

Complete Agenda

Meeting

NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

Date and Time

3.00 pm, MONDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 2025

Location

Virtual Meeting

(For public access to the meeting, please contact us)

Contact Point

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(DISTRIBUTED 26/09/2025)

NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Dafydd Rhys Thomas
Craig ab Iago
Mike Priestley
Barry Mellor
Glyn Banks
David Bithell

Isle of Anglesey County Council
Cyngor Gwynedd
Conwy County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council

Co-optee Members – Non Voting

Angela Jones
Henry Bradshaw

Eryri National Park
Transport For Wales

Constituent Council Link Officers

Huw Percy
Dafydd Wyn Williams
Geraint Edwards
Emlyn Jones
Katie Wilby
Darren Williams

Isle of Anglesey County Council
Cyngor Gwynedd
Conwy County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council

Officers in Attendance

Alwen Williams
Iwan Evans
Claire Incledon
Dewi Morgan
David Hole

Chief Executive of the Corporate Joint Committee
Monitoring Officer
Deputy Monitoring Officer
Chief Finance Officer
Corporate Joint Committee

A G E N D A

1. ELECT CHAIR FOR 2025/26

To elect a Chair for 2025/26.

2. ELECT VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025/26

To elect a Vice-Chair for 2025/26, if the need arises.

3. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration.

6. MINUTES

4 - 8

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2025 be signed as a true record.

7. THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT

9 - 22

To consider the report and make recommendations if necessary to the Corporate Joint Committee.

8. DEVELOPING THE RTP PROGRAMME FOR 2026/27

23 - 26

To consider and note the report.

NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE 30/06/2025

Present:

Councillors:

Gary Pritchard (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Craig ab Iago (Cyngor Gwynedd), Goronwy Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council), Barry Mellor (Denbighshire County Council), Glyn Banks (Flintshire County Council) and David Bithell (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Co-opted Members (Without a Vote):

Angela Jones (Eryri National Park) and Henry Bradshaw (Transport for Wales)

Constituent Councils' Liaison Officers:

Huw Percy (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Gerwyn Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd), Geraint Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council), Emlyn Jones (Denbighshire County Council), Katie Wilby (Flintshire County Council) and Darren Williams and Gwen Thomas (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Officers present:

Alwen Williams (Chief Executive, North Wales Corporate Joint Committee), Claire Incledon (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Misbah Mahmood (Corporate Joint Committee Democracy Lead Officer), David Hole (North Wales Corporate Joint Committee), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Others present:

Allan Pitt (ARUP) and Adam Graham (Transport for Wales)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was resolved to elect Councillor Goronwy Edwards as Chair of this Sub-committee for 2025-26.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was resolved to elect Councillor David Bithell as Vice-chair of this Sub-committee for 2025-26.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Dafydd Wyn Williams (Cyngor Gwynedd) with Gerwyn Jones deputising
- Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer)

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 March 2025 as a true record.

7. NORTH WALES REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN - CONSULTATION

The report was presented by the Chief Executive of the North Wales CJC and the ARUP consultant.

RESOLVED

To approve the North Wales Regional Transport Plan and supporting documentation for submission by the Corporate Joint Committee to the Welsh Government for approval and publication by the Minister in September 2025.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

As a result of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 transfer the function of developing transport policies in respect of the area of each of its constituent councils to the Corporate Joint Committee. The development and implementation of a Regional Transport Plan is a statutory function exercised by the Corporate Joint Committee through its Sub-committee, supported by the Guidance to Corporate Joint Committees on Regional Transport Plans (Version 2) 2023. Following approval and publication by the Welsh Government, the Regional Transport Plan for the North Wales region will be adopted by the Corporate Joint Committee through its implementation process to deliver a five-year investment programme.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that this draft of the North Wales Regional Transport Plan and supporting appendices was being presented to this Sub-committee to allow its Members to review it and present an informed recommendation for submission by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee to the Welsh Government for approval by the relevant Minister by September 2025. It was emphasised that the Report and all supplementary appendices submitted as part of this item responded to guidelines presented by the Welsh Government on how Corporate Joint Committees should form and develop Regional Transport Plans.

The Consultation Report submitted as part of the Item was discussed in detail and it was explained that it summarised the responses received during the 12 weeks of public consultation undertaken between 20 January and 14 April 2025. Pride was expressed in that 1684 responses had been received to the consultation during this period. Assurance was given that the responses received had contributed to the Plan, as several of its supplementary appendices had been adapted in accordance with the comments received. It was noted that some of the main adaptations included:

- **North Wales Regional Transport Plan** – There was now a commitment to comply with North Wales Network (Transport for Wales) policies, with updates to rail and bus network aspirations. It was noted that a number of schemes were part of this plan and that working with Transport for Wales supported potential future developments such as the development of a fleet of electric trains, a 'pay as you go' system to ensure that public transport was easy to use, and that work was being

done to ensure that trains were available more frequently and consistently. It was emphasised that the Plan and the Joint Committee's wider relationship with Transport for Wales was a long-term one with the likelihood that projects would evolve and adapt over time. It was noted that a number of other adaptations had been made to the plan and that some of these included ensuring support for residents and users of Holywell station (as upgrading this station was not currently a priority for Transport for Wales), improving internet connections, the Welsh Language as well as further adaptations to the Plan following 20mph regulations introduced by the Welsh Government.

- **Non-technical Summary** – Assurance was given that this document had been adapted to reflect the various changes that had been made to the Regional Transport Plan following the observations in the public consultation.
- **Regional Transport Plan Delivery Plan** – It was emphasised that a detailed assessment of projects and costs had been delivered jointly with the Local Authorities, Transport for Wales and other partners. It was explained that information had been confirmed within this document indicating how this region's Plan would work with the national Plan. It was expanded that information about affordability had been included in the document which addressed Welsh Government budgets and the money available to fund various projects. It was noted that some of the other adaptations to this document included information on the prioritisation arrangement for the projects and potential plans to extend Fflecsi services such as Snowdon Sherpa.
- **Integrated Well-being Appraisal** – It was noted that this document had been adapted to correspond to the requirements set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, following the receipt of feedback from the Welsh Government to do this.
- **Post-adoption Statement for the Integrated Well-being Appraisal** – It was explained that this document was new and noted how the Plan conformed to environmental assessments regulations. It was reported that there was detail here on how the Appraisal was delivered and its wider impact on the Plan.
- **Consultation Report** – It was reported that this new document detailed how the Public Consultation was delivered, its impact on the wider Plan and how responses had been considered.
- **The Case for Change** – It was explained that there was no change to this document as it was a support document for the Regional Transport Plan.

It was recommended that it should be ensured that the Joint Committee delegated the right to correct any minor adaptations to the Chief Executive to ensure accuracy.

Members were guided through the next steps of the Regional Transport Plan's development, confirming that the Plan would be presented to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It was confirmed that the Joint Committee would decide whether it wished to submit the draft Plan to the Welsh Government for approval. It was noted that once the Plan had been approved by the government, it would come into effect immediately and would not need to be re-adopted by the Joint Committee and Local Authorities.

Attention was drawn to the fact that members of the Sub-committee had received a letter from North Wales Wildlife Trust highlighting specific grounds for objecting to the discussion of the Plan within this meeting, setting out their desire for the Joint Committee to deal with the letter as an addendum to their response to the public consultation. They were thanked for their letter, and it was emphasised that officers and Members had received this and given it due consideration.

The content of the letter was expanded upon to provide clarity, detailing all the grounds for rejecting the Plan. In response to the first ground for refusal, which stated that the documentation of this meeting had been published on 25 June, limiting the time available to Members to consider it, it was acknowledged that there was very detailed information within the documentation. However, assurance was given that all the members of this Sub-committee were very knowledgeable about the Plan as a number of discussions had taken place since December 2024 and that the Members had been very active in scrutinising the documentation within their relevant local authorities and also with the other Members of the Sub-committee. It was stressed that no formal decision was being approved during this meeting, and it was reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to submit recommendations to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It was elaborated that the Trust noted that the documentation should be published 10-14 days before the meeting. The Deputy Monitoring Officer noted that there were no grounds for this objection for the above reasons and that three clear days before the date of the meeting was the last date on which North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Meetings documentation could be published in accordance with the Constitution. For clarity, it was explained that Members had received the documentation on 24 June.

In response to the second ground for refusal in the letter stating that Appendix 6 (the interactive supplementary document to the Delivery Plan), should not have been redacted because, in the interest of transparency, the ways in which the sub-committee's consultant Arup addresses the grounds for objection, including legal grounds made in their objection, should be in the public domain, the ARUP consultant confirmed that this document referred to a number of local authority plans and it was confirmed that it was not a public document because it contained commercially confidential information. It was noted that the vast majority of information was available within the Delivery Plan itself.

In response to the third ground for refusal in the letter, which stated that highway schemes within the Welsh Government's Roads Review had been cancelled rather than paused, the ARUP consultant confirmed that there was no development on the projects and therefore this variance in the terms did not make a difference to that. It was highlighted that officers had held discussions with the Welsh Government noting that revised documentation referred to the fact that there was no development in these schemes and that the Joint Corporate Committee would be keen to support a further review of the schemes within the Roads Review in the future.

It was clarified that if Members did not consider the draft Regional Transport Plan and made recommendations to the Joint Committee and adjourned the discussion to another meeting of this Sub-committee, that would have implications for the timetable. It was detailed that the Joint Committee aimed to meet tight deadlines to allow the Welsh Government to give approval to the Plan over the summer. It was elaborated that this would allow the Plan to be published in September. However, assurance was given that the discussion would be adjourned to another meeting if the Members agreed that they wished to do so. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that there was no legal requirement to adjourn it as detailed consideration had been given to the letter submitted by North Wales Wildlife Trust, stating that their grounds for refusing this discussion had not proved deserving.

All partners across North Wales were thanked for their continued co-operation which had led to the advent of the Regional Transport Plan to date. ARUP consultants were also thanked for working closely with the Corporate Joint Committee to ensure that a comprehensive draft of the Regional Transport Plan (and supporting appendices) was submitted to this Sub-committee and a meeting of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 14:45.

Chair



REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE
6 October, 2025

TITLE: The Strategic Transport Sub-Committee Quarterly Report

AUTHOR: Alwen Williams, Chief Executive
Adam Graham, Senior Transport Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To consider the quarterly report as required further to the Terms of Reference.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To consider the report and make recommendations if necessary to the Corporate Joint Committee.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. The Terms of Reference were approved at the meeting of the sub-committee on 1 October 2024. The Sub Committee has now been in place for a year. This is the second review report, with the previous one being in March 2025.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. The Terms of Reference state that the “Strategic Transport Sub-Committee will prepare a quarterly report on its work for the Corporate Joint Committee which shall include:
- Progress on implementation of the Regional Transport Plan, including individual Programmes and Projects
 - The Financial Performance of the Committee
 - Forthcoming developments”
- 4.2. The context for such a report is to ensure that the work of the sub-committee is open and transparent and that its functions are being clearly communicated. The consultation exercise on the Regional Transport Plan raised awareness of the work of the CJC and specifically its powers in relation to developing and delivering transportation policies for the North Wales region.
- 4.3. Resource management is a function of the sub-committee which includes the opportunity to monitor and review the level and deployment of resources required, and where it deems appropriate make recommendations to the CJC in relation to these matters.
- 4.4. The Terms of Reference provide that quarterly reports shall form part of an agreed scrutiny protocol and shall be in a format which will facilitate its submission into Scrutiny or other governance arrangements as determined by the Corporate Joint Committee.

- 4.5. The sub-committee was first convened on 1 October 2024. Since then, significant progress has been achieved in a short timeframe that has led to the successful launch of the public consultation exercise in January and the submission of a Regional Transport Plan to Welsh Government in July. The Membership of the sub-committee has benefitted from an informal in-person meeting to develop across-region working, and to explore shared skills and experience to support the delivery of transportation projects in North Wales. This regional cross-fertilisation of information and skills will continue to be a focus for future delivery and monitoring work.

5. QUARTERLY REPORT

5.1. Progress on implementation of RTP - Consultation

- 5.1.1 A twelve-week consultation period on the RTP and its associated documents commenced on 20 January and ended on 14 April 2025. The work was led by ARUP on behalf of the CJC and involved digital as well as physical resourcing.
- 5.1.2 Feedback from the public consultation fed into a consultation report and supporting documents which in turn informed and updated the RTP and RTDP. The findings of the consultation and outcomes are set out in a report to the Sub-Committee meeting on 30th June, 2025.
- 5.1.3 In total, 1,684 responses were received. This included 1,421 related to a campaign supported by the North Wales Wildlife Trust opposing the A494/A55/Flintshire Corridor (commonly referred to as the 'Red Route') in relation to the perceived potential of a previously proposed trunk road being referenced as part of a regional aspiration in strategic road network options to address transport related problems. The aspirations set out in RTP are not proposed policies that will impact the strategic roads network.

At the Sub Committee meeting on 30th June, Members were briefed on responses to the RTP consultation, including correspondence from the North Wales Wildlife Trust in connection with the Stamp Out The Red Route local action group. This was followed up with a written response sent to the North Wales Wildlife Trust from Ambition North Wales. This can be seen [here](#).

On the 2nd September, The North Wales Wildlife Trust subsequently sent a further letter, which can be seen in Appendix A. Ambition North Wales responded to this on the 17th September, which can be seen in Appendix B. As the initial letter received from North Wales Wildlife Trust was in English only, the response on 17th September was sent in English only. This has been translated to include in these Sub Committee papers.

- 5.1.4 Alongside individual responses to the consultation, 37 organisational responses were also identified.
- 5.1.5 Generally, aside from the concerns raised about the Red Route, the sentiment of responses was supportive of the plans and proposals, with a wide range of issues raised, spanning modes of transport, as well as comments in relation to economic, social, and environmental and commercial matters.
- 5.1.6 All feedback received was carefully considered and taken into account, informing the RTP and its supporting documents. To help demonstrate how this feedback has been taken into

account, topics of feedback have been grouped and responses provided in a 'You Said, We Did' approach, which can be found in the Consultation Report - [LINK](#).

- 5.1.7 A Post Adoption Statement for the Integrated Well Being Appraisal (IWBA) was also prepared, which explains how the feedback has shaped the IWBA and how the IWBA has informed the RTP documents accordingly (in accordance with Equalities principles, the Well-being of Future Generations principles, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and related assessments 57).
- 5.1.8 As part of the work to finalise the RTP, work has been done to identify a register of commitments. This is made up of actions that the CJC has committed to progressing during the RTP period in either the RTP or as a response to a consultation comment. Members will be updated on this at a future meeting.

5.2 Approval of RTP for Submission

- 5.2.1 On 30th June 2025 the Strategic Transport Sub-Committee were provided a presentation of the RTP and supporting documents. This included an update on changes to draft documents taking into account feedback from the public consultation, and also our intentions to make further and final amendments in readiness for the CJC in July 2025.
- 5.2.2 The Strategic Transport Sub-Committee recommended that the CJC approve the RTP and its supporting documents for submission to the Welsh Government for Ministerial approval and publication. The Sub-Committee recognised and commended officers and partners for the significant collaborative effort required to produce these documents in readiness for submission.
- 5.2.3 On the 18th July, 2025 the CJC made the decision to approve the North Wales Regional Transport Plan and supporting documentation for submission to the Welsh Government for approval and publication by the Minister in September 2025.
- 5.2.4 The RTP and all its associated documents have now been submitted to Welsh Government. It is expected that they will be approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales in September. This is expected to be after the submission deadline for meeting papers, so an update will be provided verbally at the meeting.

5.3 Grants Modernisation and Regional Transport Fund

- 5.3.1 Currently, funding from Welsh Government is available to local authorities for transport schemes is available via one of the following funds:
- Local Transport Fund
 - Resilient Roads Fund
 - Active Travel Fund
 - Road Safety Fund (Revenue)
 - Road Safety Fund (Capital)
 - Safe Routes in Communities Fund
 - Unadopted roads Fund
 - Ultra Low Emission Vehicles Transformation Fund

- 5.3.2 Through a process known as 'Grants Modernisation', Welsh Government are combining these funding streams for future years into one fund, known as Regional Transport Fund.
- 5.3.3 Through the transition to a single Regional Transport Fund, driven by the RTP, it is Welsh Government's intention that CJs will have a much greater role in the allocation and management of capital infrastructure spending in Wales.
- 5.3.4 Further to recent guidance from Welsh Government CJs are asked to identify a draft RTP Programme showing a delivery schedule for schemes to receive funding during 2026/27 - the first year of the Regional Transport Fund. CJC officers and Arup are working with the local authorities to identify the priority schemes from the Regional Transport Delivery Plan for progression in 2026/27. This process will also identify some priorities for years two and three. The delivery schedule must then be submitted to Welsh Government for approval before any funding is released to local authorities. This subject is considered in more detail in another agenda item at this meeting.

5.4 Timescales for RTF

- 5.4.1 Work in the next quarter (and beyond) will focus on finalising the RTP and developing the prioritised programme of transport schemes to be funded by Regional Transport Fund in 2026/27. The key dates for these pieces of work are:
 - **September** – Approval of RTP by Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales
 - **September and October** – working with local authority officers and consultancy support to identify and prioritise transport schemes to include in the draft RTP programme for delivery in 2026/27
 - November 4th – informal briefing of Members on transport schemes prior to CJC decision.
 - **Early November** – extraordinary CJC meeting to approve the draft RTP Programme
 - **November 21st** – Submission of draft RTP Programme to Welsh Government
 - December 15th – sub-committee update on progress & next steps
 - **December 19th** – Feedback from Welsh Government on draft RTP programme
 - **January 30th 2026** – Submission of final RTP Programme to Welsh Government
 - **March 2026** - Welsh Government approves RTP programmes and sends RTF offer letters for FY2026-27 to the local authorities and CJs

5.5 Update on other programmes and projects being planned or delivered by others

The sub-committee has a role in planning, co-ordinating and advising on regional responses to Welsh Government proposals for improving public transport.

5.5.1 Network North Wales

At a Transport Summit held in Wrexham in May 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales launched Network North Wales, a multi-billion-pound investment vision for an integrated, high-frequency transport network for the region. It will be a network that's better connected, more accessible and brimming with opportunity. It is also a significant enabler towards delivering Transport for Wales' T-Network vision – 1 Network, 1 Timetable, 1 Ticket, 1 Team, alongside the move towards Bus Franchising.

The programme announced by the Cabinet Secretary included interventions across the short, medium, and long term, which become increasingly ambitious over the period. In the short term, this meant the continued roll-out of the new fleet of trains serving North Wales, and the re-branding of the Borderlands Line to the Wrexham-Liverpool line.

By May 2026 Welsh Government have committed to:

- Double the frequency of trains between Wrexham and Chester.
- Upgrade railway stations on the Wrexham-Liverpool Line.
- Increase services on the North Wales Main Line by 50%.
- Introduce new bus services to improve access to jobs in Wrexham and Deeside.
- Launch direct trains between Llandudno and Liverpool.
- Begin rolling out pay as you go on rail services in North Wales.
- Start the T13 bus service between Rhyl and Wrexham via Ruthin and Denbigh.
- Add Metro and Network North Wales branding to trains, buses and stations to make the network easier to navigate.

In the next three years they have committed to:

- Carry out upgrades at Padeswood to unlock more freight and passenger capacity.
- Start running two trains per hour between Wrexham and Liverpool.
- Improve station safety and access at Buckley.

In the next five years, Welsh Government have committed to:

- Deliver more new trains and build new stations.
- Improve rail connections to Manchester Airport.
- Have a consistent rail timetable for the North Wales Main Line.
- Upgrade signals at Gobowen to increase capacity on the Marches Line.

Up to 2035, the commitments include:

- Electrify the North Wales Main Line.
- Increase platform capacity at Chester railway station.
- Run four trains per hour from Wrexham to Liverpool.
- Increase services on the North Wales Main Line.
- Significantly improve accessibility at stations, including level boarding

Beyond 2035, the proposals are:

- Introduce Metro-style services to stations south of Wrexham to Gobowen.
- Improve journey times between North and South Wales.
- Build new stations north and south of Wrexham, including A55 Parkway.
- Electrify and re-signal the Marches Line.
- Improve Northern line connections from Wrexham to Leeds.

It is important to note that where the Network North Wales commitments overlap with the RTP, the commitments are in line with the RTP vision. Notably regarding enhanced access to the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone, and rail aspirations for the North Wales Main Line, Wrexham-Liverpool Line, and Chester to Wrexham, guided by the T-Network philosophy.

5.5.2 North Wales Metro

Transport for Wales have been working with local authorities in the region on the development of a number of projects to enhance the sustainable transport offer across North Wales. These have been considered in the RTP policy base and in the RTDP schemes, which will act as the primary mechanism for capital delivery. The work has included:

- **Wrexham Gateway:** As part of the Wrexham Gateway Partnership, plans are being developed for an integrated transport hub at Wrexham General Station that are a key part of a wider regeneration programme.
- **Bangor Gateway:** Developing proposals to improve walking, cycling, and public access to Bangor station and enhance the station environment.
- **Holyhead Gateway:** Proposals to enhance the station environment and improve sustainable access to the station and the port facilities, including improved walking, cycling and wheeling connectivity from the town centre and residential areas and improved bus provision.
- **Caernarfon Gateway:** Exploring options for the eastern approach to the town centre that may be facilitated by the removal of the existing flyover or multi-storey car park.
- **Enhancing Menai Resilience:** Developing options to improve resilience and reliability of the Menai Crossing.
- Identifying options for improving choices for travel to work at large employment sites including Deeside Industrial Park and Wrexham Industrial Estate.
- Identifying options for bus infrastructure improvements across the region that will facilitate improved public transport journey time and reliability.
- Feasibility work considering an east-west coach service intended to complement the rail offer and improve cross-border connectivity.

5.5.3 Bus

Welsh Government have announced that young people aged 16 to 21 will be able to ride on buses across Wales for just £1 from September. Single fares will cost just £1 and there will be £3 day passes available too. It will allow young people to enjoy unlimited travel with any participating bus services from 1 September for a year. Welsh Government will extend the scheme to 5 to 15-year-olds from November. Existing reduced fares for children will apply until then. Young people looking to benefit from this will need a mytravelpass.

During the summer, Arriva have been running a new Cymru Coastliner service: a new express summer coach service between Rhyl and Llandudno. It operated from 22 June to 25 August. The service connected Rhyl and Llandudno in under one hour, calling at locations including Kinmel Bay, Towyn, Abergele, Colwyn Bay and Rhos-on-Sea. The coach operated hourly, seven days a week, using air-conditioned coaches.

At the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham in August, Welsh Government, TfW, and Arriva announced the new TrawsCymru T51 service, connecting Rhyl and Wrexham from September. This replaces the 51/X51 service. Key changes include:

- i. From September 2025:
 - hourly buses between Ruthin and Wrexham (an upgrade from the two-hourly service)
 - introduction of hourly service between Wrexham and Rhyl on a Sunday
 - simplified fares and digital ticketing options
- ii. From March 2026:
 - better integration with rail services and other TrawsCymru routes
 - new modern, accessible vehicles designed for comfort and sustainability

In South West Wales, between 1st July and 23rd September, Transport for Wales and local authorities have undertaken consultation on the proposed base network for the future franchised bus services. The timescale for introducing franchised network shows a 2027 start for South West Wales, with North Wales in 2028.

5.5.4 Strategic Road Network

Between 9th December, 2024 and 4th March, 2025, Welsh Government undertook consultation on the A494 River Dee Bridge Replacement Scheme.

The public consultation showed strong support for replacing the A494 River Dee Bridge as soon as possible. There was support for Option E as a solution which would minimise impacts during construction, provide noise screening for local residents through new green spaces and provide active travel connections across the River Dee. However, the consultation report notes that it is also clear from the public consultation that there is concern about congestion on the A494 and support for schemes which could alleviate this. The scheme's primary purpose is to replace the existing A494 River Dee Bridge which is approaching its life expiry.

Having taken into account the technical, social, economic and environmental aspects of the scheme along with the positive comments received during the public consultation, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport & North Wales has decided to adopt Option E as the Preferred Option to address the problems with the existing A494 River Dee Bridge.

Option E comprises:

- New off-line single structure River Dee Bridge plus active travel link within existing rail underbridge.
- This would replace the River Dee Bridge with a new bridge immediately upstream.
- Work at the railway would be minimised with the existing highway verge area through the structure being reconfigured to facilitate an active travel path.
- Up to 3km of new and improved active travel paths.

The next steps for the scheme are to complete the preliminary design, Environmental Statement and WelTAG Stage 3 report. Following this, the draft Orders will be published in line with the Highways Act 1980 and Acquisition of Land Act 1981.

- 5.5.5 In July, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales released a written statement on 'Plans for our road network'. This explained that Welsh Government are now beginning essential work to refresh resilience studies for trunk roads. This will ensure they have the evidence base to inform future investment decisions, to ensure roads continue to play their

role in delivering Wales' socio-economic and net zero policies. This will begin with studies of the busiest trunk roads: the A55 and A494 in North Wales and the M4 in South Wales.

6. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- 6.1. The CJC has secured additional funding of £200k from Welsh Government for RTP and RTDP progression in financial year 2025/26.
- 6.2. Financial spend on consultancy support to date has been used to commission ARUP to provide technical support and delivery since early 2024 for all elements of RTP delivery. This spend (2023/4 to September 2025) is currently £312,999.41. Of that, £271,281.95 has been claimed from Welsh Government grant.
- 6.3. A Senior Transport Officer joined Ambition North Wales in August on two-year secondment from Transport for Wales. This demonstrates the partnership working between Ambition North Wales and other organisations with an interest in RTP and RTDP delivery. It is expected that the Senior Transport Officer will undertake the CJC's responsibilities in supporting the delivery of the RTP, supported by the wider Ambition North Wales team.
- 6.4. Ambition North Wales buys-in support from Cyngor Gwynedd as its host authority. This provides officer time for support on Legal services, Democratic Services, and finance support.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The legal and governance implications are addressed in the body of the report.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – 2nd September letter from North Wales Wildlife Trust
Appendix B – 17th September letter to North Wales Wildlife Trust

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

I believe that the report is an accurate reflection of the situation and have no objections to the decision sought.

Alwen Williams
Chief Executive
Ambition North Wales
Government Buildings
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9RZ

Your Ref: AW/ls
2nd September 2025

Dear Ms Williams,

RE: The North Wales Regional Transport Strategy

Thank you for your letter of 9th July 2025. We would like to make the following points in relation to it:

We welcome the removal of the Red Route from the draft North Wales Regional Transport Plan (dNWRTP), in conjunction with your confirmation that the dNWRTP is not pursuing its re-emergence. We further welcome removal of the term "paused" as set out in your letter.

However, we remain concerned at your statement that one of the duties of the dNWRTP is to set out "regional aspirations" for the strategic road network (SRN). We have examined Welsh Government statutory advice to CJsCs with regard to the formulation of RTPs, and the secondary legislation relating to the establishment, roles, and powers of CJsCs with regard to transport, and we can find no reference to this purported "aspirational" role of RTPs. Indeed, points 1 and 9 in the Welsh Government statutory guidance state:

1. We DO want the RTPs to be firmly focused on achieving modal shift.

9. We DO want you to include disincentives for car use as well as incentives for more sustainable travel.

We would be grateful if you could inform us as to where reference to the supposed aspirational role of RTPs occurs in the guidance and/or legislation.

Whilst the above may seem somewhat academic, "aspirational" statements in statutory documents are a bad practice example of the phenomenon of "creeping validation". This is the process whereby references to policy or project initiatives, where such references are made by authorities acting beyond their remit, gather materiality to themselves, by being subsequently cited by the authority to whom the powers to pursue such initiatives fall. Thus the dNWRTP's statement at new SRN3 that the CJC ***"Supports the Welsh Government reviewing the case for strategic highway schemes where these can provide wider benefits and enhance facilities for sustainable travel"***, being aspirational, should have no materiality, because in making such a statement, the CJC is acting beyond its remit and against statutory guidance and legislation. Indeed, and in support of this, the SEA of the dNWRTP explicitly declines to assess the environmental implications of such statements on the grounds that they are aspirational, stating that they are ***"for others to decide upon"***, thus confirming that they have no materiality.



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However, you state on page 2 of your letter that it is ***"important that the Regional Transport Plan sets out options to address transport related problems on the SRN and highlight regional aspirations for strategic roads"***. This is illogical. Such statements cannot be so important as to merit inclusion in the dNWRTP, whilst at the same time being not important enough to merit being subject to statutory SEA.

We therefore advocate that, at a minimum:

1. The final version of the dNWRTP to be sent to the Welsh Ministers should include a paragraph to the effect that its aspirational statements in relation to project development have no materiality in project/policy formulation, and
2. Aspirational statements at SRN3, for example, are re-formatted and redesigned to clearly distinguish them from statutory RTP policies.

Does the dNWRTP support new highway construction schemes?

Whilst we welcome several of the changes set out in the July 2025 version of the dNWRTP and subsequent additional changes set out in your letter, it is still not clear whether or not the CJC supports making the case for new highway schemes as part of the strategic road network in general or at any particular location on it in particular.

The amended text of SRN3 set out in your letter states:

"SRN Aspiration 3: The case for delivering selected paused strategic highway schemes should be reviewed, particularly where these can provide wider benefits and enhance facilities for sustainable travel. Priority routes are the A494/A55/Flintshire Corridor"

However, this appears to us to be contradicted by the consultants' report into responses to objectors' representations that the CJC does not support re-examining the case for the Red Route (and as an aside, we have received communication from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport that this is also the Welsh Government's approach).

One interpretation of the new text set out in your letter is that the CJC supports the re-examination of transport-related problems at certain locations/corridors on the strategic road network, but, crucially that that re-examination would not result in a recommendation for completely new major highway construction on the part of the CJC. The implication of this interpretation is that the CJC supports the examination of the full gamut of possible solutions to transport-related problems on the strategic road network, including on- or near-line upgrade-related solutions, public and active travel-related solutions and non-physical works-related solutions (SMART measures). This approach would appear to us to be reasonable, and to be in conformity with the Wales Transport Strategy Y Llwybr Newydd, in accordance with which the NWRTP must act.

In the light of the above, and on the understanding that we are broadly in agreement in relation to this matter, we respectfully advocate that, in the interest of clarity, SRN 3 be amended as follows. Our suggested amendments below are in red:

"SRN Aspiration 3: The case for delivering selected paused strategic highway schemes should be reviewed, particularly

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where these can provide wider benefits and enhance facilities for sustainable travel, and are in conformity with the transport mode hierarchy set out in the Wales Transport Strategy Y Llwybr Newydd. Priority routes are the A494/A55/Flintshire Corridor and the A483 Wrexham.

However, it should be noted that aspirational statement SRN3 cannot be delivered by the RTP, as the strategic highway network is the responsibility of the Welsh Government, not local authorities. Thus, SRN3 is not a Regional Transport Plan policy.

The CJC's Ongoing Discussions with the Welsh Government with Regard to the Strategic Road Network:

We note at page 3 of your letter the statement that:

"we have engaged with the Trunk Road Agent and the Welsh Government to help understand their priorities and plans, to inform the Regional Transport Plan's 'strategic road network aspirations'"

We would be most grateful if you could inform us whether such discussions are in the public domain, and if so, how they can be accessed by us and others.

The Version of the dNWRTP to be Submitted to the Welsh Ministers:

Notwithstanding our suggested changes set out in this letter, and in the interests of clarity, we would be most grateful if you could confirm in writing that it is the July 2025 version of the dNWRTP, amended by the changes set out in your letter of July 9th which will be submitted to the Welsh Ministers, and that no further changes in relation to highways will be proposed or made to the dNWRTP.

We would be most grateful if you could keep us informed of developments in relation to the NWRTP.

We would further be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt via email.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian Lloyd Jones
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Adrian Lloyd Jones,
Head of Living Landscapes,
North Wales Wildlife Trust.

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: AW/AG-Is
Eich Cyf / Your Ref:
Dyddiad / Date: 17 September, 2025

Dear Mr. Jones,

NORTH WALES REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Thank you for your letter dated the 3rd September, 2025. We appreciate your feedback, noting the changes that were made to the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) in response to your previous letter and other responses we received, regarding the wording of Aspiration SRN 3 in the draft RTP. We welcome your involvement in this process to date and, further to this response, extend the offer of a meeting to yourselves to discuss any further concerns you may have.

Aspiration SRN 3

The Key Points section of the guidance issued by Welsh Government to CJsCs developing RTPs did, as you state, include the need to focus on modal shift and to disincentivise car use. However, the guidance also sets out an expectation that the RTP considers transport facilities and services that are:

- Required to meet the needs of people living or working in the region, visiting or travelling through the region;
- Required for the transportation of freight.

The guidance also sets out how RTPs must include an evidenced-based overview of the current transport situation and likely changes over the plan period – closely tied to land use planning. This should include opportunities and barriers to addressing the priorities in the Wales Transport Strategy and fit with the National Transport Delivery Plan.

The strategic road network of North Wales is, and is likely to continue to be, vital to meeting the needs of residents, commuters and visitors; and it is crucial to meeting the needs of the freight sector, and our ports. Furthermore, it is essential that our public transport network and services are integrated with our highway network in order to maximise opportunities for modal shift and reduce private vehicle emissions. This is reflected in many of the consultation responses received on the draft RTP.

Therefore, we have sought to produce an RTP that does take into consideration the context of strategic road and rail issues so to accurately reflect the key transport issues in North Wales, as supported by technical evidence and stakeholder feedback. We have a statutory function to develop transport policies in the region. However, in accordance with the RTP guidance, we have been clear not to introduce policies in the RTP that impact on the strategic roads network or the rail network, or



propose schemes in the Regional Transport Delivery Plan, that could not be delivered by our local authority partners in North Wales.

Following due consideration of the development of the RTP through the decision-making process established in the CJC's governance, we are content that it makes clear that neither the CJC, or local authorities, have any direct influence over the Strategic Road Network: *"the Corporate Joint Committee and local authorities in North Wales have no direct influence over the strategic road network. However, it is important that this Regional Transport Plan sets out options to address transport related problems on the strategic road network and highlight regional aspirations for strategic roads as these are key to supporting our wider connectivity aspirations for North Wales."* This is why the SRN section of the Plan includes *aspirations*, whereas the sections involving regional delivery are where we have a more direct influence to develop policies that we are able to progress.

The revised Aspiration SRN3 states the CJC's view that there is a need to review the case for strategic highway schemes where there are potential wider benefits. Any review would be led by Welsh Government, and it would not be appropriate to pre-empt the findings of any review in the RTP. The aspiration as it is currently written recognises that where strategic highway schemes affecting the strategic road network are reviewed this should be in the context of providing a broader range of benefits including facilitating sustainable travel. This does not express support for any previously promoted solutions or seek to influence the outcome of any review.

The CJC's Ongoing Discussions with the Welsh Government with regard to the Strategic Road Network:

The engagement with the Trunk Road Agent and Welsh Government has sought to help ensure that the text included in the RTP is reflective of their plans and position on the SRN. Engagement has taken place through regular online meetings to help shape the RTP during its development. As part of the Welsh Government's support in developing its review of the RTP and associated documents at key milestones, it has engaged its relevant departments, including but not limited to its public transport and highways teams.

Version of NWRTP Submitted to Welsh Ministers

I can confirm that the version of the RTP published in July 2025 is the proposed final version that has been submitted to Welsh Government for approval, further to its consideration by the Strategic Transport Sub-Committee and the decision of the CJC to approve submission to Welsh Government in July.

After approval by the CJC, the RTP was submitted to Welsh Government for approval in accordance with Welsh Government timescales and we do not have any opportunity to make further revision at this stage. We will however, forward your correspondence and this reply to Welsh Government to ensure that they are sighted on the matters you have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Alwen Williams

Alwen Williams
Chief Executive



REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE
6 October, 2025

TITLE: Developing the RTP Programme for 2026/27

AUTHOR: Alwen Williams, Chief Executive
Adam Graham, Senior Transport Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To advise the Sub-Committee about the process and timescales for developing a RTP Programme for 2026/27 for submission to Welsh Government.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. That the sub-committee note the report.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. The report is for information purposes.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Currently, funding from Welsh Government is available to local authorities for transport schemes via one of the following funds:
- Local Transport Fund
 - Resilient Roads Fund
 - Active Travel Fund
 - Road Safety Fund (Revenue)
 - Road Safety Fund (Capital)
 - Safe Routes in Communities Fund
 - Unadopted roads Fund
 - Ultra Low Emission Vehicles Transformation Fund
- 4.2. Through a process known as 'Grants Modernisation', Welsh Government are combining these funding streams for future years into one fund, known as the Regional Transport Fund.
- 4.3. Through the transition to a single Regional Transport Fund, driven by the RTP, it is Welsh Government's intention that CJsCs will have a much greater role in the allocation and management of capital infrastructure spending in Wales.

- 4.4. Further to recent guidance from Welsh Government CJs are asked to identify a draft RTP Programme showing a delivery schedule for schemes to receive funding during 2026/27 - the first year of the Regional Transport Fund. CJC officers and Arup are working with the local authorities to identify the priority schemes from the approved Regional Transport Delivery Plan for progression in 2026/27. This process will also identify some priorities for years two and three. The delivery schedule must then be submitted to Welsh Government for approval before any funding is released to local authorities. This subject is considered in more detail in another agenda item at this meeting.

5. REGIONAL TRANSPORT FUND

- 5.1. From 2026/27 financial year, Welsh Government will provide funding for local transport schemes via the Regional Transport Fund (RTF) to support the delivery of the policies and priorities set out in the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP), that contribute to Llwybr Newydd (WTS).
- 5.2. In order to secure RTF funding for North Wales, Welsh Government expect the CJC to co-ordinate production of a programme of schemes, that clearly sets out the interventions that constituent local authorities will deliver over the next financial year with RTF grant support. The programme of schemes must be in line with the RTDP.
- 5.3. Schemes to be funded through RTF are required to be categorised into the activity areas shown in Table 1.

Capital	Revenue
Road Safety	Road Safety
Active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling)	Corporate Joint Committee administrative services
Public Transport	Behaviour Change
Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles	
Highways	
Programme management and monitoring	
Regional programme preparatory works	

Table 1

- 5.4. Welsh Government have issued guidance to CJs explaining the requirements needed to secure the funding for the region, and the timescales in which these are to be completed.

6. FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1. Welsh Government expects CJs to support effective programme management of the grant and overseeing effective and timely delivery by local authorities.
- 6.2. In 2026/27 funding for schemes will be awarded directly to local authority for delivery. In future years it is anticipated that funding may be awarded to the CJC for distribution to local authorities.
- 6.3. Welsh Government expect there to be a clear focus on delivering projects on the ground during 2026/27, and delivery of interventions must demonstrate best value for money.

7. DEVELOPING THE RTP PROGRAMME FOR 2026/27

- 7.1. As part of the guidance issued by Welsh Government, the CJC has been issued a series of template forms for completion with details of the transport interventions to be funded in 2026/27. Ambition North Wales, with consultancy support from Arup, are working with local authority officers across the region to complete these forms.
- 7.2. Key to this process is an RTF Model spreadsheet tool developed by Arup. This is being populated by officers from local authorities with details for each of the schemes in the RTDP. Those details include:
- Scheme type (based on activity areas shown in Table 1)
 - Capital and revenue requirements
 - Possible match funding
 - Possible start and end dates
 - Possible spend profile through 2026/27
 - Delivery against a series of outputs and outcomes identified by Welsh Government
- 7.3. The guidance issued by Welsh Government now allows for additional schemes (i.e. schemes not in the RTDP) to be included in the programme subject to submission and agreement by Welsh Government of a WelTAG 0 report. This allows some flexibility to react to unforeseen events or changing priorities over the RTP period.

8 TIMETABLE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SUB-COMMITTEE AND CJC

- 8.1. Table 2 shows the timetable that Welsh Government have set out for submission of the programme.

Date	Activity
August to October 2025	CJCs work with local authorities, activity area leads from Welsh Government, and Transport for Wales to develop a draft RTP programme for FY2026-27
November 2025	By 21 November, each CJC must share an electronic copy of the draft RTP programme with their Welsh Government Regional Transport Lead
December 2025	By 19 December, Welsh Government will provide feedback on the draft RTP programmes to the CJCs.
End of January 2026	By 30 January, each CJC must submit an electronic copy of the final RTP programme to Welsh Government
March 2026	Welsh Government approves RTP programmes and sends RTF offer letters for FY2026-27 to the local authorities and CJCs (subject to Ministerial approval)

Table 2

- 8.2. To ensure the correct governance and approvals, the following proposals for Strategic Transport Sub-Committee and CJC are proposed:
- **4th November** – informal Strategic Transport Sub-Committee, providing Members opportunity to review the proposed programme

- **7th November** – extraordinary CJC meeting for Members to approve the programme

8.3. The programme would then be submitted to Welsh Government by 21st November.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report, but the Sub-Committee should bear in mind the proposed changes to the funding process as set out in Section 6 of this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are no expected legal implications arising out of this report. Governance implications are considered in paragraph 8.2.

APPENDICES:

N/A

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. **Monitoring Officer:**

No observations to add in relation to propriety. Any further advice will be provided at the meeting

ii. **Statutory Finance Officer:**

With reference to section 9 above, I am satisfied that there are no direct financial implications of the decision sought and I am happy to support the decision. However, the RTP is a significant financial development for the CJC, particularly in view of the requirement for the CJC to work closely with the local authorities and the likelihood of a change in the funding model beyond 2026/27.