
TRANSPORT DELIVERY SUB-GROUP

14 September 2020

Present:

Voting Members: Councillors – David Bithell (Wrexham County Borough Council), Robert G. Parry (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Greg Robbins (Conwy County Borough Council), Gareth Wyn Griffith (Gwynedd Council), Brian Jones (Denbighshire County Council) and Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire County Council).

Officers in attendance – Darren Williams (Wrexham County Borough Council), Huw Percy (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Geraint Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council), Stephen Jones (Flintshire County Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Iwan G. Evans (Monitoring Officer – Lead Authority), Peter Daniels (), Antony Stamford (), Sean Traynor () and Lowri Haf Evans (minutes – Lead Authority).

Others invited – Iwan Prys Jones (North Wales Economic Ambition Board), Dewi Rowlands (Welsh Government), Kemi Adenubi (Transport for Wales).

1. APOLOGIES

None to note

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received for discussion.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 17 February 2020, were accepted as a true record subject to:

- Item 10: *Hydrogen - Fuel of the Future - examining methods of undertaking joint purchases of hydrogen vehicles for use as part of Local Authority fleet services.*

No decision had been made regarding the use of one technology over another when considering purchasing vehicles.

- to amend the name of Peter Davies to Peter Daniels

It was confirmed that 'matters arising' from the minutes would not be discussed at the meeting following an explanation regarding committee procedures. If an update regarding any matter was required, it had to be ensured that it was included on the meeting agenda.

It was proposed and seconded to include matters arising from the minutes on future meeting agendas. The Terms of Reference of the Sub-board to be circulated to Cabinet Members.

5. BUS GOVERNANCE AND NETWORK UPDATE

Presentation by Dewi Rowlands - Deputy Director for Strategy and Transportation Policy, Iwan Prys Jones - Programme Manager, North Wales Economic Ambition Board and input from Kemi Adenubi (Transport for Wales).

DECISION

To accept the report and request a further detailed report for the next meeting on the concept of forming a North Wales region bus company noting the options including the possible governance arrangements.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to provide an update to members on developments in relation to governance arrangements and funding bus services together with further work planned on North Wales bus services.

Attention was drawn to the three associated matters for consideration.

- Update on progress as a result of Welsh Government proposals to revise the management arrangements for bus networks.
- Update on progress with the work of developing Regional Bus Strategies for North Wales following work commissioned by the Ambition Board
- Update on work undertaken by Arup on behalf of Transport for Wales on developing a bus strategy and vision for North Wales Metro

It was reported that COVID-19 highlighted the challenges for the current bus transport system that had seen a sudden and serious reduction in the number of bus passengers (around 90%) across services since the lockdown period. The numbers were likely to remain low until it was possible to envisage changes to social distancing guidance that limited capacity as well as the public's aspiration to travel on public transport.

It was noted that the crisis was an opportunity to change the provision with the pandemic having drawn attention to the poor resilience and innate weaknesses in the current system. It was added that the current legislation framework was responsible for a lack of joint provision.

Consideration was given to changing the model for the bus network in Wales by ensuring effective outcomes that would respond to the need. It was emphasised that collaboration with the Authorities was essential to improve the service. It was noted that work was being undertaken to adapt part 3 of the Buses Bill (financial stream to deliver standards) in order that a better range of equipment was available to Local Authorities to be used with planning and providing local buses in their areas.

It was added that the Public Transport Strategy, 'Local Services, National Vision', would go out to public consultation in November 2020 with an intention to submit this to the Senedd in March 2021. It was proposed to present the draft strategy and engage with Local Authorities to ensure that there was a suitable service developed for individuals and communities.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The information submitted was welcomed
- Given that the network had been split into regions with many local authorities managing this within their regions, the situation was complex and it would be difficult to have 'one management body'

- Needed to attract active individuals - the network offered good connections for cyclists and electric bicycle users
- That clear communication and engagement were essential
- The report had been drawn up prior to Covid - useful and good information and details had been included and since the pandemic the aim was the same - to get a network that delivered improvement
- That collaboration with partners was essential - an equal voice for all to ensure that collective resources are available to deliver
- The suggestion to run a bus company at a local authority level was to be welcomed
- It was suggested that North Wales, as a region, could present a package to run a bus company. A good opportunity to collaborate. Operational arrangements had already been established. Expertise, skills and knowledge were available.

In response to the suggestion, it was noted that this would be welcomed and that there would be a benefit to seeing authorities supporting each other with an application for a formal plan in place by July 2021.

It was proposed and seconded for North Wales to establish a Bus Company

In response, Cabinet Members noted that they accepted the suggestion and agreed,

- that more details were required regarding how this would work
- that an effective system was required for North Wales - one that would be managed by people local to North Wales - local knowledge and experience was essential
- that a report was required on the governance matters of the Corporate Joint-Committee

6. GROWTH TRACK 360 UPDATE

The report was presented by Ian Roberts - Flintshire County Council.

DECISION

RESOLVED to accept the information.

DISCUSSION

A detailed update was provided on the work and proposals for consideration. Owing to the significant reduction in the number of passengers during lockdown, it was highlighted that consideration must be given to new ways of working, ensuring that plans were fit for purpose. It was stressed that, if access to fast trains could not be ensured, North Wales would be under a significant disadvantage.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the information was thorough and included a number of positive matters
- That better explanation and understanding was required of the type of trains that would be used
- Concern that North Wales was not part of the discussions on the restrictions in the number of journeys into Manchester - as a result, North Wales was likely to lose out on services to the Airport and Piccadilly Station

- Better resources were required in Chester if more trains were to be available across North Wales
- It was necessary to add resilience to the list - regular flooding and landslides caused problems in some areas

The meeting commenced at 9:30am and concluded at 11:20am.