Cyd-Bwyllgor Corfforedig
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Corporate Joint Committee

Appendix B

Bi-Annual Report November 2026

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REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE
2nd November 2026

TITLE: The Strategic Transport Sub-Committee Bi-Annual Report

AUTHOR: Adam Graham, Senior Transport Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. To consider the bi-annual 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 for the Sub Committee require that an update report is produced on a bi-annual basis.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. The Terms of Reference state that the "Strategic Transport Sub-Committee will prepare a bi-annual report on its work for the Corporate Joint Committee.

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.

4.3. The Terms of Reference provide that bi-annual 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.

5. REGIONAL TRANSPORT FUND 2026/27

5.1. At the start of the 2026/27 financial year, Welsh Government's Regional Transport Fund became an important source of funding for the transport interventions identified in the Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP). Ambition North Wales, supported by external consultants, worked closely with officers from local authorities to identify a Programme of Schemes for funding in 2026/27, which was reflective of the RTDP prioritised schemes, local authority aspirations, and the indicative budget provided by Wesh Government. The programme was agreed by the Sub Committee and then the CJC in autumn 2025 before being approved by Welsh Government.

5.2. Funding for the delivery of schemes is awarded to local authorities. The total funding amount awarded to North Wales authorities was £28.3m capital, and £0.48m revenue. Scheme delivery commenced on the 1st April 2026.

5.3. Work has since commenced on developing the RTF programme of schemes for the 2027/28 financial year. This is subject to more detailed consideration in another agenda item.

6 RESPONSES SENT TO CONSULTATION RUN BY PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

6.1. Since the last bi-annual report, a consultation response has been sent to Transport for Wales to ensure that the region's Regional Transport Plan aspirations are considered as part of the bus franchise consultation. The response is shown in Appendix 1.

7. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

7.1. Through the Regional Transport Fund, the CJC secured funding of £370k capital and £100k revenue from Welsh Government for programme management of the Regional Transport Fund programme. Reporting at the end of Quarter 2 included the spend shown in Appendix 2.

7.2. This funding allocation is, in part, being used to fund a team of three staff working on the strategic transport remit of the CJC.

7.3. Financial spend from that funding has been used to cover consultancy support to continue the commission with Arup that has provided technical support and delivery with finalising the RTP and RTDP, and the coordination of the Regional Transport Fund Programme of Schemes. The spend also covers officer time for those CJC officers who have worked on RTP development.

7.4. Ambition North Wales buys-in support from Cyngor Gwynedd. This provides officer time for support on Legal services, Democratic Services, and finance support.

8. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

8.1. The CJC's transport responsibilities have grown as we have moved into the delivery of the Regional Transport Plan schemes this Financial Year. Alongside regional coordination, strategic transport issues that impact the region, and contributing to the wider work of Ambition North Wales; the CJC is responsible for working with local authorities to support and monitor progress and spend of ongoing Year 1 RTF schemes, and to identify and prioritise the Year 2 programme. This has necessitated the recruitment of additional staff to support the Senior Transport Officer. The team of three now consists of:

- Senior Transport Officer (secondment from Transport for Wales)
- Transport Officer (fixed term employment)
- Transport Officer (secondment from Wrexham County Borough Council)

8.2. As noted in section 7, funding for these staff resources is through the Regional Transport Fund allocation.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report, but Members are advised to note the financial performance update in Section 7.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Bus consultation response
Appendix 2 – Financial Reporting

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

"The bi-annual report and that it is being presented in accordance with the Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference and wider governance arrangements. I have no additional legal or governance observations."

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

"The report outlines the situation over recent months and approving the decision sought will not create new financial commitments. I have no objections to the contents of the report."

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Appendix 1 – Bus Franchise Consultation Response

By e-mail
To engagement@tfw.wales
Rebecca.Colmer@tfw.wales

Dyddiad / Date: October 2026

Dear TfW Engagement Team,

NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO BUS REFORM PROPOSALS CONSULTATION

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on bus reform proposals. The below sets out the response from the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It is intended to complement the responses from the six local authorities in North Wales, and we would be supportive of any specific changes to or concerns about the proposals that are raised by individual authorities from the region in their responses.

Opportunity to Engage

Senior officers from Transport for Wales have attended a number of meetings of the CJC's Strategic Transport Sub Committee to update Members as the proposals for the franchise bus network have been developed. Franchising presented a real opportunity to improve bus services for communities in North Wales so this engagement with Members has been welcomed and we would like to invite TfW to future meetings as the consultation findings emerge and final proposals for implementation are developed.

Similarly, the close working with officers at the local authority level on the base network has allowed local knowledge to shape the proposals, and this has been welcomed.

However, as the body responsible for strategic transport planning across the region, it is disappointing that Ambition North Wales have not been engaged at officer level in the development of the proposals before they were out for public consultation.

Finally on engagement, it has been pleasing to see the number and geographic spread of the public drop in events that have been held as part of this process, as well as the amount of information that has been provided on-line. This has allowed people from communities across North Wales to engage in this important consultation.

Regional Transport Plan Aspirations

In the North Wales Regional Transport Plan (RTP) we recognised the importance of the change to franchising and, through Policy PT1, committed to "work with Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government to support the roll-out of bus franchising in North Wales, which should include multi-year funding that would provide certainty for the travelling public, authorities, and operators."

In the RTP we set out our aspiration for the bus network in North Wales that we would like to see delivered through the opportunities that franchising provides:

- **Policy PT2:** All new buses introduced in North Wales should be Zero Emission. Where new buses are a long-term improvement, opportunity should be sought to re-power the existing fleet.

- Policy PT4: The Bus Service Transformation Network will be rolled out in North Wales. This will include a core network of services between and within major settlements and employment sites with a frequency of two to four buses an hour extending into the evenings.
- Policy PT5: Future bus services in North Wales will:
    - Have a high frequency and long operating hours
    - Have consistent/regular departure times
    - Have Sunday timetables as close as possible to weekday frequency to support commuting, leisure and visitor economy demand
    - Be coordinated to provide a well-spaced timetable
    - Minimise journey times between the origins and destinations with the most demand
    - Take direct routes that remain the same throughout the day
    - Be routed via transport interchanges and railway stations
    - Be integrated with local bus services and dynamic demand responsive transport
    - Be comfortable for long journeys

The proposals set out in the current consultation do not go as far as achieving those ambitions, with the proposals consulted on being very similar, if not identical, to the current network in much of North Wales. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed network and service patterns are reflective of the funding that is available, there is a need to manage public expectations with regard to the extent of improvements that are possible through franchising currently.

We would like to see proposals from TfW and Welsh Government that will enhance the network and service provision across North Wales in the future. Alongside this, we would like assurances that funding from Welsh Government will be available in the future to support an enhanced network after franchising is in place.

On the issue of funding, it should be noted that as some routes currently are operated commercially, they do not require any funding at the moment. This will change when those routes are contained within franchise packages, and there needs to be recognition by Welsh Government and TfW that it may not be possible to deliver a like for like bus network in the future within the funding regime that currently exists. To address this, Welsh Government should seek to commit to further and multi-year funding for public transport going forward.

The Proposed Network and Service Patterns

Some of the proposed service changes will involve a change for journeys that are currently direct. Where these changes create an inconvenience such as cost, delay, or uncertainty for the passenger, these inconveniences should be minimised. For example, the F19 and F18 services currently connect villages in Flintshire to Rhyl. Under the new proposals, this would require a change at Prestatyn to a service which is currently run by a different operator. There should not be financial penalty for passengers required to make that change. This could obviously be addressed through the integrated ticketing proposals being progressed by TfW.

On Ynys Mon, the Council have run a pilot using Local Transport Fund of a Demand Responsive Transport Service in a number of small communities adjacent to the A5. This was after the commercial operator stopped serving these communities on a commercial basis citing delays, low passenger numbers and

issues with parked cars or narrow roads. It Is disappointing that the proposed franchise network does not serve these communities.

Cross-border bus services into England are a crucial part of the transport network in North Wales, particularly from Flintshire and Wrexham. This reflects the large numbers of people who move across the border for work, leisure, family, and access to services. These cross-border bus services should not be disadvantaged when they cross the border into Wales in a way that causes inadvertent change to the English part of the journey.

There appear to be some errors or inconsistencies in the materials that have been published. For example:

- In Prestatyn on the interactive map, the routes shown for the 11 and 35/36 services reflect the previous routing before these were swapped around. If these are being swapped back after franchising, this is not reflected in the proposed service changes section.
- Also for the same 11F service, the map site suggests a frequency of 1 minute intervals
- There is a very small Fflecsi area shown in Saltney Ferry on the map.

We would also encourage a review of the Fflecsi areas to allow cross-boundary movement for some services where the communities do not necessarily look to towns in their own local authority area, but to closer towns in a neighbouring authority area. Both franchising and regional working via the CJC should provide the opportunity to ensure that services reflect the journeys that people want to make and are not restricted by political boundaries.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to these proposals, and for the regional engagement to date. If you require any further information on the contents of this response, or to engage in further discussion, please contact Adam Graham, the Senior Transport Officer at Ambition North Wales on AdamGraham@uchelgaisgogledd.cymru

Yours sincerely,

Cllr David A Bithell
Strategic Transport Sub-Committee Chair

Appendix 2									
Scheme name	RTF 2026/27 allocation (£)	Actual spend on ledger in 2026/27	Funding committed in 2026/27	Estimated value[1] of works/ activities delivered in 2026/27 (£)	Key activities in period covered by report	Key activities planned next quarter (50 words max)	RTF 2026/27 forecast outturn (£)	Q1 RTF claim[3] (£)	Q2 RTF claim[3] (£)
Revenue- RTP Admin	£100,000.00	£26,206.83	£81,188.49	£100,000.00	Ongoing consultancy support for development of Year 2 RTF programme, and for monitoring work	Ongoing support to finalise proposed Year 2 programme for submission to Welsh Gov in Quarter 3. Increased focus on monitoring and evaluation to meet Welsh Gov requirements and our own governance processes.	£100,000.00	£19,694.27	£6,512.56
Capital- RTP Management & Monitoring	£370,000.00	£30,951.58	£152,649.38	£370,000.00	Transport Team recruitment- two new Transport	Retention of staff, allowing more resilience and a growing role for the CJC in regional working and supporting	£370,000.00	£0.00	£30,951.58

					Officers recruited in Q2, creating a team of three. Engagement with Walk Wheel Cycle Trust on Walking and Cycling Index involvement.	local authorities on RTF programme. Completion of procurement process for Walking Wheeling and Cycling Trust ahead of Walking and Cycling Index commencement. Full team recruitment- and better understanding of cost for that- will provide a clearer picture on available budget to progress any commitments register schemes from RTP			