**The Enterprise and Business Committee
Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport**

1. Introduction

BUS USERS UK, now in its 26th year, is an independent organisation dedicated to ensuring that the voice of the bus user is heard.

BUS USERS UK CYMRU receives funding from the Welsh Government and our structure is aimed at delivering agreed outcomes. The staff comprises:

- Senior Officer for Wales – part time

- Officer for Wales - full time

- Three Bus Compliance Officers – full time

- Administrative Assistant – part time

- Nine Local Representatives geographically spread across Wales - part time

2. Our key outputs include:

- Gathering and reflecting the views of bus passengers in Wales via bus user surgeries;

- Providing a contact point for bus user complaints in Wales and administering a follow-through process keeping a database record of case history and responses;

- Providing a bus punctuality, reliability and quality monitoring service;

- Acting as advisor on cases to the Bus Appeals Body;

- Providing advice to local authorities and bus operators to improve responses to passengers' views and to improve service delivery;

- Providing advice as required to the civil servants in the Welsh Government and Ministers on strategic and technical matters;

- Representing bus users on a range of representative bodies such as the Regional Transport Consortia, Traveline Cymru, Age Cymru, Passenger Focus and at a number of local authority consultations.

Bus Users UK Cymru welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Enterprise and Business Committee on the issues surrounding Integrated Public Transport. Our comments will be based largely on what passengers tell us as well as our own findings.

Bus Users UK, PO Box 1045
Cardiff CF11 1JE
T 029 2022 1370
E wales@bususers.org
W www.bususers.org / www.bususerswales.org

3. Vision

Buses will be the clean, capacious, comfortable transport of choice for all, with friendly drivers, appropriate integrated fares, clear and up-to-date information, regular and reliable services and seamless transition to other forms of transport.

4. Mission

To champion the interests of bus users and campaign for better bus services

5. Values

- Inclusion
- Excellence
- Bus user-led
- Partnership-oriented
- Building relationships
- Cooperating with bus companies, government and other agencies

6. Key interests and concerns - What is integration?

Integration means different things to different sections of society:

- For some it means frequent services, easily interchangeable between modes, (bus, rail, taxi, airport) and involving minimal walking.

- For a hospital outpatient it means being able to get a bus that will get him or her to the appointment. With ever increasing centralisation of services this is becoming more of an issue every day.

- For an elderly person it means being able to get out of the home to shops, doctor's surgery or to visit friends.

- Recognising that people want to travel on Sundays and understanding that if residents do not have a Sunday service they won 't have a Bank Holiday service either thus leaving them stranded in their homes at Christmas, for example.

- Understanding that potential passengers who do not have access to the internet or ease of travel to the nearest station will pay the most expensive rail fares.

- Realising that if passengers have sensory impairments, audio visual announcements are essential, rather than a nuisance.

- In deeply rural areas it means being able to use one mode of transport to link into another for longer journeys e.g. demand responsive and community transport linking into longer distance bus services.

- Being able to buy one ticket at the beginning of the journey that will cover the whole journey (end-to-end).

- All operators accepting other operators' tickets and bus operators being able to work together to provide inter-availability of tickets.

- A smartcard which will allow travel on all modes (e.g. an *All Wales Entitlement Card*).

- Radial services linking suburbs to each other as well as suburbs into the centre.

- Safe, comfortable and effective interchanges where passengers can change mode of travel in enclosed areas that provide coordinated timetables to provide a seamless journey.

- A common standard across Wales for the provision of full, understandable and coordinated timetable information. Many people cannot read timetables so this must be borne in mind, as should passengers and potential passengers with sensory impairments.

- Effective marketing and communication of travel information. Timetables need to be understandable, available through a variety of means (paper, downloadable, website, mobile phone app) and with the potential to be customised to the specific journey being planned by the customer.

- Awareness of Traveline.

- Large transport organisations, which operate both bus and rail, would talk to each other and work together.

- Being able to buy rail tickets with a bus 'add on' (PlusBus) AND a bus ticket with a rail 'add-on'.

- Integration means that where possible all bus services should pass through a central bus station especially where the bus station is adjacent to a rail station.

- Recognition that bus lanes and other bus priority measures have an important part to play in the faster movement of people, rather than being regarded as a nuisance to car users.

- Land use planning to enable public transport provision at the first stages of, say, a housing estate or enterprise zone. If potential residents or tenants cannot see any bus service provision they will make the decision to travel by car and once that decision is made there is very little that can be done to persuade them out of the car.

Most operators need to protect their markets and deliver a profit but when their margins are squeezed the pressure will fall on the local authorities to plug gaps. All transport providers will need to be imaginative if they want to maintain their networks and provide integration.

Our continuing theme is that the policies of central and local government cannot properly be delivered without integrated public transport. The economy, education, health, social inclusion and environment policies all depend upon the timely and seamless movement of people.

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Terms of reference

How well is Welsh public transport integrated, particularly in relation to bus, rail and community transport services, and what factors limit integration?

> Public transport integration is limited in Wales but there are excellent examples to be found. However there are factors which limit integration.

> While it is easy to provide integration in urban environments, it is more difficult to exploit opportunities in rural areas because the call on resources is greater.

> There are significant time issues when travelling from north to south or south to the west coast. The redeveloped TrawsCymru network will make a significant contribution to linking these communities both to each other and to the rest of Wales and beyond.

> Insufficient provision of secure park and ride/park and share locations. There are several examples of informal sites on key interchanges, for example the A4119 adjacent to the M4. That would be a good opportunity for a local authority to provide something more permanent than a layby and an enterprising bus operator could start a service from those locations.

> The reduction in resources is having an impact and some fares have been revised upwards already. Most operators need to protect their markets and deliver a profits and when their margins are squeezed the pressure will fall on the local authorities to plug gaps.

> The seeming inability of large transport organisations, which operate both bus and rail, talking to each other and working together.

> The inability or unwillingness of operators to accept other operators' tickets and achieve inter-availability of tickets is a barrier to integration.

How successful are legal, policy and administrative / delivery arrangements in Wales in supporting effective, integrated public transport services that meet the needs of Welsh travellers?

> There are a number of transport policy documents developed by the Welsh Government which provide support including the National Transport Strategy, National Transport Plan and Regional Transport Plans.

> The success of these plans and strategies depends upon the skills and expertise of the various RTCs and the resources for delivery at RTC and LA level.

What steps can be taken to improve public transport integration in Wales?

> Integration will only be effective when everyone in Wales has access to a bus or train and can connect to a bus or train service within a reasonable timeframe and at a reasonable cost. People live in different locations with different available travel options and in many cases may not be able to have the same level of integration as others. People who live in urban areas will probably be more critical and demand a

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higher level of service and travel options than those in rural areas. We think that improved integration will depend upon political aspiration linked with sufficient and ongoing available finance.

Key Issues

How can the integration of rail, bus and community transport services in Wales be supported and improved to meet the needs of communities and businesses in both rural and urban Wales?

Working together, transport providers and local authorities should develop networks to serve communities and businesses. Travel Plans should be developed for every business and no commercial enterprise zone should be developed until the public transport provision is agreed with local operators.

Across Wales currently there is very little provision of real time public transport information. There are examples in, say, Cardiff but it could be argued that the rural areas need it more than a city or town where higher frequencies of services are enjoyed.

Too many so-called RTI systems just tell you what it is in the timetable, and the expected time of arrival can come and go without the appearance of a bus. That this does not tell the traveller is whether the bus or train they are awaiting will actually arrive or was it cancelled.

The development of an All Wales Public Transport Entitlement Card is a big step in the right direction and at the time of writing Cardiff Bus and Newport Bus have developed a smartcard and another smartcard is being trialled in the Newport area. An operator in North Wales has developed m-ticketing.

How successful are Regional Transport Consortia in supporting the provision of effective, integrated public transport?

Regional consortia are probably best suited to implementing Integrated Public Transport plans because they can deliver improvements across their local authority boundaries.

Again, the success of the RTCs depends upon the skills and expertise of the staff and the available resources for delivery. The RTCs have capital resources available but the ongoing maintenance relies upon revenue expenditure and it is this activity which is at risk.

How effectively does Welsh Government policy support public transport integration? In particular, the Welsh Government is considering the establishment of Joint Transport Authorities in Wales, and the feasibility of operating the Wales and Borders rail franchise on a not-for-dividend basis. Additionally, the Minister for Local Government and Communities has indicated that he is considering the use of quality partnerships and contracts in delivery of bus services. How far would these proposals improve integrated public transport provision in Wales?

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A Joint Transport Authority might just impose another layer of management without achieving an integrated policy and we are not clear how it would differ from the composition of the existing transport consortia.

Local authorities have the power to "make" a Statutory Quality Partnership and these are an effective method of driving up standards. There are examples of these in north Wales and others are being developed for other networks.

What innovative approaches to delivery of public transport in Wales might be considered to improve integration?

- Maps at bus stations
- Full bus and rail timetable information at adjacent bus and railway stations
- Greater promotion of area/tourist tickets
- Greater bus and rail ticket inter-availability
- A legal requirement to put a destination display on the front of buses
- RTCs to require all operators to participate in area-wide multi-operator ticketing
- Audio visual information inside vehicles

How effectively do key stakeholders, particularly transport operators and public bodies, cooperate to ensure effective service delivery?

Competition rules dictate that transport operators are not able to talk to each other particularly when trying to develop a common fare and ticketing policy or indeed, connecting services.

When local authorities put socially desirable services out to tender we suspect they often select the lowest cost tender instead of building in quality standards. We have examples of dirty buses, scruffy drivers and a lack of destination information.

We suspect that financial pressures can override the ability and willingness of operators to cooperate and when bus operators put together a network that is commercially based, this can be thrown into disarray for economic reasons. At such times Head Office will have more influence over the plans than a local authority and/or the passengers who have been inconvenienced.

How can the creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route support effective, integrated public transport in Wales?

Greater focus on Wales, and so not competing with other regions of the UK, which may have higher passenger flows and therefore more 'clout' within an organisation. Should enable WG to provide appropriate infrastructure but won't influence services provided.

What examples of good practice in public transport integration can be identified within Wales, more widely within the UK and internationally?

Public transport integration is limited in Wales but there are excellent examples to be found.

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There are various community transport initiatives taking place in the Pembrokeshire area such as *Bws Y Bobol* and *Country Cars*, as well as various Town Rider operations.

Grass Routes operates in Monmouthshire.

Bwcabus operates in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion and links small communities to the main bus routes.

Cardiff

Wales' capital city has the basis of excellent rail/bus/taxi/cycle/walking integration but the current poor state of the central bus station does not give a good perception of passenger arrivals into Cardiff. It is to be hoped that planning on a new Interchange will commence soon. There are three park and ride services but not all are open every day.

Newport

The train station is a good example of upgrading but the chance to turn it into a real interchange was lost. There are plans to refurbish the bus station and improve Market Square .

Swansea

The park and ride provision is good and the metro is successful, but there is poor integration of rail and bus service. Both the bus station and the railway station have been extensively upgraded but they are some distance apart and the provision of information could benefit from improvement.

Caerphilly

This has good signage with the bus station adjacent to the rail services.

Bargoed

This has very good integration with the railway station, with rail information at the bus station but not such good integration with the town itself

Carmarthen

There are several bus services connecting the railway station to the town and beyond.

Rhyl

Rhyl has a new bus/rail interchange.

Aberystwyth

This bus station has been redeveloped and is adjacent to the rail station.

Brecon

Brecon Bus Station has waiting facilities and is close to the town. New public conveniences have been built.