Enterprise and Business Committee inquiry into Integrated Public Transport

**Evidence from the Chartered Institute of Logistics and
Transport (UK) Cymru Wales**

Executive Summary

- The level of provision of Integrate Public Transport services in Wales is mixed.
- There are different requirements for rural and urban services.
- Key elements include integrated ticketing, effective interchange points, coordinated timetables and effective marketing.
- There is policy support but funding is more challenging in the current environment.
- It is important that Integrated Public Transport schemes do not conflict with logistics operations.

1. **Introduction**

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) Cymru Wales welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Enterprise and Business Committee on the issues surrounding Integrated Public Transport. As the preeminent professional Institution for those in the transport industry, our members are well placed to provide informed commentary on the issues affecting Wales.

In addressing this, we first consider what the concept of Integrated Public Transport means in a Welsh context. From this, key elements for the delivery of such services are considered, as well as the surrounding policy environment. Although the Committee's main focus is on passenger transport, there are also issues we would like to raise in relation to the interaction with freight and logistics operations. Finally, we consider some of the specific questions raised within the terms of reference.

2. **Integrated Public Transport in Wales**

Within Wales, we would consider that the concept of 'Integrated Public Transport' varies between different operational environments. In rural parts of Wales, the focus would be on journeys to major centres or market towns to access services etc. that are not available more locally (e.g. shops, hospitals). Therefore, integration may be related to local bus journeys connecting with strategic corridor s services. In the more urban environments (e.g. South East Wales, Swansea By and North East Wales), there are multiple nodes which attract passengers, and therefore journey patterns become more complex. The consequence is that a greater variety of services are required, possibly involving different transport modes.

The extent to which these concepts exist within Wales is mixed. In the rural setting, there are examples where some integration is taking place, but this is often in a localised context. For instance, the Bwcabus service in Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion enables rural communities to connect onto longer distance bus services where matters such as inter-availability and through ticketing are available for customers, as local operators that are based in the community are responsive to local authority interventions. In urban areas, challenges exist because of the range of different operators providing bus and rail services, with often limited cross-ticketing and little/no timetable coordination. For instance, local journeys within Cardiff can be made on nine different bus and rail operators. While urban environments are often well suited to Integrated Public Transport solutions, such opportunities are not currently being exploited within Wales as commercial operators seek to protect their market.

3. Requirements for its delivery

Given the above situation, the question therefore arises as to what the requirements might be to achieve Integrated Public Transport in Wales. While not intended to be a comprehensive list, our members believe these to be the key aspects.

a. Integrated ticketing

A key element for Integrated Public Transport is to provide end-to-end journeys for customers across all operators within a mode and ideally across all modes. In doing so, this should be achieved using one ticket. The benefits of such an approach can be seen elsewhere. For example, Booz & Co (2009) study seventeen different examples of integrated ticketing schemes and find that passenger numbers increased by 6% to 20%[1].

The situation in Wales in relation to integrated ticketing is complex. Many of the larger bus operators offer 'network' tickets that allow unlimited travel on their buses within a pre-defined area. These may be offered as an additional product (e.g. Stagecoach Megarider) or instead of a return ticket (e.g. Cardiff Bus' Day to Go ticket or the West Wales Rover ticket). However, the transferability of these to other transport providers is limited.

For rail-bus integration, probably the best example is the Plus Bus ticket, which gives unlimited bus travel within a set area around the arrival and departure stations. However, the tickets are only sold by rail operators. For passengers travelling to the station, they therefore need to purchase the ticket in advance and have it delivered to them. Another example is the integration between Arriva Trains Wales and Lloyd's Coaches on the Aberystwyth to Machynlleth route, where the return tickets are interchangeable between the two operators. By contrast, the recent introduction of a £1 charge on the Cardiff Airport bus link from Rhoose station, which is only payable on the bus, is an example of where through ticketing would avoid surprises for the unsuspecting passenger.

Going forwards, modern ticketing technology such as smartcards and mobile ticketing would facilitate integrated ticketing options. It is worth noting that several operators already have ITSO

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[1] Booz & Co (2009) The Benefits of Simplified and Integrated Ticketing in Public Transport, report for the Public Transport Executive Group, http://www.pteg.net/NR/rdonlyres/EACFCEE0-F212-467F-B342-2B9B9538DEED/0/integratedticketingreport221009.pdf

compatible cards and therefore, in theory at least, these cards should be able to share back office technology and enable integrated ticketing.

b. Effective interchange points

Another key aspect of Integrated Public Transport is to have effective interchange points. Again, this needs to be reflective of the types of services being catered for. Within towns and cities, the bus station often provides a focal point and therefore needs to be welcoming and safe for customers, as well as enabling effective interchange between services. The quality of bus stations throughout Wales is mixed, both in terms of quality and facilities offered.

However, many journeys require transfers outside of the city centre. Therefore, at key locations it is important that, for example, passengers are not kept at a windswept bus stop with outdated timetable information, but have shelters and information systems. These shelters may be enclosed, and may also include other facilities such as vending machines. As an example, Cape Town has installed a Bus Rapid Transit network where the express buses stop at what are effectively enclosed stations. This provides a safe environment for passengers to wait for their connecting services.

Similarly, there should be a minimum expectation of facilities at railway stations, depending upon the size and passenger throughput of the station. Convenience is also required to enable passengers to connect between bus and rail services. In Cardiff, the introduction of the Bus Box has reduced the ease of connection between bus and rail to many routes, particularly to the East of the City.

Finally, while the above particularly focuses on bus/bus and bus/rail connections, it is also important to encourage people to walk or cycle to the interchange point. This may be through providing safe walking routes or cycle storage racks/lockers. It is also important to develop secure park and share sites for cars to connect with the bus / coach at key strategic points on networks. For example, there is evidence that car users are parking at key interchanges on routes such as the M4 and A55 to car share for part of the journey into towns and cities. This could be an opportunity for buses to exploit if effectively developed and marketed.

c. Coordinated timetables

In the context of Integrated Public Transport, it is important that timetables are coordinated to provide a seamless journey. This is less important where routes operate to a relatively high frequency (e.g. every 10/15 minutes). With infrequent services, it is essential that these are effectively timetabled and, where appropriate, guaranteed connections should be maintained to give customers confidence.

A number of the examples given above (e.g. Bwcabus, Cardiff Airport link) already offer these timetable connections. Both of these services are supported by either or both local or national government, and therefore these connections are specified within the contract with the provider. Indeed, there is a requirement for the Demand Responsive element of Bwcabus schedules journeys to connect with the corridor services. Where government is not involved, then there may need to be coordination between operators. This is more challenging, especially when allocating responsibilities when things go wrong.

d. Effective marketing and communication

Finally, we believe that it is essential that Integrated Public Transport needs to be supported by an effective marketing strategy and clear communication. The former is particularly important in attracting customers to the network. As well as branding issues, consideration also needs to be given to the product offered. For example, a simple fares structure is more likely to attract passengers. Such a strategy has been pursued in cities like Newport, where all journeys within the city cost the same. This approach has also been adopted successfully elsewhere in the UK, for example in Brighton. Documents such as 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. It is also important for services to be marketed effectively, to demonstrate relative competitiveness with the cost of a car journey. For example Carmarthenshire provide information on the cost per mile of a car journey compared to the cost per mile of a fare on public transport routes. Such an approach encourages modal shift.

Communication needs to continue throughout the whole journey. This may be providing accurate information on service reliability, either across the Internet or using bus stop/station technology. Similarly, where there are delays, it needs to be easy for customers to recalculate the route they need to take.

In summary, the above points represent a starting point for developing an effective Integrated Public Transport Network. However, policy makers also have a role to play, and this is something we discuss in more detail now.

4. Policy support and its success

On paper at least, national and regional government have provided support through the various policy documents produced on transport. This includes the Wales Transport Strategy, National Transport Plan and Regional Transport Plans. Having the regional consortia is probably more conducive to implementing Integrated Public Transport. They can take a view beyond local government boundaries and therefore reflect the travelling patterns of a region more effectively. Advanced versions of developing a vision for a region can be seen with the Cardiff Metro concept developed initially by Cardiff Business Partnership. It must also be recognised that one size will not fit all especially in rural areas where a high level of support is required to deliver basis services for communities, here local knowledge and expertise is required to maximise return on investment. Typically in excess of seventy per cent of bus services require a subsidy to provide key services in rural communities.

Underpinning all of these documents is a desire to move towards an Integrated Public Transport system. However, as demonstrated above, many of these initiatives in Wales are currently extremely limited in scope, both in terms of the number of schemes and their geographical scope. It should be acknowledged that this will take time, particularly given the current economic climate with the funding available being cut significantly. Developing an Integrated Public Transport system does require significant public investment in both financial terms and in the skills sets and capacity of all the organisations involved in the planning, management and delivery of Integrated Public Transport.

One issue that needs consideration is not only Integrated Public Transport within Wales, but also for cross-border services. This is perhaps particularly important in North-East Wales, where many people commute into the Liverpool metropolitan area and Manchester. Similarly, Shrewsbury is an

important centre for many communities in mid-Wales. In South East Wales, there are sizeable flows of people to and from Bristol, yet most public transport services cover major centres only.

5. Integrated Public Transport and freight logistics

Finally, we would like to raise the issue of the relationship between Integrated Public Transport and freight logistics. Our concern is that, in focusing on public transport, the implications for freight are often forgotten. As an example, the first draft of the Sewta Regional Transport Plan contained no mention of freight, despite this region being the largest generators of freight in Wales, and one of the biggest rail freight areas in the UK.

Integrated Public Transport often leads to investment to improve the quality of services. For buses, this may be the introduction of bus lanes or innovative demand responsive services and other bus priority measures. The downside to this is that these are often coupled with parking restrictions, with the consequence that logistics operators are either restricted on when they can unload, reducing their operational efficiency, or facing penalties for stopping even if no alternative exists. With rail, more frequent services take paths that could be used by freight trains instead. Some evidence for this can be seen on Valley Lines services, where there are some gaps in services to permit coal trains to run to Hirwaun and Cwmbargoed. The Welsh Government should ensure that in their relationship with Network Rail they support the freight sector by ensuring the appropriate number of freight paths are protected. Overall, if the Welsh Government is to support Integrated Public Transport, we would suggest that policy makers are not blind to the impacts on logistics.

6. Responses to specific queries

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?

The organisational structures for policy, rail and bus services will not in themselves improve Integrated Public Transport provision in Wales. Ultimately it is the combination of skills, resources, collaboration, an effective strategy and appropriate regulatory framework which will improve Integrated Public Transport provision.

The outcome of the Government decision to empower the Regional Transport Consortia to manage Local Transport Services Grants and Bus Services Operator Grants will demonstrate whether or not the current voluntary arrangements have the potential to improve Integrated Public Transport provision in Wales. It may still require further regulatory changes which could be proposed by the Silk Commission in the 2nd part of its investigation. The establishment of Joint Transport Authorities or, in the case of the South East, some form of combined authority as Greater Manchester has already established and may be established shortly in West Yorkshire.

Setting up the Wales and Borders franchise on a not-for-dividend basis might give Welsh Government more control but, unless the services specified by the government are contained within a wider Integrated Transport strategy, at both a national and regional level, then there will be no benefit. Likewise, quality partnerships and contracts for bus services could also encourage

Integrated Public Transport, but needs to be part of a wider, long term strategy that is effectively resourced, both financially and with appropriately skilled people.

How can the creation of a Network Rail Wales devolved route support effective, Integrated Public Transport in Wales?

The new devolved route with create a greater focus on Wales, and so Welsh issues are not competing with other regions of the UK, which may have higher passenger flows and therefore more 'clout' within Network Rail. This should enable the Welsh Government to provide appropriate infrastructure for the aspired services, but as Network Rail does not operate the trains, there will not be a direct influence on the services provided.

What are the implications of the England and Wales High Level Output Specification and Statement of Funds Available for Control Period 5, published by the UK Government, for the development of integrated rail services in Wales?

These documents provide a good opportunity, particularly in South Wales, for investment and development in the Welsh rail network. Electrification will give opportunities for improved and more frequent rail services. This will help increase passenger numbers. Developing Integrated Public Transport solutions around this change is a significant opportunity and one that the Welsh Government needs to urgently take a leadership role with.

7. Conclusion

Our evidence shows that there is a long way to go to achieve effective Integrated Public Transport within Wales. However, there are signs that small initiatives within Wales are being successful, and that plans developed by policy makers could extend this throughout the whole country. However, such initiatives will require significant investment, not just in physical assets but also in developing appropriate operating mechanisms and finding people with the right skills to enable effective implementation.