

Notes from EIS Stakeholders event 1 May 2019 – Key Themes

Participants included representatives of the following:

Age Cymru, Association of Transport Coordinating Officers, Bridgend Community Transport, Bus and Coach Association, Campaign for Better Transport, Cardiff Council Licensing, Cardiff Hackney Alliance, Community Transport Association, Confederation of Passenger Transport, Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, Disability Wales, Dragon Taxis/Veezu, Future Generations Commissioner, GMB, Licensed Private Hire Association, Newtown Dial-A-Ride, Older Persons Commissioner, Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Operators, Stagecoach, Sustrans, Taxi drivers of Cardiff, Traveline Cymru, TAS Partnership, The Law Commission, Transport Focus, Unite the Union, Welsh Local Government Association.

White Paper Proposals for Bus Services and Concessionary Fares

- The White Paper contained some useful ideas but was not strong enough on the overall vision and did not resolve the balance between running bus services for profit and funding quality service provision for everyone.
- Providing local authorities with legal tools will not be enough to resolve the problems with the transport network.
- Consensus was generally in favour of introducing Enhanced Quality Partnerships. These could be important for bringing in community transport providers.
- The priority is for a transport system focused on passenger needs and customer experience, including customer focus of drivers, benefits of wi-fi. Experience of young people in particular must be understood and their concerns addressed. An independent passenger representative body with a strong voice is needed.
- Tackling congestion at peak times is vital and this must include providing better services outside peak times – to prevent people using their car as the only alternative to get to/from work.
- Lack of expertise in local authorities to deal with the bus franchises.
- Services have been drastically cut at local authority level and lack of funding is a fundamental issue which the proposals do not address. Larger

operators can 'cherry pick' profitable routes while smaller operators are left to bid for the least profitable. Many routes are being lost – the effect of insufficient funding on services in North Wales has been dramatic – and the impact on passengers is severe. A national investment strategy is called for.

- Significant disparities in pay and conditions of bus drivers vs train drivers, and between smaller and larger operators, must be recognised as a factor. Recruitment and turnover is an issue – some routes do not operate due to lack of drivers.
- CPT considered increasing the eligibility age for bus concessionary fares a good idea. However an impact assessment of the change would be needed.
- Timescales – legislating on these issues can take a long time to reach implementation – there is a long way to go.
- Great disappointment that Community Transport is missing from the proposals. Good community transport is vital for health and wellbeing and to address isolation.
- Weighting of criteria within a franchise model was critical – if 80% of weighting is put on price there is then a danger of a race to the bottom and we cannot afford for that to happen in Wales if we want quality transport services.

Proposals for Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

- Agreement that there should be consistent national standards – no wriggle room – and a national register to share data.
- Safeguarding, and the safety of drivers were important issues. Again national standards/a coordinated approach could be applied to addressing this in licensing, training and applying safety measures such as the use of CCTV and other technology.
- There is a lack of access to taxis for disabled people outside Cardiff. Accessibility is a key issue but not mentioned in the White Paper at all. The possibility of placing accessibility requirements on PSV operators over a certain size was raised.
- Local authority representatives suggested enforcement should remain local to take advantage of local knowledge.
- There was discussion of pollution and the financial impact of the introduction of Euro VI (lower polluting engines) on drivers.

- There are too many taxis in Cardiff, not enough space on ranks and drivers are struggling to make minimum wage. Cross-border working is a huge issue (drivers from outside Cardiff working in the city). Could it be enforced to ensure that e.g. Newport drivers have to start or finish every journey in Newport? Different fees, standards and tests between licensing authorities was a factor.
- Rural issues must be reflected and understood in developing proposals. For example, cross border working may be essential in rural areas due to under-supply of drivers.
- Taxi Drivers of Cardiff called for a cap on PHV drivers as in Glasgow. Local Government highlighted that Scottish legislation is different, but it was noted that the proposed Welsh legislation could be an opportunity to change that. Uber did not support the cap proposal and suggested that it would limit moves to a “world of shared vehicles” which might reduce private car ownership and have benefits. Uber also challenged the methodology used in Glasgow, for example suggesting that the survey used focused on areas where there was good supply of PHV, didn’t look at unmet demand and there was no opportunity to challenge the decision.

White Paper proposals for Joint Transport Authorities

- There is insufficient information in the White Paper to understand the reasoning for JTAs in relation to both taxis/PHVs and bus services – far more clarity is needed, in particular to understand the benefits of the proposals.
- For taxis/PHV’s some stressed how important it was that local authority borders remain – a pure national system could see even more over supply in urban areas like Cardiff. A lot more detail on the proposals is needed.
- In the absence of detail people might default to the Option B of having national standards for taxis/PHVs but keeping responsibility for taxis/PHVs with local authorities, but it was suggested it might be possible to have an ‘Option C’ with a mix of national and local while retaining local borders. Taxi Drivers of Cardiff suggested JTAs should be purely administrative, managing standards, enforcement and data etc., but with local borders retained.
- The proposals do not adequately reflect the voice of bus and rail passengers. The removal of regional transport consortia and the passenger

advisory panel as a forum for views were concerns in that regard. It is also of great concern that community transport is missing from the proposals, although many of the goals expressed in the White Paper could be addressed by community transport.

- There must be far greater understanding of what is stopping people from using public transport, research is needed as well as engagement with non-transport users. Proposals must reflect societal change in how people live, work and travel.
- If there are strong national standards and shared information, then it was asked, do we still need a national JTA?
- There is a danger that a national JTA body won't understand or reflect local issues – it is vital that local knowledge is used at regional JTA level, and businesses must be fully involved.
- The JTAs must also recognise rural issues as distinct from urban issues and have someone who specifically represents the needs of rural areas.
- Things that can usefully be done at national JTA level include:
 - Service planning and coordination
 - Real-time passenger information
 - Setting and policing national standards
 - Procurement of better transport infrastructure e.g. bus stops, raised kerbs etc
 - Concessionary fares
 - Data provision for operators and passengers, including performance data
 - Integrated ticketing and coordinating multi-modal travel on an integrated network
 - Coordinating introduction of new modes into the network, e.g. self-drive vehicles
- There is a lack of clarity about the board/body that will oversee the JTAs and also how Transport for Wales fits within the JTA model. Also, would the regional and national JTA's end up getting in the way of each other?
- Land-use planning is missing from the proposals and is vital.
- Regional rail is also missing. For example in South-East Wales the Valley Lines must be part of working towards an integrated network. Unless bus and rail travel can be joined up there is no point to the proposals.
- The level of technical expertise in the JTAs is crucial. It will be helpful to larger operators operating across 7 local authority areas to only have one

person to deal with, but it must be the right person.

- The remit and role of the Traffic Commissioner regarding licensing must be considered as part of developing the proposals.
