

**Transport Committee**

**18 July 2019**

Present: Councillors L Robinson, Chair, G Friel, Deputy Chair, P Cleary, J Dodd, S Foulkes, P Hayes, H Howard, A Jones, N Killen, A Lavelle, M O'Mara OBE, K McGlashan, P McKinley, L Mooney, P Pritchard, J Stockton, H Thompson, M Uddin, J Wiseman and F Wynn

14. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nathalie Nicholas, Ged Philbin and Jerry Williams.

15. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

16. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting of the Transport Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019, be approved as a correct record.

**Matters Arising**

**Minute No. 7 – Cycle of Meetings and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Lead Members 2019/20**

The Chair, Councillor Robinson invited the Committee to nominate opposition members to the outstanding positions on the Outside Bodies.

**Resolved** that the Transport Committee appoints the following opposition members to the appropriate Outside Bodies: -

- The Beatles Story Board (Observer) – Councillor Frances Wynn
- Mersey Ferries (Observer) – Councillor Christopher Rowe
- Travelsafe Board – Councillor Allan Jones
- Opposition Spokesperson – Councillor John Dodd

17. **Presentation - Transport for Wales**

The Committee received a presentation from Lee Robinson, the Development Director for North Wales in relation to Transport for Wales.

Members raised the following: –

Councillor Steve Foulkes enquired about ways to improve the working relationship between the City Region and Transport for Wales (TfW) and whether there was any money available from the £40m identified to improve stations between Bidston and Wrexham e.g. Heswall and Upton which were in poor condition.

Lee Robinson informed the Committee that a steering group had already been established working on cross border connectivity with a view to setting a vision for the work that will be identified in the outline business case which is already in progress. Some of the money will be invested in stations, following a recent audit that was conducted by an external party on all stations showing improvements to lighting, cycle storage, CCTV, branding and painting etc.

Councillor Ken McGlashan enquired about the vision and mechanism that would be used to work more closely together with the newly established business unit in Wrexham and the City Region and whether or not consideration would be given to working with the City Region and its train suppliers to have similar trains across the border given the issues experienced by Transport for Wales with its supplier.

Lee Robinson stated that there was well-established relationships already at senior and operational level and he was happy with the communication and dialogue at the moment and would be happy to share procurement channels in relation to the rolling stock.

Councillor John Stockton enquired about the Halton Curve services and how it would be marketed in the future to encourage travel across the region and also how it would link with the John Lennon Airport.

Lee Robinson stated that he had already met with the rail partnership officer and discussed a detailed plan to market the link and that meetings have already taken place with the airport and discussions were underway in relation to ticketing, pricing and flights.

Councillor John Wiseman stated that Newton Le Willows was a key location for growth within the St Helens area and for the journey between Manchester and Llandudno and wanted to know if there were any further plans to improve the service.

Lee Robinson stated that there are no additional plans other than what has been referred to in the presentation and is limited by the network currently.

TfW are aware of the issues to increase the connectivity services and to make it more efficient right through to Manchester airport.

Councillor Nina Killen commented that it was positive and encouraging to hear about the increase in Sunday services and enquired about whether it was across the whole network, or just the links between Wales and City Region and if any consideration had been given to peak seasons e.g. Christmas.

Lee Robinson informed the Committee that it was across the whole network and TfW was aware of seasonal issues having responded to Chester Races and the Christmas season with the increase in patronage.

Councillor Gordon Friel enquired about the issues with the bottleneck to Chester for services involving Liverpool, and any plans to address it. He also asked about the lack of connectivity with timetables between London to City Region e.g. first train to airport, do not match with the TfW trains which run later.

Lee Robinson commented that there is work already being undertaken with partners including Chester West and Merseytravel to address the Chester City Gateway to relieve the bottleneck with suggestions submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT). He also stated that they rely on working with the train and bus operators across the board not just Wales to address the issues relating to the timetable.

Councillor Helen Thompson enquired about the accessibility arrangements with the new trains.

Lee Robinson stated that there was a DfT requirement by December 2019 to refurbish trains that are not accessible and to improve accessibility with new trains and rolling stock through “access for all funding” to also improve accessibility with stations.

Councillor Anthony Lavelle enquired about TfW plans for revenue protection.

Lee Robinson stated that there was advertising around ticket purchasing and installing automatic barriers and the deployment of officers along the network to check passenger tickets.

Councillor Pat Cleary enquired about the train improvements to include cycle storage and whether it would include station storage improvements as well for better cycling storage facilities.

Lee Robinson stated that it would include better cycle storage at stations.

Councillor Patrick McKinley enquired about smart ticketing and the “trials” and if it interfaced with the City Region and the wider north projects.

Lee Robinson stated that discussions were underway with TfN and the Liverpool City Region to establish a common ticketing process relating to using the same tickets across the borders, but this is still ongoing.

The Chair, Councillor Liam Robinson enquired about how important park and ride was on the rail network and how it could be improved to get people on the train earlier, rather than driving to destinations.

Lee Robinson stated that discussions were underway and it was about understanding what the journeys were and why people were doing it and addressing the barriers people face by not wanting to take the trains.

The Chair, Councillor Liam Robinson enquired about how TfW could ensure that processes were in place for delivery and avoid future fiascos.

Lee Robinson stated that it was all about detailed planning and working with relevant bodies e.g. DfT etc. to keep the dialogue and pressure going with those partners and working arrangements.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee notes the contents of the presentation and thanked Lee Robinson for his attendance and for answering the questions and congratulated him for the outstanding work that Transport for Wales were doing in being forward thinking and proactive.

## 18. **Quarterly Bus Update**

The Committee considered a report from Matt Goggins, Head of Bus relating to an update on key issues in the first quarter of 2019/20 between April to June 2019.

Matt Goggins highlighted the following: -

### **Bus Patronage**

- The target initially set was to grow by 10% over 4 years, but the target had been exceeded within 2 years and a new target had been set at 20%.
- Patronage has been built up with a 9% growth in fare paying patronage.
- Adult patronage for the first time has increased and is driving growth.

### **Bus Passenger Survey**

- The overall satisfaction was at 91%.
- Joint highest of any metropolitan area in satisfaction.
- There has been a 5% increase with satisfaction relating to value for money.
- There has been an increase in satisfaction relating to “waiting facilities”.
- Good levels of satisfaction relating to personal safety and security through practical measures and communicating those messages to passengers.

### **The Bus Alliance**

- Completed procurement for 5 green bus core routes, across four districts to improve reliability and punctuality of the network.
- 100% Bus Alliance operator buses are now fitted with contactless technology, soon to be 100% of all buses across the City Region.
- Completed independent evaluation relating to the “Better by Bus” campaign, with over 40% of people being aware of the campaign. It has been changing perceptions and influencing behaviours through key messages being communicated.
- The City Centre Bus Re-routing project was underway and there has been about 825 comments submitted via the web portal.
- The introduction of the second of the St Helens bus network reviews has been completed in April 2019.

### **Bus Reform Business Case**

Currently analysing the data submitted by bus operators to support the Business Case relating to the Bus Services Act 2017 devolution deal. The data relates to revenue and commercial costs provided by the bus operators who have been co-operating.

### **Other Updates**

- Ticket machine upgrade was not just about ticketing machines being installed, but it was also about real time tracking to improve reliability and punctuality and improve the accuracy of arrival times of the buses, this has been well received.
- New contracts embedded in Wirral relating to change of operators which has gone smoothly.
- Customer information improvements relating to information being displayed together with rail connectivity information has seen improvements.

Members raised the following concerns –

- Communities faced with operators changing routes on a regular basis e.g. 41, 22 and 41A which has been affecting connectivity to local hospitals for residents and communities feeling isolated with even more decreasing and more centralised NHS services to the main hospital.
- Many routes have been reduced or Sunday Services taken away, but information has been advertised on noticeboards for Sundays as a “Bank Holiday” service, but if there is no Sunday services, how can there be a Bank Holiday Service.
- Arriva has agreed a trial run for 6 months for the 492 and 495 buses that starts in September, but no one knows about this as there has been no advertising for this trial service for the route to be used.
- The 10A bus has been diverted to Liverpool One bus station via Lewis’, why?
- The 47 bus route has been proposed to be taken away by Arriva which affects the Ince Blundell area directly, the Councillor had

spoken to Arriva who have said that they don't take into account the impact on communities when reviewing bus routes, as it is all about the business case.

- Has any analysis been done relating to Carbon reduction and the mobile shift from cars to buses.
- 141 bus, issue of not running regularly with a gap of 6 weeks for elderly people prior to the new services being introduced from September 2019.
- A number of services have been cut back e.g. 137, 138 being reduced to Whiston Hospital which people use to access hospitals, getting to and from work and the crematorium, need to hold the bus service operators to account.
- There was a half hour service from St Helens to Rainford previously which meant that every half hour 1 bus service goes through Eccleston which goes past the crematorium. With the bus services being cut back along the 137 and 138 route, it would leave 1 bus service every 2 hours to the crematorium from St Helens, which is unacceptable.
- Public services being delivered by private companies means that Merseytravel suffers the consequences as the public believe the bus services are run by Merseytravel, need to hold the operators to account.
- People worried about what happens when they get into town given all the bus re-routing work currently taking place in the City Centre especially on the 79 bus route e.g. getting to and from the business district, are there any shuttle buses.
- Is there any consideration by the bus companies relating to the lack of corporate social responsibility and whether or not they are taking it seriously. There should be an ethical procurement process in future when contracts are being negotiated to involve taking into account any social impact analysis and about the ethical levels of profit and what may be acceptable.
- Really good report with a front page that provides a good summary with all the relative information. It is appreciated that information is fed back relating to the surveys.
- Members expressed frustration in respect of the current model for the provision of bus services and looks forward to using the Bus Services Act 2017.

Councillor John Stockton the new Lead Member for Bus informed the Committee that he will provide feedback to the bus operators on the many issues and concerns raised relating to the social impact of removing bus routes.

Matt Goggins informed the Committee that –

- There was a lot of disruption happening in the City Centre relating to the City Centre Re-routing Strategy at the moment and services are

being diverted to keep them moving and to balance the network dynamic around the City Centre.

- Information has been communicated with the customers and additional staff have been deployed on Victoria Street and other areas during peak time to keep the network running as effectively as possible.
- His team were aware of the 47 bus route and the concerns raised and waiting on some positive news from the bus operator which will be shared with Councillors.
- No analysis had been completed in relation to 'social impacts', but will look into tracking it in the future.
- Procurement processes are ethical and will look into the suggestions being made regarding contracts and ethical pricing and the examples.
- There are a lot of complex issues with interpreting the legislation relating to the Bus Services Act 2017 as it has not been done before but things are on track and will provide updates to the Committee as it progresses.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson commented about real time information becoming reliable relating to bus arrivals, and in relation to climate emergency and 70% of the fleet already with low emission targets already being met and exceeding other sectors of the wider transport network. He also expressed his gratitude to Matt Goggins and the rest of the bus team for their continued hard work and the progress being made with discussions involving the bus operators and consultations. Insist upon consultation, few parts of the country have the consultations in advance, equally shows how hard the team work. Beholden to the decisions of the private company and we need a different approach and how we can use devolved powers and bring forward the recommendation early next year.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee: -

- a) notes the contents of the report; and
- b) an update be provided to the Committee at its next meeting relating to the issues and concerns raised by members of the Committee.

19. **Quarter 4 Merseytravel Corporate Plan Performance and Financial Monitoring Report 2018/19**

The Committee considered a report from Jason Roberts and Sarah Johnston relating to Quarter 4 of the Merseytravel Corporate Plan, Performance and Financial Monitoring Report 2018/19.

Sarah Johnston, Head of Finance took members through the Financial Monitoring Report.

Councillor Steve Foulkes, Lead Member for Finance and Organisational Development informed the Committee of the significant pressures from last year still remains, no resolutions for specific rail grants, main reason for overspend due to slippage on rolling stock and the capital slippage on Mersey tunnel. Very tight and difficult budget to deliver, it has been very well presented and thanked Sarah and her team for the work done.

Members raised the following concerns relating to –

- Merseyrail concessions; and
- Risk relating to the reserves.

John Fogarty informed the Committee that there was currently no mechanism in place to pass the reduction to Merseyrail, so it comes off Merseytravel “bottom” line, as a result the budget has made some reserves available to offset that concern. He also stated that Merseyrail were the owners of the network, platforms, signalling, depot construction of which Merseytravel has no control over the costs, but there is a risk attached as identified in the report.

The Chair Councillor Robinson informed the Committee that discussions were ongoing with operators relating to funding concessionary travel.

Jason Roberts explained the Corporate Plan and Performance report relating to the key performance indicators and the three key transport priorities.

Councillor Howard enquired about ticket barriers.

Jason Roberts informed the Committee that as part of the programme to install barriers at key locations across the whole transport network, it was the view that because of the staffing and boarding arrangements at the Mersey Ferries and in relation to ticket checks by staff, it was deemed that there was no requirement to install automatic ticket barriers at the Mersey Ferries locations.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee notes the contents of the report and requests further information as appropriate.

20. **Liverpool City Region Cycling and Walking to Work Fund Programme**

The Committee considered a report from John Smith, the Programme Development Officer that highlighted the key issues identified for consideration in any future funding programmes for the cycling and walking to work funding programme.

Members enquired about the following: -

- The need to recognise the big barriers are road traffic and the dangers by taking the tough measures for cyclists to get from A to B safely.
- How can the £40,000 for Walrus cards encourage walking and cycling for the programme.
- There seems to be a lack of co-ordination and communication between the 21 projects with just the £1m, how will it be co-ordinated effectively.
- Climate emergency being declared across the City Region so the projects to support cycling and walking is great to reduce the carbon footprint and improve healthy lifestyles and get value for money.
- There are references to the obvious health benefits to walking and cycling, but is any research being done related to the long term benefits.
- Need to be speaking to all the groups and needs to be integrated into what is on offer around the City Region.
- Encouraging people to get into alternative modes of transport, to reduce pollutants in the air, e.g. electric bikes and scooters etc. which could contribute to the wider impact.
- It is so much easier to get a bike on a train and on some routes it is easier to take a bus, but on other routes where you can use a bus to get around, but need to take a bus to get there, it is difficult to get bikes on the buses, it is something that could be looked into.

John Smith informed the Committee that the DfT have stated that the criteria for using the funding was specifically to cycling and walking. People have incorporated walking and cycling into their daily travel to get to their buses and trains and not driving to those sites as previously happened. In relation to the 21 projects, there are crossovers, so it is really about 8-9 main projects. However, it is noted that there is a lack of resource in the City Region and with our neighbouring partners in terms of a dedicated officer, but the evaluation highlights about the lack of central co-ordination which could assist future funding. The Liverpool City Region is involved in a project with Sustrans called Bike Life, which will address some of the issues raised relating to health benefits and a paper will be going to the Combined Authority be published in early March 2020, Government will soon be publishing a paper relating to Prevention Strategy which provides a link between preventable diseases and how it can be reduced and cycling and walking.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson stated that work is currently being done in the City Region to address the co-ordination issues and the resources is a small part of it, as there are other budget requirements, but 55km walking infrastructure being designed and delivered is a big step that can be delivered across the City Region network.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee notes the contents of the report.

21. **High Speed 2: Phase 2B Route Refinement Consultation**

The Committee considered a report from Tom Carbery seeking the Committee's endorsement in response to the HM Government's consultation on the proposed route refinements.

Tom Carbery highlighted the following: -

- Consultation involves 11 proposed design refinements;
- 2 new junctions in the High Legh are in Cheshire which could have future connections to Liverpool;
- Better outcome for HS2 services between London and Liverpool is also highlighted but is only possible if the new speed line between the proposed junctions and Liverpool City Centre is built;
- Being developed by Transport for the North and Northern Powerhouse Rail;
- Significant benefits to the economy including possibly 24,000 new jobs in the City Region;
- Additional 11,000 new homes to facilitate the growth in the economy;
- £3.6m visitor increase to the City Region;
- Look at what can be done to continue the direct services to Runcorn from London

Members enquired about the following: -

- agree with the report and the response relating to the Government consultation;
- some concern regarding the new Prime Minister's views on reviewing HS2; and
- potential second rail way age but underwritten by freight with investment.

Tom Carbery stated that as a City Region not much is being done to get freight onto rail, discussions are held relating to the potential sites. But it is all about the journey times and delivery, it is meant to be more efficient and carbon free in terms of emissions, but there are discussions at the moment ongoing to ensure those issues are taken on board.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson stated that it was a good report and response to the Government consultation, but the Committee should not lose sight of the length of time it has taken to get the HS2 into the route and the fact that the Liverpool junction has been included and that discussions continue with Government.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee endorses the content of the report and the consultation response

22. **Public Question Time**

The Committee received two questions from Mr Brace and two questions from Mr Wennell as follows: -

In the absence of Mr Brace, the following two questions were circulated to the Committee.

**Mr Brace**

**Question 1**

On Friday 12th July 2019, I planned to travel by train to collect documents from the building that the Transport Committee is being held in and the Merseyside Police HQ. However, the Wirral Line trains were all cancelled for a number of hours and passengers were directed over the tannoy to the front of the station to get a rail replacement bus. After waiting outside the station for about half an hour a rail replacement bus (provided by Arriva) hadn't arrived and on asking the station staff, they told me only a request had been made for a bus but they had not been told when one would arrive. On my return journey approximately two hours later, the network was running again and there was a rail replacement bus outside the station.

What are the requirements on Merseyrail in the franchise agreement with Merseyrail for periods of major disruption and is it Merseyrail's, Arriva's or a joint responsibility for rail replacement buses at times of major disruption?

**Question 2**

Thank you for your answer to my question to a previous meeting of the Transport Committee about vandalism of bus stops/shelters.

During the period of waiting for a rail replacement bus outlined in question 1, we both eventually gave up waiting after about half an hour and walked up to the main road to get a bus to Liverpool instead. However, the nearest bus shelter had no timetable information in it.

For those of us without mobile phones like myself, no timetable information at a bus stop or bus shelter with no electronic information display makes it hard to determine when the next bus is.

Why is there timetable information missing from many bus stops/shelters on Merseyside and whereas I realise each timetable has to be individually printed, when will more bus stops/shelters be showing the correct timetable information rather than none at all?

The Chair informed the Committee that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.

**Mr Wennell**

**Question 1**

On most trains they have at least 1 toilet on board. Yes, I know a lot of the trains that leave Liverpool are long distance and can take 1 - 2 hours to reach its final destination. On Merseyrail, most of the routes are short with journey times between 15 - 30 minutes but Hunts Cross - Southport takes 64 minutes & Liverpool Lime Street - Chester via Birkenhead takes 45 - 50 minutes. With these journey times of more than 30 minutes, why are there no toilet facilities on board?

**Question 2**

Everyday the Metro paper is out on board the buses, now some of these are left loose for you to pick up a copy. But on some buses they have a dedicated box to put them in which is fine, but it's secured down on some buses that have lack of luggage space on board. Where do they expect the passenger to put their luggage? Now on a few occasions I have had to leave my luggage under the seats behind the stairs. Other times I have put it where the Metro box is & it has fallen out. Where do they expect the passengers to put their luggage, is the Metro box actually needed?

The Chair thanked Mr Wennell for submitting his questions and informed the Committee that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.

23. **Petitions and Statements**

No petitions or statements were submitted for this meeting.

24. **Transport Committee Work Programme 2019/20**

The Committee notes the updates relating to the Work Programme for 2019/20.

25. **Any Other Urgent Business Approved by the Chair**

There was no urgent business.

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Chair of the Transport Committee

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Date