



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru The National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes The Enterprise and Business Committee

**Dydd Mercher, 21 Tachwedd 2012
Wednesday, 21 November 2012**

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Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o Weddill y
Cyfarfod
Motion Under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the
Remainder of the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**Committee members in attendance**

Byron Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Yr Arglwydd/Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Nick Ramsay	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
David Rees	Llafur Labour
Kenneth Skates	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol**Others in attendance**

David Beer	Swyddog Gweithredol Teithwyr, Passenger Focus UK Passenger Executive, Passenger Focus UK
Margaret Everson	Uwch Swyddog Cymru, Bus Users UK Cymru Senior Officer for Wales, Bus Users UK Cymru
David Sidebottom	Cyfarwyddwr Teithwyr, Passenger Focus UK Passenger Director, Passenger Focus UK
Stella Mair Thomas	Aelod o'r Bwrdd ar gyfer Cymru, Passenger Focus UK Board Member for Wales, Passenger Focus UK
Tudor Thomas	Cynrychiolydd De Cymru, Bus Users UK Cymru South Wales Representative, Bus Users UK Cymru
Lee Waters	Cyfarwyddwr Cenedlaethol, Sustrans Cymru National Director, Sustrans Cymru
Allan Williams	Cynghorwr Polisi, Sustrans Cymru Policy Advisor, Sustrans Cymru

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Kayleigh Driscoll	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Andrew Minnis	Ymchwilydd Researcher
Siân Phipps	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.34 a.m.

The meeting began at 9.34 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Nick Ramsay:** I welcome Members, witnesses and members of the public to today's meeting of the Enterprise and Business Committee. This meeting is bilingual and headphones can be used for simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1, or amplification

on channel 0. The meeting is being broadcast and a transcript will be published. Would people please turn off their mobile phones? There is no need to touch the microphones. In the event of a fire alarm, would everyone please follow the directions of the ushers?

[2] We have two apologies today, from Keith Davies and Julie James.

9.35 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Drafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport—Evidence Session

[3] **Nick Ramsay:** Today, we follow through with our inquiry into integrated public transport. This is the first formal evidence session of the inquiry. Last week, we held a stakeholder engagement event in Swansea, which provided a solid evidence base to inform the committee's inquiry.

[4] I welcome our witnesses. Thank you so much for being with us today. I know that the climatic conditions were not conducive to getting to Cardiff. Would you like to introduce yourselves and your position for the record?

[5] **Ms Everson:** Good morning. My name is Margaret Everson, and I am senior officer for Wales for Bus Users UK, which is a UK-wide organisation covering Scotland, England and Wales. In Wales, we are funded by the Welsh Government to provide a passenger support service. I work part-time. That is me.

[6] **Mr Thomas:** My name is Tudor Thomas. I am a representative and stakeholder liaison officer for Bus Users UK Cymru. My role generally is more related to dealing with bus users, monitoring services and travelling throughout Wales on all sorts of operated services.

[7] **Nick Ramsay:** Great. Thank you both for being here today. I propose that we go straight into questions because we have a number of areas where we would like to gather some more information. Byron Davies has the first question.

[8] **Byron Davies:** Good morning to you. My question is a general question to kick things off. I would like to know your opinion on the overall effectiveness of Welsh bus services in meeting the needs of travellers across Wales, particularly in terms of a comparison with the rest of Britain.

[9] **Ms Everson:** Do you mind if I consult notes as we go along? Thank you very much. We think that there is a reasonable match between supply and demand because commercial services try to maximise the resources at their disposal anyway. Nobody sets out to make a loss, so the commercial service operators largely maximise the services to the public. They will endeavour to grow demand by having imaginative routes, et cetera. The only thing that will restrain that is the cost of fuel and the cost of drivers. Overall, we think the services here are very good.

[10] They are very effective in urban areas, but maybe not so effective in rural areas. However, even in the urban areas where you would expect maximum travel opportunities, they still have no buses on a Sunday. Of course, it is not widely recognised that if passengers do not have a bus on a Sunday, they do not have a bus on a bank holiday either, so people can be imprisoned in their homes for three days in a row at Christmas, for example. Recently we have had double bank holidays, which mean that people are just abandoned in their own homes, which is a source of worry.

[11] We think that services in Wales compare reasonably well with services in England. Big operators such as Arriva, First and Stagecoach have operations in both countries, and we have no evidence that they give a poorer service in Wales than in England.

[12] **Byron Davies:** How closely do you work with the bus service operators? What sort of relationship do you have?

[13] **Ms Everson:** We monitor them. We have to be very careful that we are not seen to be at all in the pocket of any bus operator. We watch them, and they know that we are watching them, and we deal with complaints from passengers to bus operators. We work for the passenger to get a better service from bus operators, so although we have very good co-operation from bus operators, when we have complaints and problems and suggestions, we are not that close to them, if you understand what I am trying to say.

[14] **Mr Thomas:** You could say that we are critical. We have a very broad understanding of how people use bus services, because we travel and we are aware of lots of communities of different sizes right across Wales. We can act as a sounding board, and we sometimes try to improve the quality of services by suggesting to operators that they are perhaps not doing certain things quite right. However, we are not in a position to tell them. We try to influence them to improve their services.

[15] One aspect that you mentioned was the effectiveness of services. In Wales, we have the all-Wales concessionary fares scheme, which is available 24/7—every day, all day. That has allowed operators to provide a more level service than is the case in some English rural areas, where the concessionary fares start at 9.30 a.m., so why would they put on that bus at 8 a.m.? There have been cases where it has been reported that an hourly service will start at 9.25 a.m., with the next bus being at 10.25 a.m., disadvantaging the concessionary fare holder who is not able to get somewhere as soon as they would like. There are places in England, such as Dartmoor and the Lake District, where people need to travel equally long distances as people in Wales travelling from, say, Machynlleth to Newtown or wherever. Therefore, in some cases, you could say that the Welsh approach and strategy is slightly better for some of our communities that have less frequent services.

[16] **Byron Davies:** This is a nice question: how effective do you think you are? *[Laughter.]*

[17] **Ms Everson:** We must judge ourselves. We have had some considerable successes in getting changes in services. I would have to get back to you in writing, Chair, to give you specific examples, but I know that people have written to us—

[18] **Nick Ramsay:** You are far more modest than most witnesses.

[19] **Mr Thomas:** I think that that question is better aimed at the bus operators because they are the ones that we try to influence the most. If we have created waves, we have done it quietly with them because, at the end of the day, we know that the operator's good name is part of their marketing with their customers.

[20] **Ms Everson:** I suspect that we will be far more effective in measurable terms from now on because the Welsh Government has funded us to employ three bus compliance officers whose job it is to ride around on buses, carry out roadside monitoring, check the effectiveness of bus services, hold operators to account and report them to the traffic commissioner if they are not running their services according to the timetable.

[21] **David Rees:** Last week's stakeholder event was very informative for us. The issues of land use and the integration of public transport with development came out of that event. I

notice that you highlighted something that was mentioned last week, namely that developments seem to focus on car users more than anyone else. In that sense, how effective are the Welsh Government or local authorities in considering the integration of public transport policies with development and land-use policies, and perhaps even other areas, such as health and social services?

[22] **Ms Everson:** I think that local authorities already have the power under section 106 to enforce developers to think about public transport. I am not sure how much evidence there is of whether that is used, but there are certainly examples that I can think of: take Rhose point or eastern Cardiff as examples. In Rhose point, in south Wales, a major housing estate was built with no turning circle for a bus. It was a dead-end and I believe that there is still no way of getting a bus into that estate. Therefore, when you go to look around the estate, you have made your decision to buy a car before you even look for the alternatives. That is a big problem.

9.45 a.m.

[23] Culverhouse Cross and Pontprennau in east Cardiff are examples of where big industrial or residential estates were built without a thought given to how people might commute. On the positive side, in the Vale of Glamorgan, in Port Road in Barry, with which I am familiar, a new housing estate is being built and traffic lights, bus shelters and bus stops have all been installed in advance of people moving in. So, when people came to look at that estate, they could see the bus shelters and the bus stops and think, 'Oh, I can get a bus to and from here'. There are powers at the local authorities' disposal and they should use them. They should perhaps make the developers pay to install public transport options before making people decide to buy a car. Do you want to add anything to that, Tudor?

[24] **Mr Thomas:** There are a couple of examples with which we are slightly puzzled. Within the last year, or thereabouts, two supermarkets, one in north Wales and one in south Wales, were built on their own sites—they were not built near public highways, but on their own land—with nice car parks and shelters for trolleys. Everything had been planned out. However, in the north Wales example, the facility for buses was too small for the length of buses used on the service. We have received reports that the owner of the supermarket—a big national chain—was quite surprised that the bus company would not use the facility, although it was not because the bus company did not want to use the facility. We would say that something like 60% of bus users do so to go shopping—whether that be to buy a loaf of bread, replace their glasses or just to browse the shops and have a coffee. People's shopping activity is very much linked to what supermarkets do. In the south Wales case, smaller or short wheelbase buses could use the site, but the major operator in the area could not use the site because the queuing effect would be dangerous for pedestrians on the site.

[25] It strikes me that, while a local authority would design something and go through a safety audit process—I do not know whether you are familiar with the various stages, but stage 1 would be the drawing stage and the following stages would require auditing by a qualified person as it goes live and a couple of weeks later to monitor what happens with the movement of vehicles and people—it does not appear to happen within a development site on someone's land. It may be that the supermarket owns the land and feels that it can do what it likes, but we just find it puzzling that the link between public transport and shopping is not obvious, especially in this day and age when petrol prices are higher than ever and will continue to increase. Public transport has an important role to play in allowing people to carry out their daily or weekly shopping activity at these major supermarket chains.

[26] **David Rees:** So, I take it that your view is that the consideration of public transport by developers is an afterthought, whether there are section 106 agreements in place or not, rather than a major consideration to the development, whether it is a housing or retail

development or a school or hospital.

[27] **Mr Thomas:** I have worked for developers and there is a fine line between whether the developer feels that the value of the construction or its design will be compromised by allowing too much space to be given to car parking or to buses or people. It is very much for the local authority to give guidance on minimum standards. Going back a couple of years, especially on the English side of the border, there were various regulations ranging from how many bedrooms you could have in a house to how many car parking spaces you would design for a development. Those kinds of fine detail items can be very important to instil a local authority policy on a developer, because they need it at the beginning; it is very difficult to do it after they have designed the building and the drainage—

[28] **David Rees:** My concern is more about the responsibilities of authorities and the Welsh Government than the developer, and the requirements of the bodies that are authorising the development. In England, the passenger transport executive group produced a report, ‘Thriving Cities: integrated land use and transport planning,’ which makes recommendations on policy and process. Have you read that report, and, if so, do you agree with its recommendations?

[29] **Ms Everson :** I am sorry, but I have not read it. I will read it and get back to you.

[30] **Nick Ramsay:** You cannot read everything, as we know all too well in this committee.

[31] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Beth yw'r **Alun Ffred Jones:** What are the main gwendidau mwyaf o ran cyflwyno weaknesses in the provision of information to gwybodaeth i deithwyr ynglŷn â passengers about transport? thrafnidiaeth?

[32] **Ms Everson:** The lack of a common standard; we are quite clear on that. There are 22 local authorities across Wales, there are four consortia and dozens and dozens of bus operators. You can even find anomalies within local authorities. Some local authorities provide all the information, for example, at bus stops, themselves. In other local authorities, bus operators will provide the information at bus stops, but they will only provide their own information and no other operators' information. Another slightly rogue operator will perhaps come along and put stickers all over everything, and they will not come to update that.

[33] Timetable provision is most important at the point of departure. TravelineCymru provides a first-class service before you travel, if you have access to a telephone, the internet or the myriad of ways in which you can pick up information from TravelineCymru, but once you are out, at the bus stop, you need TravelineCymru's text number so that you can find the next buses from that stop or you need timetable information. You see people standing at bus stops gazing at timetables trying to work them out. As far as I am concerned, the biggest weakness in the provision of information to the travelling public is the lack of standardisation.

[34] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae rhai **Alun Ffred Jones:** Some councils and local cyngorau ac awdurdodau lleol wedi rhoi'r authorities have stopped publishing printed gorau i gyhoeddi amserlenni print. A yw timetables. Is that a problem or do you hynny'n broblem ynteu a ydych yn meddwl believe that that is something that they should bod hynny'n rhywbeth na ddylent fod yn ei not be doing anyway? wneud beth bynnag?

[35] **Ms Everson:** I think that it is a problem.

[36] **Mr Thomas:** There are two problems. One of the big problems is that certain rural

and coastal areas of Wales rely on tourism, which is a major income-generating activity for this country. Visitors to an area will come for a week or maybe two weeks. The ability for them to have travel information that they can carry, look at and decide what they will do in the afternoon or tomorrow is quite important. I used to see people in Caernarfon with the timetable book in their hand, and to my eyes, they were not necessarily Welsh people—they were visitors, maybe from other parts of Britain but they could well be from other parts of the world. Most people who use one service will talk to the driver to find out if there are any changes. If they do not talk to the driver, they might not know that a change has happened, even if they are a regular user. If they are an infrequent user, how are they to know that services are changing? Something like a timetable is—

[37] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A ydych yn gwybod faint o gynghorau lleol nad ydynt bellach yn printio amserlenni? **Alun Ffred Jones:** Do not know how many local authorities do not print timetables?

[38] **Ms Everson:** I know who does. The Vale of Glamorgan prints a very comprehensive timetable twice a year, which has useful rail links as well as buses. That is most useful.

[39] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Efallai y byddech yn gallu rhoi gwybodaeth inni ynglŷn â faint o gynghorau nad ydynt yn eu printio. **Alun Ffred Jones:** Maybe you would be able to provide us with information about how many councils do not publish information.

[40] Mae gennyf un cwestiwn arall, ynglŷn â gwybodaeth go iawn. Rydych yn dweud yn eich cyflwyniad nad yw'r wybodaeth hon yn effeithiol iawn y tu allan i'r prif ddinasoedd. Beth yw'r brif broblem gyda'r wybodaeth electronig hon? I have one other question, about real-time information. You say in your submission that this information is not very effective outside the main cities. What is the main problem associated with this electronic information?

[41] **Mr Thomas:** There are two types of real-time information. The one that is more evident in Cardiff is real-time information with a unit on a bus that transponds its location to a satellite and back to the bus stops. Effectively, as the bus proceeds along the road, the time until the bus approaches a particular bus stop will count down, like you have on most railway stations, to say that you have 10 minutes or nine minutes to wait. If it gets delayed, it will continue to say nine minutes, and then you think that it is worth waiting, because it will come.

[42] The other variety shows an electronic version of the published timetable. So, if the bus is late, the time on the bus stop disappears, because the bus stop recognises that the bus should have gone. However, the bus has not arrived and people are left wondering whether the bus is going to come. So, there is a confidence issue.

[43] There are also other issues. We feel that real-time information is of more value in rural areas, because bus services are less frequent. If you have a bus service every 10 minutes or seven minutes, having real-time information is like icing on the cake. Another issue is that the installation of real-time information is generally put under a capital heading, but there may not necessarily be revenue funding to maintain and update the information. There were situations in Neath and Port Talbot where both bus stations were equipped with real-time electronic information, but the council was unable to continue funding facilities to update them because bus services were changing on a frequent basis. So, while the idea was good, the follow through was letting down the initial investment.

[44] **David Rees:** The information that you talk about is good when it is available. However, we had a question last week about whether that information included disability access with regard to which services are disabled friendly—it depends on which bus you get. Do you find that that information is also readily available on the Vale of Glamorgan website,

or is that information lacking? If so, people who have disabilities, no matter what kind, may have difficulty in identifying the services that they can use.

[45] **Ms Everson:** I think that information is lacking. You take a chance. If you are in a wheelchair, you can get on your local bus, perhaps, to go down to town but you do not have the confidence that you will have the same quality of bus to return home. You could go, for example, from the top end of Barry down to town on a Cardiff low-floor-access bus, with raised pavement borders at bus stops—you can just wheel your wheelchair on—but when you want to return, you might get another operator's vehicle with a step entrance, and you are stuck and have to wait for the right quality of bus. You do not necessarily know that in advance, so it is all a lottery for people who need to get on a bus in a wheelchair, as well as for mothers and fathers with pushchairs and sleeping children. You can fold up a pushchair if the child is awake, but if he or she is not awake, you are in trouble.

10.00 a.m.

[46] **David Rees:** So, there are difficulties. Bus service operators are also not identifying which buses they put on which routes and at what time, so that information is not available.

[47] **Ms Everson:** In theory, all buses should be low-access ones, but it does not work like that.

[48] **Kenneth Skates:** Turning to fares and barriers to integrated ticketing, could you clarify whether competition rules are an overwhelming factor that prevent integrated ticketing or does it relate more to a reluctance among operators to co-operate with one another?

[49] **Mr Thomas:** On the first part of your question, that is the first thing that we hear from bus operators; they will not talk to other operators and they ask us whether we can try to solve the issue in a different way, which is usually through the local authority. Some operators have commercial concerns and feel that they would be disadvantaged by being involved. These tickets work in a knock-for-knock way. So, if the big operator in an area has many passengers who might want to use your bus because you are the only bus that goes to a particular activity park for children, they would get lots of tickets, but no money.

[50] There was a situation in west Wales where a small private operator accepts the travel-wide ticket on a Sunday because it is a tendered service, and it is stipulated in the tender. However, on Monday to Friday, they do not accept it because it is too much for them—there is too great a commercial risk. When you look at the operation, there is a service to the seaside and, in the summer, there will be lots of passengers, but no money. So, the knock-for-knock arrangement, which, from what we understand, is the only way the Competition Commission allows this type of product to exist, does not work very well. However, if you had a pooling scheme, which would involve parties having to divulge how much they take on a ticket, which would then be calculated according to route kilometres, that type of organised product would be seen as anti-competitive by the Office of Fair Trading. That is how we see it.

[51] So, there are barriers to how you can make these systems more uniform. However, having said that, operators do see a commercial value in them and there are schemes. However, they are poorly promoted in part. Operators tend to promote their own ticket, which allows travel on any of their own services, and all of the major bus companies have them. A couple of the private or small operators also have them along with the big councils such as Cardiff Council and Newport Council. However, the multi-operator ticket, which may be a few pence more and gives one much greater freedom, is not frequently issued by drivers. Perhaps their product knowledge is not so great and you only have to be faced once with someone saying, 'That is not valid' or 'I don't accept that' or 'I don't issue it', for your

immediate reaction to be, ‘I don’t like that and I won’t ask for that again’, which is a barrier to encouraging public transport use.

[52] If you think about it, if you have a car, you can travel anywhere for 360 degrees. However, as soon as you use a bus service, you have to pay—you do not have a concessionary ticket where you can travel on any bus—and once you start paying, you have to rely on different rules applying with different operators. So, for example, if you travel between Llanrumney and Cowbridge, you have to buy two tickets: one on Cardiff bus and one on First Cymru, and that will set you back over £9. However, if you travel between Llanrumney and Llandrindod Wells or Newtown—a distance of perhaps 110 miles—it will cost £7.70. There is disparity. Most people who are giving up their car, or thinking about the cost of car travel, think that there is something wrong with that.

[53] **Kenneth Skates:** What can the Welsh Government do? Does it need to act as a kind of leviathan?

[54] **Mr Thomas:** There could be a case of looking at how the current legal structure cuts across the strategies the Government wishes to pursue. At the end of the day, I fully appreciate that the laws in this country are designed for good reason in the first place, or that political will has changed the operation. I started off in life when there were a lot of nationalised industries, but those nationalised industries are all private now. With things like gas, they are talking about restricting the kind of pricing you can offer in the future. The bus industry was denationalised and privatised, and the free-for-all has consequences. You cannot blame a private operator putting their own resources into a business wanting to—

[55] **Nick Ramsay:** I am just going to intervene because I have realised that we 10 minutes left and we still have a number of questions to go through. I would like to move things on.

[56] **Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas:** Fel defnyddiwr cyson o’r cerdyn teithio rhatach, roeddwn yn gwrandio gyda diddordeb mawr ar yr hyn a ddywedoch am gostau a phrisiau. Fodd bynnag, rwyf am ofyn cwestiwn ynglŷn â chyfnwidd rhwng bysiau a chyfnwidd rhwng bysiau a threnau. Mae rhai llwybrau lle mae cystadleuaeth rhwng bws a thrên, yn hytrach na’u bod yn cynorthwyo’u gilydd o safbwynt teithwyr. Mae hynny yn wir am ardal Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru a Taith yn y gogledd, yn fy mhrofiad i. Sut y byddech yn symud ymlaen i sefyllfa lle byddai’n bosibl i deithiwr symud yn hwylus rhwng bysiau a’i gilydd a rhwng bysiau a threnau, gyda chyfleusterau cyfnwidd diogel a sych, yn enwedig ar fore fel hon?

Lord Elis-Thomas: As a regular user of the concessionary pass, I listened with great interest to what you said about the costs and prices. However, I wish to ask a question about the interchanging between buses and between buses and trains. There are some routes where there is competition between buses and trains, rather than them working together for the benefit of passengers. From my own experience I can say that that is true of Mid Wales Transportation and Taith in north Wales. How would you progress to a situation where it would be possible for a passenger to move smoothly from bus to bus or from bus to train, with appropriate and safe interchange facilities, which, particularly on a morning such as this one, are also dry?

[57] **Ms Everson:** Where would you start? The all-Wales entitlement card might go a long way towards enabling passengers and potential passengers to switch easily from train to bus rather in the same way as the Oyster card. I know the two circumstances are completely different for financial reasons—

[58] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** I am also the proud owner of one of those as well.

[59] **Ms Everson:** The one thing I find in London is that you can get on and off a tube, on

and off a bus, or go down to Victoria Station or Waterloo Station and hop on a train to London Bridge without having to think about whether you have money or change; it does not matter because you have your Oyster card charged up, so you can just do it. That would go a huge distance towards getting full integration for people, not necessarily for the operators, who have their own problems, but for people, so that people are included in society by being able to do what they want and when they want to do it, without having to worry about whether they have £1—or, actually, £5, £6 or £7—in their pocket for fares.

[60] As regards interchanges, local authorities, consortia and transport providers need to get together and provide them. Cardiff bus station is a disgrace, and it has been talked about for years. I am not criticising necessarily, but there have been changes in administration; there have been many focus groups and many workshops and everybody has had their say. Five years down the line, we are nowhere near. It is about the will of the people who can bring this about and getting them to do it. It is not difficult.

[61] **Nick Ramsay:** Are you happy with that, Dafydd?

[62] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** I am very happy with that.

[63] **Nick Ramsay:** We only have a few minutes left and Members want to ask some questions, so, if I move things on, please forgive me.

[64] **Eluned Parrott:** How effective do you think transport policy is in Wales in delivering integrated transport and, very briefly, could you name three things that the Welsh Government could change to improve the situation?

[65] **Ms Everson:** In two minutes? There could be a bit more of a focus on bus services. There is a lot of talk, obviously, about the electrification of the rail service, which is great and which other people will talk to you about, because they will know far more about it than I ever will. Bus services deal with the old, the young, the vulnerable and the socially excluded. So, there should be more focus on buses, to make it easier. This could include local authorities creating more bus lanes and bus gates; I know that that is a contradiction to the walking and cycling routes, because if you make it better for walking and cycling, you make it worse for buses. Everybody needs to get together to provide bus lanes and easier ways of getting people in and out of city centres. That is one thing.

[66] **Mr Thomas:** Perhaps, a little bit of attention could be given to transport hubs and making them more user-friendly. For example, Brecon bus station has a toilet facility. That is what people really want when they are interchanging, and waiting for a train or a bus. One has to remember that buses serve more housing areas than trains will ever do. So, people have to get to the station, and while there is strong evidence that car users would change their mode of transport to trains more than to buses, the bus is still very important in feeding into your rail network. If you are investing vast sums of public money into the rail network, you have to do the link from the house. That might need a little more attention and planning.

[67] **Byron Davies:** Could you give me your view on the effectiveness of the regional transport consortia model? Does it vary across the consortia?

[68] **Ms Everson:** Some are more mature than others, and I think that the regional consortia model works, because the consortia are concentrated in the areas that they serve. They can draw together common standards across their areas. South East Wales Transport Alliance, for example, is urban, covering 48% of the population, I believe. TraCC is incredibly rural and it can concentrate on how to address rural difficulties. South-West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium has a bit of both, and Taith has the north Wales corridor and the trans-European network. I believe consortia work. I have no evidence and I would love to

see the fine detail and more words on it, but I do not know whether an all-Wales authority would be able to address the regional issues as well as the consortia do.

[69] **Byron Davies:** Okay. That is very fair, thank you.

[70] **Joyce Watson:** I want to ask about funding for buses and the effectiveness of the current approaches to tendering for bus services in Wales, which provide services that are not economically sustainable but socially necessary.

[71] **Ms Everson:** Indeed. Local authorities are struggling with that issue at the moment with the reduction in funding brought about by the current economic situation. What we are finding is that they are not able to buy Sunday services and that is a bit of a problem. Do you want to say anything about that, Tudor?

[72] **Mr Thomas:** I am not sufficiently knowledgeable on the funding issue, because it is very much a situation between the local authority and bus operator and what package of services they put out.

[73] **Nick Ramsay:** If you do not have the information, then do not worry.

[74] **Joyce Watson:** We will ask someone else.

[75] **Nick Ramsay:** Yes; one of our chain of witnesses. Joyce, do you have any further questions?

10.15 a.m.

[76] **Joyce Watson:** What role do you think that community transport should play alongside commercial bus operations in an integrated public transport network?

[77] **Ms Everson:** The Community Transport Association is expected to fill the gaps. Whether it has the funding to fill the gaps is another issue. CTA will tell you that it does not. There are community transport services outside the Community Transport Association. There is Grassroots in Monmouthshire, which works very well. Bwcabus, I understand, works very well, and there is Bwcabus 2 as well. That links people with other services. It is not supposed to be a network of its own. It links into main bus services. Were there enough money, many more of these types of services could be established.

[78] **Mr Thomas:** There is one issue with community transport, which is that it uses volunteer drivers, in the main. If you start asking volunteers to do more and more for nothing, they may leave, which makes your existing operation—the core service that you are trying to provide now, before you expand—less sustainable. It is also very difficult to ensure reliability when you have volunteer staff. We all know about a certain rail operator in the south that tried to run all its Sunday services with volunteers—and they were paid—and it did not work. So, in terms of relying on community transport to fill the gaps in the way that I think that you are envisaging with regard to significant cuts to tendered services, I cannot see it happening without it wanting a new type of regime.

[79] **Nick Ramsay:** We are completely out of time. I thank Margaret Everson and Tudor Thomas for being with us today; it has been very helpful. I appreciate the difficulties—ironically, for an integrated public transport inquiry—that you had in getting here today. Thank you. We will feed that evidence into our inquiry on integrated public transport.

[80] **Ms Everson:** If there is anything else that we can help with in writing, we are happy to come back to you.

[81] **Nick Ramsay:** Excellent. It was good to hear you building on the evidence that you provided in the stakeholder event that we held, so thank you for attending that. Have a safe journey home.

10.18 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Drafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport—Evidence Session

[82] **Nick Ramsay:** That was a very quick changeover of witnesses, worthy of our integrated transport inquiry. [*Laughter.*] I welcome our witnesses. Thank you for being here today to help us with our inquiry. Would you like to give your names and position or role for the record?

[83] **Ms Thomas:** Bore da, Mr Cadeirydd. Good morning. I am Stella Mair Thomas, and I am the board member for Wales for Passenger Focus UK.

[84] **Mr Sidebottom:** I am David Sidebottom, the passenger team director at Passenger Focus UK.

[85] **Mr Beer:** I am David Beer, a passenger executive at Passenger Focus UK.

[86] **Nick Ramsay:** Great. Thank you for being here. We have a number of questions for you, so I suggest that we get straight into those. If at any point I am moving you on, it is not because I am bored in any way about what is being said, but because I want to get as much information as possible for our inquiry. Eluned Parrott has the first question.

[87] **Eluned Parrott:** I will start with general issues. You outline in your paper what the priorities are for passengers across Wales. Were you able to identify in your research whether there were different priorities and issues identified by users of different franchises operating in Wales?

[88] **Mr Sidebottom:** The most significant difference is probably with regard to those using the longer-distance cross-border rail services, particularly First Great Western going into London and the south-west of England. That is largely because the journey purpose is slightly different. It is usually going to be a leisure journey, rather than a commuter travelling to and from work. We tend to find from our research work on the national passenger survey that commuters are a bit more grumpy than those taking a leisure journey and that tends to reflect through in some of the results. Whereas the commuter will see some of the poorer performance factors day in, day out, someone taking one or two journeys a year will see the journey slightly differently. So, stripping that down a little bit, you may see a difference for longer distance journeys.

[89] **Ms Thomas:** I do think that you have better rolling stock for longer journeys than you have on the shorter commute journeys that we are used to within Wales, and having a more comfortable train with greater capacity makes people a lot happier.

[90] **Eluned Parrott:** In your research, do you break it down into different categories of user, and are you able to say that, allowing for the fact that these passengers are using the services for different reasons, particular franchises or particular areas have issues that other areas do not suffer from?

[91] **Mr Sidebottom:** On the national passenger survey, we can certainly do that, breaking

it down into various parts—passenger satisfaction by operator and by different routes. You get some smaller numbers, of course, and so you need to treat some of the research with some restraint. On the passenger priorities work, it involves a cross-section of passengers and it is more difficult to split down.

[92] **Byron Davies:** In your paper, you identify a number of key issues for Welsh rail travellers. One is that satisfaction levels with transport connections within Wales were lower than those for journeys between Wales and England. I have a number of questions on that. Why do you think satisfaction levels with connections within Wales are lower? Why are satisfaction levels when changing modes of transport within Wales lower? What do you think the Welsh Government can do about this?

[93] **Mr Sidebottom:** It is hard to pinpoint exactly. When you read some of the general comments that come through from passengers as part of the research—there is space to write free text on the survey form—in some of that, and in some of our work with other stakeholders across Wales, there are issues about connections from the main line service into rural services, where timetables are perhaps not co-ordinated and passengers may face a 58-minute or 59-minute delay in connection. So, there is something around that in particular. It is hard to pinpoint precisely. Anecdotally, you will come across certain services where that has traditionally been a problem, but it is usually around waits and the convenience of making that connection.

[94] With regard to other forms of public transport, there is the classic example of bus timetables and rail timetables never being very well co-ordinated. We see that across Great Britain, particularly in some of the bigger cities in England, and particularly here in Wales. That comes across clearly in terms of the passenger priorities work.

[95] As for what Government can do, I think that there is something that could be done around getting the train operators and transport consortia working together as closely as possible, looking at best practice where examples have been brought together to benefit passengers. Ultimately, you can go down the route of looking at more powers for transport authorities that can set fares and timetables and the kinds of things that are starting to develop in one or two of the transport authorities in England, particularly in West Yorkshire and the North East, which are looking to rebrand bus networks, for example, to have greater control. It is also about how you incentivise passengers to make those connections as well. It is one thing to have co-ordinated timetables, good rolling stock and good kit and good information, but there is a challenge there in motivating and incentivising passengers to make those connections.

[96] **Ms Thomas:** From a passenger perspective, it is very hard when their train is late and they miss a connection. Passengers do not perhaps realise the huge penalties that train operating companies incur if trains run late, but my experience of travel within Wales—and I am sure I share it with many of you—is that you see people missing these connections. That is a huge issue between different train operating companies. However, even if services were all under one ownership, the company would still incur penalties by hanging on for a late train.

[97] **Byron Davies:** So, that is something that the Government could actually deal with.

[98] **Ms Thomas:** Well, it is to do with the complicated pathways of trains along lines, which is something that is within your power to do.

[99] **Mr Beer:** Also, on the train side, part of the issue with connections is about them being guaranteed, whereas bus and train connections are not necessarily guaranteed. If you are going to connect at Cardiff Central for example, there will be a guarantee that those trains

have to arrive within 10 minutes of each other, whereas with regard to bus and train connections, there is not necessarily that guarantee. Potentially, that is something that could be built in by bringing people to the table, giving powers to the authorities to do that, and by making sure that those timetables then hold the passenger's hand, because that is part of what passengers look at at the point of choice, when asking, 'How shall I make this journey? Can I get from A to B? If I have to change at a particular place, what's my experience going to be, and am I going to be able to get off at the right place, look for where the next part of my journey comes from and be able to get there, and will it arrive on time to take me where I want to go?'

[100] **Byron Davies:** That is very helpful, thank you.

[101] **Nick Ramsay:** I call on David Rees, briefly, and then I will bring in Ken Skates.

[102] **David Rees:** Clearly, there is an issue within Wales, which we might look at, but, when you go across the border, there will be difficulties because how can you control the decisions about connections in England, for example? So, there could be a problem there as well. At the moment, unless it is an UK-based solution, we will not guarantee satisfaction, will we?

[103] **Mr Sidebottom:** No. There is the whole issue about a joined-up railway, but we are starting to see train operators work more closely with Network Rail through alliancing and looking at how they can squeeze more capacity out of the existing networks. So, we are seeing some good work starting, but it is very early days, and the Government, the operators and Network Rail have to look at where and when passengers want to go. There is a bit more work to be done on that, because we are often stuck with old timetables and services, so maybe there is a bit of fresh thinking to be done to understand where and when passengers really want to go. There are some green shoots through the alliancing network.

[104] **David Rees:** I have a quick final question on this. Have you had discussions with Network Rail, because we do not always talk about freight being moved on rail and the impact that that has on passengers. In an airport, if you are delayed, the pilot comes over and says, 'I've now got to wait for another slot to be made available', because there is so much going on, but, clearly, with freight, there is an issue in relation to the slots on a railway line as well.

[105] **Mr Sidebottom:** It is the overall capacity argument. It is a devil of a job for Network Rail to co-ordinate all this stuff. As a passenger advocate, we could not care less about freight, but, at the same time, we appreciate that it is a difficult jigsaw to put together.

[106] **Ms Thomas:** We talk closely with Network Rail, and we are delighted that Mark Langman is now in post here in Cardiff. So, we have had regular meetings with him, and I know that the train operating companies are working closely with his office to make things work better for passengers.

[107] **Byron Davies:** I have a brief comment on a remark that you just made about research into where passengers go et cetera. I was surprised to hear that. Surely, there must be quite a bit of research into this; that is how planning is carried out.

[108] **Mr Sidebottom:** Yes, particularly where people are looking to make connections. Our research asks passengers how they rate their journey. If they have a lower satisfaction rate with connections, it is about understanding from our work, or from working with operators, the Government and other transport authorities, why people are not making those connections. Is it because the bus service or the train service does not go where they want it to go, when they want it to go? So, maybe it is about refreshing some of that thinking.

[109] **Kenneth Skates:** Can you tell us whether the complexity of rail fares and tickets varies across Wales depending on the operator?

[110] **Mr Sidebottom:** It is a much more complex picture, particularly for the longer distance journey. There is the turn-up-and-go, high-fare anytime ticket compared with the book-in advance ticket through the internet. There is also the complexity that passengers feel a level of mistrust about whether they are being sold the right ticket at the right price—that comes across in a lot of our research—either from the booking office ticket window or, in particular, from a ticket-vending machine. There is still a great deal of mistrust about whether passengers are getting the right ticket for the right journey. While it is good to see Arriva Trains Wales installing ticket-vending machines at lots of unstaffed stations, there is an issue, particularly for the occasional user, the passenger who is making one journey, rather than the commuter who can press the buttons in their sleep. It is more about the experience of the infrequent passenger making that particular purchase. The complexity is detrimental to the passenger in that, when they have bought the wrong ticket and are on the wrong train, they are then hit by a penalty fare or a fine. It is not about them evading the fare; they have just not quite understood the terms and conditions and have been hit with a large penalty.

[111] **Kenneth Skates:** Is there a resistance to simplification and to ticket integration?

10.30 a.m.

[112] **Mr Sidebottom:** Simplification would be a good thing. The train operators have a job to do at the moment to rebuild the trust of passengers so that, when you book a ticket, you understand the terms and conditions and the penalty if you get on the wrong train. There is inconsistent delivery at the moment on the part of train managers and station staff in helping passengers. We have all been on a train where the manager has turned a blind eye and allowed a passenger who seems genuine to get away with it when, on the next journey, they could be hit with a large penalty fare.

[113] **Ms Thomas:** One thing that has become clear to us is that, unless these schemes to make your journey simpler by allowing you to book one ticket—and I know that there are pilot schemes going on at the moment—are marketed correctly and widely, people generally do not know about them. What is coming out in our research is that people just do not know about them and there is great suspicion of them; people do not understand them and the schemes have not been explained to them. So, I think that there is a lot of work to be done in that area.

[114] **Mr Beer:** If you are looking at joining up journeys, there is also the issue of whether the train ticket can have an add-on with a bus ticket and, if so, whether the passengers know about that. This morning, I was particularly pleased to see the fares advertised in the bus shelter so we knew how much it was going to cost. However, when I boarded the bus I had only a £5 note, so I now have a change voucher in my pocket. That experience was a one-off, but, as an occasional visitor to Cardiff, that is not as positive an experience as it might have been. Those bits need to be joined up and made simpler to reassure passengers that they are able to get the right ticket and that, when they get on the bus or train, it will be accepted and they will have bought the right one. They need to be reassured all along the route.

[115] **Kenneth Skates:** Let us be clear that it is the operators that need to embrace simplification and integration, ultimately.

[116] **Mr Sidebottom:** Yes.

[117] **Mr Beer:** Yes.

[118] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning. Moving on from the issue of choosing your ticket to getting help, I want to talk about the McNulty report, rail passenger service staffing levels and the importance of staff to passengers. Many witnesses have said that they want people at the stations whom they can talk to. Do you agree with that? If so, what impact would you expect there to be as a result of increasing the number of driver-only operated trains?

[119] **Mr Sidebottom:** Staff visibility is incredibly important to passengers. This issue comes across every time in our research, regardless of the factor we are studying. It improves people's sense of personal security at stations and on trains. It also improves the availability of information and means that passengers who need it can get help with getting on the train, buying a ticket or whatever. There are lots of successful operations, particularly in the south-east of England, that run driver-only operated trains. The occasional complaint we get from passengers is that the doors were closed before they felt they had a chance to board. Some operators are operating 12-coach trains as driver-only operations, so it can work, but let us not kid ourselves about this. Through our research, passengers tell us that staff presence on trains is important and, looking at our passenger priorities research, there is a sense that there needs to be an improvement in Wales with regard to people's sense of personal security on board services. Having a staff presence certainly helps. Whether that is provided by British Transport Police staff, who are doing a good job where they can to help that feeling of personal security, or by train operator staff, they play a huge part in making the journey successful for a passenger.

[120] **Ms Thomas:** On staff visibility, we work closely with the British Transport Police. At a meeting last week with Peter Davies, the chief superintendent for Wales, I was delighted to learn that it is going to increase its visibility on trains. He feels that this is needed specifically on trains. We work quite closely with the transport police and I think that we are very fortunate in Wales that we have very good community officers and that the train operating companies work closely with the British Transport Police. It is an important element of staff visibility.

[121] **Joyce Watson:** That is all very well and good, but is that not passing the buck a bit—the idea being, 'We reduce our staff and someone else can pay'? That is how I read that. If you see British Transport Police in west Wales, I will eat my hat, because I have yet to see them.

[122] Anyway, moving on from that, there is the issue about people who need physical help to get on or off at a station, or who may need help to get out of a car in the first place. Sometimes, there is nobody around. What happens if a light goes off and there is nobody there to put it back on? These are very simple things. What feedback have you had from those groups of people who feel more vulnerable, maybe, than other groups of people?

[123] **Mr Sidebottom:** We undertook some research in 2010, looking at unstaffed stations in Wales. It was a joint piece of work with the University of Glamorgan. Five areas of priority came across, and high up there was access, in its broadest sense—getting to the station, the car park, and physical assistance, which was missing. That prevents so many journeys. We have undertaken separate research on passengers with disabilities who use the current assisted passenger reservation system that the train operators use. When it works well, it is fantastic, but you need to have staff present—that comes across loud and clear all the time.

[124] **Ms Thomas:** There is nothing more daunting than unstaffed stations and we have so many in Wales. We really need real-time information at all our stations, because if you arrive at an unmanned station when it is dark or there is not much light, and you do not know whether the train has gone, or whether you have a two-hour wait, you have to have that real-time information. I would stress that that is an ambition that we should have in Wales.

[125] **Mr Beer:** If I could add a point as well, with having so many unstaffed stations in rural areas in particular, there may not be as much opportunity to buy a ticket in advance, so there has to be somebody available on the train to sell the tickets. Also, it is from ticket sales that the operators get the returns on how many people are on the train, which they feed into the modelling for how many trains are needed on that route, what size of train is needed, and all sorts of other factors that flow from that. It is the presence of a member of staff doing that job that allows the data to be fed out.

[126] **David Rees:** I notice that one of the recommendations is on the use of ticket vending machines; there will be a lot of issues around cabling and all of the connectivity for that. Going back to the fares issue for the moment, clearly we get a lot of anecdotal information about it being cheaper to buy two tickets to certain places than to buy one. What moves are being made to ensure that the cost of a journey is the appropriate cost, and that it is not cheaper via some other mechanism, so that if you are going to use ticket vending machines, passengers will get the best deal?

[127] **Mr Sidebottom:** The train operators and Network Rail are trying to flush out these loopholes where they can, but there are still hundreds if not thousands of those in the ticketing system. It is that sort of double-edged sword: some passengers understand that, and will get the best deal by split ticketing and doing those deals, but others will go to the ticket office window or the vending machine and buy the ticket they think is the best one, but they are probably paying over the odds for it. That is where the mistrust comes in. This is part of the simplification agenda when we work with the Association of Train Operating Companies or ATOC to look at flushing these out of the system, but it will take a huge programme of work. That is not to say that it cannot start—it is under way, but it will take many years to flush these out, I am afraid.

[128] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Rwyf eisiau cyfeirio at uned Cymru o Network Rail a hefyd masnachfaint newydd rheilffyrdd Cymru a'r gororau. Bydd y fasnachfaint newydd honno yn digwydd yn y blynyddoedd nesaf. Beth ddylai'r blaenoriaethau fod o ran hyrwyddo trafnidiaeth integredig yn y fasnachfaint newydd honno?

Alun Ffred Jones: I want to refer to the Wales unit of Network Rail, and the new Wales and borders franchise. This new franchise will happen in the next few years. What should the priorities be in terms of promoting integrated transport in that new franchise?

[129] **Mr Sidebottom:** Part of it is about understanding passengers' priorities. Clearly, we are very interested in what passengers get from any franchising arrangement, whether it is something that is not-for-profit, not-for-dividend or anything like that. It is about making sure that passengers' priorities are listened to. When we ask passengers what they want from new arrangements and set-ups and structures, they tend to care less about that and more about what they see as the important priorities. Once again, we have identified through our research what passengers' priorities are. We will try to articulate those to Network Rail, to the Government and to train operators to try to make those points come across clearly. So, if there seem to be gaps in the system in terms of the way in which rail and bus and rail and rail are integrated, we will try to articulate those particular points.

[130] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Iawn. Nid wyf yn hollol glir ar hyn. O ran trafnidiaeth integredig—dod â'r gwasanaethau bysys a rheilffyrdd at ei gilydd, ag unrhyw agwedd arall—a oes rhywbeth a ddylai fod yn rhan o'r fasnachfaint newydd honno a fyddai'n

Alun Ffred Jones: Okay. I am not entirely clear on this. On integrated transport—bringing bus and rail services together, and any other aspect—is there something that should be part of that new franchise that you think would contribute to that?

cyfrannu at hynny?

[131] **Mr Sidebottom:** A significant point there is perhaps the availability of multimodal types of ticketing that would help passengers not to have to worry so much about those particular journeys. I would like to see something in the franchise requirements that helps ticketing arrangements. We have talked about better information and marketing to passengers, but I think that, where there is a clear timetable advantage for passengers to make integrated journeys, the next thing on the tick-list is ticketing that enables passengers not to worry about whether they have the right ticket for the next journey. Anything that the Government can do to help that will be a huge advantage for operators and passengers.

[132] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gennyf un cwestiwn arall. Unwaith eto, gan gyfeirio at drafnidiaeth integredig, beth ydych chi'n meddwl y gall uned Cymru newydd Network Rail gyfrannu o safbwynt datblygu trafnidiaeth integredig? **Alun Ffred Jones:** I have one more question. Once again, referring to integrated transport, what contribution do you think the new Welsh unit of Network Rail can make with regard to developing integrated transport?

[133] **Mr Sidebottom:** I touched on this point a little earlier, but I think that, in particular, it is a matter of keeping this open dialogue with operators going. We started to see an alliance model developing, which is opening some of the doors that may have been closed to operators and Network Rail to talk more about what passengers want. We are keen to see Network Rail producing better information for passengers about the performance of their train routes—I am talking about detailed punctuality information, for example. However, I think that the dialogue is helping, as is the fact that Network Rail is looking at passengers as its customers rather than train operating companies. A slightly new culture is starting to develop within Network Rail so that it is recognising passengers as customers rather than just the train operating companies.

[134] **Ms Thomas:** To add to what David has said, since we have had a greater presence for Network Rail in Wales, we have seen much better partnership working with the train operating companies. It is extremely visible and the effects are beginning to be felt. That is very good. It now has a big office in Wales. We have a major programme now for the electrification of the line, which will create huge challenges for Network Rail, so for it to have its base here and be able to understand the local problems is a huge advantage to us. I can see benefits to what has happened recently with Network Rail being based here.

[135] **Eluned Parrott:** To pick up on that point, going into the electrification and the major signalling works that are going on at the moment in Cardiff Central and that area, we are obviously expecting huge amounts of passenger disruption, so what would you like to see the train operating companies and Network Rail doing to smooth over that period, because it will be quite an extended period of time when passenger services will be affected?

[136] **Mr Sidebottom:** A lot has been learnt from the work that Network Rail and the operators did at Reading. We played a big part in helping them to shape some of the benefits. The main thing is having a staff presence to help people, particularly those who are making connections at places like Reading, and having people there to give information. You cannot get enough information out to passengers, whether on the platform via staff or through the use of social media or the website when people book tickets. Reading was a success, and there is stuff that Network Rail and the operators can learn from what happened at Reading. Although it is not quite on the same scale as some of the longer term disruption planned around here in terms of electrification, there is the basic core lesson of staff and information.

10.45 a.m.

[137] **Ms Thomas:** I also think that there needs to be a co-ordinated effort to recognise what is happening here, particularly in Cardiff with big events such as rugby and football games, because we have heard some horror stories in the past of Network Rail taking possession of the line while we had 90,000 people to shift in and out of Cardiff. We have seen huge improvements in that area.

[138] If the main line is to be affected when we have these major events, it will cause real problems. We need advance warning, lots of information, plenty of plans and co-ordinated working with the event people and the train operating companies such as Network Rail in a way that we have perhaps not seen in the past.

[139] **Mr Beer:** In respect of the passengers' journey itself, passengers tell us that if they have bought a ticket to travel on a train, they want to arrive on a train and not on a replacement bus. Network Rail's part in that is to make sure that alternative routes are available, and the operators' part is to make sure that they have staff trained to drive on those alternative routes, so that they can divert the trains effectively. Where it is unavoidable to have replacement buses, which it sometimes is, passengers' journey length should be looked at. Again, we have heard some horror stories of passengers taking an hour and a half to two hours longer than they would have taken on the train, which puts a hole in their plans for the day.

[140] **Ms Thomas:** We have not touched on the issue of stations. If people are delayed, it is really important that they stay in a station where the toilet is open, the lights are on, and there is someone to help them. We welcome the huge investment being made, with the support of European funding, into stations. That is a big programme under way at the moment. However, passengers' needs must be taken into consideration when these plans are put into place. We have done some pretty good research on that. For instance, we had several pilot schemes at Chester station before the plans for improvements were finalised, which included access for the disabled. So, again, we would urge whoever is in control of the development of stations in Wales to take passenger needs into account.

[141] **Nick Ramsay:** It is a well-made point. You rarely get on a train without a station.

[142] **Ms Thomas:** Exactly.

[143] **David Rees:** Just out of curiosity, have you have had any involvement in the proposals for Port Talbot Parkway station, because that is in my area, and investment is now coming there?

[144] **Ms Thomas:** David has been. Did you go there, David? Oh, no, that was Burry Port.

[145] **David Rees:** No, that is further west.

[146] **Ms Thomas:** I know. I thought that David had been there recently.

[147] **David Rees:** Going back to the integration issue and perhaps more to the co-ordination of transport, I did not read it in your papers, but you referred to the integrated transport authorities in England earlier. The passenger transport executives were created under the Transport Act 1968. There are only six of them, and I note that they are all in the midlands and the north. The city regions report by the Welsh Government has identified the possibility of developing a passenger transport executive concept in the south-east Wales area. I suppose that what I want to know is whether you think that that model will work in Wales.

[148] **Mr Sidebottom:** It could do. Going back to the previous comments about structures

and passenger care, we are seeing a debate raging in West Yorkshire and the north-east about the authority taking control of bus services. When you ask passengers, they just do not care. They just want the bus to turn up on time and to get value for money, and all the kinds of things that are important to them.

[149] However, it can work, particularly with that clearer focus on aspects such as having control over ticketing, control over fare levels and control over integration. Sometimes, the authority areas in England have missed the point on that and have perhaps been fixated on one particular mode of investment, in a tram network for example, and other things around the margins have suffered. That clear focus on what passengers want can help. We work quite well with the transport authorities in the midlands and the north through our work with bus passenger representation in England, for example, using our research to influence where they spend their money on improving the networks. So, it can work, but it is about the core things of what passengers want and helping with things such as information, ticketing and setting fare levels.

[150] **David Rees:** Most of those are urban-orientated or city-orientated. Do you find that the urban-rural mix works?

[151] **Mr Sidebottom:** Yes. Greater Manchester is an example. Of the bus network in Manchester, 24% starts or finishes in a rural area. So, yes, that can work quite well, and understanding where the travel-to-work boundaries are is core to this as well. However, one danger that some local authorities mention is that passengers who live the other side of the border feel as though they are getting a worse service but are paying higher fares. Passenger journeys do not stop and start at particular borders but go across borders. So, there is a risk of creating an independent republic, if you like, as a transport authority. You see some quite heated debates around the margins, where the borders are, in some of the transport authorities.

[152] **Nick Ramsay:** An independent republic. Someone's eyes just lit up. *[Laughter.]*

[153] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** What were you looking at me for?

[154] **Nick Ramsay:** I have no idea why, but I was. *[Laughter.]*

[155] I want to return to buses and to a specific question on border issues. Do quality contracts and partnerships improve the co-ordination and integration of bus services in England, and can we learn something from that?

[156] **Mr Sidebottom:** This is a topical question, as the issue is raging in the north-east and in West Yorkshire. They can do, but we do not have one to compare. We do lots of bus passenger satisfaction research and we would love to be able to model the different frameworks, one against another. Our view is that they can deliver all the things that passengers want, but bus operators, of course, are opposed to them, because they take away their commercial freedom, the entrepreneurship and the innovation. London has a similar framework, and, although so much money goes into London, it gets things right on the integration of transport, with simple ticketing, great information at bus stops, a greater frequency of service and the things that are really important to passengers. So, yes, that can help, but we do not yet have the evidence to say that it can, even from a passenger perspective.

[157] **Nick Ramsay:** You make an important point that England is a big place, and that the London experience is different from that in other parts of the country. Is the satisfaction of passengers in London, or England, comparable with satisfaction rates here? Is there a general lack of happiness with services, or is there a difference?

[158] **Mr Sidebottom:** We worked with the Welsh Government a couple of years ago to help to formulate a methodology for a bus passenger satisfaction survey, using the methodology that we use in England. The results were generally the same for particular issues. In England, about 85% of passengers are satisfied with a bus journey just taken, but you see a range of results on things like value for money, the comfort of the vehicle, standards, information, driver attitude and that kind of thing. However, the overall level of satisfaction is generally comparable.

[159] **Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas:** Fel un sy'n cael y fraint o gynrychioli rheilffordd Dyffryn Conwy, yn ogystal â rheilffordd y Cambrian, un o'r materion sy'n dipyn bach o grwsâd gennyf yw'r cyfnewid trefnus ac effeithiol rhwng bysiau a threnau. Cawsom sgwrs ddiddorol gyda'r defnyddwyr bysiau yn gynharach ynghylch hynny. Beth ydych chi'n gallu ei wneud i hyrwyddo hynny? Pe bai cyfrifoldeb Llywodraeth Cymru dros reilffyrdd yn gliriach, fel y mae yn achos bysiau, a fyddai integreiddio gwell? Stella?

Lord Elis-Thomas: As someone who has the privilege of representing the Conwy Valley railway, as well as the Cambrian line, one of the issues that is something of a crusade for me is the effective and efficient interchange between buses and trains. We had an interesting conversation with the bus users a little earlier about that. What can you do to promote that? If the Welsh Government's responsibility for railways were clearer, as it is in the case of buses, would there be better integration? Stella?

[160] **Ms Thomas:** Diolch iti, Dafydd.

Ms Thomas: Thank you, Dafydd.

[161] **Nick Ramsay:** No pressure, Stella. *[Laughter.]*

[162] **Ms Thomas:** Yes, no pressure. *[Laughter.]* It is always a great shock to me—no, a surprise; I am not shocked any more, because you see it too often—how far buses are located from trains. You get to a train station and think, 'Where is the bus?' There is often a long walk. One area—

[163] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** Llandudno Junction station is not too bad.

[164] **Ms Thomas:** It is not too bad, no. If I were sitting on your side of the fence, I would be looking at land ownership. For instance, Network Rail owns a lot of land around Cardiff Central station, and I know that the bus station project, which has gone back to square one, involved using a lot of Network Rail land. So, if you are in a position to look at integrating bus and rail journeys, I would suggest that those termini need to be brought together. They are not together in many places, and that does not encourage people who have to walk with heavy bags, or in the rain or in the dark from one form of public transport onto another.

[165] **Byron Davies:** I am a great advocate of parkways as transport hubs. Do you have any feedback from passengers on that issue? Do they like them?

[166] **Mr Sidebottom:** They do. The challenge is car parking—or the lack of it. It is about keeping pace with demand. We all know that rail patronage is growing. It is at a record high since the second world war et cetera, but that brings its challenges. It is about developing car parking and affordability, but also about getting to the station. If you can get there at 7.30 a.m. rather than at 8.30 a.m., you can get a space, so you need that local knowledge. As Stella rightly says, it is about great utilisation, as Network Rail owns a lot of land.

[167] **Byron Davies:** However, if we had the bus services right, we could get rid of the cars and people could get to the transport hubs.

[168] **Mr Sidebottom:** Yes, and if we made things easy. Although it does not suit everybody, if you are using the developments in smart technology for ticketing, people can

get the ticket on their phone, and can go straight on the bus with the same ticket. It has to be seamless. You have to incentivise people to make that connection. People will not just do it; they have to be incentivised to do it.

[169] **Byron Davies:** Are they interested in that?

[170] **Mr Sidebottom:** Yes, absolutely.

[171] **Mr Beer:** A good example of making the most of the opportunity for innovation is East Midlands Parkway station. It is just off the motorway and it has a large car park. Where it also has an advantage is that Stagecoach brings its long-haul Megabus coach service there, and its passengers can transfer onto a train and continue their journey into London. If you are looking for the TrawsCymru service to call at parkway stations, that would join longer journeys up, when people are travelling further.

[172] **Ms Thomas:** On the development of coach and bus stations, we recently looked—and I speak wearing the mantle of the public transport user committee for Wales, of which I am a member—at what has happened at Aberystwyth. It seems to us that the last people to be thought of there were the passengers. The consultations were not particularly thorough. For instance, they forgot to order shelters for passengers, and the pathways for passengers look positively dangerous at the moment. There are elementary things like that to sort out.

[173] On public transport and transferring from buses and cars to mainline trains, work has been done in the Valleys in particular to extend car parks. I park at Taff's Well, and the parking available there has doubled in the past few years, so it now has around 160 spaces, I think, but it still gets full and it is difficult to get a space there after 8 a.m.. There are problems with buses to rural areas—or even to the outskirts of Cardiff. I live within the Cardiff area, at Gwaelod-y-garth, and we have only eight buses a day. The first bus this morning could not bring me here in time, so I had to travel by car, which was a huge mistake as most of the roads were flooded. There are huge problems, even within the capital city of Wales, to get about on public transport. These things have to be addressed, as it really is just not good enough.

[174] **Nick Ramsay:** You should live in my village, or Joyce's. It is even tougher. I was interested in your point about bus stations being near railway stations. Planners often talk about the need for that, but it is a different matter when it comes to sanctioning developments. In Newport a few years ago, there was a space near the railway station, and yet the bus station is still some way off.

[175] We have two minutes left. Does anybody have any final questions?

[176] **David Rees:** Historically, most bus stations tend to be near the town centres and railway stations tend to be a bit further away. Do you have discussions with bus operators to ensure that there are links between railway stations and bus stations? We do not want people to walk to the bus station; we want to make sure that buses stop at railway stations and move on. In my parkway, you could not get a bus in there to turn around. Hopefully, the new one might, but it is on the other side of the railway line, which causes more problems. Do you have discussions with operators to ensure that link, so that someone can get off a train and get on a bus that takes them to the bus station easily?

[177] **Mr Sidebottom:** Yes. Sadly, part of our bus passenger work is currently restricted to working within England outside of London, so it does not do national work. That said, we learn and share the results of our bus passenger survey and we share those results. This is more about how passengers rate those connections and the current service. We try to share those results with others. We work closely with Margaret and her organisation in Wales as

well as with Bus Users UK in England, to help share that with them.

11.00 a.m.

[178] **Eluned Parrott:** On overcrowding, which I do not think that we have touched on much today, the service that I use most frequently, the Vale of Glamorgan line, is badly affected. To what extent is overcrowding a disincentive for people to travel, particularly those with disabilities or those who take bicycles on trains?

[179] **Mr Sidebottom:** We have done work with people who are not currently passengers, asking them about the barriers to use. For disabled passengers, the fear of getting on a train to commute is huge—having the space and dignity in terms of how they are treated on that journey.

[180] **Ms Thomas:** We talk about disabled passengers, but many passengers are not disabled, but are not fully fit and need a bit of help. They might be young mothers with pushchairs or slightly elderly people who need that extra help; you cannot see them as being disabled. The problem is greater than it is defined by statistics. Overcrowding is a huge problem, which we have all experienced. I had an unhappy experience travelling from Manchester last week. It felt like we were cattle being herded rather than passengers being treated properly; it is just not good enough that people have to stand for an hour or two and that the conductor does not have room to get through the train. There are only two cars on the train from Manchester to Cardiff at 3.30 p.m., taking on all of the commuter traffic on the borders. It is unacceptable.

[181] **Joyce Watson:** I think that the final destination of the Manchester train that you were on is Milford Haven, because it is the Milford Haven train. I have heard very little today about rural transport and our experiences. When you measure experiences as ‘good’, ‘indifferent’ or ‘satisfactory’, do you start from a base of asking people what they might expect or hope for rather than measuring what they get? There is a big difference. They might say, ‘Yes, this is wonderful, because it actually turned up’, or ‘The service is amazing and we are grateful that we have a train or a bus’—most of them no longer have buses, by the way. That is where I am coming from. It is all about the reality of the situation, and I am frustrated about what I have heard this morning because we are not looking at that reality. Are we measuring what people need and what they would like to have against what they have got—

[182] **Nick Ramsay:** That is a rather existential question. Be as succinct as you like—reality or otherwise.

[183] **Mr Sidebottom:** Every three years, we repeat our passenger-priorities-for-improvement work. We give passengers a range of facts and they tell us what is important by ranking them. That looks at a mix of rural and urban travel.

[184] **Mr Beer:** We are also working with local authorities—we produced a toolkit for them on running consultations. For example, where local authorities are pressed for cash, before they make any cuts or reduce bus services, we ask them to go out. We have identified consultation best practice for them to work to so that they make informed decisions about the steps that they take with regard to what journeys passengers will be able to make.

[185] **Nick Ramsay:** I thank Stella Mair Thomas, David Sidebottom and David Beer for being witnesses to the committee today. That was very helpful. Managing three witnesses sometimes proves tricky, but you were succinct and clear, so thank you for your evidence. We will feed that into our inquiry and feed back any information in due course.

Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 11.04 a.m. ac 11.14 a.m.

The meeting adjourned between 11.04 a.m. and 11.14 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Drafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport—Evidence Session

[186] **Nick Ramsay:** Welcome back, Members. We will follow through with our inquiry into integrated public transport in Wales for the remainder of this morning's session of the Enterprise and Business Committee. I welcome our witnesses. Thank you for being with us today to help out with our investigation. Would you like to give your names and positions for the record?

[187] **Mr Waters:** I am Lee Waters, national director of Sustrans Cymru.

[188] **Mr Williams:** My name is Allan Williams, policy adviser for Sustrans.

[189] **Nick Ramsay:** We have a number of questions for you, so I propose that we get straight into those. The first question is from David Rees.

[190] **David Rees:** Good morning, both. In your paper, you discuss the considerable risk of transport poverty as a major concern, particularly among the Welsh population. You even highlight, if I remember rightly, the fact that car owners are now having great difficulty, because of the high cost of both fuel and the maintenance of cars, thus increasing the possibility that more people will use public transport. Will you discuss what you view as being the social and economic impact of the current transport policy in Wales?

[191] **Mr Waters:** I think that it is worth setting out the context. Welsh transport policy, for many decades, certainly since the inception of the Assembly, has prioritised investment in roads, the free flow of traffic and decreasing journey times for car passengers and drivers. The majority of transport capital spending and spending overall has gone into car policy. We are all familiar with the concept of fuel poverty—if you spend 10% of your household income on heating your home, you are said to be in fuel poverty—yet we know that 20% of those on the lowest incomes spend a quarter of their income on the cost of running a car, but there is no similar concept of transport poverty. There is no strategy or plan, and it is not recognised in official policy. Many of these people are forced, in effect, to get into debt to run a car in order to access work and key services.

[192] We did some work with Citizens Advice, Age Cymru and Save the Children in Wales to look at the analysis of car ownership. We know that a quarter of all households in Wales do not have a car and, in Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent, about 36% of the average population in those counties do not have a car, yet transport policy, primarily in terms of investment decisions, is about making it easier to get around by car. So, we looked at a series of figures: income levels, how many people live in a certain area, how long it would take them to access key services by bus, train, walking or cycling, and whether it would take them more than an hour. We looked at the data of people who live more than a mile from bus or train stops. With that basket of measurements—which is a finger in the air approach, really; we are not claiming it as a scientific exercise—we had a snapshot and found that half of the population of Wales, more than 1.5 million people, were found to be at serious risk of transport poverty and being cut off from key services. Yet, year on year, we prioritise money for cars. That, in effect, compounds people's dependence on cars.

[193] This continues: we are told that bus funding will be cut, that the active travel Bill will not require any further money, yet £40 million is being set aside to dual the Heads of the Valleys road, even though more than a third of the people in those areas do not have a car. So, transport poverty has been a silent problem. It exists. Our approach to policy compounds it,

and I fear that it will get worse with the cuts to bus subsidies that you have already been hearing about.

[194] **Kenneth Skates:** Turning to personalised travel planning, I note that, on average, travel planning reduces car use by 11%. Do you think that there is scope for delivering this in rural areas as much as in urban areas?

[195] **Mr Waters:** Yes, absolutely. Personalised travel planning is a very interesting approach, because it is a social-marketing-based approach and it is heavily based on research. It is based on an Australian model that has been used heavily in Europe and by over 5 million households around the world. The Cardiff project, which we are running with the Welsh Government, is the largest of its kind in the UK to date. The basic principle is that research shows that there are two main barriers preventing people from using their cars less. The first is a lack of information about alternatives. So, people typically do not know the times of the buses or the location of the bus stop closest to their house, for example—I count myself among them—and people have false perceptions about relative journey times. So, people think that it is quicker to go by car from A to B than it is, and people think that it takes longer to get from A to B by bus than it actually does. It addresses the twin problems of lack of information and perception by targeting information at people. It does not preach. It is about going to households, door to door, and asking ‘Would you like information about the nearest bus stop?’ and we produce a personalised bus timetable. Interestingly, one of the most commonly requested pieces of information is a local map. Bizarrely—and this is true across the country—people are not familiar with their own area. They do not know where the local cycle paths are or what the most direct route through residential streets is, and they often do not know where the bus stops are, because they are conditioned to go from A to B by car.

[196] Data show us that 90% of journeys in Cardiff are local journeys within Cardiff. More than 60% of those are currently made by car. We have simple journey patterns. Typically, we make three journeys a day that start and end at home. We travel slowly for local journeys, yet we make them by car. Personalised travel planning tries to sweat the existing asset. It is not about providing extra services; it is about saying that there are buses and that there is a viable active travel alternative—‘Here is some information’.

[197] It achieves results of roughly between 10% and 14% reduction in car use and a significant increase in bus use. We hope to see, as has happened previously, an 18% increase in bus use, a 49% increase in cycle use, and a 13% increase in walking, simply by making a very small change. On average, that works out, per household, as switching one car journey a week. It is not a radical change.

[198] Very much as was the case with recycling, we start off small. If somebody had told me 10 years ago that I would have to separate my paper, glass and plastic, I would have said ‘That is too inconvenient; I am not going to do that’. However, by starting little by little, I am now an obsessive recycler. I seek out stray bits of cardboard and plastic and go out in my underwear in the small hours of the morning to make sure that every last bit of recycling is gathered. *[Laughter.]* The principle of behaviour change and the dynamic that we move on is similar. By giving people better information and by helping them on that journey, it can be done.

[199] Rural areas present different challenges. We have done it in rural areas. It is less cost effective, because the catchment areas are smaller, but the principle is the same. Even in rural areas, a large number of journeys are local and currently made by car, but they do not have to be made by car.

[200] **Kenneth Skates:** Have you found that, once people have their personalised plans, they are able to update them themselves, or does the issue need to be revisited?

[201] **Mr Waters:** It is about opening their eyes to the alternatives. For example, in Cardiff, in partnership with Cardiff Bus, we give people who are not regular public transport users a free bus pass for a week and encourage them to try the bus. The principle is that, once they have started, they then think that it is not a bad way of getting around—‘I had not realised that it was so quick and convenient’—and they start to do it more.

[202] We do a baseline survey, which we have done for Cardiff, to establish the current patterns. We then do a follow-up survey a year on—we will publish that next month. Then we do a follow-up survey a year after that, to see what the scale of change is. There are examples where this is done on a rolling basis, such as in Australia—they are constantly doing personalised travel planning, because they can see its cost effectiveness and impact. That has not been done in the UK to date.

[203] **Kenneth Skates:** Are you able to quantify the cost effectiveness?

[204] **Mr Waters:** The cost is £20 to £25 per household, which, for a 10% to 14% reduction in car use, is good value. If you were looking at an infrastructure intervention to achieve a similar reduction in the level of car use, you would be looking at many times that amount. It falls into the ‘smarter choices’ basket of measures. We know, from analysis done by the Department for Transport and the World Health Organization, that the cost benefits for all smarter choice interventions are significant. There is a minimum £4 return for a £1 investment and, when health impacts are taken into account, it can be up to a £9 return for a £1 investment. If you compare that with a road or rail scheme, they often struggle to pay back their own investment. It is a very cost-effective intervention. It is about spending existing money more sensibly. It is not about extra services. There are empty bus seats; it is about filling them.

[205] **Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas:** Yn ein cwestiynau i'r tystion eraill y bore yma, rydym wedi bod yn trafod cyfnewid ac integreiddio rhwng bysiau a threnau a pharodrwydd pobl i newid eu modd o deithio. Ym mha ffordd y byddai eich cynllun trafnidiaeth cyhoeddus yn help i hynny ddigwydd yn fwy effeithiol?

Lord Elis-Thomas: In our questions to other witnesses this morning, we have been discussing interchange and integration between buses and trains and people's willingness to change their mode of transport. How would your public transport plan assist that to happen more effectively?

[206] **Mr Waters:** All that the project we operate does is give people better information. That does not remove the real barriers they face, because it is about tackling the barriers of perception and helping people to navigate what can be a complicated system that they may not be used to. There are real barriers to integrated transport. It is a seductive notion and a simple idea, but as you have seen from the written evidence that you have had it is a devilishly complicated thing to achieve. The legislative and regulatory structure that we have does not help that. I was struck by Professor Stuart Cole's evidence to you on the fact that the Welsh Government has only a national responsibility for roads; it does not have a national responsibility for public transport. That is a responsibility for local authorities, and only a local authority can enter into a quality bus contract, even though few of them have.

[207] The Richard commission talked about jagged edges. It strikes me that there are an awful lot of jagged edges in integrated transport. The governance, ownership and regulation structures do not help and the relative investment decisions that we have made mean that funding available for non-car-based modes has been less plentiful. The further thing to throw into the mix is the distinction between capital and revenue funding. It is a fairly opaque part of Government but, in terms of funding for public transport, it is a real barrier. Given the large subsidy for concessionary fares and the even larger subsidy for Arriva Trains Wales,

there is little revenue subsidy available in the transport budget. Therefore, it is easier to build things and to build roads than it is to run things. That is a significant structural impediment. I do not know whether you would like to add to that, Allan.

[208] **Mr Williams:** On a practical level, the issue of interchange that you mention is an important one. Lots of things can deter users from using public transport, including the quality of information. If people know that there is a delay in making an interchange between two trains or between a bus and a train, that can be a really significant impediment to them changing their travel behaviour. It is an important issue at the policy level and, perhaps, it is a key issue at the practical level. Enabling individual users to achieve integrated journeys where there are no excessive delays, where they can transfer easily between different modes, including active travel, is important to them.

[209] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** If you had one offer to improve the national transport plan, what would it be?

[210] **Mr Waters:** The active travel Bill presents a real opportunity because we know from the research that a large number of journeys are soft targets. Most car journeys are short; for example, 20% of car journeys are for less than a mile. There is huge potential to shift people away from cars. There are journeys that we all used to make by foot and by bike a generation ago that we now routinely make by car. That is causing huge knock-on congestion. We did a piece of work with the Institute of Directors when the schools came back after the holidays to point out the business case for easing congestion. We found that 20% of all car journeys at 8.50 a.m. are school related. That is adding significantly to the rush-hour traffic when it need not be happening. There is a strong business case for tackling congestion through reducing travel to school by car.

[211] The active travel Bill presents a huge opportunity. At the moment, we are concerned that there will not be sufficient funding to fully realise its potential. The delivery and governance mechanisms are severely lacking to make the most of it. We have an opportunity here: we are going to have a law. We know from the evidence that there is some low-hanging fruit there that can make a significant difference, and not just in transport. One of the criticisms that we have is that to achieve integrated transport you need integrated policy and integrated government, and that is why it is easier to achieve than it is to say.

[212] **Nick Ramsay:** *[Inaudible]*

[213] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** It is a good line, though.

[214] **Nick Ramsay:** It is not that easy to say either.

[215] **Mr Waters:** Clearly not. One of the benefits of tackling active travel is that we are bringing benefits to other parts of the Government's agenda, most notably to health, but also to education. One of the silo barriers that we currently have is the journey to school. Education departments have no role in the journey to school; that is the responsibility of the transport department. That is true at the Welsh Government level and the local authority level. It is about cutting through those false barriers to try to deliver a win that will benefit everybody.

11.30 a.m.

[216] **Byron Davies:** I do not want to oversimplify things, and I agree with a lot of what you say, particularly about getting cars and other vehicles off the road. However, coming back to the point about the rurality of Wales and the difficulty in some areas—I am thinking of some out-of-the-way areas in Carmarthenshire, such as Trelech and Meidrim—if people

have to go to hospital for a 9 a.m. appointment, on a day like this, the car is essential, and we have to accept that.

[217] **Mr Waters:** I am not suggesting that we have a one-size-fits-all approach to transport for all parts of Wales. Clearly, if you live in a deep rural area, there are significant challenges, but it is not beyond the wit of man to address them.

[218] **Byron Davies:** That is the challenge, is it not?

[219] **Mr Waters:** Absolutely. However, most people do not live in areas like that, and we should not use the fact that the car is the only practical means for some people as an excuse. To confront the fact, the evidence is overwhelming that, for most people in Wales for most journeys, there is an alternative. Under existing conditions and with further investment, those alternatives can be made more viable. Wales is not unique in having rural areas. The Netherlands, for example, has many rural areas and it has a very effective public transport and an active travel system. I would hate for us to not tackle the low-hanging fruit that I referred to, which is doable, just because somebody in Trelech, for example, cannot do it.

[220] **Nick Ramsay:** Do you think that, ultimately, it is all doable or would you accept that, going back to Byron's question, there are certain pockets where it would be very difficult to ever achieve the public transport integration that you would like to see?

[221] **Mr Waters:** Inevitably, there are diminishing returns in all policies. I am sure that, for some journeys, the car is the only viable option. We know that, for example, from our research in towns, it is only for something like 9% of journeys in Cardiff that the car is the only viable option.

[222] **Byron Davies:** Sorry, what was the percentage?

[223] **Mr Waters:** It is for only 9% of journeys—this is within urban settings, I grant—that the car is the only viable option. For example, you are taking your aunty Mary to the hospital and you have to pick up a bag of cement on the way home—you need a car for that. However, roughly a third of journeys in Cardiff are already made via sustainable transport—2% by bike and 26% by foot. The research shows that a further third is currently made by car, but where there is a viable alternative—there is a bus service or a realistic walking or cycling route. In a further third, it is only practical at the moment to use the car, but there could well be a sustainable transport solution if there were more investment and more frequent bus services, or more cycle lanes, for example.

[224] The work that we are doing in Cardiff is focusing on that third where there is no existing alternative. However, the evidence shows that, with investment, there are far more journeys where you could switch from using the car. There is a small amount where the car will be the only practical option. Clearly, in rural areas, that percentage is higher. However, in those areas, many outlying villages are within easy reach of market towns. There are examples of walking and cycling paths that link up rural hamlets to the market town. So, I do not accept, even in deep rural areas, that you have to use the car for every journey. Clearly, people's circumstances differ, but we need to be looking at what is possible rather than what is not possible.

[225] **Mr Williams:** Just to build on those points, Lee mentioned the potential that exists for improving services as well. It is worth noting that, in Bristol for instance, there have been co-ordinated programmes of investment in public transport and the smarter choices side. The work there has shown that, where investment is co-ordinated and by investing in just public transport, there has been a 12% increase in one year in public transport use. If you do smarter choices measures alongside that, you have a 25% increase. So, it is worth co-ordinating these

approaches if there is additional investment.

[226] **Nick Ramsay:** I remember having a representation from a constituent on the siting of the new critical care centre in Cwmbran, which said that it should be next to the railway line because, in future, ambulances would be on rails. I thought that that was an example of thinking outside the box. Byron, have you finished your line of questioning, or did you want to go on to regional transport consortia?

[227] **Byron Davies:** Yes, I will go on to that. Within the Sustrans context, how do you view the effectiveness of the regional transport consortia?

[228] **Mr Waters:** I would say that they are patchy. I think that the model is flawed, but I do not think that there is a perfect model. The main challenge that the current voluntary arrangement has is the matter of how you can be sure that you make strategic decisions. For example—I have real-life examples, but I will just give a hypothetical example now—in our context, in terms of active travel, there is a limited sum for walking and cycling next year. There is a case for a strategic bridge to be put in at a key point, which would cost £1 million. That would require the whole budget for that region. The strategic decision would be to invest in that bridge, but in line with how they currently work, the inevitable critical imperative would be to make sure that everyone has a little bit of something. So, strategic judgments are not made; the money is shared around to make sure that everyone feels that they are getting a slice of the cake. That is a really difficult constraint if we are to take a strategic view of how we address the transport problems that we have. I could cite examples in each of the consortia of such decisions. I do not think that a joint transport authority is a panacea, largely because I do not think that many people know what it means. It is one of these phrases that are bandied around, such as integrated transport. Everyone nods sagely and thinks, ‘That sounds like a good idea’; but when you start to unpick what people mean by that and what people understand by that, I think that it then becomes very difficult.

[229] Also, in the light of yesterday’s announcement by the Minister for education on potentially taking education responsibilities from local authorities, and to come back to the point about needing integrated policies, there is a danger that transport will go off in one direction to make up JTAs around city regions and education will go in a different area with local government reform, which will mean that we make a fragmented system even more fragmented. There is a need, as we look at the structure of delivery for local government, to think about the implications of this in transport and whole-benefit terms. My worry about the current debate, because there is a lack of understanding of what it means, is that this will get lost.

[230] There is a further issue, not just about structures, but about skills and capacities. There is a significant limit, certainly in terms of active travel, but also in sustainable travel more generally. Until 15 years ago, the transport division of the Welsh Government was the roads department of the Welsh Office. That culture has changed, but it is still there, particularly in terms of the staff mix. Getting an organogram out of the transport department is something that I have failed to do in the last five years, so we do not fully know the staff mix that it has. However, I suspect, based on my experience, that there is still a heavy bias towards road engineers. There has been a conscious attempt to address that over the last couple of years, and there is now a new senior team in the transport division that has a different skills mix in terms of rail and travel planning, which is welcome. It will take time to trickle through. However, at the Welsh Government level, the skill set needed to take forward integrated transport is simply not there, and it is particularly true of rail. The capacity to do it simply is not there. At local authority level, there is a lot of experience in terms of buses, but there is very little experience in terms of active travel. So, that is a significant challenge that we face in turning this rhetoric into a reality, and it is one that is conscious in my mind with the active travel Bill, because we can issue statements and have policies—and we do have

some good policies; the national transport plan says all the right things—but in terms of ever making that a reality, there are significant barriers in the way.

[231] **Byron Davies:** So, you are actually accusing the Government of failing to take on board environmental issues.

[232] **Mr Waters:** It is also true of the Department for Transport in London. I think that there is a strong orthodox culture within the transport profession based on the fact that its members have been trained to build roads. When you walk along the corridors of the transport department you will see some lovely photographs of motorways, dual carriageways and bridges, because that is what they do; that is where they get their professional pleasure and satisfaction. That is not a criticism; there is a role for that. However, if we are going to translate worthy sentiments about integration into realities, that is an element we need to consider, and there is a slight danger that we run away with the silver bullet of JTAs without addressing who the people at the front end are who will make this happen, and there is an issue around skills and capacity.

[233] **Eluned Parrott:** Transport policy has the ability to support policy in a range of other areas—active travel links to health, for example—but it can also support sustainable development, economic development and so forth. You talked about barriers to delivering the kind of impact that we would want to see. How can we actively overcome some of those barriers?

[234] **Mr Waters:** One of the suggestions that we have put forward in our written evidence was for a transport plan that, as well as looking at the governance and the regulatory and the statutory limitations, would also look what Allan referred to as the end-to-end journey, and to do an analysis of how people travel. What is severely lacking at the moment is the perspective of the user. I am told, for example, that train companies cannot provide carriage on trains for bikes because the infrastructure simply is not there: when they order their carriages there is no room, they cannot provide facilities at train stations unless the Welsh Government gives them extra money. The same applies for buses. We are not looking at the whole journey, which is how passengers travel.

[235] The in-vogue solution is to build park-and-ride facilities. We have spent tens of millions of pounds over the last few years on park-and-ride facilities to try to help integration, and these are simply car parks. Most people who travel by train live within a short distance of the local train station, and yet we are encouraging them to drive there. So, we are building these very expensive car parks, which are very quickly filling up, which, it seems to me, just shifts the problem. It takes up a huge amount of public spending, but does not really address the issue. We are not looking, for example, for safe routes to stations in the way that we looked for safe routes to schools. There is a project in England doing just that, which perhaps Allan can say a little about.

[236] **Mr Williams:** Nationally, 85% of journeys to rail stations are under five miles and 65% are below 1 mile—that is across the UK, I should say. So, these are distances that can be easily walked or cycled—

[237] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** That is internationally.

[238] **Mr Williams:** Yes, I apologise. So, these are distances that can easily be walked or cycled by most people, and the evidence is that investing in walking and cycling links to stations can be extremely effective in increasing journey-time reliability, which is a key factor for people. It removes the anxieties about interchanges that were mentioned earlier. There are benefits to businesses, as it enables people to commute more by walking, cycling and rail. The evidence from some of the programmes that we have begun to run suggests that really

significant numbers of people would move from using a car to using a combination of walking, cycling and the train were there better integration of those modes.

[239] **Eluned Parrott:** To follow up on that, is the problem or barrier one of communication between different delivery organisations or are there other barriers that are preventing progress on these kinds of issues?

[240] **Mr Williams:** TravelineCymru suggests, for instance, that one of the issues is information; it is about people being aware of what exists. TravelineCymru demonstrates that providing better information enables people to change. However, there are also practical issues about parking in stations—we know that 20 bikes can fit into one car parking space, and the land taken and the costs associated with providing parking for bikes are far less than for car parking, for instance. So, there is a range of practical issues, as well as information.

[241] **Mr Waters:** It is not simply about communication; it is systemic. We have developed a piecemeal approach to transport in Wales and have never really done a whole-system analysis. For example, I have talked to bus operators who will ask, ‘Why should we detour our bus service to the train station in order to link up to the train?’ because, they say, ‘Well, that’s not convenient for us, that’s not where we want to send our route and that’s not where the passengers already on the bus want to go, so why should we do it?’ There is nothing to tell them that they should do it, because of the barriers that we have already touched on. The barriers go way beyond communication.

11.45 a.m.

[242] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gennyf un cwestiwn ynglŷn â’r sylw a wnaethoch yn gynharach ynglŷn â chwmnïau trên yn dweud nad oes modd iddynt gael coetsys sydd yn gallu cario beiciau. Mae trenau newydd yn Iwerddon, ac, yn sicr, mae lle i rai beiciau ar y trenau hynny—trenau sy’n teithio pellter hir ydynt. Ar y cyfandir, mewn rhai gwledydd, yn sicr, mae lle am ddwsin o feiciau neu’n fwy ar y trenau. Felly, beth yw’r anhawster ynglŷn â chael coetsys felly ym Mhrydain? A yw ond yn fater o ddiffyg arfer, ac felly nad oes galw?

Alun Ffred Jones: I have one question in relation to a comment you made earlier about train operators saying that they cannot get carriages that can carry bikes. There are new trains in Ireland, and there is certainly room for some bikes on those trains—they are long-distance trains. On the continent, in some countries, certainly, there is room for a dozen or more bikes on trains. So, what is the difficulty in getting such carriages in Britain? Is it just a matter of not being used to it, and so there is not the demand?

[243] **Mr Waters:** That is a chicken-and-egg situation, in part. It is very difficult to generate demand when you are limited to having two bikes per train at the guard’s discretion, which is the current position. The train companies will simply say that, when they bought their trains, they were not required to be designed to carry bikes. The old carriages on the InterCity 125 still have a guard’s van that you can put bikes on, but most trains do not. I take your point that it is not beyond the wit of man to come up with a franchising system that requires train companies to have carriages that can take bikes, and that is certainly true on the continent. There are other ways around it. It is about interchange at stations—making it easy and safe to leave a bike at the station so that you can take the second leg of the journey by train, which is something that I often do. There is also the provision of hire bikes—the Netherlands, for example, has made huge investments in what are effectively multi-storey car parks for bikes at train stations, and in a very easy-to-use bike hire system that you can use your train ticket to access. We have not made any significant efforts in that direction. There was a small scheme set up in Cardiff with sustainable travel centre funding, but it was almost set up to fail, really—it was set up to become self-financing after two years, the company that ran it made no serious efforts to expand it, and, because of the way that the sustainable travel

centres were set up, there was no ongoing funding for it. We seem to have given up on it just when it was beginning to catch on in Cardiff. So, bike hire schemes that are easy to use and that can use integrated ticketing at stations are a short-term way in which we can address what we need to address in the longer term through franchising and the way that the infrastructure and carriages are designed.

[244] **David Rees:** Lee, once again your passion for the subject is coming through in your responses. You will be pleased to hear that I asked the Minister yesterday to ensure that the integration of transport services is something that will be looked at when looking at education services. So, transport will, hopefully, be included in that.

[245] Moving on to the issue of planning policy in particular, 'Planning Policy Wales' actually says that local authorities should promote public transport as a means

[246] 'to achieve environmental objectives, to assist in relieving congestion, and to encourage social inclusion'.

[247] Is this being seen on the ground?

[248] **Mr Williams:** Our experience is that public transport and integrated transport are often considered very late in the development process, both for residential and commercial developments. Active travel—walking and cycling—is usually not considered at all. It is much too late, once you have built an out-of-town shopping centre or a housing development on the edge of a bypass, to consider those in a proper way. We often have complaints from public transport operators that the first time they are consulted is when the houses are built and somebody wants them to build a bus stop. It takes, on average, two to three years to provide a new bus service from start to finish, and it is far too late once the houses have been built to do anything more than simply provide another bus stop. We have worked with developers in a number of places in England on new housing developments, doing such things as making sure that new developments are permeable by walking and cycling, and making sure that when people move in—which offers a key opportunity to influence people's travel behaviour, because they are making changes anyway—they get the information about the services that are available, and that that is planned into the development. It needs to be considered at a really early stage when things are being planned, in terms of their location, and how they will be accessible, and where people are likely to work. If that is done, the evidence from elsewhere in Europe suggests that that can be really effective in influencing people's travel behaviour.

[249] **Mr Waters:** The active travel Bill is designed to do just that—as part of the planning process, there will be a network of routes identified that will be required to be developed as developments come on stream. We need to make sure that that has teeth, however, and that the planning Bill, as it is being developed, addresses some of the issues that are thrown up by this.

[250] **David Rees:** While the active travel Bill will force local authorities to give this more consideration, and the planning Bill will, hopefully, look at that, in the meantime, what steps can we take to ensure that local authorities and planning authorities follow 'Planning Policy Wales' guidance? Is there any position that the Welsh Government can take to enforce that requirement?

[251] **Mr Waters:** I guess that the crudest way to do it is to tie it to funding: to make sure that, when Welsh Government funding is given, it is given against certain criteria. In terms of walking and cycling, there is often more that can be done there. The conditions attached to the funding are quite loose. For example, one of the key things, we think, in terms of influencing future planning, is having a good evidence base and having monitoring and evaluation built

into schemes, so that you know how people travel, where they are going and where the popular routes are. At the moment, for funding given by the Welsh Government for walking and cycling, there is no requirement to monitor and so local authorities do not know how many people are using the routes, or, often, where the routes are. It is simple to do. When we built a scheme, for example, we put in an automatic counter so that we could capture data. That often does not happen when Welsh Government funding is used. So, there are things that can be done in the short term.

[252] **Nick Ramsay:** Just out of interest, the Government said in Plenary yesterday that there are no plans for a review of technical advice note 18, which looks at the links between land-use provision, local authorities and transport. Do you think that, with the active travel Bill, there will be a need to look at technical advice notes such as TAN 18 or do you see those as being completely separate?

[253] **Mr Waters:** Well, I suppose that, by placing a statutory duty on local authorities, they are, effectively, amending it as they go along, so it will create a new reality.

[254] **David Rees:** So, in a sense, TAN 18 will become enforceable, effectively.

[255] **Mr Waters:** The trouble with technical advice notes, as Allan has suggested, is that they say all the right things, but they are just a number of considerations that have to be taken into account. The reality is that the people at the coalface, who are making the decisions, do what they know. So, as a small example to make a broader point, in terms of the design of infrastructure for active travel, we know that there is lots of good practice available, but often the engineers involved are designing to a different set of standards, because the good practice is guidance, they have guidance coming out of their ears, they are not trained in guidance and they have not got time to read it, so what they implement is what they know and what they know is 20 years out of date and often not fit for purpose. That is the problem with TANs; it is lovely and hard to disagree with, but it is often not what happens on the ground.

[256] **David Rees:** I have one final point in that case. Local development plans are coming through as well, which clearly identify the way in which authorities are developing land in their areas. Do you have an input into the LDPs in the authorities?

[257] **Mr Waters:** No. We are not named in ‘Planning Policy Wales’, so local authorities are not required to consult with us—some will, but most will not. The LDP process is a key opportunity, especially in terms of safeguarding land for routes. I must say that your local authority in Neath Port Talbot is one of the only ones of which I am aware that, in drawing up its LDP, has included walking and cycling in its future provision planning. I would hope that, in the next iteration, because of the active travel Bill, all local authorities will be doing that. They are not doing so currently, however, because they are not required to do so.

[258] **Nick Ramsay:** We have seven minutes left and a few questions, so please could Members be succinct? Alun Ffred Jones is next, with questions on active travel.

[259] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Efallai’ch bod wedi ateb hwn eisoes, ond er mwyn cydlynu beicio a cherdded gyda gwasanaethau trên a bysiau, beth sydd angen digwydd? Beth dydych chi’n meddwl yw’r blaenoriaethau? **Alun Ffred Jones:** You might have answered this already, but in order to co-ordinate cycling and walking with train and bus services, what needs to happen? What do you think are the priorities?

[260] **Mr Waters:** I think, as we have said, that the concept of the end-to-end journey needs to be hard-wired into transport policy and planning. There needs to be provision of secure bike parking at bus stations. In England, for example, ‘hubs’ have been developed—perhaps you could say something about that, Allan—where you have bike maintenance, bike

hire and a secure parking centre, so that people can easily interchange. There are issues about interchanging between buses and bikes, for example, where the regulations and laws governing driver behaviour make it very difficult for bikes to be allowed on buses. Some buses, such as the TrawsCambria, had the capacity for bike racks, but only very few stations had the health and safety guidance that allowed them to be put on. The bus driver has to physically leave the cab to put them on and they are not allowed to do that while the engine is running. However, if they switch the engine off, it takes several minutes for it to be turned back on, which interrupts the timetable, and so bus companies are very reluctant to do it.

[261] Some common sense needs to be applied to make it easier in rural areas for bikes and buses to be a more practical multimodal option and, in urban areas, for the planning of interchanges for active travel to be thought through as to how they can link up.

[262] **Byron Davies:** The amazing thing is that they manage to do it in France; they do it very well in terms of buses and bikes.

[263] **Nick Ramsay:** I see that there is no comment on that. You seemed to have silenced the committee with that point, Byron; I am not sure why.

[264] **Mr Waters:** I am just trying to save you time.

[265] **Eluned Parrott:** What is your view on the role of community transport in helping to achieve greater integration of public transport in Wales?

[266] **Mr Williams:** Community transport has a key role to play; it cannot entirely replace conventional bus services, but some evidence suggests that community transport is one of the existing resources that can be better deployed. For instance, technology has been used elsewhere to co-ordinate existing services such as council vehicles, community bus services, existing conventional bus services, people who are volunteer drivers, school bus services and post buses. All of those existing resources could be co-ordinated better through the use of new technology. So, community transport has a key role to play, but it is only part of the mix and there is no way that community transport on its own can address all the gaps that exist in current provision.

[267] **Nick Ramsay:** There is time for one more question. Joyce Watson, do you want to come in?

[268] **Joyce Watson:** You have answered the question I was going to ask, which was about funding. I am going to ask another question about the visibility of cyclists where they have to go alongside traffic. How do you see the management of cyclists and car drivers or bus operators when they are running alongside each other? I have seen some rather scary instances on both sides—they are pretty terrifying to watch. How do you think that you can better provide a safer route for both, not just the car driver or the cyclist, but both?

[269] **Mr Waters:** That could give rise to a very long and complicated answer, and I am conscious of the time restrictions.

[270] **Nick Ramsay:** You have three minutes.

[271] **Mr Waters:** The simple answer is that there needs to be better infrastructure provision, and it goes back to the point that I made earlier about design. For example, cycle lanes at the moment are often very poorly designed, very narrow, they pass parked cars and there are cars parked in them, so it does not make cyclists feel safe to cycle in them. There can be conflict: in London, for example, a number of women have been killed by large vehicles and buses because they are squeezed into the side lane because the infrastructure is

poor and driver behaviour does not address this.

[272] So, there are issues of infrastructure and also of speed. One of the things that we would like to see on residential roads is a default 20 mph speed limit, because traffic goes too fast at the moment and that has a significant impact on the number of actors in that scene. So, we would like to see slower speeds.

12.00 p.m.

[273] I guess that, behind your question, there is an inference that people behave irresponsibly, and that is true. That goes to the heart of a far deeper question about how we address that and make this a more normal activity because, at the moment, cycling is quite an odd thing to do, quite an eccentric thing to do, and sometimes quite a scary thing to do. It is about how we make it less of all those things, which is where the active travel Bill has a role to play. It is about providing better infrastructure and getting more people doing it, because then it becomes more mainstream, so drivers are more used to seeing bikes on the road, and more people who are drivers are also cyclists, which is the case on the continent, and so they behave differently. It becomes a virtuous circle. However, we are a long way off that.

[274] **Nick Ramsay:** Lee, I know that I am going to regret asking you this question, but you suggested that the Welsh Government should have the ability to decide the balance between capital and revenue, which obviously has not happened to date. I wonder what your thinking was behind that.

[275] **Mr Waters:** It was a submission that we made to the Silk commission. I touched on it earlier because one of the significant impediments at the moment to funding active travel and sustainable transport more generally is the paucity of revenue funding. It seems to me that it is a Treasury-made rule that is treated as if it were handed down on a tablet of stone, but these rules were created by people and they can be changed by people. I had a conversation with Gerald Holtham about this a while back. There is a way of acting smarter within the Welsh Government with the creation of a Welsh Treasury, for example, which is something that I know that Dafydd Elis-Thomas is very keen on, where capital and revenue are swapped internally, so, for example, the health service is revenue rich and capital poor and the transport department is the reverse. So, again, it is not too difficult to imagine a system where a strong finance department within the Welsh Government could devise a system to make that simpler. There are some examples of that happening already on an informal basis.

[276] **Nick Ramsay:** I can hear local authority officers shaking in their boots.

[277] **Mr Waters:** It is about risk aversion. There is risk aversion in terms of auditing, where it is terrifying to do this, but we need to be smart about tackling these problems. We have issues of long-term behaviour change, both for obesity and climate change, and behaviour change is about revenue funding. We have hard wired the system so that it is easier to build things that actually have an adverse consequence on both those challenges. If we are going to address long-term challenges, we need to think differently about the way we spend money.

[278] **Nick Ramsay:** We really have to finish, Byron, unless you can ask your question and Lee can answer in two seconds.

[279] **Byron Davies:** With the new enterprise zones, what input have you had to those in terms of the concentration of the workforce?

[280] **Nick Ramsay:** You can answer 'none', 'a lot' or 'in the middle'.

[281] **Mr Waters:** None. We are working with workplaces as part of the personalised travel planning project, but there is much more that can be done in that area.

[282] **Nick Ramsay:** Thank you. I thank Lee Waters and Allan Williams; that was a really helpful session, which will help us no end in compiling our report into the integration of public transport in Wales, which is long sought after and hoped for.

12.03 p.m.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o
Weddill y Cyfarfod
Motion Under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from
the Remainder of the Meeting**

[283] **Nick Ramsay:** I ask a member of the committee to move the motion.

[284] **Joyce Watson:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(vi).

[285] **Nick Ramsay:** I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 12.03 p.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 12.03 p.m.*