



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes **The Enterprise and Business Committee**

Dydd Iau, 24 Ionawr 2013
Thursday, 24 January 2013

Cynnwys **Contents**

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

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

Ymchwiliad i Drafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig: Craffu ar y Gweinidog
Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport: Ministerial Scrutiny Session

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi 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
Keith Davies	Llafur Labour
Yr Arglwydd/Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Ann Jones	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Julie James) Labour (substituting for Julie James)

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**

Bayo Dosunmu	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Trafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Deputy Director, Public Transport
John Forsey	Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru
Hubert Mathias	Consortiwm Cludiant Integredig De-orllewin Cymru South-west Wales Integrated Transport Consortium
Iwan Prys-Jones	Taith
Carl Sargeant	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau) Assembly Member, Labour (Minister for Local Government and Communities)
Huw Thomas	Uwch Reolwr Busnes, Cludiant Cymunedol Senior Manager Business, Community Transport
Mark Youngman	Cynghrair Trafnidiaeth De-ddwyrain Cymru South East Wales Transport Alliance

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

Chloë Davies	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Andrew Minnis	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service
Siân Phipps	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.33 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.33 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Nick Ramsay:** I welcome Members and witnesses to this morning's meeting of the Enterprise and Business Committee. This meeting is bilingual; headphones can be used for simultaneous translation from Welsh to English on channel 1 or for amplification on channel 0. The meeting is being broadcast and a transcript of the proceedings will be published. I remind Members to turn off their mobile phones, and I remind Members and witnesses that there is no need to touch the microphones, as they will operate automatically. In the event of the fire alarm sounding, can people please follow the directions of the ushers? We have one

apology today from Julie James, and Dafydd Elis-Thomas will arrive a little later. I thank Ann Jones for being with us today. Ann has agreed to substitute for Julie James and is more than welcome to the committee.

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

[2] **Nick Ramsay:** This morning, we are continuing with our inquiry into integrated public transport in Wales. I welcome our four witnesses and thank them for agreeing to join us today and for the papers that they provided in advance, which have been most helpful. Starting from my left, would you like to give your name and position for the record?

[3] **Mr Youngman:** My name is Mark Youngman, I represent the South East Wales Transport Alliance, as chair of its rail group. In addition, I am the transport policy officer for Monmouthshire County Council.

[4] **Mr Mathias:** I am Hubert Mathias. I am here to represent South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium, and I am the transport manager at Pembrokeshire County Council.

[5] **Mr Forsey:** Good morning, I am John Forsey. I represent Trafnidfaeth Canolbarth Cymru. I am currently the interim joint passenger transport manager for Powys and Ceredigion county councils.

[6] **Mr Prys-Jones:** I am Iwan Prys-Jones, the executive officer at Taith, and am clearly here representing Taith.

[7] **Nick Ramsay:** That is great. Thank you for being with us. We have a fair number of questions for you, so I propose that, rather than having any opening statements, we get into them. As there are four witnesses, can Members be precise about who you are directing your questions to? If I want to move things on at any point, I will do so, because with four of you it is going to require some management. I will pass over to Byron Davies for the first question.

[8] **Byron Davies:** I will direct the question at all of you and it is up to you to decide who answers it. The question is quite a simple one: does the Welsh Government policy and strategy provide sufficient provision and leadership to co-ordinate the delivery of transport integration?

[9] **Mr Prys-Jones:** As we have said in some of the evidence packs that have been provided for the meeting today, in terms of overall direction and guidance, the Wales transport strategy is a good document and links back quite effectively to the programme for government and the overall ambitions of the Government. We have issues—and this is what we reflected in some of our evidence—with the planning framework that sits below that and particularly with the way in which the national transport plan and regional transport plan both report to the Wales transport strategy, but have not necessarily been developed in partnership with each other. We think that there are issues there that can probably be worked on and helped to improve the overall delivery of transport projects across Wales. Overall, the ambition is there and the guidance is there at a strategic level, but we think that there is scope to improve the overall arrangements in terms of the delivery mechanisms lower down in the process.

[10] **Byron Davies:** Perhaps I could ask you how you think the Welsh Government could assist with improving this.

[11] **Mr Prys-Jones:** To be fair, I think that the issue has been picked up quite clearly as part of the work that has been done to follow up the Simpson compact. In particular, a review of the planning framework is one of the pieces of work that has been identified as one of the potential work streams that will emerge from that. We hope that that will lead us to an effective and integrated transport planning framework that will help deliver the ambition that the Government has quite clearly set out in its overall strategy.

[12] **Byron Davies:** Some of the comments that we have had from previous witnesses have given the impression that there is little Welsh Government strategic guidance or vision. Would you agree with that?

[13] **Mr Mathias:** The bus funding review should help us and should move things forward. Unfortunately, there has been a cut in funding at the wrong time. If the funding had not been cut, and we could have moved forward for another year with existing funding, together with the review, the mileage rate and those kinds of things, we could have made some ground. However, it is going to be even more difficult with a cut in funding of 27% and 25% in the bus service operators grant.

[14] **Byron Davies:** What about strategic vision; do you think it is providing that for you?

[15] **Mr Forsey:** It is a hard job for the Welsh Government to try to get an overarching strategic direction and policy framework in place where we then have public transport, which is a very localised issue as well, and we have the local politics, which might not necessarily want to follow the national framework because it is a very sensitive subject. When you go to rural communities, where they might have two or three buses a day, or two or three buses a week, because of reduced funding or whatever, it can become a very difficult decision for local politicians to make as to whether to keep or retain those services, which may not necessarily tie in with the wider, overarching strategic framework from the Welsh Government. It is very difficult to try to strike that balance and I do have a little bit of empathy for the decision makers in the Welsh Government.

[16] **Byron Davies:** That is the nature of government unfortunately, and that is what leadership is about, is it not? I am asking you, I suppose, to tell me whether you think you are getting that.

[17] **Mr Prys-Jones:** The overall vision and strategic intent is there. The direction of travel is quite clear. The issue we have is that there is scope to tidy up and improve some of the delivery mechanisms below that. Having established a clear vision, one of the issues is that, perhaps at an operational level, there is a tendency to revert to a mode-based approach to transport delivery. Whereas the vision talks about integration and about having a joined-up strategy across the board, when it comes down to it, we still tend to develop projects by road, rail or by bus projects. That has been recognised in some of the work that is being done at the moment and, hopefully, as that work progresses, we will be able to get to a point where joined-up interventions are taken because they are the right thing to do rather than being the right thing to do for that particular mode of transport. Hopefully, that clears things up.

[18] **Mr Youngman:** This is perhaps quite unusual for transport professionals to say, but transport is not just about transport. It is not an end in itself; it provides the opportunity for people to go to work and to take part in leisure activities and health and education activities. I would agree with what my colleagues have said, but perhaps we need to think outside of the transport field, in that there has to be a holistic vision of what transport feeds into. For example, on health policy, it should be ensured that if a decision has to be taken on where new health provision is to be made, there is some discussion and debate on what kind of transport will be needed or on whether transport should dictate where that health provision is made. The same applies to education and places of employment. Rather than transport being

behind the scenes, discussion about transport should be at the heart of these matters.

[19] I know that this is a message that people in the Welsh Government took back to their other colleagues in other areas of the Welsh Government. We have a similar battle in local authorities to ensure that we do not work in silos. Transport itself works in a silo. Those responsible for bus services do not talk to those responsible for trains or for roads. However, transport representatives do not talk to health, education or economic development representatives as much as they could. That is where the greater vision needs to take place. We need to look at transport holistically: it is not an end in itself, although some of us like travelling on buses and trains for the sheer fun of it, but it will take you to another activity, be it to work, to watch Swansea City or Cardiff City play, or to the cinema. Transport is not an end in itself. That is probably where the greatest strategic vision needs to happen.

[20] **Byron Davies:** I think that you have hit the nail firmly on the head there; I agree with you. So, who should be pulling these strands together?

[21] **Mr Youngman:** It should be a combination of people, both at national Government level and local government level. They need to ensure that the various service and policy areas talk to one another and are mindful of one another. So, for example, if a health board is looking at rationalising its provision, we need to ensure that it considers what the transport implications are before shutting a village hospital. I gave you a specific example on the post office in my paper. If a local sub-post office shuts in a community, everyone who could previously walk to get their pension now has to jump in a car to drive 15 minutes down the road to their nearest sub-post office. We are talking about small things like that, but also big things. This is not just about one department, but about people having the mindset to think, 'I need to think about transport matters in this, so who do I go to talk to?'

[22] **David Rees:** Mr Mathias, you highlighted the question of cuts in grants, for example, but clearly the changes are related to whether the bus service operators grant was working effectively in delivering services. That is a big question that we have. Now that the funding has gone to regional consortia, is that a better use of that funding to ensure that you can manage it in a better way?

[23] **Mr Mathias:** The mix of authorities within the consortia is of some concern because you have rural authorities mixed with urban authorities. The new system will work and will improve things. We will have more control over where services go and over the quality of services, for example, whether those services meet trains and are timely and so on. I can see that improving things. However, I hope that you are not sitting here thinking that we are not integrating at all now; there is a lot of good work going on, for example, the improving community access in rural health services project in SWWITCH, which is looking at health and access to non-emergency transport to hospitals. There is a lot of joint working going on at the moment. It is very easy in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, where the local authorities control about 80% of the network, because it is mainly subsidised, but it is more difficult on the eastern edge of SWWITCH, where there are more commercial services and there is a lack of control. However, hopefully the bus funding review will bring more control into those areas.

[24] **David Rees:** You mentioned the policy issue on the linking up of health boards and so on, and I understand that totally because one critical aspect of any health reform is how to get people to those services. Have a group of you had discussions with the health boards during their processes of reconfiguration?

[25] **Mr Mathias:** Yes. On the ICARHS project, we are meeting regularly and have done so right from the word go, and we have been linked in to everything that Hywel Dda has done. Buses go to the hospitals and already provide non-emergency transport. So, this is

working quite well.

9.45 a.m.

[26] **Mr Youngman:** I think that we have, but it could be made better. I have always been a passionate believer that this should be about having a mindset whereby I think about the environment and transport in everything that I do. This might be coming from someone who is a transport professional, but all of us around the table are pedestrians at the end of the day. It is about thinking about simple things like that. It has always been a criticism in the past that people have worked in silos. That is probably prevalent in the transport industry: those dealing with roads would never talk to those dealing with trains. This needs to be made better. It needs to be a matter of course that, at an early stage of any discussion of health or education provision, transport is there at the table so that we can feed in and compromise where necessary.

[27] **Mr Forsey:** I was at a meeting yesterday with our local health board in Powys. I heard what were, quite frankly, some horror stories about non-emergency patient transport, for example. There was the example of a 91-year-old lady who lives in rural mid Wales, in the north of Powys, who was expected to be in a hospital in Stoke-on-Trent at 8 a.m. Perhaps the commissioning side in the health authority will have an 8 a.m. clinic for everyone to attend, without giving any consideration to where people are attending from. That is also a major factor in the examples that Hubert and Mark have presented to you, in terms of tying services such as health and education together.

[28] **Nick Ramsay:** I will bring Alun Ffred Jones in at this point.

[29] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Cododd David Rees y pwynt y bydd y consortia bellach yn cymryd y cyfrifoldeb dros drefnu trafniadaeth. Mae hyn yn codi cwestiwn ynglŷn ag atebolrwydd. Pan fydd newidiadau'n digwydd yn fy etholaeth i, a phan fydd gwasanaeth bws yn cael ei golli, gwn lle i fynd a phwy i'w holi yng Nghyngor Gwynedd. Pwy fydd yn cymryd y cyfrifoldeb hwnnw pan fydd newidiadau'n digwydd yn y dyfodol? I ble dylai pobl fel fi neu fy etholwyr fynd? Pwy sy'n rhan o'r consortia, a phwy fydd yn cymryd y cyfrifoldeb hwn?

Alun Ffred Jones: David Rees made the point that the consortia will now take responsibility for organising transport. This raises a question about accountability. When changes happen in my constituency, and when a bus service is lost, I know where to go and whom to quiz in Gwynedd Council. Who will assume that responsibility when changes happen in the future? Where should people like me or my constituents go? Who is part of the consortia, and who will assume this responsibility?

[30] **Mr Prys-Jones:** Mae hwnnw'n gwestiwn da iawn. Bydd elfennau o'r gwaith hwnnw'n gorfod digwydd wrth inni ddatblygu'r fframwaith newydd ar gyfer y dyfodol. Y gwir amdani yw mai consortia yw'r rhain. Nid ydym yn gyrrff llwyr annibynnol. Mae consortia wedi'i ffurfio, yn achos Taith, o'r chwe awdurdod lleol yn y gogledd, ac mae'r gallu sydd gennym i wireddu cynlluniau yn deillio o'r staff a gyflogir yn yr awdurdodau lleol. Felly, mae'r cysylltiadau o ddydd i ddydd sy'n bodoli gyda staff yn yr unedau unigol ar hyn o bryd yn mynd i barhau yn y dyfodol, wrth inni weithio drwy'r gyfundrefn newydd. Mae

Mr Prys-Jones: That is a very good question. Aspects of that work will have to take place as we develop the new framework for the future. The fact of the matter is that these are consortia. We are not completely independent bodies. In the case of Taith, a consortium has been formed of the six local authorities in the north, and our ability to realise plans stems from the staff that are employed in the local authorities. Therefore, the day-to-day links that already exist with staff in the individual units at present will continue in the future, as we work through the new system. There is a debate to be had about the kind of regional bus network to be

trafodaeth i'w chael ynghylch pa fath o rwydwaith bysus rhanbarthol y byddwn yn ei ddatblygu yn y drefn newydd. Ai rhwydwaith strategol rhanbarthol fydd hwn, gyda'r dasg o ddatblygu cysylltiadau lleol yn parhau i fod yn rhan o swyddogaeth yr awdurdodau lleol? Fel arall, a fydd y rhwydwaith yn rhywbeth gwahanol? Mae'r drafodaeth honno eto i ddod ond, yn sicr, mae'r consortia yn rhan o awdurdodau lleol. Rydym yn rhan o'r teulu, fel petai. Bydd y cysylltiadau agos sy'n bodoli rhwng etholwyr a'r swyddogion yn y cyngorau presennol yn parhau, a chydlyn yw prif rôl y consortia ar hyn o bryd.

[31] **Mr Mathias:** O ran yr hyn sy'n digwydd ar hyn o bryd, mae SWWITCH eisoes yn gweithio ar y cyd â phedwar cyngor. O ran yr arian cludiant rhanbarthol, fel yr arian ar gyfer *infrastructure* ac yn y blaen, mae trefniadau *robust* yn bodoli eisoes. Yr unig beth sydd angen inni ei wneud yw cario ymlaen i ddatblygu y rheini.

[32] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Iawn. Hoffwn symud ymlaen at y pwynt nesaf. Dywedasoeh y byddwch yn datblygu eich ffyrdd o weithio wrth ichi fynd ymlaen, ond mae hwn yn codi'r cwestiwn: a ydych yn mynd i weithredu yn yr un ffordd ar draws y pedwar consortia, neu a fydd y pedwar consortia, fel y maent ar hyn o bryd, yn gweithredu mewn ffyrdd ychydig bach yn wahanol? Onid yw hynny'n creu dryswch a diffyg patrwm ar draws Cymru, gan eich bod yn gweithredu mewn ffyrdd ychydig yn wahanol o ran cynllunio ac yn y blaen?

[33] **Mr Prys-Jones:** Credaf ein bod yn adlewyrchu'r gwahaniaethau sy'n bodoli ar draws Cymru. Yn amlwg, mae'r rhwydwaith bysus o amgylch Caerdydd yn mynd i fod yn llwyr wahanol i'r rhwydwaith sy'n bodoli yng nghanolbarth Cymru neu yng Ngwynedd. Felly, mae'r ffordd rydym yn gweithredu yn mynd i adlewyrchu'r hyn sydd yn rhaid digwydd i siwtio'r gyfundrefn leol. Rhoddaf enghraifft dda: ym Mhowys neu yng Ngwynedd, mae canran uchel o'r gwasanaethau yn mynd i fod yn wasanaethau sy'n cael eu cefnogi gan grant i'w cynnal. Bydd gwasanaethau yng ngogledd-ddwyrain Cymru neu dde-ddwyrain Cymru yn llawer mwy masnachol eu naws. Wedyn, bydd y ffyrdd o weithredu yn wahanol. Felly, yn

developed under the new system. Will this be a strategic regional network, with the task of developing local links remaining part of the functions of the local authorities? Alternatively, will the network be something different? That discussion is still to come, but the consortia are certainly part of local authorities. We are part of the family, as it were. The close links that exist between constituents and officials in the current councils will continue, and the main role of the consortia at present is co-ordination.

Mr Mathias: In terms of what is going on at present, SWWITCH is already collaborating with four councils. In terms of regional transport funds, such as the funds for infrastructure and so forth, robust arrangements are already in place. All we have to do is continue to develop them.

Alun Ffred Jones: Fine. I would like to move on to the next point. You said that you will develop your method of working as you move forward, but this raises the question of whether you are going to operate in the same way across the four consortia, or will the four consortia, as they do at present, operate in slightly different ways? Does that not create confusion or lead to a lack of a pattern across Wales, as you are operating in slightly different ways in relation to planning, and so on?

Mr Prys-Jones: I believe that we reflect the differences that exist across Wales. Obviously, the bus network in and around Cardiff will be completely different to a network in mid Wales or in Gwynedd. Therefore, the way in which we operate will reflect what needs to happen in order to suit local circumstances. I will give a good example: in Powys or in Gwynedd, a high percentage of the services will be services whose existence will be supported by a grant. Services in north-east Wales or south-east Wales will be far more commercial in nature. Then, the method of operation will be different. Therefore, obviously, along the borders between the different consortia or even along the border between England and

amlwg, lle mae ffiniau rhwng y gwahanol gonsortia neu hyd yn oed rhwng Cymru a Lloegr, lle mae'r gwasanaethau yn mynd ar draws y ffin, bydd angen partneriaeth agos yn y manau hynny i sicrhau bod y gwasanaeth yn un cyson ar draws Cymru.

Wales, where the services cross the border, a close partnership is needed in those areas to ensure that the service across Wales is consistent.

[34] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Awgrymwyd y byddai'n syniad da cael rhyw fath o gorff i gymryd trosolwg dros Gymru gyfan er mwyn cryfhau trafndiaeth integredig. A oes gennych chi rywbeth i'w ddweud am yr awgrym hwnnw? Nid yw'r ffaith fy mod yn gofyn cwestiwn yn Gymraeg yn meddwl mai dim ond y Cymry Cymraeg sy'n cael ateb, gyda llaw.

Alun Ffred Jones: It has been suggested that it would be a good idea for there to be a body that has an overview across the whole of Wales in order to strengthen the integration of transport. Do you have something to say about that suggestion? The fact that I ask a question in Welsh does not mean that only Welsh speakers can answer it, by the way.

[35] **Mr Forsey:** In TraCC, I would not say that we are almost there, because we subsidise so much of the bus network, so it is far easier for us to try to manage that. Indeed, in my current role, I am trying to bring two transport units into one so that, effectively, in the longer term, there would be no Ceredigion County Council or Powys County Council transport units but there would be a TraCC transport unit. In discussions with officers from this region, we would welcome a more overarching framework and guidance, but that would probably require a change in legislation. That might be different for colleagues in SEWTA, where there is a far more robust commercial network. However, certainly in mid Wales, I can see that that would be a way forward for us.

[36] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Ar gyfer fy nghwestiwn olaf, trof at SEWTA, sy'n dweud bod angen pwerau ychwanegol ac arian ychwanegol ar lefel ranbarthol er mwyn dod â'r rhaglen integredig i fodolaeth. Pa bwerau ychwanegol ydych chi'n credu sydd eu hangen?

Alun Ffred Jones: For my last question, I will turn to SEWTA, which says that additional powers and additional money are needed on a regional level in order to bring the integrated programme into existence. What additional powers do you believe are necessary?

[37] **Mr Youngman:** Taking both the question on additional powers and additional funding, in our evidence we talk about some of the weaknesses of the current regulation. The fact that we have commercial services against those that are subsidised means that you are dealing with the Competition Commission and other such issues. I can quote examples where, as a local authority, we could not put on a bus service that would run against a competing commercial service. Cardiff, perhaps, is an example of where that happened. Funding is probably the big elephant in the room—funding not just for services, but the infrastructure and some of the improvements to bus and railway stations. The focus of this inquiry and our evidence has been about interchanges between public transport, but there are other interchanges; for example, someone being able to park their car at rail and bus stations or to be able to walk and cycle to a railway or bus station and then put their bike somewhere safe where there is a security camera. All of these things cost money. In the SEWTA region alone, we have 92 stations. You only have to do the sums on just a small amount of money to bring that up to twenty-first century standards or what exists in mainland Europe and you will see what the sums equate to. Next year, we will be working to a budget of around £7.5 million, I think.

[38] **Nick Ramsay:** Alun Ffred, are you asking about specific additional powers for the regional transport consortia, rather than powers overall?

[39] **Alun Ffred Jones:** The quotation is:

[40] ‘additional powers and resources would be needed at the regional level to deliver a more ambitious integrated transport programme.’

[41] So, I was asking, what are those powers?

[42] **Mr Youngman:** You have the current Transport Act 1985, but looking at Network Rail, for example, although it is better than the previous British Rail days, Network Rail’s main focus is still providing rail services. The rail industry’s main focus is still providing for rail services. When it comes to integration between other modes, and if you speak to some train company managers, for example, they will tell you that their customers tell them that more parking facilities are needed at railway stations. I remember old colleagues saying that no-one would ever get off the train to get on a bus, but if you provide a 500-space car park, they will use that.

[43] **Nick Ramsay:** The next question is from David Rees.

[44] **David Rees:** Following on from that, the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 gave the Minister the power to establish joint transport authorities. Three of your papers, if not all four, come out against that, shall we say, and it is understandable to an extent. If you want more powers and more statutory oomph, in one sense, why not? Why not establish joint transport authorities? Each of you can answer that question.

[45] **Mr Mathias:** We talked briefly in the room earlier where we were all locked away.

[46] **David Rees:** So, it is a joint answer, is it?

[47] **Mr Mathias:** We are devolved and it is an opportunity to look at some legislative powers. We talk about the London franchising, quality contracts and partnerships, but we need a Wales model. One size does not fit all, obviously. The London model will not work in Wales. Possibly, there is something there. I am sure that it could sit with the consortia. I am not quite sure where the benefits of a joint transport authority would be. Really, the consortia would be yours. How would they differ?

[48] **Mr Prys-Jones:** To add to that, the route to the answer is in precisely the point that Alun Ffred raised a moment or so ago, which is the relationship between a new body that might be created and local government. Much of the delivery needs to happen at a local level; therefore, we need to have really close routes back into local communities in order to make sure that decisions are taken at the appropriate level. Were a JTA to be created, you are only creating another layer of bureaucracy and another layer of governance in what is already quite a congested field. We think that there are examples in England, particularly in the Greater Manchester area, where organisations that are effective JTAs, I suppose, in terms of their powers and their ability to act, are governed through the existing local government framework. Therefore, you maintain much stronger, closer local political links at the same time as having the ability to take a strategic overview of stuff. If we were able to develop that kind of model in Wales that is tailored to suit the specific requirements of Wales, we think that that would be a more powerful approach than perhaps just creating, by legislation, some body that will be different to local government in particular.

[49] **David Rees:** It comes down to the actual functionality of the body, effectively.

[50] **Mr Prys-Jones:** Yes, exactly. At the moment, the regional transport consortia have quite limited powers, and those powers are mainly built around delivering a regional transport plan. Some of the things that are happening at the moment, such as the changes to the bus

network, for example, are changing that. As the management of the rail network evolves, as perhaps some of the work that has been progressed as part of the Simpson compact to look at management of strategic regional highways also comes to the fore, we might be able to get to a situation where you have a body that has equivalent powers to a JTA but without, necessarily, the bureaucracy of an additional governance structure.

[51] **David Rees:** Would it be an additional governance structure if it actually replaces the RTCs?

10.00 a.m.

[52] **Mr Prys-Jones:** At the moment, the governance of RTCs is built up from members who are already elected to their local authorities. So, there is no additional governance structure. Regional transport consortia exist as joint committees of however many local government organisations there are in their areas, so no additional tier of government has been created. What has been created is an organisation that has the opportunity to work in partnership with local government, but to act and think strategically.

[53] **David Rees:** I understand that there will be some local accountability, because there will be some locally elected representatives on the potential joint transport authorities.

[54] **Mr Prys-Jones:** Yes, but additional people would still be brought on board and you are still creating a body that would have a separate existence and would therefore be a costly addition to processes in Wales.

[55] **David Rees:** Would it be more effective? That is the crucial question.

[56] **Mr Prys-Jones:** My colleagues can speak for themselves, but, in my opinion, if we were able to develop the transport consortia into a body that had similar powers to those of the potential JTAs, I do not think that they would be any more effective. In fact, they might be slightly less so, because they would not necessarily have the direct links back to local government in the way that the consortia currently have.

[57] **Mr Mathias:** Going back to what Iwan said, I think that we are already there—if the consortia have a few more powers and the politicians are there to govern.

[58] **Mr Youngman:** I want to make one final point and echo what Hubert and Iwan have said in terms of local accountability. I am not speaking on behalf of the other consortia, but I do not think that a JTA without a significant level of funding similar to what they have in Manchester, and way above what each of the consortia receives at the moment, would bring about a massive step change, which is needed in terms of integration. A lot of things come back to funding, but a JTA, as you indicated, is potentially another level of bureaucracy, taking away local accountability. If it is still having to deal with the same amount of money that is available at the moment, you would ask whether that was the right—

[59] **Mr Forsey:** In addition to additional powers and a change in legislation, a much harder nut to crack would perhaps be a change in culture. A significant amount of money is put into the transport industry in Wales. We were saying, in the little room down the hall, that in this country, the perception of public transport is that it is funded by the taxpayer. Why is that? If you go abroad the perception is that it is funded by the taxpayer, let us use it and get our money's worth out of it. Perhaps we need to start changing the Welsh perception of public transport and what it should be. That comes down to how we present it, invest in it and demonstrate what we are getting out of it.

[60] **Keith Davies:** Rwy'n mynd i ofyn fy **Keith Davies:** I will ask my question in

nghwestiwn yn Gymraeg. Sut ydych yn gweld y consortia yn datblygu'r strategaeth arfaethedig ar gyfer rhwydwaith trafndiaeth ranbarthol bysiau a thrafnidiaeth gymunedol? A fydd hynny'n wahanol i'r ffordd y mae pethau'n cael eu gwneud yn awr? Wrth edrych ar hynny a'r grant gwasanaethau trafndiaeth rhanbarthol, sut y gallwn fynd i'r afael ag elfennau hanfodol integredig, fel tocynnau integredig, cydgysylltu'r amserlenni, darparu gwell gwybodaeth a chyfleusterau mewn cyfnewidfeydd?

Welsh. How do you see the consortia developing the proposed regional bus and community transport network strategy? Will that be different to the way that things are done now? Looking at that and at the regional transport services grant, how can we tackle the essential integration elements, such as integrated ticketing, linking timetables and providing better information and facilities at exchange points?

[61] **Mr Prys-Jones:** That is a good question.

[62] O ran bysus, o dan y drefn sy'n dod i ben ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn ariannol hon, prin iawn yw'r rheolaeth rydym wedi'i chael, yn enwedig dros wasanaethau masnachol. Mae llif arian sylweddol wedi mynd i mewn i'r gwasanaethau hynny heb fawr o reolaeth ynghylch beth sy'n dod allan ohonynt. Mae gennym flwyddyn o'm blaenau i gyfarwyddo â'r drefn newydd. Fodd bynnag, wrth inni fynd trwy'r flwyddyn, mae'n allweddol ein bod yn gosod allan yn union yr hyn rydym yn disgwyl ei weld o'n rhwydwaith bysus, yn enwedig y ffordd y mae'n gwasanaethu'n cymunedau.

In terms of buses, under the current regime that comes to an end at the end of this financial year, we have had very little control, particularly over commercial services. A substantial cash flow has gone into those services with little control in terms of the outcomes. We have a year ahead of us to familiarise ourselves with the new regime. However, as we work through the year, it is crucial that we set out exactly what we expect from our bus network, particularly the way in which it services our communities.

[63] Mae'r ffordd y mae'r cynllun newydd wedi'i baratoi'n gofyn ein bod yn datblygu nifer o amcanion. Byddwn yn disgwyl i'r cwmnïau bysus sicrhau bod yr amcanion hynny'n digwydd. Wedyn, byddant yn cael arian yn sgîl hynny. Mae hynny'n rhoi rhyw elfen o reolaeth ar sut y gallwn siapio'r rhwydwaith. Rwy'n meddwl bod hynny'n gam sylweddol ymlaen.

The way in which the new plan has been developed asks that we develop a number of objectives. We expect the bus companies to ensure that those objectives are met. Then, they will be funded as a result of that. That gives some element of control over how we can shape the network. I think that that is a significant step forward.

[64] Mae'r cam nesaf yn seiliedig ar sut rydym yn integreiddio mathau eraill o drafnidiaeth. Cyn belled â bod pobl eisiau defnyddio bysus yn unig, mae hynny'n iawn fel y saif pethau, ond sut rydym wedyn yn integreiddio bysus gyda'r rhwydwaith rheilffyrdd a chyda mathau eraill o drafnidiaeth? Dyna'r her at y dyfodol. Mae llawer o waith i'w wneud dros y flwyddyn neu ddwy nesaf ar siapio fframwaith newydd ar gyfer bysus, ond rhaid inni gadw golwg ar y dyfodol ac ar sut rydym yn integreiddio hynny gyda gwahanol fathau o drafnidiaeth, fel bod gennym rwydwaith integredig llawn sy'n rhoi cyfle i bobl ddefnyddio rhywbeth

The next step is about how we integrate other forms of transport. As long as people want to use only buses, then that is fine as things stand at the moment, but how do we integrate buses with the rail network and with other modes of transport? That is the challenge for the future. There is a great deal of work to do over the next year or two in shaping a new framework for buses, but we need to keep an eye on the future and how we integrate all of that with the various modes of transport, so that we have a truly integrated network, a holistic network, that allows people to use something other than the car to access services and employment, as they have to do

heblaw'r car i gael mynediad at wasanaethau a chyflogaeth, fel y maent yn gorfod gwneud ar hyn o bryd mewn gormod o lefydd yng Nghymru.

at present in too many parts of Wales.

[65] **Keith Davies:** Dros y blynyddoedd sydd i ddod, byddwn yn cael llai o gyllid. Pa effaith fydd hynny'n ei chael ar y strategaeth?

Keith Davies: Over the coming years, we will have less funding. What effect will that have on the strategy?

[66] **Mr Mathias:** Os ydym yn siarad am wasanaethau trafniadaeth gymunedol a sut maent yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd, mae'n bwysig ein bod yn gwybod beth sy'n digwydd ar lawr gwlad—yn Aberteifi ac yn Hwlfordd—a ble mae pobl eisiau teithio. Mae'n bwysig nad ydym yn colli golwg ar beth sy'n digwydd yn y trefi bach hyn, i wneud yn siŵr ein bod yn rhoi'r arian yn y man iawn, yn enwedig pan fo llai o arian i'w gael ar y plât.

Mr Mathias: If we are talking about community transport services and how the various aspects join up, it is important that we know what is happening on the ground—in Cardigan and in Haverfordwest—and where people want to travel. It is important not to lose sight of what is happening in these small towns, so that we can ensure that we are directing the funding to the right place, especially when the funding is reduced.

[67] **Mr Prys-Jones:** Rwy'n ategu hynny. Yn amlwg, bydd llai o bres yn golygu dirywiad yn y gwasanaeth mewn rhai llefydd. Bydd hefyd yn rhoi'r angen arnom i ganolbwyntio llawer mwy ar sicrhau bod pob ceiniog yr ydym yn ei gwario ar y rhwydwaith bysus yn cael ei gwario yn y llefydd priodol, ac nid ar ddarparu'r gwasanaethau y mae'r cwmnïau bysus yn teimlo bod rhaid iddynt eu rhedeg.

Mr Prys-Jones: I would endorse that. Clearly, reduced funding will mean a diminution of service in certain areas. What it will also do is to place a requirement on us to concentrate far more on ensuring that every penny that we spend on the bus network is spent appropriately, and is not on providing the services that the bus companies feel that they need to run.

[68] **Keith Davies:** Un peth rwyf wedi'i glywed dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf yw bod y cwmnïau bysus yn cael cyllid a bod neb ar y bysus. Sut y gallwn sicrhau ein bod yn talu am wasanaeth sy'n cael ei ddefnyddio?

Keith Davies: One thing that I have heard over the last year is that the bus companies receive the funding and there is no-one on the bus. How can we ensure that we are paying for a service that is being used?

[69] **Nick Ramsay:** John Forsey?

[70] **Mr Forsey:** I was not going to answer on this, but I will make an attempt. Going back to the previous point first, it is all very well having a great integrated transport system. You asked about information, and I think that we need to make far better use of the one-stop shop, which is Traveline Cymru and that is already funded. Whether it becomes the registration service for local bus services and that everything is done centrally in Cardiff, instead of having to send documents to Leeds, is another question. The consortia need to make better use of Traveline Cymru as a data point for collecting information, sharing it and being consistent with it. This also touches on Alun Ffred's point about where people go under the regional transport consortia when they have a problem with bus services. Perhaps it would be better to have one point of information, where that call centre directs people to the appropriate body and the appropriate person.

[71] Going back to the point about how we ensure that we are spending the right money, or that the money going in is appropriate, that is quite a difficult question to answer in a

deregulated environment. I have a personal opinion. Given that we have challenging financial times ahead and that we have a rail franchise coming up fairly soon, why not lump strategic bus routes in with the rail franchise? Here is something radical for you: why not allow pensioners' bus passes to be used on off-peak trains, which you are already paying for, at no extra cost as part of the franchise deal? I suspect that that would probably free up a fair bit of money. Given the choice between travelling on a bus and travelling on a train, some people would prefer to travel on a train; that might free up a little bit of money in the public transport network. That is a personal view; it is not necessarily the view of TraCC. It is just an example, if that is what you are looking for.

[72] **Keith Davies:** Rwyf wedi darllen yn rhywle yn ddiweddar—nid wyf yn cofio yn lle—am y sefyllfa ym Mhowys. Rydych wedi newid rhywbeth ar y bysiau, a olygodd bod 40 yn fwy o bobl wedi bod yn defnyddio'r gwasanaethau bysiau nag o'r blaen. A yw hynny'n wir? Rwy'n credu imi ddarllen rhywbeth am hynny rai wythnosau yn ôl.

Keith Davies: I have read somewhere recently—I do not remember where—about the situation in Powys. You have changed something on the buses, which meant that 40 extra people have been using the bus services than before. Is that true? I think that I read something about that a few weeks ago.

[73] **Mr Forsey:** I think it was a little more than 40 people. In the period 2007-12, since re-tendering the bus network, we have tried to create a more integrated network. I will be the first to admit that we are struggling to integrate with trains, but that is because we have a fairly infrequent train service in central Wales. The panacea is the hourly service across to Birmingham. We have grown the number of passengers on buses from around 600,000 in 2006-07 to around 1.1 million in the last year. So, we have tried. It has come at a cost, but we have managed to shift that number of people on to buses in a fairly rural environment.

[74] **Ann Jones:** I do not know whether I heard you correctly when you were talking about one-stop shops; are you advocating yet another one-stop shop for transport?

[75] **Mr Forsey:** No.

[76] **Ann Jones:** I am just thinking that, within my own town, there are four different one-stop shops. I am supposed to be able to walk in and say, 'I want to go here, do this, and arrange that. Sort it for me', and they cannot. What are you suggesting?

[77] **Mr Forsey:** That is probably exactly the reason why there is confusion. What I am suggesting is this: we have Traveline Cymru and there is a phone number. If that phone number becomes the only point of contact for Welsh public transport users, instead of local authorities duplicating what Traveline Cymru does, it will be a consistent source of data. If Traveline Cymru received the bus registrations that the bus operators are required to submit, that would be another sensible check. That is the point that I was trying to make.

[78] **Ann Jones:** Why is it that, when you are supposed to have an integrated transport hub in certain areas, the two types of transport do not speak to each other even though they are less than 100 yd apart? What is the difference in having a one-stop shop? It is no different on the telephone if the person at the other end does not have the information, and is not able to tell you how you can connect your services. How will you address that?

[79] **Mr Forsey:** I do not know what else your four one-stop shops provide; is it just public transport information, or are they council one-stop shops?

[80] **Ann Jones:** They provide a range of services, but we all talk about one-stop shops, and for me, as a member of the public, I want one-stop shops. I do not want to have to trail around, getting one piece of information over here and another over there. If a local authority

is offering a one-stop shop, it should be a one-stop shop. I should not have to stop six times to get the information.

[81] **Mr Forsey:** I completely agree, but if the one-stop shop staff are trained in relation to public transport information, they will use the public transport website and offer information across the service desk. I will then be able to find the same information on the internet in Modica in relation to Wales. It will be consistent information on transport. It is not what the local authority is providing, it is not what the bus company is providing—

[82] **Ann Jones:** So, why do you, as local authority employees—and this excludes the gentleman from Taith—insist on putting all of the information pertaining to your individual authority in your one-stop shop and then ignoring what is happening across your consortia?

[83] **Mr Mathias:** I do not think that we do.

[84] **Ann Jones:** I think you do. I would not have asked you if I did not think that you did.

[85] **Mr Forsey:** I will speak for my team and I will be quite brutal and blunt: we are a local authority, and I do not think that we are particularly good at giving out that consistent information. That is why I advocate the use of a one-stop shop where professionals are able to give out that information. I am not being critical of my team, but it is not a function that we are particularly good at.

[86] **Mr Prys-Jones:** I think that we are in the middle of a change of systems from where we were five or six years ago, when all information tended to be provided in paper leaflets. We are moving towards a system where everything will be electronically-based, and people will look at their mobile phones or what have you. We have some rationalisation of our systems to do. People still produce information the way that they have always done, because that is how they have always done it. As the funding regime tightens, and as new technologies continue to become more universal, we will move towards a different way of providing information. The point that John has made—that there is an opportunity in Wales to develop a single, national service for information that everyone can access and everyone feeds into—is one potential way forward.

10.15 a.m.

[87] **Nick Ramsay:** Mark Youngman, did you want to come in?

[88] **Mr Youngman:** I have been trying to deal with many of the questions that have been raised. It certainly will be a challenge in developing a regional bus strategy, because services are of a different nature. Many bus services are local in their nature, not regional, although many more people than is perhaps given credit for travel outside of their local authority area into the likes of Cardiff and Newport, particularly in south-east Wales. We have experience in the SEWTA region of developing a fairly well-researched and well-analysed regional rail strategy, which has looked at the whole network. We have also looked at the more physical features, such as interchanges and what kind of standard there should be at each interchange and even at each bus stop. The delivery will always be determined by how much funding you get, but SEWTA and the individual local authorities are quite imaginative when it comes to accessing various pots of money, whether from Europe or from planning developers and the like.

[89] Examples are always useful and I have two examples of what we have done in the SEWTA region within the existing legislation. In Caerphilly, an opportunity arose on its Sunday network last year, because all of its Sunday tenders were coming up for renewal. So, it sat down with the local operators and worked out, with the resources that the operators had

and that the local authority could put in, whether a better Sunday network could be provided. It meant some previous links being taken away, and people do not like links being taken away, but it resulted in a new Sunday network that has seen a 17% increase in passengers. That was achieved simply by shifting the buses around and by means of loose, centralised planning.

[90] In Monmouthshire, to give you another example, we had a subsidised bus service that went to the local railway station to provide a rail link service, but no-one used it for that link. Those who did travel on the service asked, ‘Why are we always going to the railway station when no-one gets picked up?’ So, we decided to take away the subsidised service and replace it with our own in-house, demand-responsive community transport, the Grass Routes scheme. So, people can ring up the day before they travel to book a bus to pick them up from the train station. That is a much more cost-effective way of doing it than having a regular bus service that, with the greatest will in the world, people were not using.

[91] This might be a personal view, but I must say that many people do not change between modes of transport. Many bus passengers will not travel by train and many train passengers will not travel by bus. You only have to go to London to see that many people coming out of main-line railway stations will take the tube rather than catch a bus, because there is a bit of a hierarchy. Someone famously said that, if you are travelling on a bus over the age of 30, you are seen as a failure. I think that there is still that kind of perception out there.

[92] To link to what John said about having a one-stop shop, given the weather that we have had in Wales over the last five days, I, along with a number of authorities, have been tweeting like mad, providing people with updates on their school and public transport. ‘Traveline Tim’ has been put into Twitter jail a few times, just through providing updates about Cardiff bus and Newport Bus—I even had information on the Metrobus in Surrey tweeted by ‘Traveline Tim’. The number of Cardiff bus’s followers on Twitter shot through the roof when it started putting information out there. There is a one-stop shop out there and it needs to be made more of. I know where to get travel information on how to get from my house in Neath to my office in Raglan; I know where to go and I also know what rail website to visit if I want cheap fares. It is about getting that kind of information out there and social media and the internet are probably the way forward. However, having a good, thick bus guide is still useful and, as soon as we publish it, it goes out of the door and we get requests for reprints left, right and centre.

[93] **Nick Ramsay:** Byron Davies, did you have a supplementary question?

[94] **Byron Davies:** It was just a comment, really. I totally agree with what Mr Prys-Jones said about technology and so on. I wanted to point out that the Traveline Cymru app, for example, is wonderful. It is absolutely amazing what you can get from that, in terms of information to plan your journey. It has to be the way forward. I know that it is more difficult for older people, but I totally agree with you.

[95] **Mr Mathias:** They are developing something that will enable you to see fares so that you know exactly how much it will cost to travel. That is coming soon.

[96] **David Rees:** You can get wonderful apps on iPhones, but not everyone has an iPhone and many pensioners will not have iPhones, so the question, really, is: how do we get to those people as well?

[97] **Mr Mathias:** Traveline is developing bus-stop information so, hopefully, all the information will go through Traveline, and even our local authority and consortia timetable cases will be standardised across Wales. The exact format has to be agreed, but it will just be

a matter of printing them off and putting them up for people who are unable to use technology.

[98] **David Rees:** It has to be not just for those who can afford it, because some of the most vulnerable people cannot afford that type of mobile phone.

[99] **Mr Youngman:** At the moment, most bus-stops have a six-digit code and the National Rail Enquiries service has a facility whereby you can send a text to 84950 with the name of your station and it will ping back a message immediately with information about what trains are running and whether or not they are delayed. I would venture to suggest that most people have a mobile phone, and many elderly people do have smartphones and the like. While there might be some areas where mobile phone reception is still not good, they are still able to ring us up on their mobile phone to ask us where the bus is, or send a text. Things are certainly moving along.

[100] Within Monmouthshire, for example, to be a bit parochial, we have put facilities up in some of our towns that are information points where people can access information about days out, and so on, and one of the pages that they can press to get information up is the Traveline website. If you happen to come into Monmouth one day, you will see a nice thing outside of one of our car parks—

[101] **Nick Ramsay:** You can be as parochial as you like if you are going to mention iPhone advances in the shire.

[102] **David Rees:** Not all Valleys areas and rural areas are in that position at this moment in time.

[103] **Nick Ramsay:** Ken Skates, do you have a supplementary question?

[104] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, I have a couple of small queries. When you said that you tweet updates regularly, how do you get the information on delays or cancellations? Is it through GPS or through the older system of just getting a telephone call?

[105] **Mr Youngman:** It is a bit of both, actually. Sometimes, it is a matter of looking out of the window and talking to colleagues, particularly from the highways sections, getting tweets back from other users, and getting phone calls and e-mails from operators. As soon as we were getting that information, it was a matter of pinging it out there. Tweeting is evolving quickly. I have not got into Twitter jail yet, but I was getting there, I think, just because of the sheer amount of information that was coming in. It was particularly useful in terms of schools, to keep them informed. There is a generation that will grow up with the smartphone as their method of communication.

[106] **Nick Ramsay:** We have come to the conclusion that Twitter will have to be enshrined in law at some point, because, if it ever went bust, I think everything would grind to a halt.

[107] **Ann Jones:** What is Twitter jail?

[108] **Mr Youngman:** You have a limit of, I think, 100 messages per hour and then you are stopped from sending stuff.

[109] **Ann Jones:** Oh, okay. I will never get into that, then, because I cannot use it.

[110] **Mr Youngman:** I think that it was brought home to me when someone said that many youngsters now do not e-mail; they use social media to access information and

communicate with one another. Given that they are going to be the next generation of users of transport, whether buses or trains, should we not be looking to develop the information systems we have for the next generation, while, at the same time, acknowledging the people who are already using it? That is why we still produce a book, but, at the same time, you will see that there is a QR code on it so that people can access that. We can keep it updated on the internet. The printed version is only up to date when it is printed; it frequently becomes out of date, but we can keep it updated on the web.

[111] **David Rees:** A bit of advice: youngsters may be using social media and Twitter at the moment, but, as they get older and realise the openness of it, they might start moving back to e-mail as it is more private. So, be careful about saying that that is the way that it is going to go. It might be that the next generation of young people will do that, but, as they grow and realise the implications of wider public access to what they say, they might start to try to communicate more privately.

[112] **Nick Ramsay:** It is all going to go back to carrier pigeons, is it not? [*Laughter.*]

[113] **Kenneth Skates:** I have one more small query. Do the Traveline Cymru information pages on the internet include train times?

[114] **Mr Youngman:** Yes.

[115] **Kenneth Skates:** Why does it not state that on the guide?

[116] **Mr Youngman:** That is last year's guide and we are currently working on this year's guide for Monmouthshire. One point that has been made to us by some users of that guide is that there needs to be more information about rail services. One of the difficulties with rail services is that, if I put all the train times in there, I would end up with a very large book indeed.

[117] **Kenneth Skates:** It is just a simple query, because, if we are trying to get integrated transport, it strikes me as being pretty obvious that, if you are telling people what the service is online, you include train timetables.

[118] **Nick Ramsay:** Joyce Watson, do you want to come in on this?

[119] **Joyce Watson:** I do have a smartphone, and, on occasion, it actually works in some areas of Ceredigion; I can tell exactly where it will go down. It sometimes works in Powys, and, again, I can tell you exactly where it will go down, and it will sometimes work in Gwynedd, and I can tell you the same again. Mostly, it will work. The point that I am trying to make here, as someone who knows the area extremely well, is that these new applications are fine if you have a connection. If I was stuck in places where I would not be able to access that information at all, that would be a big problem for me, and that would be fairly consistently the case across Ceredigion and Powys in particular, because I am on O2. If you see this as the way forward, how are you working with network providers—you are local authorities, and I know about the problems that you incur in trying to get transmitters up—to resolve those communication breakdowns?

[120] **Mr Forsey:** I believe that Oftel, the regulatory body, is auctioning off the fourth generation site at the moment. While 4G is exclusive to the EE network at the moment, I understand that it will become far more widespread. It requires a lot less infrastructure, and, when it was trialled, it was trialled in rural Sweden and rural Cornwall, I believe, and people were able to download huge quantities of data very quickly. So, technology is evolving apace, and I genuinely see 4G technology removing a lot of these communication black spots in rural mid Wales.

[121] When you can start watching high-definition television on the move through your 4G telephone, you can then start to think about having real real-time information. I know that it is web-based and requires people to have smartphones, but my 72-year-old retired father bought an iPod the other day—I nearly fell off my chair. I think they refer to themselves as ‘silver surfers’, and they are beginning to use this technology. *[Interruption.]*

[122] **Joyce Watson:** There you are—one silver surfer. *[Laughter.]*

[123] **Mr Forsey:** The technology that we have on the Traws Cymru buses at the moment means that those vehicles are tracked. The next step that I would like to see is to get that tracking onto an app so that you can see where your bus is, rather than receive a message saying that it is five minutes away.

[124] **Kenneth Skates:** There is potential there to have bus users, with their permission, obviously, integrated into the live information system so that the users travelling on your services can offer, through their mobile phones and GPS and 4G, live updates.

[125] **Mr Mathias:** We have developed something at SWWITCH for some real-time information. Going back to the point as regards network coverage, we have not failed in any of the locations where we have fitted them to get network coverage—they work in real time. We have also developed a text messaging service, so that you can text and get real-time information on your phone. So, it does work quite well in rural areas—better than I thought, to be honest.

[126] **Nick Ramsay:** We have about 15 minutes left. I will bring Eluned Parrott in at this point, with some questions on community transport.

[127] **Eluned Parrott:** I think that it was you, Mr Mathias, who mentioned the potential role of community transport in providing non-emergency patient transport for people based in rural areas. Could each of you briefly tell me what you see as the strategic role of community transport in providing bus services in your areas?

10.30 a.m.

[128] **Mr Prys-Jones:** We see that there is a great opportunity to grow, develop and work in partnership with community transport, especially in relation to the areas that you have just mentioned, but also in terms of the local linkages from smaller communities directly into the strategic bus networks that will be developing. We need to be cautious sometimes; I think there is a perception that community transport is cheaper than commissioning or procuring normal bus services, and I am not sure that is necessarily the case. It can be more flexible and more user-friendly sometimes, but not necessarily cheaper. So, we need to be careful of falling into the trap of assuming that community transport equals financial savings.

[129] Where we have some development work to do is possibly in ensuring that the community transport organisations have the ability to grow to meet the opportunities that are available. A lot of community transport providers are quite small and niche in terms of what they do and they are heavily reliant on core funding that comes particularly from local authorities or from the Welsh Government in some cases. If they are going to evolve to take advantage of the changing funding environment that we are in, then we need to find a way of supporting them over a period of time to enable them to grow and develop the capacity to be able to offer the seamless service that the health sector, for example, will expect to have, if it is going to commission significant services from the community transport sector. How we identify and work with community transport organisations that have the ability, the willingness and the aptitude to want to grow to respond to that type of change, and move

away perhaps from the relatively niche service they deliver at the moment, will be one of the key challenges over the next 12 to 18 months or so.

[130] **Mr Mathias:** We have examples of community transport working in health and providing non-emergency transport in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. They are working well, linking in with the hospitals. We have the Bwcabus project, which again links into main bus routes.

[131] **Eluned Parrott:** Is Bwcabus delivered by community transport providers?

[132] **Mr Mathias:** It is not, but it is classed as community transport because it is demand-responsive. However, it could be carried out by a community transport provider.

[133] **Eluned Parrott:** One of our previous witnesses said that it was not a community transport initiative because it was delivered by commercial providers and it was not designed to be community-led necessarily; it was just demand-responsive. Obviously, there is a difference of opinion there.

[134] **Mr Mathias:** I would argue that Carmarthenshire would consider it as being community transport. We have things like the town rider scheme in Pembrokeshire that provides transport for people who cannot access public transport and that is working quite well, bringing people shopping et cetera. There is DANSA in the Neath valley as well.

[135] **Mr Forsey:** In the TraCC region, I believe, off the top of my head, that there are around 25 or 26 different community transport schemes. They are all individually constituted and they all rely heavily on volunteers. There is a little bit of a fear within the sector that if it starts registering bus services, because it is so reliant on volunteers, if the volunteer cannot show up, it would then fall foul of not running a bus service. That is a bit of a difficult challenge for it. There is a role perhaps for the CT sector to evolve. We have quite a vibrant CT sector in rural mid Wales. It needs to be a little better co-ordinated: it is not that the two individuals are not doing a good job; I just think it needs to be a little bit more strategic so that it ties in with the local health authority and the county council's social services. There is also a perception that community transport can only provide transport in these remote, rural isolated places. That is not necessarily true. There are a fair number of people who live in urban areas who cannot get out of their houses, so there is a defined role there as well if we want to keep people living in their homes. It is not just about providing rural transport.

[136] **Mr Youngman:** I would probably echo what my colleagues have said. I gave the example earlier of our Grass Routes transport scheme, which is now going to a railway station to replace an existing bus service. The Grass Routes scheme in Monmouthshire—again, speaking parochially—takes people to supermarkets in the county and outside the county, where a normal bus service probably is not practical for them. Community transport has a role in broadening the transport network. You made an interesting point about some people not viewing one scheme as being as much of a community transport scheme as another. You could argue that a fully registered commercial bus service that, every Tuesday, takes a group of pensioners into Abergavenny market is a community transport scheme, although it is not classed as such. Community transport is about more than just small operators. Perhaps it is a service that is run on a commercial basis. In the example I gave, the service runs to Abergavenny market on a Tuesday from an outlying village. Those people do not have any other bus services throughout the week, but that is all that they want: they just want to get to Abergavenny market on a Tuesday.

[137] **Eluned Parrott:** Those definitions are obviously going to become more important when it comes to funding. The new funding arrangements talk about ring-fencing 10% of the regional grant for community transport schemes. At that point in time, if we include Bwcabus

as a community transport scheme, it will have the potential to stream funding away. Within the Minister's statement earlier this month was the idea that community transport providers need to work with regional consortia to meet local needs, and that the ring-fenced funding that they could expect via you would be dependent on them meeting those strategic needs. So, there needs to be a strategic need on a regional basis, but there has also been some concern relating to people travelling across different regions, particularly when it comes to things like non-emergency patient transfers. How do you co-ordinate a national strategy and work together to ensure that national needs are met, as well as needs within your own regions?

[138] **Mr Prys-Jones:** That is a very good question, and it comes back to the point that I made in my earlier answer. Many of the relevant organisations at the moment are quite small and tightly focused on what they deliver. However, there are aspirations, including those linked to health or providing bus services or links to them in large rural areas. We need to work with the community transport sector to see that role grow over a period of time. John and I have discussed in the past whether there are opportunities to create an almost federal approach to working with a number of community bus networks. So, you would provide a single point of contact, which would be a national or regional arrangement, or an arrangement where two regions are working together. That point of contact would then liaise and procure the delivery through a number of organisations that work together but retain their independence. That would provide an element of the kind of resilience that is necessary to meet health requirements or to deliver bus services.

[139] We have talked about a good example in Norfolk. Norfolk County Council operates quite a scheme and we have considered whether—perhaps in north or mid Wales, or even in the whole of Wales—we could work together to provide that kind of umbrella organisation that could support and work with the community transport sector to enable it to meet these more strategic needs that we want to work towards as part of the new bus funding regime. There is work to be done to evolve that, but there are some good models out there that we might be able to develop with the Community Transport Association and some operators over the next year or two.

[140] **Eluned Parrott:** You have three months to implement the changes between the old funding regime and the new regime. How far down the line are you to be able to do that and to be able to ensure that there is consistency of service, as well as consistency of funding for operators that are currently delivering what many communities would see as an absolutely critical service for them?

[141] **Mr Mathias:** We are currently working on the quantity of funding per consortia so that we can work out what that 10% is going to be.

[142] **Mr Prys-Jones:** The issue for us is that we have a lot to do to be able to ensure that the system is up and running in some form or another from 1 April. To be fair, the Minister has recognised how much work needs to be done to implement the new scheme to its full extent. That is why it has been agreed that there is to be a transition year. Over the next three months, we need to try to ensure that we do not end up on 1 April with significant disruption to bus services and significant unforeseen circumstances, particularly in relation to community transport organisations. So, for the moment, our work is entirely focused on ensuring that we still have a network, and that the network is as robust as we can make it, given the reduction in funding from 1 April. We know that we have at least a year of transition that needs to be done, and we are going to use that year to work with the CTA and other organisations, including the bus companies, to gradually move towards the new regime, to be fully up and running from April 2014.

[143] **Nick Ramsay:** We are into the last five minutes and we still have some areas to cover.

[144] **Joyce Watson:** SEWTA suggests that new proposals and possible legislation might be required to facilitate bus integration, and that might also include bus franchising. May I have some brief replies, please?

[145] **Mr Youngman:** I gave the example of Caerphilly, where, within the current legislative situation, the local authority has sat down with the bus companies and worked on a much more comprehensive bus network, using the same amount of resources as are currently available. That is not always possible. We could put contract conditions on our subsidised services, to require them to take other operators' services, for example. However, when those operators are really free to set whatever fares they like, you can end up with a situation in which one operator complains, asking why it is taking all the passengers of another operator when it is running appalling buses. Within the current legislation, things are possible, as in the example of Caerphilly and even in my own county.

[146] Bus franchising—and I had some experience of this in London—comes at a cost, however. With the amount of subsidy that London's bus network has, you could probably have 20 or 50 years' worth of funding in Wales to meet what they do on a yearly basis. It comes at a cost.

[147] **Joyce Watson:** How do you think we will have integration of rail services achieved during the current franchise and the priorities for future rail franchises? How do you think we will achieve it?

[148] **Mr Youngman:** John made a comment earlier that the future franchise should perhaps include some element of bus provision. We have long argued in the SEWTA region that the rail-link services are a natural extension of the bus network, such as the one that runs from Maesteg to Caerau and, even now, more local ones. If they are part of the rail franchise, they can be marketed properly as such. In Cornwall, there is a bus route that is effectively in the same livery as the train company.

[149] You could also have better integrated ticketing: a facility where people could perhaps buy a train ticket before they got onto the train that would enable them to use the bus. There is a good integrated ticket out there at the moment called Plusbus, but it has a weakness in that you can only really buy it at a railway station to enable you to travel onwards from a railway station on a bus. You cannot get it on a bus before you make the train part of journey, whereas in London, with the Oyster card, people do not have that hassle. I have to say, though, that the experience of it is that the Oyster card took a long time to get through the machinations of even a heavily regulated rail industry. It took many years for National Rail to agree to the Oyster card being fully available on all of London's train services. They are getting there, however.

[150] Locally, in Monmouthshire, we want to publicise the fact that we have a number of rail services coming through our county. It may be more of a challenge with the rail industry to try to get it to include bus times or bus information. Even if it is merely just putting in a one-stop shop, Traveline is probably sufficient to try to encourage that.

[151] **Nick Ramsay:** Let us not get back into the whole one-stop shop for the one-stop shop for the one-stop shop discussion. Thank you, Joyce. There are a couple of minutes left, and Ken Skates has some questions on ticketing.

[152] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes. I will try to fly through these questions. First of all, under the Transport Act 2000, there is a duty on local government concerning bus information schemes. Why are they not being used, given that there is a duty?

[153] **Mr Youngman:** Bus information costs. There are many examples where we have put real-time information systems in, but they have not had the ongoing revenue stream to keep them updated, to ensure that when an operator changes its vehicles or moves to another part of the UK, the piece of kit that is on the bus that tells the real-time information system where the bus is can be taken off and fitted to a bus that is staying in south Wales. Things like the bus guide come at a cost. All of the posters and timetable frames that we have on display come at a cost. In terms of ever-decreasing transport budgets in all local authorities, there is a balance to be struck between—

10.45 a.m.

[154] **Kenneth Skates:** Is it not cost-neutral because of the adverts? Are you not getting any revenue from them?

[155] **Mr Youngman:** Marketing budgets are also being squeezed, but we are trying to be imaginative. Unlike other authorities in England, we do not charge for this. If you go to Herefordshire, for example, you will get a similar book but you will have to pay for the privilege. We have kept it free but that has required us to put some advertising in it. If you increase the advertising you end up just becoming a bit of a *Yellow Pages* and you lose the message that is in there about public transport. I think that other authorities provide information, namely Caerphilly and the Vale of Glamorgan. I go back to smartphones, but perhaps new technology is a way. New technology at bus stops might also be a way. If 4G is rolled out, there may be a facility so that we can keep that constantly updated.

[156] **Kenneth Skates:** Can you clarify whether GoCymru will be an integrated ticket or an e-purse, and what is the difference? The Minister said that there would be an integrated ticket and SEWTA said that there would be an e-purse.

[157] **Mr Youngman:** I have not been directly involved with it, but as far as I am aware it is still in its pilot stage. Again, people think that smartcards are the panacea, but London had an integrated ticket for many years on a piece of paper, as did many other European countries. In London it was the Travelcard. Integrated ticketing should not just be about smartcards; it should be about the facilities that are provided. It may well be that, as technology moves on, having a smartcard is not the approach to take. There could be contactless cards or you could have credit on your mobile phone. People can now present a card in the supermarket that takes money off them when they pay for their milk, rather than having a card that requires a chip and a personal identification number.

[158] **Nick Ramsay:** I think that an e-purse would still, effectively, mean separate tickets. You are just buying them in one way, are you not, whereas integrated ticketing would be from the start of the journey to the end? You probably know more than I do about that.

[159] **Mr Mathias:** GoCymru and the buses being of the same colour as the trains is the way ahead, is it not? You might have the green bus of Wales, just like the red London buses. That is the idea. It does not really matter how the ticket is bought. It can be bought by using a credit card or by using a ticket to which you can add money. However, it needs to be truly integrated and I think that that is the way ahead. These are very early days.

[160] **Keith Davies:** You get it when you go to London. If you are under ground and you buy a rail ticket, then that is also your underground ticket.

[161] **Nick Ramsay:** We will have one five-second question and one five-second answer before we finish.

[162] **David Rees:** Is it a problem in Wales? When you talk about London, there is one

body and, effectively, there are many companies with the same livery, as you say. Is it the problem that, in Wales, there are too many operators and that how it will all be funded is a major issue?

[163] **Mr Youngman:** I think that you might find that in London there are probably more operators, including the rail operators as well. The London Underground never used to talk to the buses and British Rail was a whole different ball game. I think that it is now much better in London, with the London Assembly, but there are still differences. I must say—and this is a bit of a hobby-horse of mine—that the UK does not do integrated transport, compared with other countries. We see transport as a bit of an—

[164] **Nick Ramsay:** We kind of worked that out with this inquiry.

[165] **Mr Youngman:** In the UK we have not put in the level of funding that other European countries have put in over many years. We just have not done it.

[166] **Mr Mathias:** The small operators have a place in public transport in Wales, providing local journeys—community-style journeys—that might be funded from the public purse, and they offer something that possibly the larger operators cannot provide.

[167] **Nick Ramsay:** On that note I thank our witnesses—Mark Youngman, Hubert Mathias, John Forsey and Iwan Prys-Jones—for being with us today. Diolch yn fawr. Your evidence is very helpful and we will be feeding it into our inquiry into integrated public transport in Wales. Hopefully, we can give guidance to the Welsh Government, which can improve things as we move forward.

[168] The meeting is suspended until 11.00 a.m.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.50 a.m. a 11.01 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.50 a.m. and 11.01 a.m.*

Ymchwiliad i Drafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig: Craffu ar y Gweinidog Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport: Ministerial Scrutiny Session

[169] **Nick Ramsay:** I welcome Members back to this morning's meeting of the Enterprise and Business Committee. I also welcome our witnesses. Thank you for being with us today to help us with our inquiry into integrated transport in Wales. Would you like to give your names and positions for the record?

[170] **The Minister for Local Government and Communities (Carl Sargeant):** Good morning, Chair. I am Carl Sargeant, Minister for Local Government and Communities. I will let my team introduce themselves with their full titles.

[171] **Mr Dosunmu:** I am Bayo Dosunmu and I am deputy director of public transport.

[172] **Mr Thomas:** I am Huw Thomas and I am senior business manager for buses and community transport.

[173] **Nick Ramsay:** Thank you. I also thank you for the paper that you have provided; it has been very helpful. We have a fair number of questions for you, so I propose that we get straight into those. Byron Davies has the opening question.

[174] **Byron Davies:** Good morning, gentlemen. SWWITCH states that the Wales transport strategy and national transport plan are not very effective in supporting integration. Professor

Cole has suggested that the Welsh Government may currently lack the skills necessary to engage with experienced private transport companies. Also, TraCC has commented that it has largely been left to consortia to seek better integration and that there has been little Welsh Government strategic vision or guidance. You say in your paper that the Wales transport strategy provides an overarching framework for the creation of an integrated transport system. Who is right?

[175] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you for your interesting question, Byron. There are comments there that I probably would not agree with, and I will explain some of the detail behind that now. When I took the post of Minister for transport, I was very keen for my team to look at priorities within the fixed budget, given the change that we had in the financial envelope. You will be aware that the national transport plan was just a list of things to do. On that basis, I asked for a review of the plan and we put priorities in that proposal in order for us to have target dates for us to try to achieve actions over interventions. I looked very closely at the issues around regional transport consortia—what they do and how effective they are—and the potential for joint transport authorities. Speaking with my team, I was very keen that we did not create something new when we could perhaps strengthen an organisation that might give them the teeth to act. I have been working with the regional transport consortia—SEWTA, SWWITCH, TraCC and Taith—in order to give them the ability, the funding and the opportunities to show what they are worth around regional planning. That leads on to creating the tools to do the job and an effective policy agenda, to give them the agenda of what we are trying to set up at the Welsh Government. You will have seen recent announcements in relation to the movement of change. Transport is very cumbersome in terms of making those long-term agenda changes; it takes a long time to do that.

[176] I have started to change the way in which we use and fund our bus services. You will be aware of that. The other integrated opportunities with the new franchise are important. We must line those up, and once they are in place, the operational side of this, in terms of the transport consortia, will do the job. They are certainly stepping up to the mark, particularly in south Wales, where they are taking the lead on the metro concept, and in north Wales, with electrification. So, they are stepping up to the mark. Professor Cole is an interesting chap of great value and he has many views, none of which I share.

[177] **Nick Ramsay:** None of them?

[178] **Carl Sargeant:** Some of them, I should say. [*Laughter.*]

[179] **Lord Elis-Thomas:** I think that you were right the first time. [*Laughter.*]

[180] **Carl Sargeant:** I am sure that I will receive a letter from Professor Cole now. [*Laughter.*]

[181] **Nick Ramsay:** Minister, there is a key difference there in terms of the Record.

[182] **Carl Sargeant:** He adds great value, but, as I said, I do not agree with all of his views.

[183] **Byron Davies:** You said at the beginning that you would not agree with all of the comments that I mentioned. We have had bus and train operators come in to give evidence for this inquiry. I think that all of them, without exception, have said that there is not one body that is leading them in a particular direction. I would say that that is your role. So, why do you think that they need to say that to us?

[184] **Carl Sargeant:** I do not recognise that. We must recognise that all those people whom you have had in to give evidence are commercial operators, and I invest a significant

amount of public money into those operators. The reality is that we have little or no legislative competence around direction in terms of some of the contracts that we have with these organisations. It will be interesting to see, in the committee's report, the committee's views on legislative powers. I believe that we should have such things as regulated bus services in Wales; they were de-regulated many years ago and that was to the detriment of public investment and public services. That is my view and that of the Government. There are issues around quality bus partnerships where we invest this money and where we have levers to ensure that we have control of these services. At the moment, we have very little, so I am slightly surprised that the view of the commercial operators—which receive a significant amount of funding—is that they have no direction. It is based on a voluntary concept; if they wished to do things, they can. I would like them to do things, but often they do not.

[185] **Byron Davies:** Moving on to preparations for the next regional transport planning period, how will the Government assess the long-term needs in Wales?

[186] **Carl Sargeant:** We have started to consider how that might look from 2015 onwards; the early work on it is starting. The concept will be about growing the economy, protecting the most vulnerable and tackling poverty. I have said that clearly in my interventions. At the moment, that will be our main focus for creating a transport plan for the future.

[187] **Byron Davies:** Finally, I have a personal question, because I get a bit confused; I am being quite open with you here. We have your transport policy and lots of other things. For example, we have Cardiff Airport, we have issues around connecting train services with buses, and we have enterprise zones and city regions coming into the equation. Can I ask you bluntly, do you have a handle on all of this?

[188] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I believe that we have. You probably could have answered that question for me.

[189] **Byron Davies:** Yes. Could you give us some detail around all that?

[190] **Carl Sargeant:** Let me give you some confidence about that. The work on transport, which is undertaken in my department, and the work on Cardiff Airport, city regions and enterprise zones, which is undertaken in the business department, is done very closely between those teams. I meet regularly with the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science and our teams work closely together behind the scenes to look at what we can do. It is a case of getting the best bang for the buck. It is about what the Minister for business is doing and what we are doing to align some of those projects going forward.

[191] It is quite complicated out there, with all the different systems, but the fundamental thing in this is the issue of who is responsible for what. Again, I have been clear with regional transport consortia about what their role is in the city regions or otherwise. It has not been brought to my attention that there is confusion in the system, although I recognise the complexity of the different layers of interventions and schemes that could potentially cause conflict if it is not managed well.

[192] **Byron Davies:** I just get the impression that it is not being sold well at the moment.

[193] **Carl Sargeant:** Okay; I accept your view, but I probably do not agree with you, though.

[194] **Byron Davies:** Okay, thank you.

[195] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Rydych wedi **Alun Ffred Jones:** You have referred to cyfeirio at rai pwerau y buasech yn dymuno some powers that you would wish to have.

eu cael. Pa bwerau ychwanegol yr ydych yn credu y buasai'r Llywodraeth yn dymuno eu cael er mwyn creu trafndiaeth integredig well? What additional powers do you believe the Government would wish to have in order to create improved integrated transport?

[196] **Carl Sargeant:** Diolch, Alun Ffred, for the question. There are a couple of significant items that I think would be extremely helpful to us in shaping the future of integrated transport in Wales. One is about the regulated bus services, again. I would seek the opportunity to have that provision. The other would be around franchising and franchising decisions. The committee will be aware of the recent Brown review in relation to what happened in London around franchising.

[197] Despite what Brown has said—and I welcomed his report, as it gave some clarity to the processes—I still believe that it prohibits changes to a franchise system that could operate in Wales because of that system. I will give an example. One of the Government's manifesto commitments—and I know that the Member shares this view—was to consider a not-for-dividend, not-for-profit railway system. I have seen evidence around that, and without prejudice, I might say, Chair, there will be a point when I may be involved in making a decision concerning the franchise, so I am not prejudging any bid in advance of that; I just want to give an example. A unit or body that wishes to bid for a franchise has to invest significant amounts of money just in creating a business case. We estimate the cost to be about £3 million to £5 million. It is very difficult for a not-for-profit, not-for-dividend organisation of any scale to create a business case at a cost of £5 million without full knowledge that the bid will be successful or otherwise. It is much easier for the big players—some of the German banks, et cetera—to create those business cases at risk, where they may move forward or they may not. That is a part of the franchising system that I think is complex and one that prohibits change, and I think that we need change in terms of giving other people opportunities to bid.

[198] So, there are two significant areas, I would say, around franchising and franchising powers, along with devolving the process and the financing to Wales. This is for the right reason; I do not want powers and not do anything with them—I do not want powers for the sake of having them. The other area is the regulation of bus services in Wales, as I think it would be really significant in terms of the direction of authorities to deliver on Government priorities, with no question.

[199] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Beth fuasai cael y pwerau dros *franchise* y rheilffyrdd yn ei wneud i chi o ran datblygu'r isadeiledd neu wasanaethau i'r teithiwr? Beth fuasai'n gallu ei wella? **Alun Ffred Jones:** What would having the powers over rail franchising do for you in terms of being able to develop infrastructure or services for the traveller? What would it allow you to improve?

11.15 a.m.

[200] **Carl Sargeant:** The decision-making process for the scope of the franchise is a determination made between myself and the Department for Transport. The leading hand in all of this is the Department for Transport in the UK. It controls the method of franchising and the process to deliver that. The judgment on the franchise, too, is ultimately a decision for the Department for Transport and the Minister at Westminster. For instance—although I have no reason to believe that this would be the case, it is an example that could occur—if the decision and the process led to a not-for-dividend company being the most beneficial to Wales in terms of its bid, and that was submitted for a decision to the Department for Transport, that would be a decision that I would have to be consulted on. I, or the Welsh Minister at the time, would be asked for a view, to agree or otherwise. I agreed. There is still an opportunity for the Westminster Government to refuse that franchise, based on either the

professional element of the business case—that it just does not stack up, and the Westminster Government does not agree with it—or based on a political decision it does not believe that a not-for-dividend, not-for-profit programme was suitable for any franchise in the UK. I believe that that fundamentally should be a decision for the people of Wales and the Government of Wales. At the moment, there is a risk in that that potentially still lies with the UK.

[201] **Alun Ffred Jones:** A ydych mewn **Alun Ffred Jones:** Are you in discussions trafodaethau gyda'r Llywodraeth yn San with the Government at Westminster Steffan ynglŷn â hyn? regarding this?

[202] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I am.

[203] **David Rees:** May I go back a bit to the integration of the consortia's operations? You have mentioned that you might be looking at joint transport authorities under the 2006 Act. When would you want to use JTAs? Are you going to give the consortia sufficient time? You have just changed the funding to the consortia, so are you going to give them sufficient time to try to deliver what you now want in your system?

[204] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I am. I am not pursuing JTAs with any vigour at all. I believe they are and were an option for change should we have to do that, but I am putting a lot of faith in the regional transport consortia. If you look at the shape of the consortia previously, they were nice organisations but, in terms of effectiveness, they spent money but the regional aspect of planning was not their strongest point. I hope that I am now giving them the strength and capacity as regional organisations to create a regional transport plan that gives them an opportunity for integrated transport. That is why bus funding has gone to them as organisations, in order for them to make regional choices. I am trying to put them into a space where, in effect, they are joint transport authorities in a region in their own right. I think they certainly are, in most cases; it is just the speed at which they get there. Some are certainly delivering on that.

[205] **David Rees:** I have two further points. Their representatives have been in this morning and they claimed and argued that they needed more powers to deliver on some of the demands that you have put upon them. Are they going to get more powers, or do you believe that they actually have sufficient regulatory powers to do that now?

[206] **Carl Sargeant:** As regards what I am asking them to do now, they have the powers to do that. The key for them is to deliver on that. I am not going to devolve any more powers or funding to an organisation. They have to prove that they can manage and deliver on what they have. We have made a fundamental change in bus service operation and funding, which we have delivered to regional transport consortia. I will work very hard with them to ensure that we get delivery on this, and I await that eagerly. This is unique in the UK. We have moved in a very different direction. I think it is very progressive and they are right in the front line of delivery. Let them deliver on that, then come back to me to say what additional powers they think they need to make a better service for the people of Wales. I am not precious about who delivers it; I want somebody to deliver it well.

[207] **David Rees:** One of the aspects of this inquiry is integrated transportation. So, in relation to how much of the funding you are asking them to look at, how they could create and establish stronger integrated transport systems by simply providing bus services?

[208] **Carl Sargeant:** For me, it is about progression. I mentioned earlier, in answer to the opening question from the Chair, that there are probably three significant strands that are important to integrated transport. The first of those is the rail franchise up to 2018, and we are working hard on that to understand how we can get better value in terms of the scope of the franchise. It is not just about running trains up and down a track, but about where they stop,

when they stop, what they deliver, the quality of service and whether they will meet up with buses at the other end.

[209] The second strand of that is the bus service industry. We have made big changes to the way in which that industry is funded because we want a lever to make sure that we can have operational influence on what happens on the ground. At the moment, the influence is limited, and you will see that services operate when they want to operate on a commercial basis. We have put a significant amount of public money into the rail network and the bus network, and we have to make sure that we can integrate them better. The bus service review is really important, and that will move in line with the train operators franchise and the way in which we can integrate them.

[210] The third significant strand—and we probably lose sight of this—is the active travel Bill, which is about making people more mobile. It gives you the ability to use your bike, walk or whatever you wish to do within a 10-mile radius of operation, so that that fits in nicely with bus operators and train operators. That is the jigsaw puzzle coming together, which is really important, but it takes a little time.

[211] The franchise runs until 2018, when we will have that big lever that will hopefully bring this together. The teams are working incredibly hard to make sure that bus, train and active travel come together, and I hope that they will.

[212] **David Rees:** Are the regional transport consortia fully aware of that vision?

[213] **Carl Sargeant:** Absolutely. If any of them are in doubt, they should come to see me pretty quickly.

[214] **Keith Davies:** O ran ariannu, a blynyddoedd nesaf? **Keith Davies:** In terms of funding, do you believe that there is sufficient funding to create an integrated network over the coming years?

[215] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you for your question, Keith. How do I answer it? On whether there is enough money in the system, there is lots of money in the system. On whether it is being used properly or whether it could be used better, it could of course, and that is why we are trying to shape this differently.

[216] I will send the committee a note on how much money overall we have put into the bus service operation, through the regional transport grant and school transport. We have put significant amounts of money into the bus and rail network. To date, I do not think that we have had the best value that we should have had. That is why I have shaken the system. It has not been easy and there has been a lot of pushback from different organisations that did not want me to do that. On that basis, I would suggest that we are probably doing the right thing.

[217] On whether there is enough money moving forward, I always need more money—I could always do a better job in terms of providing a better service if I had more investment. What is important is that I identify exactly what money goes into the system and that we make the best use of it. If the Minister for Finance and Leader of the House is watching this meeting then I do not have enough money, so we have to make sure that we use the money that we have well.

[218] **Keith Davies:** Roeddech yn sôn am y Gweinidog Cyllid. Yn y sesiwn a gawsom ar ddechrau'r bore, roedd y bobl a oedd gyda ni yn sôn am seilwaith Cymru a bod yn rhaid **Keith Davies:** You mentioned the Minister for Finance. In the session that we had earlier this morning, the people who were with us talked about Wales's infrastructure and that

edrych ar bethau ar wahân i gludiant. A ydych wedi cael unrhyw drafodaethau gyda'r Gweinidog Cyllid ar edrych ar ba arian cyfalaf sydd ar gael i ariannu seilwaith Cymru? aspects other than transport need to be looked at. Have you had any discussions with the Minister for Finance to look at what capital moneys are available to fund Wales's infrastructure?

[219] **Carl Sargeant:** There are things that are devolved to Wales, and things that are not. You will be aware that the rail network is a non-devolved function, so that is a Westminster issue. The committee is well aware of the ongoing discussions about the electrification and the upgrading of services that is required. That is a function of the Government in Westminster, and I have those discussions with it on a regular basis.

[220] The capital expenditure on my budget has been dramatically reduced this year as a consequence of the settlement that we received. We have to deal with that; there is nothing that I can do. The Minister for Finance, as much money as she may have, cannot magic new money, because it is just not there. Notwithstanding that, she has made a significant contribution to the road networks and to the highway improvement grant for local authorities. All that makes up the infrastructure, but we have had a difficult settlement, certainly in capital, and you have to try to operate within the financial envelope that you have. Could it be better? Absolutely, but that is all that I have.

[221] **Kenneth Skates:** Good morning, Minister. May I ask you about integrated ticketing and GoCymru, the card that you described as an integrated ticket, which is currently being developed as an e-purse, I understand? Can you clarify what GoCymru is and whether there will be developments with it this year?

[222] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you for your question, Ken. GoCymru is the Wales entitlement card for transport. We have two pilot schemes taking place—one in Cardiff and Newport and we will be widening that to north Wales shortly. I see that we have props as well, Chair. These are the new GoCymru cards, and we will share them with the committee.

[223] **Kenneth Skates:** May we have a look at those cards?

[224] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes. That was good timing. We are trialling that card on bus services. What we are testing there is the technology of this; this is different to the limited systems that are in place across the UK currently. People have compared this card to the Oyster card in London, but there is a big difference. The money that is put on an Oyster card in London goes to the London transport scheme; it goes to one operator. In Wales, we have many operators, and that is with buses alone. We have to have a payment method that we can use easily, so that when money is triggered on the card it goes directly to that operator. We are testing that now, to make sure that the technology works.

[225] Alongside that, Chair, to make sure that it is fully integrated, we have had some discussions with train operators, namely Arriva and First Great Western, and they are coming close to a conclusion, about the opportunity to use these cards on train services as well. So, that will make that fully integrated, but there is a time issue, and I know that there are Members around this table who have asked me many written questions about this scheme. We hope that we will be able to conclude some of those discussions with the train operators and the bus service operators and have better information around the end of March in order to start rolling that programme out more fully so that it extends to all of Wales. However, we are moving forward with this; the technology is quite challenging.

[226] **Nick Ramsay:** You have just said that there is only one operator in London, but that is not the case, is it? There is more than one operator. I think that what you meant was that there is one system of running the Oyster card. Can you clarify that?

[227] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I am sorry. That is what I meant. The payment goes to the one system, whereas our payments need to go to multiple operators.

[228] **Kenneth Skates:** That is grand. Is there going to be a pilot scheme in Wrexham?

[229] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes.

[230] **Kenneth Skates:** Excellent.

[231] **Nick Ramsay:** While we are talking about integrated ticketing, you have said that you want GoCymru to act as an integrated ticket, but, in his question, Ken Skates asked about the difference between the e-purse and the integrated ticket. At the moment, it is more of an e-purse system, is it not, rather than taking into account the start point and where you want to go, even if that is at the other end of Wales?

[232] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I suppose that you could describe it in that way. I know that there is some concern about how the e-purse system works. We have tried to establish what styles of transport there are around in Wales. As I said earlier, we have multiple bus operators across Wales and we have the train operators. How do we ensure that people can use this card effectively? We are doing some trials with students, and I know about the bank of mum and dad element, where the bank of mum and dad can top up a card for a student and they will use it for bus travel at the moment—they cannot use that in their local Sainsbury's or Tesco; it will be used for transport. We are, hopefully, using that to best effect.

11.30 a.m.

[233] **Nick Ramsay:** I cannot imagine what you mean, Minister. [*Laughter.*]

[234] **Carl Sargeant:** Of course. However, that is why we have gone down that route: because of the complexities of route management versus the management of finance to the individual organisations. We believe that this is probably the easiest way to ensure that there is a flexible card that you can use across different modes of transport. We hope to move further forward with this when we have tested that technology, so that we have—I am probably not the best person to describe this—the app, where you get a digital ticket on your phone and you tap it onto the system.

[235] **Nick Ramsay:** I am sorry to labour the point, Minister, but, given this commitment to integrated ticketing, can you see a process whereby we move from the e-purse to fully integrated ticketing? I know that you have said that you have to decide how that would work in Wales, but can you see a route ahead on that, if you will pardon the pun?

[236] **Carl Sargeant:** I do not know whether that is the right direction for us to go: that is, going from the style of card that we have now—the e-purse, as you call it—to a route-based card. There are, possibly, opportunities that we could explore on that. However, at the moment, with regard to the opportunity that we see for this, people tell me that what they would like is the ability, when travelling from A to B, whether by train or by bus, to use the same card or ticket to do that. We are already doing that without a card on a route in Newport, with the Rogerstone train and bus system. It works, but this takes it to the next level, whereby there is a card that enables us to do that. So, I am not yet convinced that a route-based system is better than a finance-based system. I am not clear on what the benefits would be for Wales, given the diverse numbers of transport operators that we have.

[237] **Eluned Parrott:** For the pilot plan, you have chosen initially two urban areas in south Wales and then another urban area in north Wales. Where we see e-purses developing,

it is generally in metropolitan areas—schemes such as the Oyster card are based in concentrated urban areas. However, the big challenges for Wales are the huge expanses with rural populations, isolated communities and very fragmented services. Did you not feel that arranging to do some form of pilot in some of the more challenging rural areas would have been valuable to help you to assess whether or not this will be viable on an all-Wales basis?

[238] **Carl Sargeant:** As I said earlier, what we are trying to do is to establish the technology and to see whether we can get the technology to work. The benefit of piloting this in an urban area is that we have a bigger number of people using the technology. Once that is tested, that will then work in any part of the system. As I said, the benefit of doing an urban trial is that we get more people using the card, which tests the system. If the system is based on a card and a ticketing machine that recognises the card, we believe that it will work on any bus anywhere in Wales.

[239] **Eluned Parrott:** However, where you have a lower footfall, the cost-effectiveness of implementing this technology may be lower as well. Are you assessing cost-effectiveness as part of this trial?

[240] **Carl Sargeant:** We recognise that there are different scales of operation and, if we were to operate this purely on the basis of profit, there would probably be no bus services in many of the rural economies. We have to make sure that we balance the opportunity here and consider whether this system works and how we can share that with all communities across Wales. That is, fundamentally, what we are trying to do.

[241] The reason we subsidise some services is because they are not commercially viable. We will continue to do that, whether they are in urban areas, more poverty-stricken areas, or rural areas. That is the commitment of the Government. This is just a system that we believe will provide an opportunity. This inquiry is into integrated transport, and, whether you live in a rural or urban area, this is an operator to operator system. You touched on the Oyster card and other systems. We are saying that, if you jump on an Arriva bus and use your GoCymru card to reach a point where the next person of delivery is either a local deliverer, or Stagecoach or whoever, you will be able to jump on and your card will continue to work on all of those buses. That is what the complexities of this are. The test is in an urban area, because we can get the footfall and real-time figures, and we can then roll it out across Wales. The rural element, and what you described, is an issue that we face with regard to all aspects of service delivery. We do not believe that this is affected by trialling it in an urban environment.

[242] **Nick Ramsay:** Ken, would you like to come in here?

[243] **Kenneth Skates:** No, I am content with that.

[244] **Nick Ramsay:** Okay. Minister, I would like to ask you about one final point, which you have touched on. There has been a delay in extending the system to rail. How long do you envisage that delay lasting?

[245] **Carl Sargeant:** As I said, we have had some discussions with the two train operators that operate predominantly in Wales. The team is moving very quickly on this. I think that March is a fair timescale for us to see some clear indication of the next stage forward. I will be happy to inform the committee as and when we are clear with the operators. This is a technology-based issue. We have to upgrade ticket machines to read cards, et cetera. That is an investment issue with both the operators.

[246] **Nick Ramsay:** Is that more of an issue for rail than for buses?

[247] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes. It is just the way that the franchise system works. It works differently from the way in which investment in local transport grants operates. It is not insurmountable, and we are moving forward very quickly. I received questions recently from a Member, and we have moved a significant way, in terms of the delays that we were encountering, towards more positive intervention with the train operators in terms of being able to deliver that.

[248] **Nick Ramsay:** When the committee went to Swansea as part of its inquiry and Members got off the train at Swansea station, there was a very nice information board with which we were very impressed. It had a list of times of buses from the station. I am sure that you are aware that there are concerns that this does not work the other way around. If you are at bus stops, you do not necessarily know when the next trains are going. Do you think that that problem can be overcome? I think that it was the public transport users' committee that has made some recommendations in the area of intermodal information. Are you taking those recommendations on board?

[249] **Carl Sargeant:** We are taking this very seriously. It is very disappointing in this day and age. I am not sure which is worse: having an out-of-date timetable or no timetable at all. The fact of the matter is that it is wrong, and it should not be. That is part of the longer-term plans in the Welsh Government's vision for change in transport. I shared some information with you earlier, Chair, regarding what the opportunities are for quality bus partnership schemes. I hope that we can lead in Wales in taking this forward. While we do not have the powers to re-regulate bus operations, there are things that we can do through quality bus partnership schemes if we can get them enabled, which would give us an opportunity to provide quality bus services, quality information services and quality integrated transport. This all fits together really nicely. It goes without saying that there are some things that we are doing already. 'Traveline Tim' and the Traveline Cymru team are doing a fantastic job in providing phone services and digital services—internet and apps. I used that service recently when I was looking for a bus service in Cardiff. It is great. It tells you exactly which way to go, which bus to catch and how long it will take you. So, there are things out there that do work.

[250] **Dafydd Elis-Thomas:** In Penrhyndeudraeth?

[251] **Carl Sargeant:** Absolutely. I visited there recently. Traveline Cymru does a great job, but this could be a lot better. The lever that we need to do this is in quality bus partnerships and the franchise, whereby we say, 'If we are giving you all of this money, we expect some service delivery.' Part of that service provision is about information services and their quality. I also believe that we must ensure that we have audio-visual signs on buses and trains. It is a really important part of this. I know that the Royal National Institute of Blind People has done work recently on that. It is absolutely essential for moving forward in the twenty-first century.

[252] **Nick Ramsay:** As for the quality of the bus stops and rail stations overall, do you think that it would help if there was a common standard for both?

[253] **Carl Sargeant:** Part of the problem is that stations have one of two owners: either Network Rail or Arriva Trains Wales. Again, I think that there are opportunities there. We are building up a really good relationship with the new Network Rail Wales manager; he is very effective in his work and certainly has a better relationship with the Welsh Government. There is lots of work to do there in terms of aligning policies between the three of us—the new franchise, a Welsh manager for the Welsh network and the Welsh Government. There are things that can happen within the new system, in a very short timescale. However, I tend to agree with you that it would be better if there was a standard across all the stations.

[254] **Nick Ramsay:** Whether you are waiting for a bus or you are waiting for a train, I would imagine that you would expect the same quality in your environment.

[255] **Carl Sargeant:** Absolutely.

[256] **David Rees:** Minister, you have just mentioned quality bus partnerships and quality bus contracts. It is no surprise to you, perhaps, that when the bus operators came here, they did not like them. So, how are we going to get them to be implemented? That is the crucial question here.

[257] **Carl Sargeant:** We currently have some things in train that are starting to shape a better way to do business. The starting point for all this was the way in which operators receive their funding stream. As you are aware, we have moved away from the operator subsidy on fuel and we have put that onto a mileage-based subsidy. So, no longer will we be paying for empty buses to go from A to B with just the driver on them. Again, there was a lot of resistance to that too. We have said that we will pay a mileage-based subsidy; we therefore have some more leverage in terms of routes that we are happy to pay for and routes that we are not happy to pay for. Of course, the operators also have their vision of commercial operation in terms of what they wish to do with licensing. It will be fully implemented by 2014 through the regional transport consortia. I have said to the consortia that we need to look collectively at the next stage. Let us get this done, let us get this working and then ask where we go from there. I believe that they will have the power and the vision, in terms of regional transport planning, to start looking at the way in which they procure services, how they invest in the operators that are willing to deliver the quality bus services—the fully audiovisual information service on buses, seatbelts if that is appropriate, et cetera—what level of service operators are prepared to deliver and how we will reward them. There are some schemes that deliver a gold, silver and bronze award. So, if you are delivering a bronze-style transport service, then you get the lowest amount of subsidy support. My aim is that we should develop a gold scheme for Wales. These are discussions that we are having with operators and with the transport consortia. That is the way that we can develop the soft route into quality bus partnership contracts. There are currently schemes in train with local authorities that are already developing schemes for quality bus partnership contracts. I hope that we can move on very quickly and that Wales could lead the way again in terms of this. Without the full powers, this is the only route to make those changes.

[258] **David Rees:** So, that is part and parcel of the directions the RTCs will now be taking, because they have the regional transport grant now.

[259] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes.

[260] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning, Minister. We have heard you talk about the possibility of introducing quality partnerships and the reregulation of bus markets, and we have a bus funding review ongoing. My question is whether the consortia have the resources to effectively deliver that new approach and whether funding for bus services will be sufficient to ensure the adoption of those quality outcomes that you so eloquently state you would like.

11.45 a.m.

[261] **Carl Sargeant:** If I ask the transport consortia to do more work, I need to support them to do that, and I have those conversations, about how exactly we can support them, with my team. It might not always be financially; it may be a skill base that we need to look at, in terms of giving them an opportunity and investment to develop it.

[262] I have to be perfectly honest with you, Chair, the fact of the matter is that the budgets

are reducing and there is nothing I can do about that. There is £1.7 billion less coming into the Welsh economy; that has a consequence and I have to alter the services accordingly. There are two reasons for this. I could have carried on funding bus operations the way we did before, on a fuel-subsidy-based method with higher rates than anywhere in the UK, by putting a squeeze on other parts of the budget. I did not think that that was right, and I made a clear Government commitment to make that change, and we have done that, working with regional transport consortia. They have stepped up to the plate, and they are keen to deliver this with the operators and to finalise that for 2014.

[263] Despite the amount of money that is in the system, I think that we can do things better, and that is why I am challenging them to work with me. There is no reason why we have to do these things 22 times. There is no reason at all. That is why, on a regional basis, we can focus on the funding available from the Welsh Government and local authorities, in terms of delivering a better service. So, will it mean changes to services? Of course it will. That is how things are: we have less money in the system. However, by virtue of the fact that we are planning change, that gives us an opportunity to shape the best services and how those should be delivered in the future. Rather than thinking, 'Just because there is less money, we should reduce the service and let that be the end of it', we are making sure that we are able to plan better with them to deliver.

[264] **Joyce Watson:** Talking about change, how do you think the network strategy can ensure that the bus services integrate with rail services, particularly in terms of timetable co-ordination? It seems that a lot of work is being done in specific areas, but nothing is done nationally.

[265] **Carl Sargeant:** It is not all bad, is it?

[266] **Joyce Watson:** No, it is not all bad.

[267] **Carl Sargeant:** We have some great services, and people have seen recently, in this difficult weather spell, that people working in the public transport sector have worked incredibly hard to make sure that services continue, and I pay tribute to them. The fact is that Wales is a diverse place, and we have to try to do things better. On the franchise that we have in place currently, I have many descriptions for it, but it is probably not the best in terms of delivery and where we should be. That is nobody's fault here. The fact of the matter is that that was a contractual agreement that we signed up for. However, I hope that, for 2018, whoever delivers that service, we can have a better designed service for Wales. That is in everybody's interest. On that basis, with a new franchise and new methods in terms of the way bus operations are delivered, including the quality element of delivery of services, I think that we can get better integration to the broader areas of Wales, using the Go card as well. It all fits: it is a bit of a jigsaw at the moment, and we are trying to bring those pieces together. It takes a little time.

[268] **Nick Ramsay:** Did you just say 'go-kart'?

[269] **Carl Sargeant:** No, I said 'Go card'.

[270] **Nick Ramsay:** A go-kart would be a different matter.

[271] **Carl Sargeant:** It is important, Chair, that we bring these pieces of jigsaw together. It is quite exciting, because Wales can start to have a different style of transport system, and I am pleased that I have been able to make that start.

[272] **Nick Ramsay:** We are moving to the last 10 minutes. Dave Rees, do you have a very brief supplementary question?

[273] **David Rees:** I would like to clarify something. You are talking about moving away from the BSOG, which is fuel oriented, to a mileage-orientated scheme. Is that the mileage the bus has travelled or the mileage the passenger has travelled, because the former could leave you still paying for an empty bus?

[274] **Carl Sargeant:** The mileage refers to passenger travel.

[275] **Nick Ramsay:** Ann Jones, as we have been moving to rail services, do you want to ask your question?

[276] **Ann Jones:** You have mentioned a lot about when the new franchise comes in, in 2018. That is six years away. There are many people travelling on trains at the moment who do not get satisfaction or who do not get what they think should be delivered by the franchise. Between now and when you start the hard negotiations, how are you going to ensure that you take the views of those people who travel into consideration, so that when the companies come with their lovely £3 million business cases, all nicely and glossily done, showing a nice train that is clean and tidy, with toilets that work—I sound like someone else now—and a catering facility, you can be certain that that will be provided on those services?

[277] **Carl Sargeant:** You ask an important question. As I said in my earlier response, the franchise that we have is the franchise that we have. Notwithstanding that, there are certain criteria that the franchise must meet. According to the statistics, Arriva Trains Wales operates very effectively in Wales as compared to some of the other organisations running train services across the UK. Train travel is a massive growth area Wales and we should embrace that. We are taking people off the road networks and onto the rail networks, but you have to have suitable vehicles so that people feel comfortable about their style of travel.

[278] The Welsh Government has made a significant investment into Arriva Trains, investing in rolling stock and stations. It is fair to say that Arriva has also made local investments. However, it was a not-for-improvement franchise when it was taken out and that is evident in some areas, it may be said. We are trying our best to enhance a very expensive service. It takes an awful lot of money to invest in train travel because of the safety implications. You do not always see big effects, but it is a costly service. What we have to try to do for the future is that I will hold Arriva Trains Wales to account from now until 2018, and it should, and does, meet me regularly to explain the reasons why there are challenges in the system sometimes. We also have to look at what we want for Wales for the future.

[279] **Ann Jones:** May I ask about accessibility and building in services for people with disabilities, particularly those who have hearing disabilities? There have been five occasions when Arriva Trains has altered a service and people have not moved when they have decanted—passengers are often decanted at Chester and so on. They rely on the audio intercom, but nobody is walking down the train to make sure that everybody has heard it. Hard-of-hearing and deaf people have sat on the train, oblivious to the fact that everybody has to get off. How are we going to get accessibility right? We still have not got accessibility right and there are still people who have disabilities who will not use public transport because of uncertainty as regards how they will be treated or being able to use public transport without additional assistance.

[280] **Carl Sargeant:** Again, that is an important point, Chair. Across all our modes of public transport, there are millions of passenger journeys a year. When I hear about individual cases like that, it still disturbs me that we have not achieved full compliance in terms of where we should be in relation to delivering for people who are hard of hearing or have other disabilities. I will take that up with Arriva Trains because there is a duty within its franchise and contract to ensure that passengers' journey experience is treated as important. I will raise

that with the company—I do not have an easy answer to your question.

[281] **Eluned Parrott:** Minister, I would like to return to the issue of bus funding. In the new regime, there is a ring fence of 10% for community transport, which the consortia must implement. At that point in time, definitions become important. Can you define for me what community transport means to you?

[282] **Carl Sargeant:** I will write to the committee with the formal wording detailing what we expect in relation to community transport and the ring-fenced budget. I do not have that with me and would not want to pre-empt the decision that I have already made in terms of the definitions that they expect.

[283] **Eluned Parrott:** So, you will be providing the regional consortia with specific definitions of what should and should not be considered to be community transport within that.

[284] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes.

[285] **Eluned Parrott:** Moving on, according to your statement, the funding is also dependant on providing strategic services that are important to local needs, as we would expect. Obviously, some of those services will cross consortia boundaries. How do you see regional strategies working together to create an all-Wales strategy for delivery?

[286] **Carl Sargeant:** In the past, we have had 22 organisations making local investments. It is not new to cross boundaries—not previously or now. I bring regional transport consortia together regularly to ensure that, when they do their bus transport planning, they consider the boundaries and who funds what where. Again, making the strategic investment is really important. So, we have four organisations now that will have the ability to plan better together for the all-Wales vision, as opposed to 22 organisations trying to create their own infrastructure for delivery. We have had early discussions about this. You will be aware that we deliver the regional transport consortia grant now, which is based on the region; some local authorities invest significant amounts of their own money into transport schemes alongside that. There probably has to be a discussion further down the line when we have this in place. They will have to collectively think about what their investments are; would they make a better investment collectively again, using that money as a regional pot? I do not want to micromanage local determination of investment in transport spend. I am keen that we get the regional transport services grant in place and operational as soon as possible.

[287] **Eluned Parrott:** Moving on to the all-Wales concessionary fare scheme, I note in your paper that you have extended it to seriously injured service personnel and armed forces personnel, which I think we all welcome. However, you will recognise that people who have severe injuries are often unable to access standard forms of transport and ordinary service buses. Therefore, can you comment on the proposal from the Community Transport Association that the all-Wales concessionary fare scheme should be extended to cover community transport providers as well?

[288] **Carl Sargeant:** We are making investments into community transport. The investment is increasing to the whole of Wales. The investment that we used to make in community transport—to roll out that scheme—as the Member will appreciate, is not affordable. I just do not have that money. Having less money from Westminster has a consequence on the delivery of services here.

[289] The community transport grant now being centralised in the regional transport consortia has increased the capacity for organisations to deliver on that, should they so wish. It is also equitable now, because only 15 authorities across Wales had community transport

schemes before. That is just not right; therefore we must ensure that everybody gets a fair share of funding. It is the duty of the passenger transport committee, to which you referred, to ask me to invest more money into community transport and schemes across Wales. It is not affordable. Within the financial envelope that we have, we have created the best environment in which to take this forward.

[290] **Eluned Parrott:** If that is not affordable as a mechanism, then looking at the transport tender process to allow tenders to be weighted towards local providers who can demonstrate additional value in terms of social impact or equity of service and equity of access is a possible opportunity. Would you consider that?

[291] **Carl Sargeant:** It is still available now. The voluntary or community groups that run community transport groups can register routes under section 22 in order to provide and access core funding for services that they might want to provide. So, that is already available.

[292] **Eluned Parrott:** You will be aware that there are difficulties with waged and unwaged staff under the section 22 permits. You state in your paper that you are looking at relaxing that, so how will you do that?

[293] **Carl Sargeant:** I would consider relaxing that, if it was a problem. We have seen some community transport groups—I think that it was 15 that were funded in Wales, but I will clarify this in a note, if that is helpful, Chair.

[294] **Nick Ramsay:** If you could, yes.

[295] **Eluned Parrott:** Yes, thank you.

[296] **Carl Sargeant:** I think that 11 have been, in effect, self-sufficient, without Government funding.

[297] **Nick Ramsay:** We are into the last minute and I know that Dafydd Elis-Thomas wants the final word.

12.00 p.m.

[298] **Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas:** Mae gennyf ofn bod gennyf ddau gwestiwn ynglŷn â'r fframwaith deddfwriaethol. Nid wyf yn gwybod os gallaf ddisgwyl i'r Gweinidog ateb y rheini mewn munud. Yn y papur, fe ddywedir nad yw'r ddeddfwriaeth bresennol ynglŷn â'r rheilffyrdd yn alinio gyda delifro eich blaenoriaethau. Felly, mae gennyf ddiddordeb mewn gwybod lle rydych arni gyda'r achos am bwerau ychwanegol. Mae gennyf un cwestiwn arall ynglŷn â'r Bil cynllunio, ond anfonaf hwnnw atoch.

Lord Elis-Thomas: I am afraid that I have two questions on the legislative framework. I do not know if I can expect the Minister to answer them in just a minute. In the paper, it is stated that current legislation on the railways is not aligned with the delivery of your priorities. So, I am interested in learning where you are in making the case for additional powers. I also have one other question on the planning Bill, but I will send that to you.

[299] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you for your patience with my long, rambling responses to some of the questions that you have all asked in this session. That is an important question. I picked up earlier on the issue around the franchising and regulation of buses in Wales. I have already opened up dialogue with the Minister for transport at Westminster, and there are also considerations about what we should be seeking in the response of part 2 of the Silk commission. However, I will consider the question further and write to the Member, because of the time restrictions.

[300] **Nick Ramsay:** Do you have an extra minute, so that Dafydd Elis-Thomas can ask that question on planning?

[301] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes.

[302] **Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas:** Y diddordeb arall sydd gennyf yw'r Bil cynllunio. Yn y papur, rydych yn pwysleisio'r diffygion—rydym wedi cael tystiolaeth am y rhain—ynghlŷn â datblygiadau newydd, yn enwedig y tu fas i drefi, heb unrhyw ystyriaeth i reilffyrdd na bysiau o ran trafndiaeth gyhoeddus. A oes modd defnyddio'r Bil cynllunio arfaethedig i wella'r ffordd y mae materion trafndiaeth gynaliadwy yn cael eu hystyried yn y broses gynllunio?

Lord Elis-Thomas: The other interest that I have is the planning Bill. In the paper, you emphasise the deficiencies—we have heard evidence on these—in terms of new developments, particularly out-of-town developments, giving no consideration to bus or rail links in terms of public transport. Can the proposed planning Bill be used to improve the way that sustainable transport issues are considered in the planning process?

[303] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, and I think that that is an important point. If we develop communities outside our traditional town centres et cetera, it is important that we have a planning policy that supports public transport. I think that chapter 8 of 'Planning Policy Wales' and the technical advice notes support that principle, but I have spoken with the Minister for planning about how we can align that and the active travel Bill to ensure that we have routes that are defined with local authorities and the broader public sector to identify some of the important issues that the Member raises.

[304] **Nick Ramsay:** I thank the Minister, Carl Sargeant, and also Bayo Dosunmu and Huw Thomas, his officers, for being with us today. That has been most helpful; thank you. With the end of that session, I close this meeting.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 12.02 p.m.
The meeting ended at 12.02 p.m.*