

Ken Skates AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a
Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Transport and North
Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Llŷr Gruffydd MS
Chair Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

11 September 2024

Dear Llŷr,

I am writing to provide the committee with further information following my predecessor's letter of the 1 March. In that letter, the Government committed to provide you with an update to recommendation 9, and a response to recommendation 13.

Recommendation 9

The Minister should clarify the criteria for allocating the Bus Network Support Grant and how it will interact with the existing Bus Services Support Grant. The Minister should update the Committee on the operation of the grant within the next six months.

Response: Accept

ATCO (Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers), the umbrella organisation that represents local authority transport co-ordinators; and the WLGA (Welsh Local Government Association) were asked to identify a methodology that would provide an equitable split of funding across regions. Many options were considered, however the one chosen related to the formula used to allocate the Bus Transition Fund. This was agreed by all 22 local authority leaders at a WLGA Executive Board meeting in January of this year and conveyed to all regional lead authorities before funding was distributed.

A number of metrics and considerations were considered which included the methodology around the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) split; Bus Transition Fund (BTF) split; total passengers; mileage; population; Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. Another consideration related to the Public Transport Support and Concessionary Travel within the Welsh Government's Background Information for Standard Spending Assessments (Green Book).

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The WLGA recognised that there were no easy answers when it came to determine a regional equitable split as each region had different characteristics with different metrics favouring regions differently.

Methodology consideration also included looking at expressing the 2023/24 allocations of Bus Service Support Grant (BSSG), BES and BTF as a percentage by region or by taking an average of the best metric-based allocation, an identified need based allocation and the combined BSSG, BES & BTF allocation. Neither met the identified commitments and would involve inter-region transfers which would hamper decisions on which services could be let.

It was therefore agreed with ATCO and WLGA that the most recent formula used to allocate BTF by region remained to be the most equitable method of distribution.

Meetings were arranged by officials with all local authority regional leads, ATCO and WLGA representation to go through the methodology and rationale in ensuring that everyone was involved in the process.

A WLGA report was then prepared based upon the above and presented at its Executive Board (leaders of all 22 local authorities across Wales) on the 19th of January this year (2024) seeking approval of the proposed regional allocations. The report was cleared by Cllr Andrew Morgan and accepted/supported at this meeting by local authority leaders. Following this meeting Welsh Government proceeded to allocate the funding as agreed.

The further split of funding made from each regional lead authority to each of their constituent local authorities has been a matter for them to agree in line with their statutory duties, assessment of local needs, and scheme conditions, and has not involved Welsh Government.

The Bus Network Grant (BNG) scheme is aligned with the existing Bus Services Support (BSSG) scheme in providing local authorities with funding to secure services that would not otherwise be provided through their existing statutory duties.

Since the introduction of the scheme bus networks have stabilised across Wales and has provided confidence to passengers and wider stakeholders. Officials continue to meet regularly with lead regional authorities to ensure the delivery and monitoring of the scheme

Recommendation 13

The Minister should provide an update within the next six month on progress taking forward the recommendations from the Cross-Party Group on Active Travel.

Response: Accept

The Cross-Party Group made 51 recommendations, covering the key areas of:

- Delivery
- Governance
- Behaviour change
- Equality
- Active travel to school
- Monitoring and data
- Legislative change

The most wide-reaching recommendation was the development of a national active travel delivery plan. Our new [Active travel delivery plan 2024 to 2027 | GOV.WALES](#) was informed by the Cross-Party Group's recommendations and sets out the actions Welsh

Government, Transport for Wales and other partners will take to implement the active travel commitments in Llwybr Newydd and to strengthen the framework for active travel delivery across Wales up to 2027. It was published on 14 March 2024. Alongside its publication, the Welsh Government provided a detailed response to each of the 51 actions to the Chair of the Cross-Party Group and the Chair of the Active Travel Board.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Trafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Transport and North Wales