

North Wales Transport Commission

Interim Report



June 2023

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The Commission

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Foreword

The role of the North Wales Transport Commission is to investigate the problems, opportunities, challenges and objectives for realising a sustainable, integrated transport system in north Wales. The conclusions and draft recommendations in this report focus on development and delivery of an integrated transport system in the region, ahead of our Final Report, to follow in the autumn.

As a commission, we have spent time studying the creation of viable alternatives to the private car through an effective transport system that makes life better for the whole community - both households with cars and those without. Much of our work so far has been on understanding the journeys that people are making in and through north Wales, the current infrastructure that is in place, and what is discouraging people from making journeys by public transport in the first place.

This has been followed by a period of engagement with stakeholders to test their reactions to some of the transport issues we identified. We discussed what would be needed for them to make fewer journeys by car, what the Commission's priorities should be, and what they feel are the barriers to delivering a better network.

A high proportion of journeys are undertaken within, or to, more urbanised areas and improvements for sustainable travel in and between these locations has been a key focus of our work, and where modal shift can have significant impact. However, north Wales is also home to many sparsely populated, rural and semi-rural areas, and we have looked closely at the travel needs of people living there. Travel patterns and options are very different in rural areas, and we understand that not all car journeys can be made by other means. What will work for an urban area will not necessarily apply to a remote location.

Therefore, we recognise that the private car will continue to have a part to play in how people travel, and there is a need to help those who cannot travel by public transport or active travel to make the switch to electric vehicles, including access to charging infrastructure. These draft recommendations are framed in two groupings - the first sets out the primary changes needed for a better travel network for north Wales and the second identifies wider supporting measures across a range of areas, including governance, planning and enabling people to make the change to sustainable travel.

The draft recommendations are for discussion in the Commission's next phase and will be refined or amended for the Final Report. Arriving at this point would not have happened without the input of stakeholders, elected representatives and members of the public, to whom we are very grateful. This engagement will continue as we prepare our final recommendations.

Terry Burns

Chair of the North Wales Transport Commission

Background

We have taken a multi-modal approach, looking at all north Wales to consider how modal shift can be achieved in both urban and rural areas, using the collaborative approach taken to the South East Wales Transport Commission by:

- Analysing frequent journeys taking place within and through the region by road, including where they begin and end, at different times of the day and within different seasons, including freight.
- Analysing how public transport and active travel are used within and through the region, and where those journeys begin and end. This may include journey that start and end outside north Wales.
- Considering where the absence of public transport, car ownership or safe active travel corridors creates significant issues in communities.
- Examining the current programme of interventions to support people in north Wales to achieve a mode-shift, including the north Wales Metro programme and other relevant activity already taking place in the region to support active travel.

In February, our remit was extended to identify options for improving connectivity across the Menai Strait. Further details of this can be found at Annex 1 of this report.

This Interim Report presents our work to date, our current reflections and draft recommendations. The Commission's Final Report and recommendations, to be published in the autumn, will take in further stakeholder feedback and will reflect local and national policies including Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy and the Union Connectivity Review.

The Commission will continue to:

Be open to the views of the public and stakeholders including the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales, the Future Generations Commissioner, business groups, social partners, environmental groups, transport users' groups and local and national political representatives.

Consider the needs of current and future generations, taking into account immediate problems and future trends, such as the impact of low carbon alternative fuels and emerging transport-related technologies.

Take into account the report of the Climate Change Committee and other social, economic, cultural and environmental issues, including air quality and biodiversity.

Consider how to encourage positive behavioural responses from travellers to an enhanced multi-modal network of travel opportunities in north Wales.

Advise on innovative interventions and funding solutions, including consideration of governance, costs, financing, planning approach and programme / project management, and any need for improvements.

Operate independently of Welsh Government. The Commission is served by a Secretariat who support both the running of the Commission and delivering its work

More detail on our approach and our work to date can be found at Annex 2.



Mission Statement

The Commission’s starting point was that travel patterns in north Wales need to change, and that change is possible. Transport accounts for 17% of carbon emissions in Wales, and even with the advent of electric vehicles, reducing emissions will still require changes in the way we travel.

A switch to active travel is beneficial for health, for example helping to stave off major diseases like cancer and diabetes. Current travel patterns are also costly for households; those without car access find it difficult and expensive to get around and are disadvantaged as a result. To address these issues, alternatives to car travel should and can become much better and more affordable.

The Commission strongly believes that public transport and active travel in Wales can be better than the current services available; and it must improve if we are to see people rely less on their cars - particularly short journeys.

Therefore, this report sets out our draft recommendations in two broad areas:

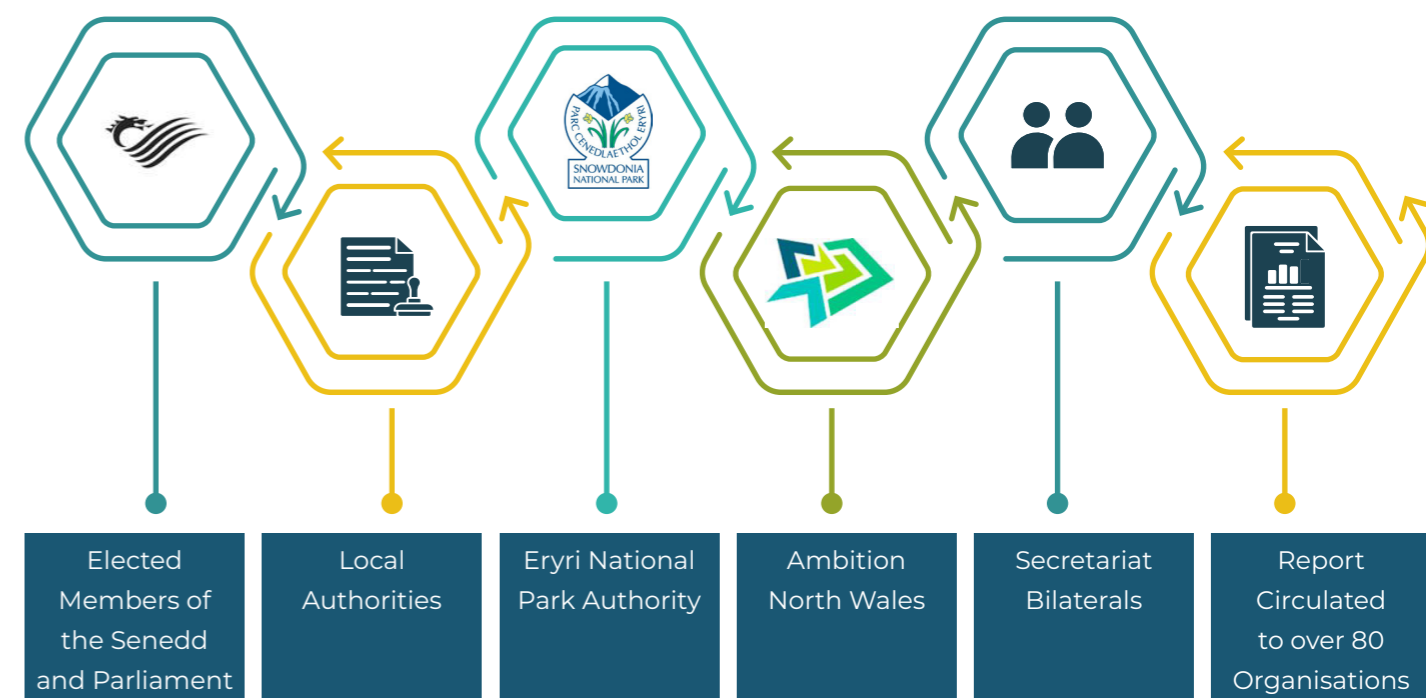
- 01 A Better Network - Primary Changes and Improvements**
Here we set out the work needed to develop and deliver a sustainable travel network for north Wales. Its focus is on public transport and active travel improvements that will provide a genuine alternative to the private car.
- 02 Enablers - Supporting Measures**
These are interventions, initiatives and ways of working that can enable more sustainable travel choices for businesses and individuals.

Stakeholder Discussions and Feedback

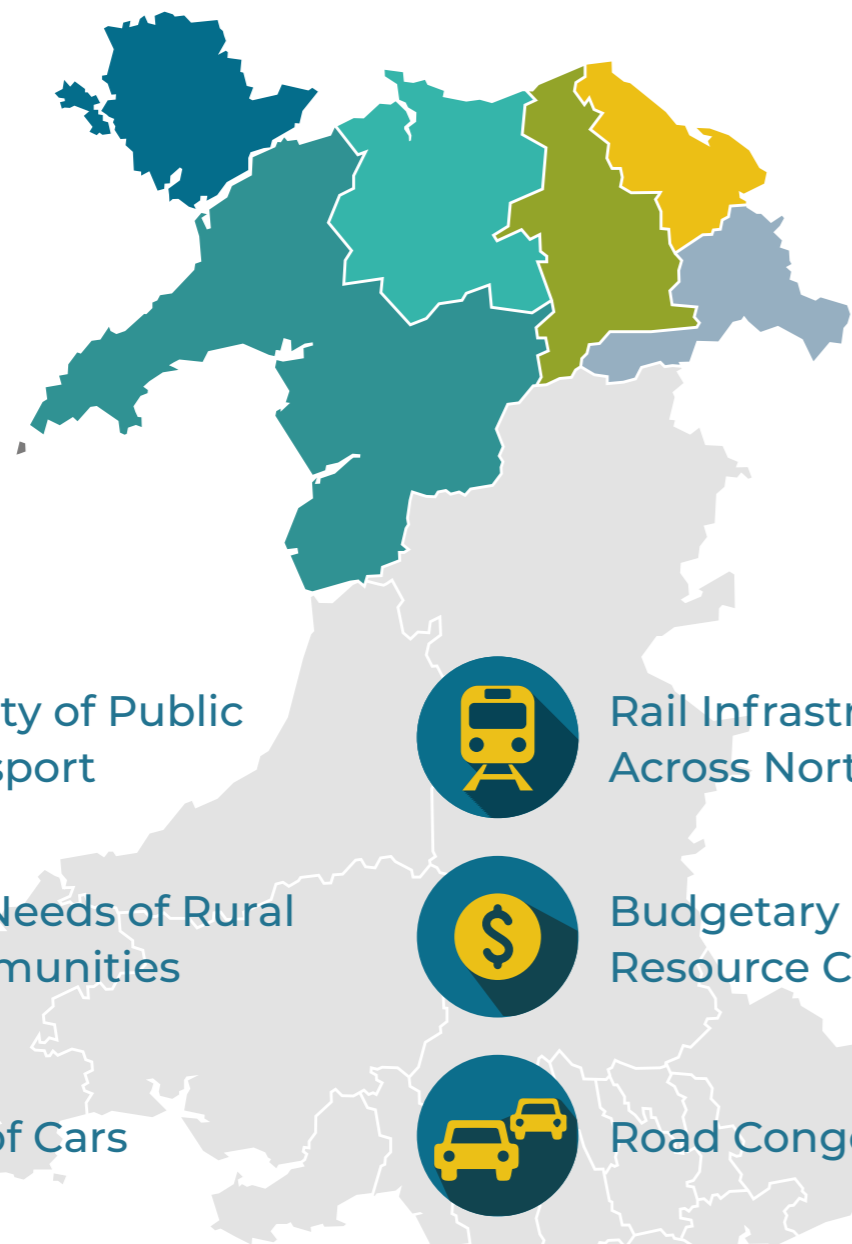
One of the priorities of the Commission has been to ensure it speaks to stakeholders throughout the process to refine our understanding of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the region. The Commission has spoken with people who live in and are familiar with north Wales including public sector staff leading on development and delivery of schemes across the region. We believe that listening to local people and organisations has greatly improved our understanding of the issues. Following the publication of our Progress Statement the Commission undertook a range of engagement activities including:

- **Discussions with elected members and senior officials** – meetings have been held with elected members of the Senedd, Members of Parliament and Local Authorities.
- Representatives from **Eryri National Park, and Ambition North Wales** joined meetings of the Commission to discuss their aims for transport, issues that are faced and potential effective solutions.
- **Requesting feedback and evidence from a broad range of interested parties** - sending the Progress Statement to over 80 organisations and businesses.
- **Secretariat Engagement** – our secretariat has met or corresponded with many individuals and organisations from industry, government, public and third sector organisations.

These interactions have enabled us to listen to the views of those who live, work and visit north Wales.



The key points from stakeholder engagement related to:



-  Quality of Public Transport
-  The Needs of Rural Communities
-  Use of Cars
-  Delivery Scepticism
-  Integration of Public Transport Modes
-  Borderlands Rail Line
-  Rail Infrastructure Across North Wales
-  Budgetary and Resource Constraints
-  Road Congestion
-  The Visitor Economy
-  Gwynedd to Ynys Môn Connections
-  Limited Resources to Deliver and Maintain Active Travel Schemes

Further detail of this feedback can be found at **Annex 3** of this report.

Welsh Government's Roads Review

In speaking with stakeholders, we heard disappointment about the outcomes of the Roads Review for the region.

Welsh Government's response to the review¹ emphasises support for modal shift and carbon emission reduction and we have focused on this when considering the strategic interventions needed for better transport provision across the region, and the steps that can be taken to achieve better networks, more useable services and fewer people travelling by private car.

While it is not the Commission's role to comment on individual schemes, roads are part of transport infrastructure – and should work to the maximum of their potential for:

- **Walking and Cycling,**
- **Public Transport,**
- **Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles,**
- **and then Other Private Motor Vehicles**

Full use of the capacity of existing infrastructure is a theme that the Commission follows across all modes.



¹ - Welsh Government response to the Roads Review [HTML] | GOV.WALES

Primary Changes and Improvements

We have determined that improvements to existing bus and rail services should be prioritised in the short-term. Providing high-frequency core bus and rail services with longer operating hours and competitive journey times with the private car, alongside more reliable services, is a first step towards providing an effective public transport network. Such provision is likely to have a transformative impact on the public's perception of public transport in the region.

Through our analysis and engagement activity, we know that there are significant barriers facing people when travelling by public transport and there are many instances where practice and delivery on the ground is at odds with aspirations for a sustainable integrated transport system in north Wales.

Public transport is not currently operating at the frequency or operational hours to make it an attractive alternative to car. This is true for both residents and visitors to north Wales.

Rural areas of north Wales, generally further south than the coast, have significantly fewer regular public transport services. Many journeys are only of a short length, with about a third being less than

5km and more than two thirds being less than 15km. Most of these journeys are within the same Local Authority area or to a neighbouring area. Many journeys that start in rural areas have destinations in nearby urban areas.

An issue we have returned to is that many people in the region do not have access to a car. Without effective public transport and active travel networks available, these people can be isolated, risk missing out on job opportunities and suffer worse access to public services because current provision does not meet their needs or is too expensive for them to use. Living near bus stops and stations does not help if the service provided does not meet your needs or is unaffordable. More people would use public transport with an improved and affordable service.

Making public transport more reliable, accessible and welcoming to people making journeys in and across north Wales will not only help the environment but also improve social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

The private car is the dominant mode for many journeys in north Wales, but there is the opportunity for many more trips to be made using the train, bus and

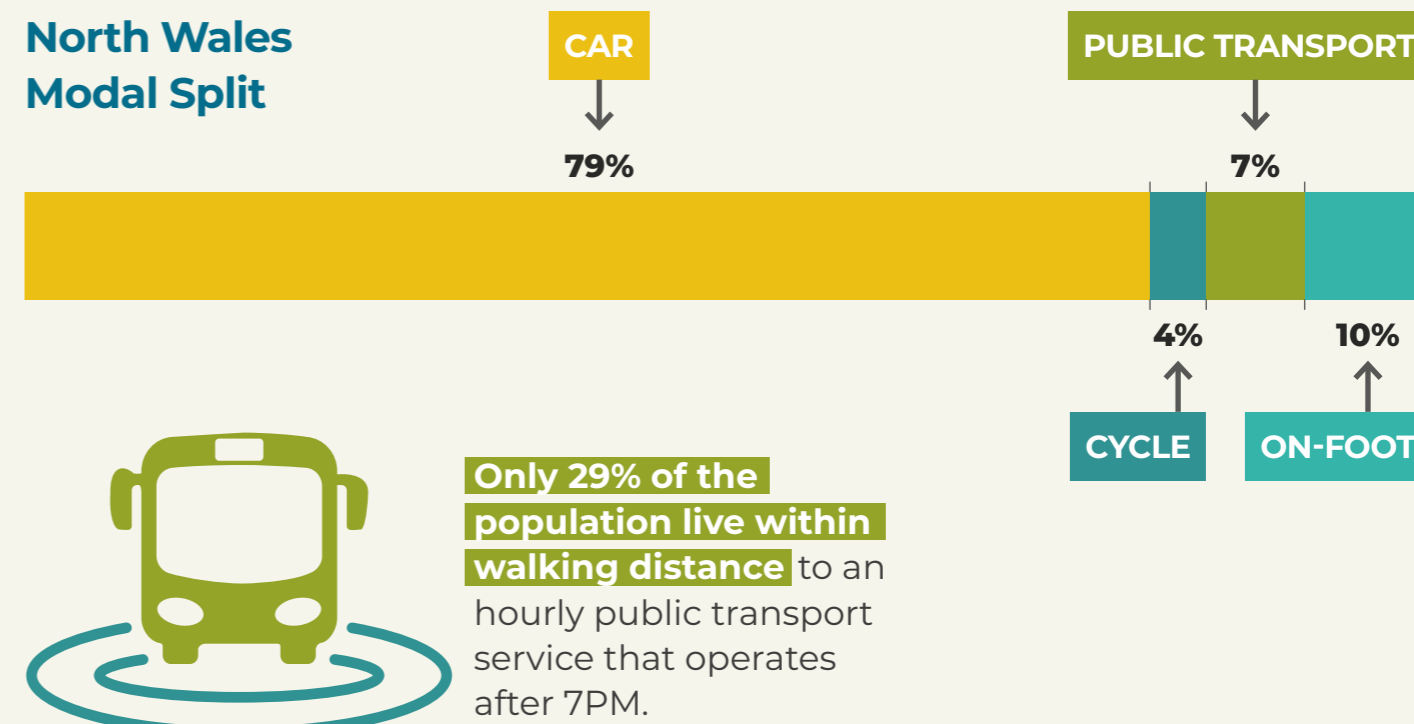
active travel - but only if networks, frequencies and operating hours and integration are substantially improved. This part of the report sets out what we have found so far about transport and travel within and across north Wales and outlines our thoughts on what can be done to create a better system.

We recognise that people will do what is most convenient and economic from their perspective, so if Welsh Government wants more people to use public transport and active travel, it will need to make these modes the easiest way to travel for more journeys.

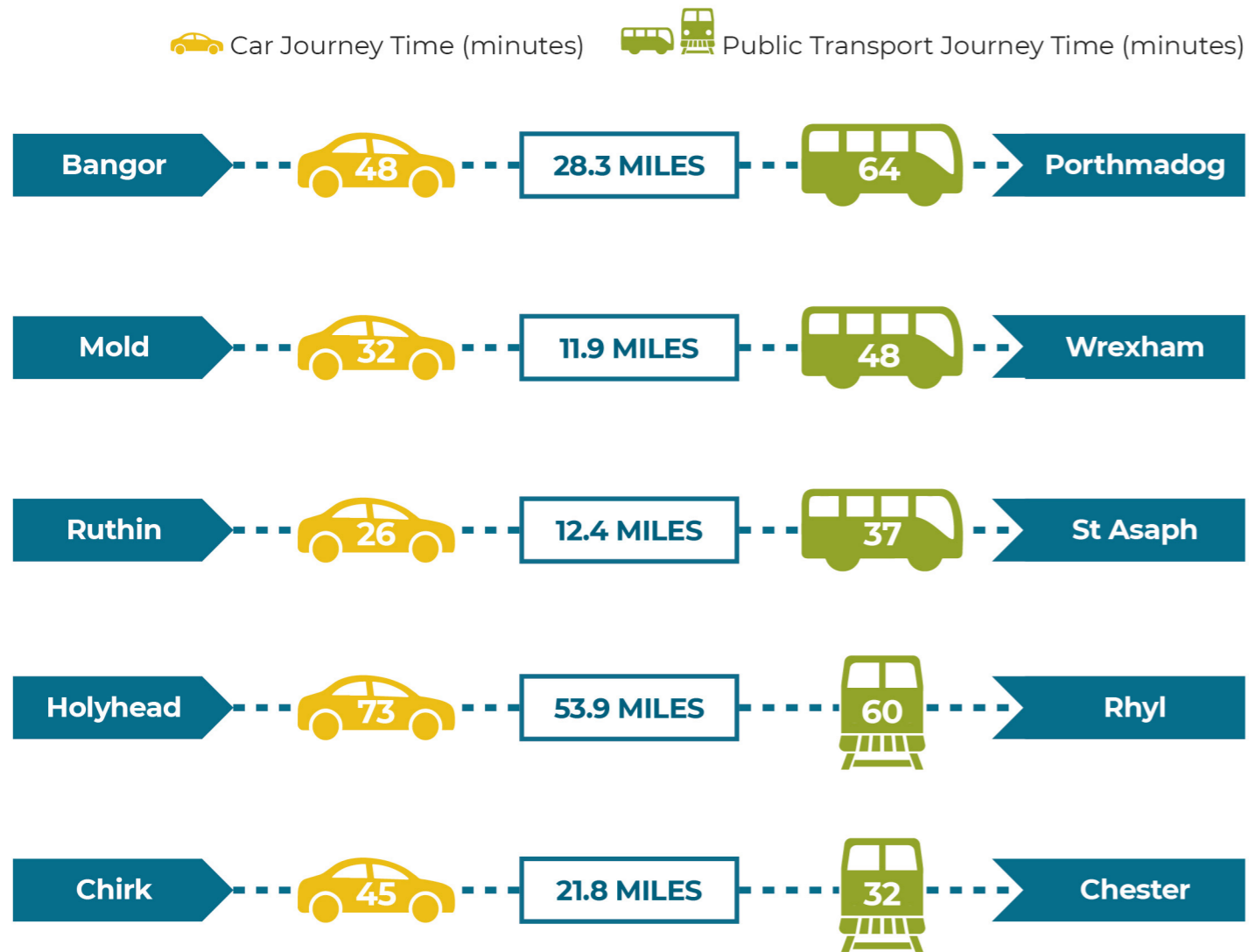
We know that people's behaviour can change; when it was hard to recycle people did not do it, now Wales has the third highest rate of recycling in the world because it has become part of the daily, easy routine for people. Despite most journeys being local, a breakdown of the transport mode share shows a significant skew to private car use. It was clear in our initial analysis of travel in north Wales that the existing bus network does not work effectively, and this contributes to a dependency on car ownership. There are, however, good existing connections in some urban areas.

Although rail improvements have the potential to particularly benefit communities in the more populated areas along the north Wales coastline, access to bus is still essential here and across the region, and particularly for more rural communities without rail access.

Existing public transport services typically operate at relatively low frequencies, both in urban and rural areas, and have limited hours of operation. For example, only 29% of the population of the region are within walking distance to an hourly public transport service after 7pm. Particularly in rural areas, this erodes any confidence and is a key barrier to people using public transport, and thereby encourages car ownership and use.



Journey times by public transport are often uncompetitive with cars, particularly in locations remote from the coastline. This is a particular issue for bus services, with routes often diverting to serve small, isolated communities in rural areas reducing the attractiveness of travelling by bus for longer-distance journeys between larger settlements.



All public transport journeys are planned for Thursday 13th April 2023, departing at 08:30, using the Traveline Cymru journey planner.

Journey times exclude any connecting walking time.

All car journey times are taken as a centre point between the range given by Google, when departing at 08:30 on Thursday 13th April 2023.

All distances are taken from Google.

As shown above there are some examples of rail being quicker than a car journey in north Wales already. The challenge is to scale this advantage so that an increasing number of journeys can be just as appealing by public transport as the same trip by car.

The Commission has also heard how other barriers –the public transport fleet, stations/stops, fares, poor interconnectivity between modes, and unclear ticketing arrangements – also deter potential users.

As we reported in our Progress Statement, localised congestion is often an issue for small towns, villages, and countryside and coastal locations, especially in peak season for tourism.

Of the top 20 free and paid-for visitor attractions in Wales in 2019 (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic), 10 were in north Wales. Many of these attractions are significant distances from major, high-capacity roads and routes to the attraction will often be along narrow rural roads and through villages where large vehicles can have difficulties passing. Large flows of seasonal traffic can result in localised delay. Visitors to some major attractions may also park either inappropriately or sometimes illegally due to demand exceeding parking capacity. Tourism also has impacts on major transport modes, particularly during spring and summer months, and most notably, the school summer holidays.

Our work to date has shown that active travel networks are under-developed and disjointed and often return users to the carriageway in areas where separated infrastructure is needed the most. Sometimes footways are not well maintained, and walking for short journeys is hampered by drivers parking their vehicles on footways or a lack of well-located or safe and convenient carriageway crossings.

It is important, therefore, that enhancements are addressed across all transport modes to improve the public transport service offering and provision for active travel in the region and achieve the ambitious climate change targets set out in Net Zero Wales.

We have identified three priority corridors of travel in the region:

A north-south axis from Shrewsbury to North West England (such as Liverpool and Manchester) including the Chirk/Ruabon/Wrexham corridor.

Connections between Ynys Môn and Gwynedd including Llandudno; and

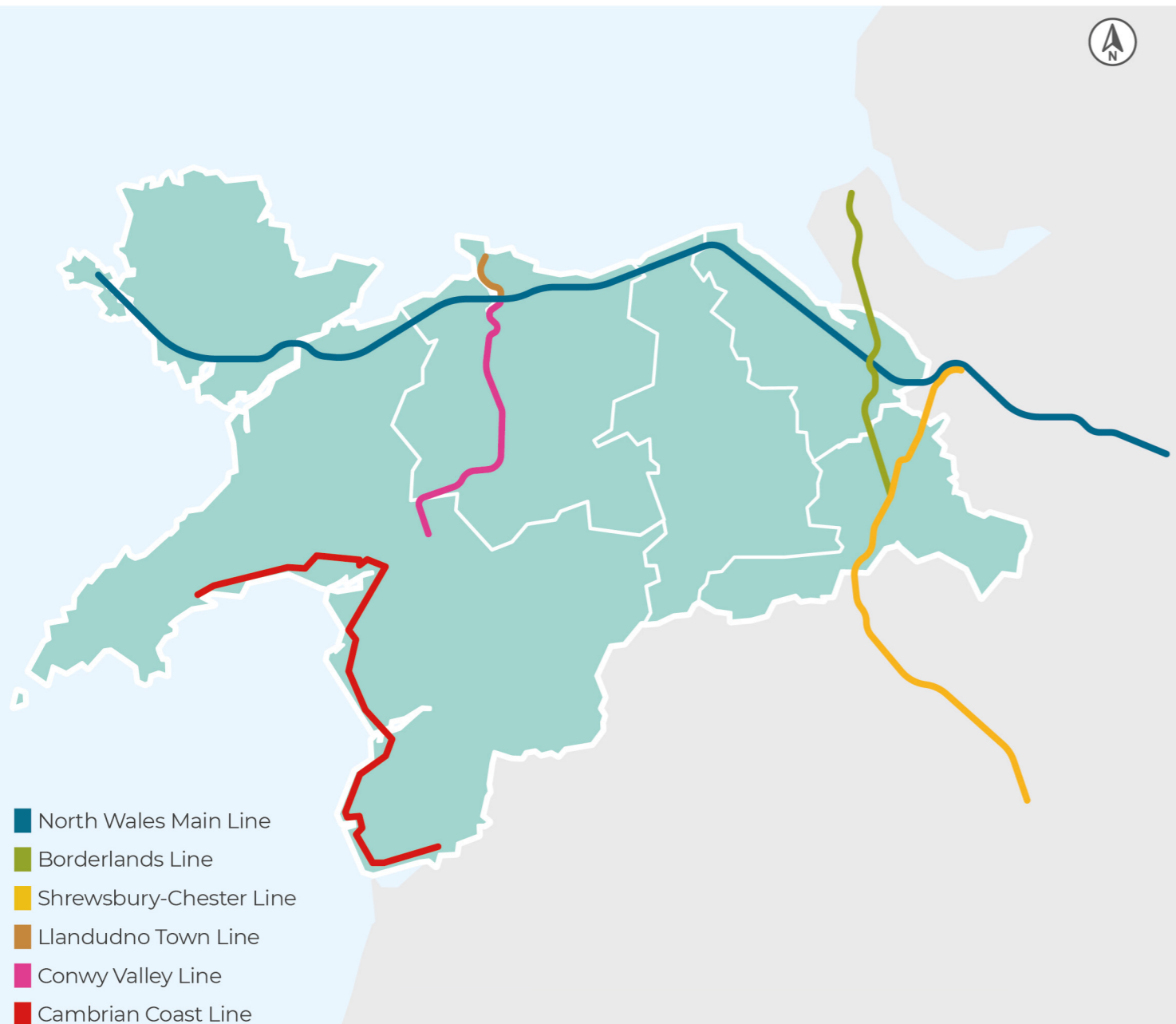
Llandudno to Chester and Crewe.

Rail

The North Wales Main Line, Borderlands Line, and the Shrewsbury to Chester Line all lie within the most densely populated areas of the region, connecting from Wrexham in the east through to Ynys Môn in the west.

The North Wales Main Line provides an east-west axis for rail between Crewe in the east and Holyhead in the west. The Borderlands Line connecting Wrexham to Liverpool via Bidston (through Deeside), and the Shrewsbury to Chester line connecting Wrexham and surrounding communities to cross-border destinations.

Despite the railway lines connecting key settlements in north Wales and the North-West of England, many train services have limited frequency and operating hours due to a combination of physical infrastructure restrictions and a lack of long-term investment in service enhancements.



Wales is not due to receive any consequential funding as a result of the High Speed 2 (HS2) and Northern Powerhouse Rail schemes in England². London is an important long-distance rail market from north Wales. Improvements to cross-border services are needed and will require agreement with UK government working collaboratively with Transport for Wales (TfW). The Commission would like to see good rail infrastructure connecting the North Wales Main Line to the proposed HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail networks.

TfW, working alongside partner organisations, is best placed to determine the routing of additional services in the region, and the Commission would like to see services along the North Wales Main Line tying into the proposed HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail networks. Any improvements involving cross border links will require agreement with UK government.

In addition to **service frequency enhancements**, the Commission is of the view that **rail service operating hours need to be extended**. For example, some services do not operate in the late evenings, particularly eastbound journeys along the North Wales Main Line, and this deters travellers using the train outside daytime hours. This may constrain evening-time activity in economies in the region and create car dependency.

Longer distance leisure and work journeys to places such as Liverpool, Manchester and Cardiff are also unattractive by rail because they would require an overnight stay which would increase costs and mean additional time away from home. By contrast, at the present time, a return trip by car can be undertaken within the day.

² - <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/162/welsh-affairs-committee/news/156565/upgrades-and-electrification-of-wales-ageing-rail-infrastructure-should-be-addressed-by-ukwelsh-collaboration-that-would-improve-services-for-customers/>

³ - Union connectivity review - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Cross-border Connectivity

North Wales is the region in Wales with the largest number of daily cross-border movements to and from England. Effective cross-border public transport services are therefore important.

Although many transport matters are devolved to Welsh Government, rail is not a fully devolved matter and therefore the UK Government, through the UK Department of Transport and Network Rail, are responsible for the development and management of rail infrastructure in north Wales.

Whilst the Commission understands that funding is finite, it is considered that further funding commitments by the UK Government could provide a step-change in the region and support the achievement of many of Sir Peter Hendy’s findings in the Union Connectivity Review³.

North Wales Main Line

To achieve proposed service frequency improvements, infrastructure enhancements are required along the North Wales Main Line.

Capacity improvements at Chester Railway Station are necessary to improve connections for north Wales as the key interchange on both the North Wales Main Line and Shrewsbury to Chester Line.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: The Commission supports improvements proposed at Chester Railway station to enable additional services to operate along both lines.

The Commission knows that service frequency enhancements on the North Wales Main Line are proposed to be implemented in phases, as follows:

Phase 1
Crewe to Llandudno

Phase 2
Llandudno to Bangor

Phase 3
Bangor to Holyhead

Our initial analysis showed that whilst the required supporting infrastructure in Phase 1 is achievable in the shorter-term, with sufficient investment and political support, the required changes to west of Llandudno Junction (Phases 2 and 3) are more significant in scale. Improvements to signalling and line capacity would be required along most of the route, which would take time and require significant additional funding.

For our Final Report, we will consider the capacity of the branch line between Llandudno Junction and the urban areas of Deganwy and Llandudno town. Llandudno is one of the most popular seaside destinations in the UK, and improving access to Llandudno from the principal rail network could encourage more people to travel by rail.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Phase 1 service frequency improvements and supporting infrastructure works should be prioritised. Development of phases 2 and 3 should continue so that these are ready to progress when funding is available.



Borderlands Line

As outlined in Network Rail's Congested Infrastructure Report,⁴ the Borderlands Line has been recognised as congested infrastructure by the Office of Rail and Road.

To address this, and facilitate the proposed frequency enhancements, signalling and line capacity improvements are required along the Borderlands Line.

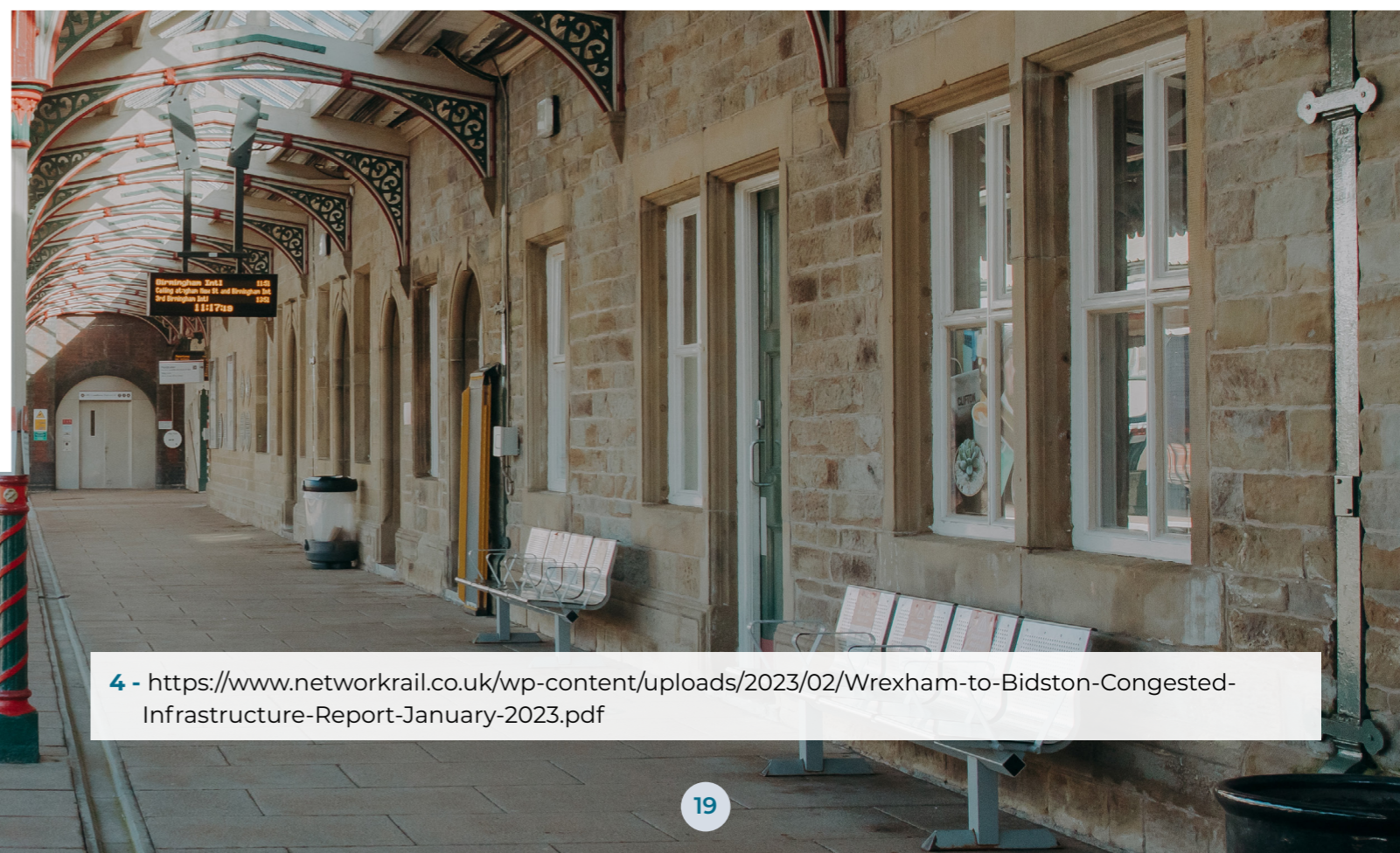
Improving connections to and from Liverpool would bring benefits, both for people in north Wales and those living in Merseyside, by bettering access to major employment centres on both sides of the border.

A key constraint on the Borderlands Line is the sidings for the Hanson site at Padeswood. The existing sidings restrict capacity along the line for both passenger and freight services because freight trains block the line for up to an hour when accessing the sidings. Previously freight

operators have objected to increased passenger services along the line without an improvement at Padeswood, because this would conflict with daytime freight services.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: The issue with the Padeswood sidings requires a resolution before other work to improve the line can proceed, and achieving this should become a priority.

Additionally, the Borderlands improvements outlined need investment to reduce journey times and increase service frequency between Wrexham and Liverpool, and significantly increase the attractiveness of the route.



⁴ - <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Wrexham-to-Bidston-Congested-Infrastructure-Report-January-2023.pdf>

Shrewsbury to Chester Line

As is the case with the Borderlands Line, improvements to signalling and line capacity are also required along the Shrewsbury to Chester Line to facilitate the proposed frequency enhancements.

This includes, but is not limited to, improved signalling at Gobowen, Chirk, Ruabon, and Wrexham, as well as increasing capacity at the current single-track section between Wrexham and Chester.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Prioritise the signalling improvements at Gobowen to allow further delivery of improvements.

Electrification and Decarbonisation

The supporting infrastructure improvements proposed along the North Wales Main Line, Borderlands, and Shrewsbury to Chester Lines have the potential to improve passenger and freight journey times. We believe that providing a competitive journey time compared with the car is essential to encourage modal shift. We also acknowledge that full electrification of the North Wales Main Line is a long-standing ambition for people across the region, including the Growth Track 360 group.

We also note that the Borderlands Line has been identified in Network Rail's decarbonisation strategy as being appropriate for battery operated trains, as opposed to full electrification. This approach would tie in successfully with the Merseyrail network to the north supporting the introduction of Class 777 services, which use both third rail and battery technology.

So far, the Commission has not seen a pressing case for full electrification of the Shrewsbury to Chester Line. However, this could change if a strong enough case can be made for investment in the future to improve journey times and contribute to decarbonisation targets.

Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast Lines

The Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast Lines are primarily single-track, which partly explains the low service frequencies of often less than one every two hours. Furthermore, the Commission has heard about the challenges facing both lines in relation to flooding⁵ and coastal erosion, respectively, which are likely to be exacerbated in the future.

Both routes are in an area of north Wales where the visitor economy is important, serving destinations such as Betws-y-Coed, Porthmadog, and Harlech.

New or Reopened Railway Lines

In Gwynedd and on Ynys Môn, railway lines do not always align closely with the areas of population density.

On Ynys Môn, the existing line takes a southerly route to Holyhead and does not serve the centre and north of the island, including the settlements of Llangefni and Amlwch.

To address this, as well as to improve north-south connectivity in Wales generally, the Commission has heard the case for re-introducing the railway line between Amlwch and the North Wales Main Line, and between the Cambrian Coast Line near Criccieth and the North Wales Main Line at Bangor.

Whilst the Commission acknowledges that new railway

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: There could be merit in introducing increased frequencies during the peak seasonal period, and this should be explored.

Further service enhancements and infrastructure improvements to make the best use of the Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast lines such as passing loops (as has happened to similar lines in Devon and Cornwall) may be beneficial.

In the immediate future, those communities served by stations along the route should have access to enhanced bus services to reduce dependence on car use.

lines in these locations could be attractive to residents, the Commission is not persuaded that these interventions are the most effective use of public funds at this time. More urgent improvements to existing lines and services should take a higher priority.

The Commission is persuaded, however, that in the short term these corridors should form part of a proposed core bus network, which would enhance the potential for travel that is quick, reliable, and high-quality. In combination with multi-modal ticketing, this may achieve some modal shift from car to public transport cost effectively. Alignments of disused lines should be safeguarded for future use.

There are other potential uses – for example the closed railway line from Gaerwen to Amlwch, where there is a proposal for this route to be re-purposed into a path for walking and cycling.

⁵ - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-54300025>

The Commission is aware that a new station at Deeside Industrial Park, on the Borderlands Line, is being considered as part of the North Wales Metro programme. Deeside Industrial Park is one of the UK's largest employment areas with 9,000 workers. This proposal has been designed to provide high quality public transport access to the Deeside Industrial Park. A large proportion of workers travel to work by car as there is poor connectivity by public transport to the site from surrounding areas. Additionally, a lack of viable public transport leads to greater car use and thus lack of parking, which may contribute to problems recruiting and retaining employees, which has an economic opportunity cost to the site and the wider area.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: The Commission supports the creation of a new station at Deeside Industrial Park.

The Commission has also examined proposed enhancements at Shotton station to improve connectivity between the high and low-level platforms for the Borderlands Line and North Wales Main Line respectively.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: The Commission supports this work to enable easier transit between the two railway lines and would suggest this work is prioritised to make Shotton station an important interchange in the network.

The Commission is also aware of new stations within the North Wales Metro programme that have been proposed along the North Wales Main Line and the Shrewsbury to Chester Line.

Whilst new stations will bring rail services closer to communities that do not have a rail station, they would increase rail journey times, which could deter some people from making journeys by rail along the route. **These communities should have access to a bus service which connects to the nearest station and comprehensive, comfortable and attractive active travel routes separated from motor traffic.**

Therefore, the current view of the Commission is that **service frequency enhancements should be prioritised first.** Whilst there could be the prospect of a case for introducing stations in the future, it is considered that the main priority should be providing an improved frequency of service that would enable journey times that would be competitive with the private car.

Rolling Stock and Station Infrastructure

Many people we spoke to thought that rail rolling stock and station infrastructure in the region do not make rail travel appealing, particularly in the context of poor service frequency and reliability. Existing trains are aging and often crowded, and stations offer poor waiting and interchange facilities.

The Commission is aware of the recent introduction of Class 197 trains on the North Wales Main Line and re-purposed Class 230 diesel-hybrid trains on the Borderlands Line. In addition, TfW has set out a programme for the introduction of an updated rail fleet across the region.

As mentioned above there are opportunities to use new Merseyrail trains to enable direct services to Liverpool on the Borderlands line.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Rail fleet improvements that facilitate the proposed service frequency enhancements should be prioritised, and use of new Merseyrail trains on the Borderlands line be developed.



TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES

Cymru a'r Gororau
Wales and Borders

Bus

The existing bus network in the region is poor, with limited frequency and operational hours, as well as often having poor journey times in comparison with the car. There are several reasons for this, including historic underfunding, car-based development planning, and car-centric attitudes. The existing, deregulated bus network does not work well in the region.

Poor reliability and punctuality, and high fares, are barriers to travel. Services have a poor reputation, and the potential reductions in bus subsidies pose a further significant risk to already poorly performing services. People we spoke to thought that public transport is simply not competitive with car travel in the region.

For these reasons, we fully support the legislative changes proposed by Welsh Government for buses as outlined in the white paper – ‘One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket’ – which offers a significant opportunity to address the issues identified in relation to the bus network.

At its centre, the legislation proposes a franchising model for bus services. This will enable both Welsh Government and Local Authorities to design a system that maximises the socio-economic value of a network that will be integrated in terms of timetabling and ticketing.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: The Commission's current view is that these legislative changes and introduction of a franchising model for bus services are essential and need to be brought to fruition. Without the legislation, it may not be possible to construct a new bus network that improves services across the region.



Core Bus Network

The planned legislative changes for bus offer the opportunity for Local Authorities, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to build bus networks that better serve the needs of the people living in the region.

We are looking at a revised bus network that at a whole-region level can effectively connect main locations and rail main lines.

Some of these routes are already served by Traws Cymru services⁶, and these point-to-point buses which form the core network will consist largely of improved or expanded Traws Cymru services, which would be consistent with the approach in the rest of Wales.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Implement an effective core bus network of main travel corridors where there is no rail option to connect significant communities and employment areas across the region, providing good frequency services and longer, more consistent operating hours.

This core bus network should be able to address the issue of journey times, the services should be as direct as possible between major destinations within the core network. Services should be coordinated to ensure efficiency of operations on major corridors.

These longer-distance services may be limited-stop and provide as direct a service as possible between communities, whilst also filling the gaps in the national rail network – for example journeys between Bangor, Caernarfon, and Porthmadog. The services are likely to be of a lower frequency than on major corridors within the local core network, however the emerging thoughts of the Commission are that these services should run at least hourly to maximise the attractiveness of the routes.

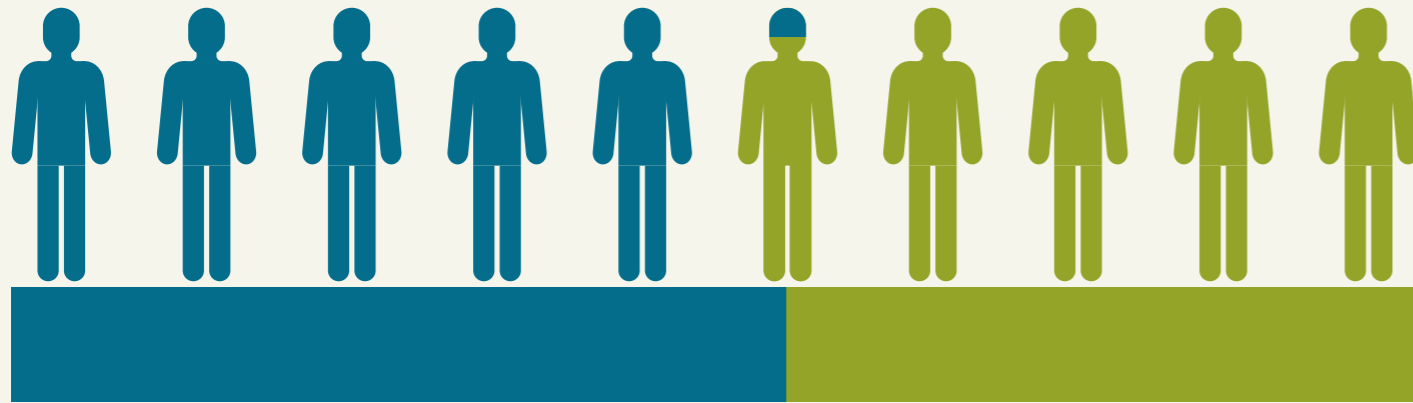
The services within the core network should also connect directly to railway stations across the region, hence allowing for or improving interchange between modes.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: At these interchange points, buses should enter station sites to maximise the ease of interchange, where possible. This should, however, be examined on a site-by-site basis and journey times across the route should not be increased unnecessarily.

From these should flow the local connections. Transport for Wales has already worked a lot with the north Wales Local Authorities to draft revised local bus networks; **the Commission is currently putting these through modelling scenarios to understand potential impacts and uplift in passenger numbers.**

⁶ - TFW_Bus_Network_Map.ai (passenger-website.com)

Buses for Rural Areas



51%

Population lives in
URBAN SETTINGS AND BUILT-UP AREAS

49%

Population lives in
RURAL SETTINGS

North Wales includes large areas that are rural or semi-rural in nature. The 2011 the Census recorded 51% of the population living built-up areas with a population of 10,000 or more, the remaining 49% living in rural areas.

We understand that replacing car journeys with public transport and active travel journeys in rural areas is more challenging than in urban areas because of the longer distances travelled and the wider distribution of the population.

On this basis, we acknowledge that greater weight needs to be placed in rural areas compared with urban areas on assisting the switch-over of the car fleet to be zero carbon emitting.

Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport is public transport that operates on flexible routes and responds to demand as it arises. Services pick people up near their journey origin, and drop them at or near their destination, and in that way are similar to a taxi service. They run without a set schedule and pick-ups and drop-offs are timed within guaranteed periods, which means services balance flexibility with reliability and certainty.

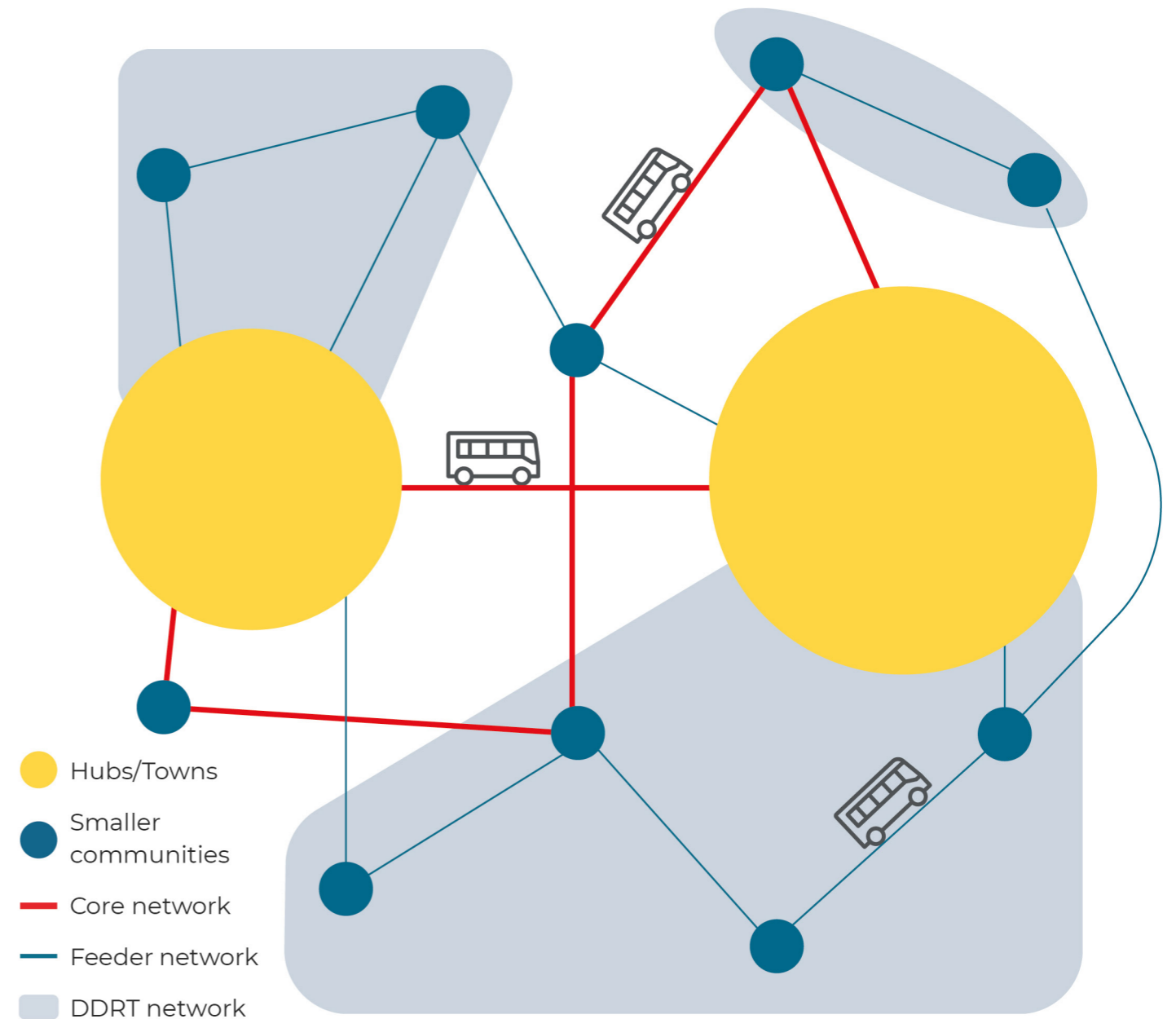
The Commission is persuaded that Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services can play an important role in supplementing the public transport network, particularly in rural areas and at the edge of urban areas.

TfW, in partnership with local bus operators, has been running a pilot of Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services called 'Fflecsi' across Wales. In north Wales there are services in Buckley, Conwy Valley, Holywell, the Llŷn Peninsula, Prestatyn, and the Vale of Clwyd (Denbigh and Ruthin),

A combination of both local timetabled routes and Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services can be effective in providing access to the core public transport network for people living in more rural areas. Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services can enable people to access their nearest community where they can access goods and services and other public transport services.

There is a lot of experience in operating Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services in Wales through Fflecsi and other schemes such as BwcaBus in West Wales, as well as in other parts of the UK. For example, it is important that local people are aware of the services and the process of organising trips, and digitally excluded people are supported to access these services.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Lessons learned and best practice relating to the Fflecsi pilots and other programmes be used in rolling out further Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services in north Wales, in particular in rural areas.



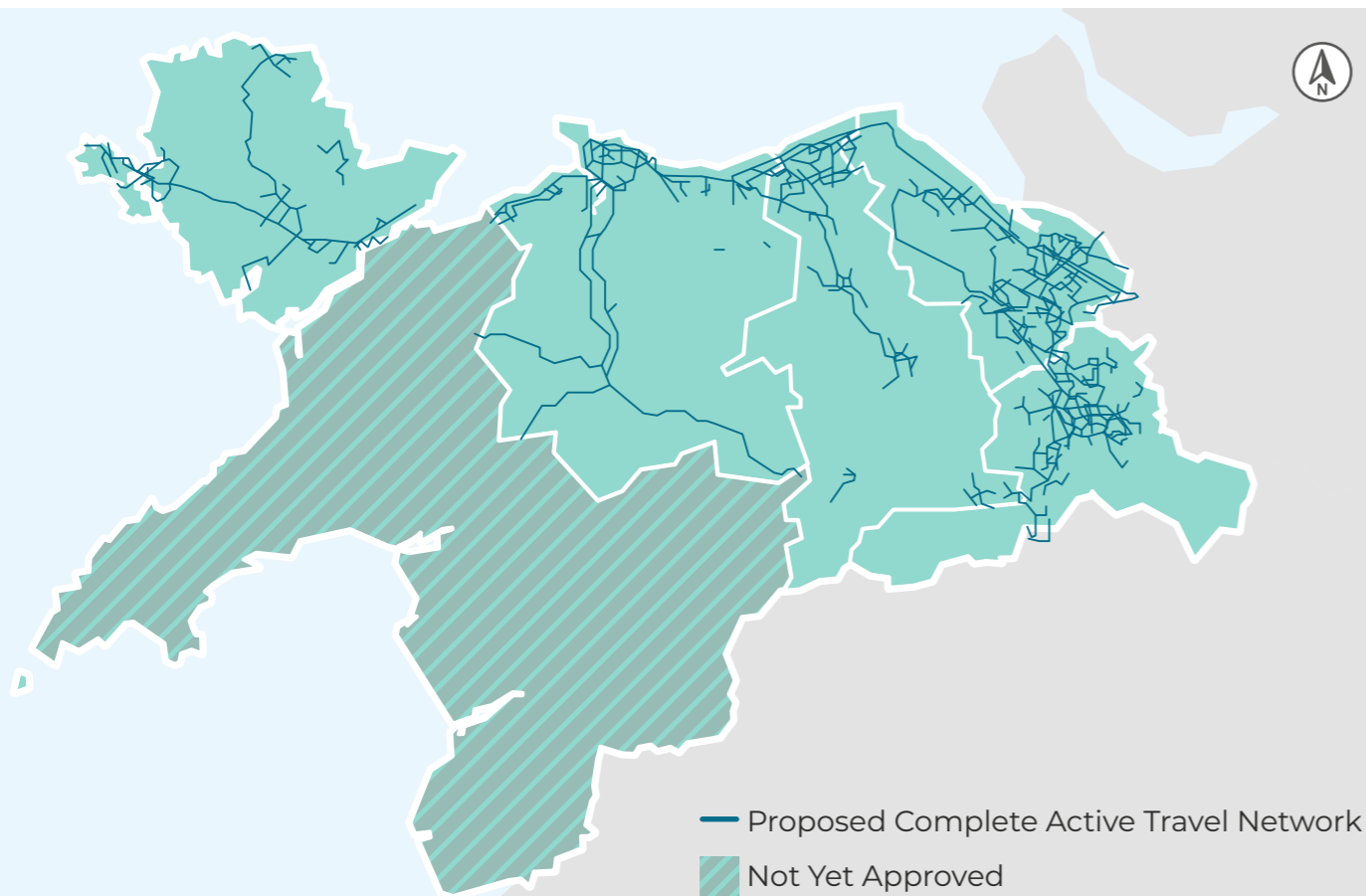
Active Travel

Developing the Active Route Network

Walking and cycling have significant potential for shorter journeys and the first and last legs of longer journeys made by public transport. Active travel involves physical activity which has beneficial effects on health and well-being. A shift from car to walking and cycling will reduce congestion and improve air quality and reduce noise.

Routes are needed that create a comprehensive network and are attractive to use. It is important that they are safe and are perceived as being safe. The geography and topography in parts of the region can make the creation and use of active travel routes challenging, but creativity can be used to engineer out some of these challenges. However, many of the populated areas along the coast and in and around Deeside are flat and there are lots of local journeys that could easily be made by active modes.

Accessing active travel can be more challenging for disabled people. For some who cannot walk well, cycling, sometimes with an adapted cycle is liberating. Initial costs of cycle purchase can be a further barrier for disabled people and people in low-income households. We have identified that a high proportion of journeys in the region are short and could be undertaken on-foot or by cycle, but levels of active travel remain low, with many short journeys being made by car. We understand from our engagement work that the current network of routes is disjointed and below current standards which is a significant deterrent to travelling by active modes.



Cross-Party Report on Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

The Review of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 undertaken by the Cross-Party Group on the active travel Act recognises the 'disjuncture' in delivery in Wales between central and local government.

The Commission supports the call for a National Delivery Plan for active travel setting out what needs to be done, by whom and by when.

As the cross-party group notes, this means improving and clarifying the relationships between Welsh Government, Transport for Wales (TfW) and Local Authorities. The Commission supports a strengthened active travel function within TfW and the creation of expert delivery units. It supports the cross-party's call for development in the legislation.

Delivering Routes

We are aware that most Local Authorities in Wales have recently produced Active Travel Network Maps that set out current and proposed routes to be developed over the next 15 years. These maps are part of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 process that requires Local Authorities to produce maps and then secure improvements. While there have been some significant active travel route developments in some Local Authority areas, there has been less delivery in others.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION:

We would like to see the highest impact active travel routes prioritised for delivery along with strengthened mechanisms for delivering coherent, attractive and comfortable active travel networks. These agreements could specify the quality of outcomes linked with funding, along with an enhanced delivery programme for active travel routes on both the local and strategic road networks. It may be that further strengthening is needed beyond this through changes to the Active Travel Act.

We noted early on in our work that capacity in Local Authorities is stretched and needs more support. Additionally new routes bring an ongoing financial burden to already overstretched councils in providing for their future upkeep; this means some existing paths may become overgrown or unappealing to use.

The Burns Delivery Unit in South East Wales is delivering a cross-local authority boundary route between Cardiff and Newport which involves significant development and change to existing infrastructure.

A method for achieving a similar outcome in north Wales could be through collaborative agreements between Welsh Government and Local Authorities. As well as collaborations between Local Authorities and Welsh Government, the Commission is considering the role of the Trunk Road Agent in relation to delivering components of the active travel network.

Urban Active Travel Routes

We have identified some priority areas for extensive active travel route development, with enhancements supported for locations such as the Wrexham Industrial Park, Deeside Industrial Park, Parc Menai, and the Caernarfon Road retail strip in Bangor.

Active travel infrastructure needs to be enhanced in town and city centres to prioritise walking and cycling. We support the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in urban areas because this will assist in making urban streets more attractive for people walking and cycling and enhance road safety⁷.

Layout changes that control vehicle speed and motor vehicle flow can contribute to health and well-being by encouraging more walking and cycling, and other beneficial street uses. School streets, area wide traffic management and Dutch inspired 'living streets' (such as Woonerven) have been used in many communities to reduce collisions and improve safety.

In some areas, such measures have been controversial, although planners can reduce controversy by involving a wide range of people, including those in neighbouring streets, in designing such schemes, and making them inclusive.

Prioritising active travel for short journeys within communities can increase spending on high streets and within town centres⁸, as well as increase time spent within the urban environment⁹.

There are some quick win opportunities to improve and enhance existing active travel infrastructure alongside the development of new routes, an example of which is the North Wales Coast cycle route that connects many key settlements.

Rural Active Travel Routes

Routes with the potential highest usage that connect more key destinations should be prioritised, but this should not mean that rural routes, or routes with lower levels of use should not also be implemented.

We acknowledge the need for, and importance of, linking rural or remote communities by active modes of travel. Rural routes should be developed to support active journeys to larger communities and settlements, where people's employment is most likely to be and where onward journeys can be more effectively undertaken by public transport.

The Commission also appreciates the potential of longer leisure routes for local people and to support tourism in the rural economy.

⁷ - Transport systems need to be made safe, healthy and sustainable (who.int)

⁸ - <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/11397/cost-of-living-report.pdf>

⁹ - 13.11.04.fixing-the-link.pdf (bettertransport.org.uk)

Modal Integration

Service improvements will not achieve significant modal shift on their own; other initiatives are required to create a unified, easy-to-use system. This includes better stations and stops, reliable travel information, coherent branding, tap-on / tap-off systems for paying for tickets and competitive and/or flat fares.

Bus and Rail Service Timetabling

Through its engagement work, we have heard that people feel rail and bus timetables are not coordinated, resulting in long wait times when changing modes. This has the effect of increasing vehicle mileage by making people dependent on the car for the first and/or last legs of their journeys.

Changes to timetables would create increased frequencies and integration between rail and bus services and offer reduced costs for taking journeys. Often drivers only consider fuel costs rather than all costs associated with owning and operating a car. The proposed legislation to introduce bus franchising will assist in creating the planning mechanism to coordinate fares and timetables.

This would improve user experience through making it easier for passengers to remember departure and arrival times, enabling more effective journey planning.

Branding and Wayfinding

An important element of successful public transport networks across the world is a clear and effective brand. This has the effect of ensuring public transport services are clearly visible for potential users, and which may then attract people to use the services.

The Commission is pleased that the Traws Cymru bus and TfW rail services are clearly branded. **There could be opportunity to provide a distinct and consistent brand for the enhanced core bus network that matches with the rail network. Branding could draw on distinct local characteristics whilst also being consistent at a higher level across the whole region.**

Furthermore, there is an opportunity to work with local and community organisations to develop placemaking and wayfinding at bus stops. Whilst this is unlikely on its own to create additional patronage, it may improve awareness of the existence of the bus network and increase pride in local assets. It also has the potential to improve the accessibility of public transport for disabled people



Bus and Railway Stations as Gateways to Towns and Cities

The North Wales Metro programme includes 'gateway' projects under development at Wrexham General, Bangor, and Holyhead railway stations. The gateways aim to improve user experience through better facilities and interchange between bus, train and active travel. The Commission notes the commitment to deliver these projects as set out in the National Transport Delivery Plan (actions NWM 3A, 3B, and 3D).

These gateway projects should improve bus provision and active travel routes from the station to the town or city centre; we have reviewed research showing that time and spend in centres is partly dependent on the attractiveness of the entrance to the settlement¹⁰. Where possible, the Commission supports stations becoming community hubs, in line with the aspirations of Future Wales.

The Commission understands that TfW has developed station improvement plans for all railway stations across the region. The Commission welcomes this, and would suggest the following are also considered:

Improvements to digital connectivity at stations to facilitate access to real time information and online booking and travel planning services.

Effective integration between modes including active travel.

More and better cycle parking that is easy to locate and use, safe and secure.

Provision of signposting and information for travellers, including by active travel so that switching modes is easy.

Public realm improvements to contribute to sense of place.

Improved connectivity between town/ city centres and bus and rail stations.

Improvements to accessibility for disabled people.

Equal status for the Welsh and English languages.

Encouraging high density land use adjacent to stations.

¹⁰ - 13.11.04.fixing-the-link.pdf (bettertransport.org.uk)

Integrated Ticketing and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

To achieve a fully integrated public transport network across north Wales, an effective multi-modal ticketing system is required. Whilst the more recently introduced 1bws ticket enables travel across different bus operators in the region, the offering for integrated bus and rail tickets is still limited.

We have learned how TfW is working alongside Welsh Government to provide 'tap-on/off' card readers on all buses in the region. These readers make use of contactless technology and ensure that users only pay for journeys they make within the existing ticketing structure. In addition, TfW is taking steps to integrate strategic Traws Cymru bus services with the rail network. This pilot, which involved 'virtual stations' being established, ensured that bus-legs of journeys were covered by an end-to-end ticket.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) schemes comprise primarily of digital platforms that support end-to-end trip planning, electronic ticketing, and payment services across all modes of public and private transportation, including public transport, active travel, car clubs, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. MaaS schemes aim to provide a simplified link between users and travel services through a convenient, economical and accessible platform.

MaaS schemes can make sustainable travel more attractive and support modal shift away from private vehicles through improving awareness of sustainable modes and improving ease of access.

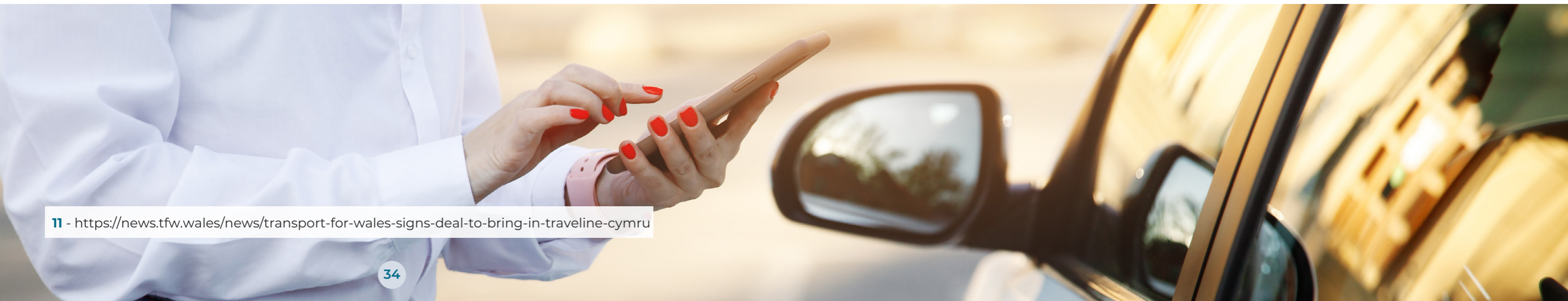
On a wider scale, MaaS schemes may include personalised messaging, discounts and other incentives, and may also support the use of mobility credits. MaaS schemes can also be complemented by other initiatives such as tailored branding and marketing, as well as physical infrastructure including mobility hubs, tourism hubs, and support desks.

The Commission notes that a MaaS system is currently under development by TfW. Building on the Traveline Cymru service¹¹, TfW intends to expand its current app to provide a wider range of journey planning and ticketing services for a range of modes. MaaS can play an important role in supporting the development of an integrated public transport and active travel network across north Wales.



Source: Jana Sochar (2017), KTH Stockholm Technology University, Topology of Maas

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Fully integrated ticketing across rail and bus modes with seamless connectivity across operators should be the goal, and Welsh Government/ Transport for Wales should aim for delivery of a digital platform and app that provides this full integration.



¹¹ - <https://news.tfw.wales/news/transport-for-wales-signs-deal-to-bring-in-traveline-cymru>

Competitive Fares

Alongside poor service frequency and coverage, we have heard how costly fares often deter people from travelling by public transport. It is widely appreciated that in combination with competitive journey times to the private car, costs for public transport journeys should at least be comparable with the private car, which is often not the case in north Wales.

We support the introduction of the 1bws ticket that covers most bus services across the region and some direct cross-border services. This ticket charges a flat fare of £6 for an unlimited number of bus services over a day.

The Commission are also aware of TfW initiatives to reduce fares for families – for example, under-11s can travel for free on TfW rail services when accompanied by a fare paying adult, whilst under-16s are able to travel for free off-peak when accompanying an adult¹².

The Commission has also noted that some places in other countries have moved to completely free public transport, and indeed in Wales there have been fares-free offers on Traws Cymru and in certain places including Swansea and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Evidence on the effects of these is varied, but this could be further explored as a method of encourage modal shift and reducing car use in north Wales.

Whilst standardised and reduced fares is the goal for public transport services in the region, the Commission acknowledge the complexity in delivering this across modes and operators.

Taking the above into account, we seek to provide more detailed proposals as part of our Final Report into an effective fare structure for public transport in north Wales. These proposals will also consider in further detail the potential mechanisms for raising revenue to sustain any initiatives, which could include recycling of charges for parking, workplace parking levies, and/or road use charges.

We support this work to integrate the public transport network in north Wales, particularly in relation to ticketing. For our Final Report, we will further consider potential multi-modal ticketing solutions. As part of this, the Commission will consider the suitability of a pilot for a ticket covering all modes of public transport in north Wales with a maximum fare, supported by tap-on/off infrastructure.

This could mirror the offers now available in some European countries, such as the “Klimaticket” in Austria which costs €1095 (£960) a year, or £2.63 a day, for an unlimited number of public transport journeys within the country.

¹² - <https://tfw.wales/ways-to-travel/rail/savings-and-offers/kids-go-free>

¹³ - [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-onboard-announcements-to-make-britains-buses-accessible-for-everyone#:~:text=Today%20\(30%20March%202023\)%2C,the%20beginning%20of%20any%20diversions](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-onboard-announcements-to-make-britains-buses-accessible-for-everyone#:~:text=Today%20(30%20March%202023)%2C,the%20beginning%20of%20any%20diversions)

Supporting Infrastructure

A barrier to increased bus usage is uncompetitive journey times in comparison with the car. On this basis, we are attracted by the introduction of bus priority measures wherever possible to minimise delays experienced by buses on the highway network. The types of measures are likely to vary by location across the region and are likely to consist of a combination of traditional solutions, such as bus lanes and gates, and technology-based solutions, such as priority provided by adaptive signalling.

A study undertaken by TfW in 2022, in partnership with Local Authorities and bus operators, investigated the location of congestion hotspots on the bus network. The study identified 34 locations, many of which are on principal routes into major settlements. At this stage we are considering recommending that this study is progressed further, and bus priority measures implemented wherever possible. In particular, the study should consider the management of main roads across the region and the need to give priority to bus services along and across these roads, as part of the objective of reducing bus journey times and improving journey time reliability.

Bus Fleet Improvements

Welsh Government has committed to delivering a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035, replacing 50% of the highest emission vehicles by 2028. The Commission is minded to support this commitment and the introduction of zero-emission buses. That said, we also understand that bus depots will need to be upgraded to enable either charging of electric, or refuelling of hydrogen, buses.

Enabling infrastructure will be required in the shorter-term to minimise the potential for barriers in the future.

Upgrades to the bus fleet should not be limited to the introduction of zero-emission vehicles; other changes should be undertaken to improve user experience and on-board services. Whilst zero emission buses will contribute to decarbonisation targets and be an improvement for many of the existing services in the region, we recognise that improvements such as on-board Wi-Fi and power sockets improve the attractiveness of travelling by bus and contribute to modal shift targets. The ability to carry cycles should also be considered. Such improvements are particularly pertinent where longer-distance bus journeys take the place of trains in areas without rail connectivity.

Of note, the Commission is aware that the DfT has recently mandated audible and visual on-board announcements¹³ the introduction of which across all services would be of benefit to passengers in north Wales.

Bus Stops

The Commission understands that a bus stop infrastructure strategy is under development across Wales to ensure consistent high-quality infrastructure is provided along important corridors. Consistent infrastructure at bus stops will help ensure that services are accessible for all travellers, and clearly visible for potential travellers. In addition, real-time bus information presented at bus stops can improve traveller confidence in the bus network and is a key feature of effective public transport networks.

Enablers – Supporting Measures

Governance and Planning

In April 2021, Welsh Government established four Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) covering all of Wales. The North Wales CJC consists of the six Local Authorities and Eryri National Park Authority. The CJCs exercise legal functions in relation to strategic development, planning, and regional transport planning. This offers a clear opportunity to more closely integrate sustainable transport with the decision-making process, with North Wales CJC

leading in the development of strategic transport matters to ensure a consistent and effective approach to transport regionally.

It is essential that in developing its regional transport plans the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) works closely with neighbouring English authorities such as the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Land Use and Planning

The Commission has been struck, in the evidence it has received and in its visits to the area, by the extent to which the patterns of land use and previous planning decisions have made it difficult to access some places without a car. Out of town shopping and food outlets, business parks, new housing and general low-density development have undermined high streets and moved development away from public transport routes and stations to places that are only accessible by car. These developments have often been accompanied by a lot of free car parking, which prioritises journeys by car above all other modes.

Superficially this seems attractive. However, in practice it leads to traffic congestion in and around these developments, locks people into dependence on car use and excludes people without car access from these places and the jobs and facilities they offer. The Commission has noted that

much of this has been incremental and also is contrary to the current national development framework, Future Wales: the National Plan 2040.

In terms of its role in local matters, Welsh Government should look for ways to constructively challenge and support Local Authorities in their planning functions to help them avoid car-based and car-dependent development in the future.

Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note (TAN) 18¹⁴ provides guidance on integration of land use and transport planning, location of developments, regional transport plans, parking and design of developments. We understand that this document was last updated in 2007, therefore is unlikely to reflect the current situation – predating Welsh Government's climate emergency declaration, Llwybr Newydd and many other policies by a number of years.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Welsh Government to review TAN18 guidance to ensure policy intent translates to implementation.



Developments in Cycles and Micromobility

E-Cycles and E-Cargo Cycles

As already noted, the geography and topography in the region can make the creation and use of active travel routes challenging. E-cycles significantly enhance the range people can cycle and the gradients they can ascend¹⁵. Compared with those on ordinary bikes, e-cycle owners use their cycles to substitute for many more car journeys.

Ownership and use of e-cycles is increasing and is likely to continue to do so. We recognise that e-cycles are still expensive for many people, but the ability to purchase can be improved through more employer cycle to work schemes and subsidies.

Department for Transport data shows light goods vehicles (LGVs) mileage has increased by approximately 37% between 2010 and 2019. This corresponds with the growth of retail deliveries. E-cargo cycles may have a role to play in parts of the region to replace short distance light commercial vehicle deliveries. On this basis the Commission would like to encourage greater use of e-cargo cycles in the region. Engagement will be required with businesses.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: We would like to see ways in which wider e-cycle use can be developed in the region, either through ownership or through short- or long-term hire schemes.

Cycle Hire

The impacts of cycle hire schemes have been considered by CoMoUK¹⁶, with benefits including reducing car carbon emissions, allowing people to re-engage with cycling, improving physical activity levels, and supporting local economies. **There are currently no mass cycle hire schemes located in north Wales.**

TfW completed a study in March 2023 investigating the most appropriate types and locations for cycle hire schemes across Wales. The Commission will consider the findings of the study, including the recommendations in more detail ahead of the publication of our Final Report.

¹⁵ - <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/get-active/2019/everyday-walking-and-cycling/9-reasons-to-ride-an-electric-bike>

¹⁶ - https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/6102564995f71c83fba14d54/623082b095a4567ce1720e27_17CoMoUK%20Bike%20Share%20Survey%202021.pdf

CoMoUK Bike Share Survey 2021 – Key Findings

BIKE SHARE IS A TOOL FOR RE-ENGAGING CYCLISTS



50%

OVER HALF OF BIKE SHARE USERS SAID THAT BIKE SHARE WAS THE CATALYST TO START CYCLING AGAIN

BIKE SHARE REDUCES CAR USE



53%

RESPONDENTS WOULD HAVE MADE THEIR LAST TRIP BY CAR (DRIVER OR PASSENGER) OR TAXI, IF BIKE SHARE HAD NOT BEEN AVAILABLE

BIKE SHARE OFFERS A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS



20%

OF RESPONDENTS REPORTED THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY MODERATE TO VIGOROUS EXERCISE THEY GET ON A REGULAR (WEEKLY) BASIS

E-BIKES REDUCE CAR USE EVEN MORE THAN CONVENTIONAL BIKE SHARE



34%

OF RESPONDENTS USING E-BIKES SAID THEY WERE REPLACING CAR OR TAXI TRIPS OF MORE THAN 5 MILES PER WEEK AS OPPOSED TO 24% OF NON-E-BIKE USERS



31%

OF THOSE SURVEYED USE BIKE SHARE FOR COMMUTING AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK

BIKE SHARE USERS REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS



ON AVERAGE, PER USER, THERE MAY BE A REDUCTION OF ABOUT 3.7 CAR MILES AND 1KG OF CO₂e EVERY WEEK



Micromobility

Micromobility, or human-scale mobility, is a term used to cover a range of different types of very small, powered vehicle. The term covers such vehicles as mobility scooters, which have been used for many years by disabled people.

Other types of innovative small-scale vehicles, such as hoverboards, powered skates, and the Segway are illegal in the UK. The exception is the e-scooter, which has been the subject of 32 trials sanctioned by the Department for Transport in England. The trials are run by technology companies which offer them for short- and long-term hire. The use of privately owned e-scooters remains illegal on the public highway.

The Commission awaits the outcome of the UK government's deliberations on the future regulation of e-scooters. It notes with interest the Integrated Mobility Service contract that the West of England Combined Authority is letting in Spring 2023 for e-cycle hire, e-cargo cycle hire and e-scooter hire.

Car Clubs

Car clubs can be an effective method in reducing the number of car trips and ownership rates in an area, while boosting use of sustainable modes. Research undertaken by CoMoUK¹⁷ suggests that twenty private cars are taken off the road by each car club in the UK, and car club use can be more economical than car ownership.

There are three main types of car club as follows:

- **Back to Bay** – the most common form of car club in the UK, where cars must be returned to a designated parking place.
- **Back to Area** – where cars must be returned to a small, designated area.
- **One-Way / Flex** – a newer form of car club, where cars can be taken on a one-way trip and parked on-street wherever it is legal to do so.

In addition, there is a type of car club referred to as 'peer-to-peer'. This involves people offering privately-owned vehicles for rent to others via an online platform. This is an option where a car club model may not be economically viable.

Within north Wales, the Commission is aware of small car clubs in the Ogwen Valley (organised by Partneriaeth Ogwen), in rural Gwynedd (Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig), and in south Denbighshire (ran by Partneriaeth Gymunedol De Sir Ddinbych). In addition, the Co-Wheels social enterprise and Enterprise have car club vehicles available for hire in north Wales.

Whilst car clubs can be introduced in workplaces across the region and should be considered as part of developing Travel Plans, it is considered that they can be equally as effective when being operated by community-based organisations.

Car clubs could support rural communities through increasing confidence in a model of lower or non-car ownership that can be supported by a combination of the sustainable transport network and community-led car clubs.

Community Transport

There are some community and shared transport services in north Wales that play a role in helping people access healthcare, shopping and social services. Elderly and vulnerable groups are more likely to use, and indeed rely on Community Transport schemes. Additional support is required to further decarbonise community transport in north Wales whilst supporting the sector to be sustainable to ensure equitable access to public services to those who need it most.

Park and Ride

The Commission is aware of a study undertaken in 2021 by TfW investigating potential park and ride sites in north Wales. The study considered two types of park and ride sites:

- Those where people drive or cycle a short distance to a stop or station, then use public transport for most of their journey (for example from home to a local station for a commute).
- Those where most of the journey is undertaken by car, with the journey being completed by public transport (for example, driving to the outskirts of a town and completing the journey on public transport).

Within north Wales, the study suggested that park and ride sites for the first type of journey would typically be at a railway station car park, while those for the second type would be near to

a destination. At this stage, we have determined that the first type of park and ride is, in principle, better than the second because it has greater potential to reduce car mileage. The Commission is yet to develop views on the extent to which it would recommend promoting park-and-ride.

Freight Movement

As set out within Llwybr Newydd, a competitive, responsive, and resilient network of freight and logistics distribution across Wales is essential to support communities across the country and ensure the transport network operates effectively. There are several ways Welsh Government can influence freight movement. The Commission has considered freight movements across north Wales. It has given particular attention to the Port of Holyhead which has sailings to Ireland and is identified by Future Wales¹⁸ as a Strategic Gateway for international connectivity.

The UK Government has announced the creation of a freeport site on Ynys Môn, one of two in Wales. Depending on the nature of businesses attracted to the Freeport and its success, there may be implications for freight movements.

Welsh Government, working in conjunction with the UK Government, Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn, and North Wales CJC should ensure that sustainable freight practices are a central consideration in the development of proposals as part of Ynys Môn's recently granted freeport status.

¹⁷ - <https://www.como.org.uk/shared-cars/overview-and-benefits#car-club-survey>

¹⁸ - Future Wales: the national plan 2040 | GOV.WALES

Road-Based Freight

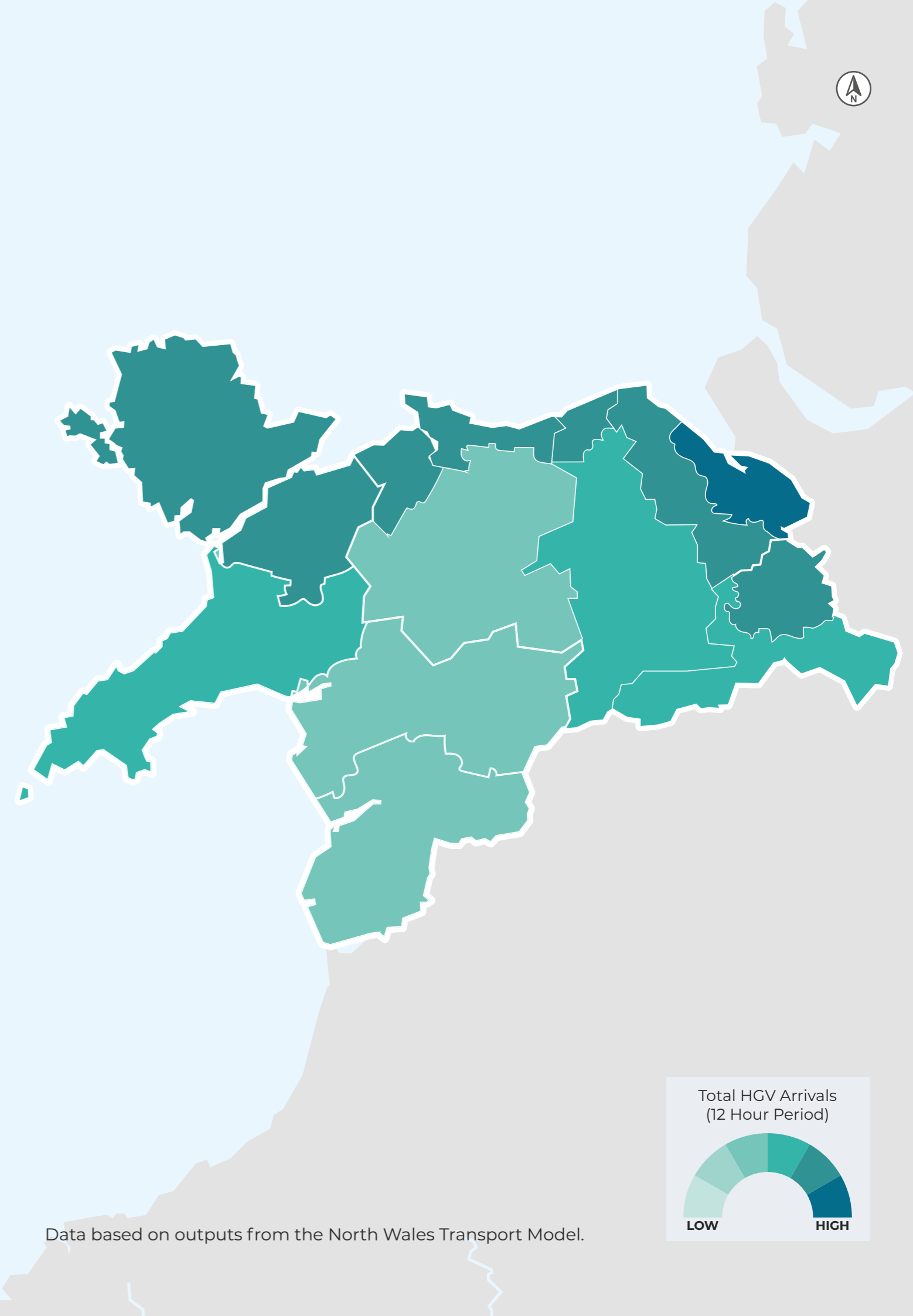
The predominant flow of road-based freight within the region is east-west, along the A55 from Holyhead in the west to the A494 and the English border. There are also freight movements south from the A55, including along the A483 in the County Borough of Wrexham and then towards the Midlands, and the A487 / A470 corridor.

The Commission has examined the North Wales Transport Model to investigate the locations of freight origins and destinations. The model suggests that freight trips are primarily focused along the coastal arc, which matches the principal population centres in the region and the existing principal highway network. The model suggests that there are concentrations of freight flows in Deeside and Wrexham, and this is linked with major manufacturing sites and industrial estates, including Airbus, JCB, and Iceland.

In addition to long-distance Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements, there are a significant number of short-distance freight movements within north Wales. These shorter-distance movements impact more on urban areas and are primarily undertaken in Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) such as vans.

As noted in the active travel section about e-cargo cycles, there has been a 37% increase in light goods vehicle (LGV) mileage between 2010 and 2019. This increase in LGV mileage is predominantly led by trends such as online shopping, and it is possible that more could be done to shift goods to sustainable modes or zero-emission vehicles. We are aware of the closure of the Holyhead Roadking site a mile from the port to facilitate a new customs site, and stakeholders have shared with us the impact of this on both local communities and the well-being of drivers.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: A network of suitable road-side locations should be developed across the region.



Data based on outputs from the North Wales Transport Model.

UK Landbridge

Whilst many freight movements in the region have origin and destination points within north Wales, some movements are from Ireland to continental Europe and are hence using the UK as a land bridge. There are now new border checks associated with the UK leaving the European Union that create additional paperwork and cost. Despite this, and the instigation of direct ferry services from Ireland to continental Europe, some time-sensitive products, such as those in the agri-food sector, still use the land bridge.

In 2020, over 80.0% of goods carried on Irish registered heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) between Ireland and Europe passed through Welsh ports, equivalent to 0.5Mt. 72.5% of the total volume passed through Holyhead port.¹⁹

UK Land Bridge



¹⁹ - Sea Transport 2020, Statistical Bulletin, Welsh Government

Rail Freight

Rail can play a greater role in moving freight in the region. We note that Welsh Government, working in partnership with Network Rail and Breedon Group, have recently re-opened the Llandudno Junction freight yard to enable freight movements to Luton. It is anticipated that 250,000 tonnes of slate aggregate will be moved from the yard each year, with each service removing approximately 76 HGVs from the roads²⁰.

Due to the reduction in scale of traditional bulk industries, such as coal, slate, and steel, the region currently has a relatively limited rail freight market. This is reflected in a total of between two and three daily rail freight journeys being made along the North Wales Main Line, despite a currently reserved hourly allowance for rail freight services.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Elsewhere in the UK, there are high speed parcels services being reintroduced; in the longer term this may offer opportunities to reduce road freight in this sector and station development plans should allow for this.



²⁰ - <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/stories/resurgence-of-welsh-rail-freight/>

Freight and Logistics Plan for Wales

The Commission is aware of the commitment within Welsh Government's National Transport Delivery Plan to develop a Freight and Logistics Plan for Wales.

The Commission is supportive of the development of such a plan and would advise that specific consideration is given to:

The role rail freight can play in decarbonising freight and logistics networks, noting the potential to significantly increase the number of journeys along the North Wales Main Line.

Plans to address pinch-points on the rail freight network, notably Padeswood Sidings, which is a significant barrier to improved services.

Potential measures to support the introduction of zero carbon emission heavy and light goods vehicle fleets within both the public and private sectors, including charging stations and possibly hydrogen fuelling stations.

Measures to reduce the impact of local deliveries on communities, including e-cargo bikes, area delivery and servicing plans, micro-consolidation centres, and delivery lockers at key locations such as transport and/or mobility hubs.

Opportunities to improve rail freight journeys across the UK Landbridge, which could include a swap-body service at the Port of Holyhead to avoid the need for HGV journeys through the region.

Procurement practices across the public sector to minimise the need for longer-distance freight journeys by road.

Developing facilities and programmes to support the well-being of HGV drivers.

In addition, we are minded to recommend that Welsh Government works alongside both the UK and Irish Governments to understand the impacts of Brexit on trade through Holyhead and reflect this within Welsh Government's forthcoming Freight and Logistics Plan.

The Visitor Economy

The visitor economy plays an important role in many parts of north Wales. It is supported by transport infrastructure and services, and visitor travel has impacts on the operation of the transport network in some parts of the region.

Tourism created £6.0 billion of expenditure in 2019 in Wales. Most expenditure (£3.5 billion) relates to day trips. Tourism related industries accounted in 2019 for £3.4 billion, or 5.0% of Gross Value Added in Wales, an increase from 4.6% in 2015²¹.

Visit Wales reported in 2022²² that six of the top ten most popular free attractions are in north Wales, with seven of the top ten most popular attractions (free and paid for) also being in the region.

The visitor economy accounts for 13.0% of employment in north Wales compared with 11.3% in Wales overall. There is variation within the region, with 21.7% 18.6% and 19.6% in Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, and Conwy respectively, and 8.2% and 8.7% in Flintshire and Wrexham respectively²³.

Effective transport infrastructure and services to accommodate peak demand by sustainable travel modes is important for both the economy and the environment.

The Commission is impressed by the work of Eryri National Park and its partners relating to the management of parking and the provision of public transport. Recent developments include the Sherpa'r Wyddfa bus service and park and ride linked with

parking management at Pen-y-pass, and the enforcement of park restrictions on roads. This package of measures is considered an exemplar by other National Parks and tourist areas.

A review undertaken by Partneriaeth Yr Wyddfa in 2020 identified Llanberis, Betws-y-Coed, Beddgelert, and Bethesda as 'gateway villages' to the National Park.

Initiatives such as the Sherpa'r Wyddfa provide a way of travelling sustainably once visitors have arrived in the region, and this is important. Even if people arrive at a destination by car, they should be able to access attractions by active travel or public transport.

Coastal locations such as Prestatyn, Rhyl, Towyn and Llandudno are a huge part of the North Wales economy and visitors to these destinations are part of the continued success or regeneration of those places. For example, Tir Prince fun park in Towyn has more visitors than any other attraction in the region and has long opening hours and multiple events.

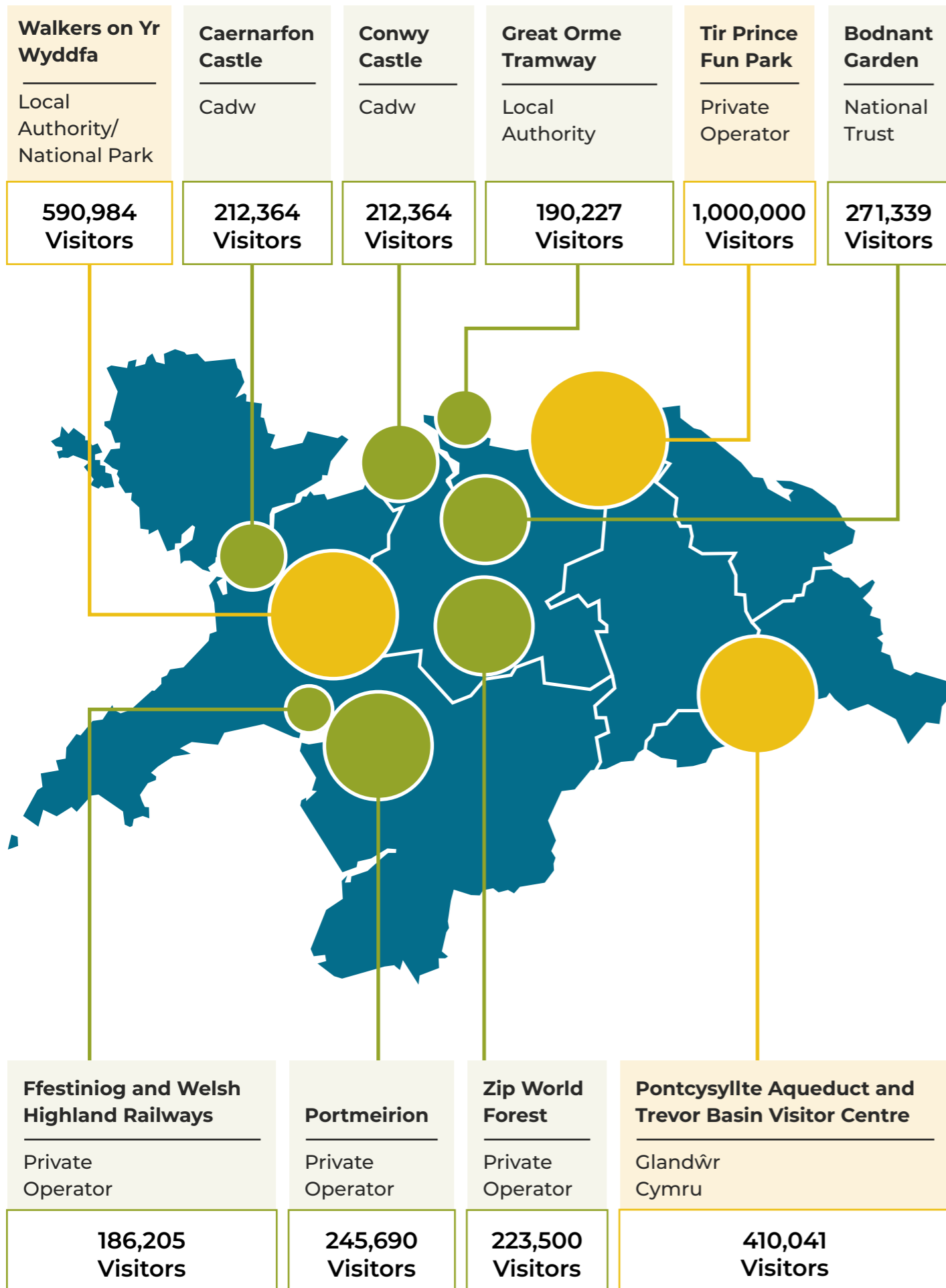
Many visitor attractions would benefit from the opportunity to improve public transport and active travel access, allowing more people to access these locations, in particular people without a car. This might involve seasonal shuttle buses from town centres or rail stations, cycle and e-cycle hire or improving signposting for public transport and active travel information.

²¹ - <https://www.gov.wales/wales-visitor-economy-profile-2021.html#96418/>

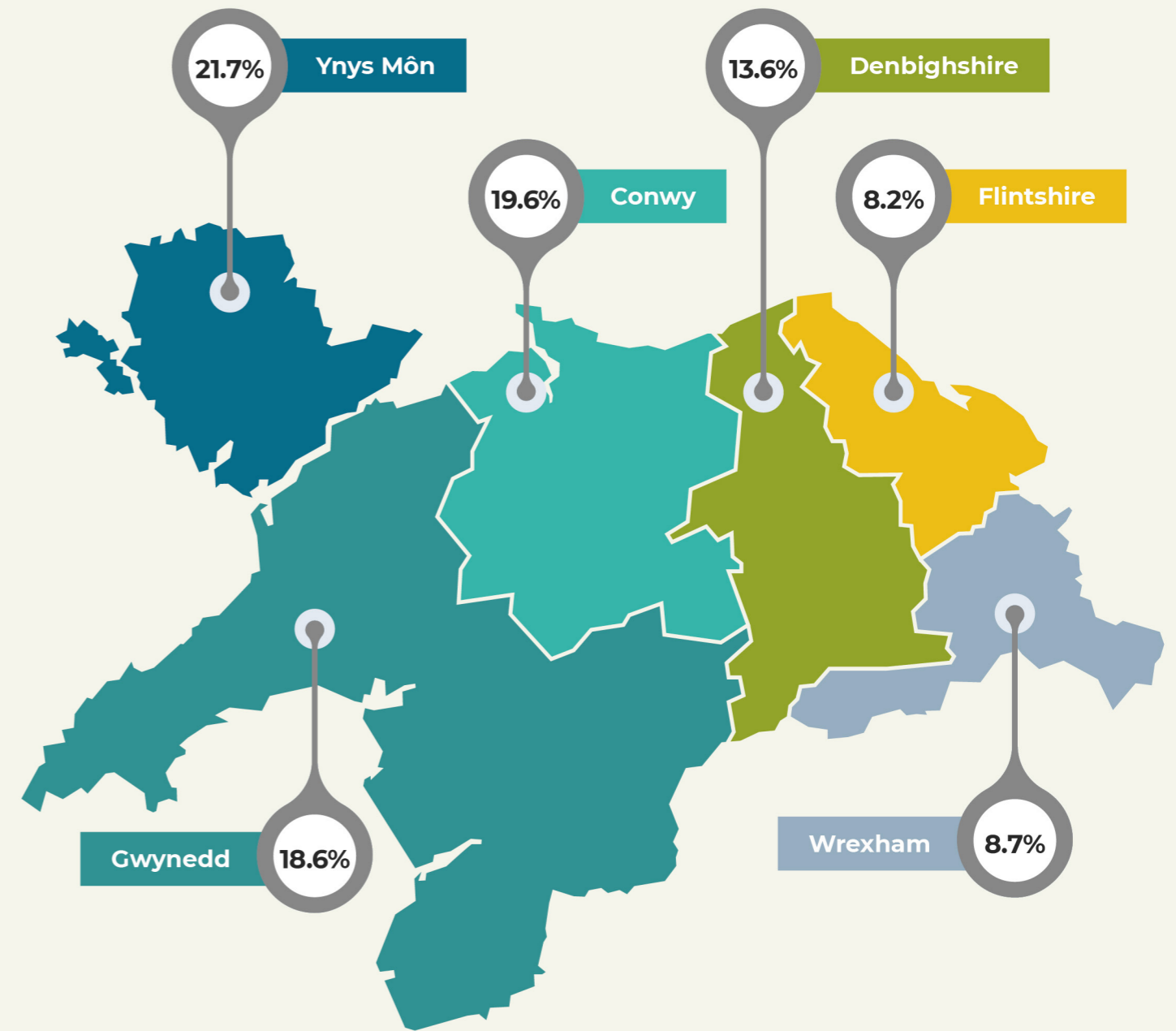
²² - <https://www.gov.wales/visits-tourist-attractions-2021>

²³ - <https://www.gov.wales/wales-visitor-economy-profile-2021.html#96418>

■ Free tourist attractions ■ Paid tourist attractions



% of Employment in Tourism, 2020



It is important that more visitors can move around the region using public transport and active travel and we would like to consider how this might look in practice, and what further can be done in partnership with major attraction owners, Visit Wales and CADW.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Consolidation and expansion of the best practice schemes identified by Partneriaeth Yr Wyddfa's review in 2020. This could include learning from other parts of the UK such as the work in Loch Ness, Scotland.

Digital Connectivity

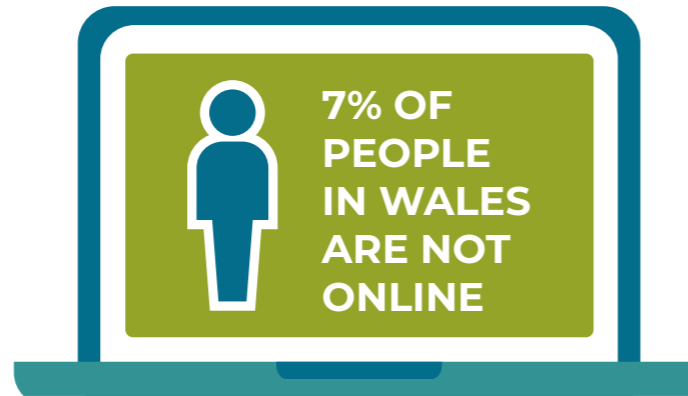
Digital, as well as physical, connectivity is important. Recent advances in the speed and capacity of digital connectivity have enabled significant opportunities in relation to the choice of business and home location and reduce in some cases the need to travel.

There are currently various locations across the region, primarily in central and western rural areas, with poor digital connectivity. This is a significant barrier which can restrict the ability to work remotely and access goods and services.

Digital connectivity helps people to maintain access to services (including banking and healthcare) and allows them to avoid longer distance travel if they choose. On-line grocery shopping can also reduce car mileage travelled, but this is only fully effective if the delivery services are made by sustainable modes such as e-cargo cycles or electric vans.

Whilst providing effective digital connections and services is important, ensuring people across north Wales are digitally literate is equally as important.

There are a higher proportion of digitally excluded people in older age groups and with disabilities, and therefore improving digital literacy in these groups, or providing them with digital assistance is important. This is especially relevant in north Wales because approximately 23% of the population are aged 65 and above²⁴, compared with 21% in Wales. Conwy has the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over in the country (28%).



DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: We support digital literacy schemes, such as the Digital Communities Wales programme²⁵, and would like to see more done to make sure individuals and communities are made aware of their existence.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Planning for accessibility should recognise the contribution of digital connectivity and that better access to goods and services and the choice of working at or near to home needs a joint consideration of travel and digital options.

²⁴ - Population estimates by Local Authority and year (StatsWales)

²⁵ - <https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/>

Encouraging Better Travel Choices

Improvements to public transport and active travel networks, infrastructure and services, as outlined in Part 2 of this report, will create a change in behaviour, but further initiatives to embed better travel choices will also be needed.

This involves measures to both encourage desired behaviours and discourage non-desired behaviours. Encouragement measures are more effective where there is limited discouragement for travelling by car, for example where congestion is not widespread.

So far, we have identified two large travel to work areas – Deeside and Wrexham Industrial Parks and employment areas (private sector dominated) and Bangor/Ynys Môn / Caernarfon employment areas (public sector dominated). Both areas may benefit from specific encouragement and discouragement initiatives.

Four R's Approach



Encouragement Measures

Partnership Working

Effective partnership working between the public and private sectors is essential. **These partnerships should cover:**

Major barriers facing employees travelling to and from the workplace - for example, if employees drive to the site early to avoid congestion and get a parking place this could, over time, result in stressed and tired employees who do not want to stay with the company. If staff operate in shift patterns, there could be issues with people (women in particular) feeling unsafe when using cars parked far away or public transport in the evenings or at night.

How public partners can support – such as bringing employers together with bus operators for ideas on services and ticketing, amending routes, cycle routes, help with planning where a company identifies expansion requirements that they might be able to solve with improved car park management/reduction of commuter cars, and/or parking management generally.

What businesses and organisations can do – changing operational practices, working together, linking transport with health and climate objectives, branding new services/initiatives.

Working in partnership with the private sector has a range of benefits, including the opportunity to actively encourage the principles of more flexible working, wherever possible. Welsh Government has set out a target for 30% of the Welsh workforce to work remotely for at least part of the week and we acknowledge that achieving this will contribute to decarbonisation targets as set out in Net Zero Wales.

That said, we recognise that a lot of the jobs in north Wales, including healthcare and manufacturing, are likely to have a lower propensity for remote working and therefore this should be taken into consideration.

These partnerships with businesses can also promote car sharing, and so reduce total car mileage for commuting and business purposes. There are several good case studies on how this can be promoted, as part of travel plans and business measures to meet scope 3 Greenhouse Gas Protocol²⁶.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION: Strategic partnership proposals to be developed by Welsh Government working with Local Authorities and the major employers in the two employment areas identified above.

²⁶ - <https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/Chapter7.pdf>

Travel Planning and Healthy Travel Charters

Alongside this, a combination of Travel Plans or Healthy Travel Charters developed for organisations across the region can support people to embed positive behaviours.

The commitments made within the National Transport Delivery Plan to produce tailored Travel Plan guidance for organisations across Wales, alongside an effective support programme to support their roll-out, is a welcome first step.

Businesses and organisations across Wales can publicly sign a Healthy Travel Charter, outlining the commitments of organisations over the next two or three years to supporting sustainable transport initiatives. We consider this to be an additional important step in supporting modal shift across the region through committing organisations to sustainable transport targets.

We have noted that Healthy Travel Wales is currently developing a charter for north Wales and would encourage organisations to sign-up to this when available.

Promoting Sustainable Transport Choices

In addition to providing an effective sustainable transport network, work needs to be done in north Wales to change attitudes to travelling by modes other than the private car.

Whilst improving public transport and active travel networks will increase confidence, we recommend that this should be supported by behaviour change activities across the region, working with communities, workplaces, and educational facilities such as:

- Improved marketing and further awareness campaigns for sustainable transport services.
- Engagement with communities to demonstrate the benefits of reducing car usage.
- Undertaking regional events such as car-free days.
- Holding active travel events for local decision-makers to reduce potential concerns.

We are aware that active travel schemes across the country are often subject to criticism due to concerns associated with potential impacts relating to a loss of parking or reducing in road capacity. On this basis, we have determined that a behaviour change programme would need to focus on challenging these criticisms, with a particular focus on local decision-makers, due to their prominent roles in communities.



Discouragement Measures

Road User Charging

Road-user charging relates to charging people who travel by car within a defined area, with the intention to raise revenue to support sustainable transport measures and to discourage car use.

An independent review of road user charging was undertaken in 2020 by Derek Turner CBE, on behalf of Welsh Government. The report considered the potential merits of introducing road-user charging across Wales and concluded that it could be an effective measure to deliver a more equitable, efficient, and sustainable transport system.

As Wales is not all the same, either geographically or in relation to its transport issues, the report identified that different approaches may be required across the country to road-user charging. The report subsequently recommended that a National Policy Framework for equitable road-user charging be developed for Wales as a priority, to ensure that it works for different areas and the entire population. This has led to a commitment with the National Transport Delivery Plan to develop a policy for fair road-user charging by 2026 (action BC4).

We have considered the potential for introducing road user charging in north Wales to assist in encouraging people to use sustainable transport modes, and we acknowledge the role road user charging can play in raising essential revenue for supporting the sustainable transport network, and therefore is likely to play a part in transport across the region in the future.

We agree with the findings of the Turner Report and suggest further consideration is given to road-user charging in north Wales.

Cardiff County Council has recently announced plans to implement a road user charging scheme²⁷, and there is an opportunity to follow and learn from this first plan for Wales – while also recognising the differences between the south-east and north of Wales. For example, as north Wales has so many cross-border journeys, detailed consideration would need to be given to ensuring any cross-border charging is equitable.

Low Emission Zones

A Low Emission Zone is a geographically defined area in which the most polluting vehicles are restricted from entering or driving within without paying a charge. The overall aim of these zones is to both reduce the amount of traffic within a specific area and reduce the number of highest-polluting vehicle types, to minimise the associated emissions and air quality effects. Other benefits include a reduction in congestion levels, raising revenue to fund sustainable transport initiatives, and benefits to human health.

In England, the UK Government's Department for Transport has instructed several Local Authorities to implement Low Emission Zones (otherwise known as Clean Air Zones) due to the lack of compliance with legal nitrogen dioxide levels.

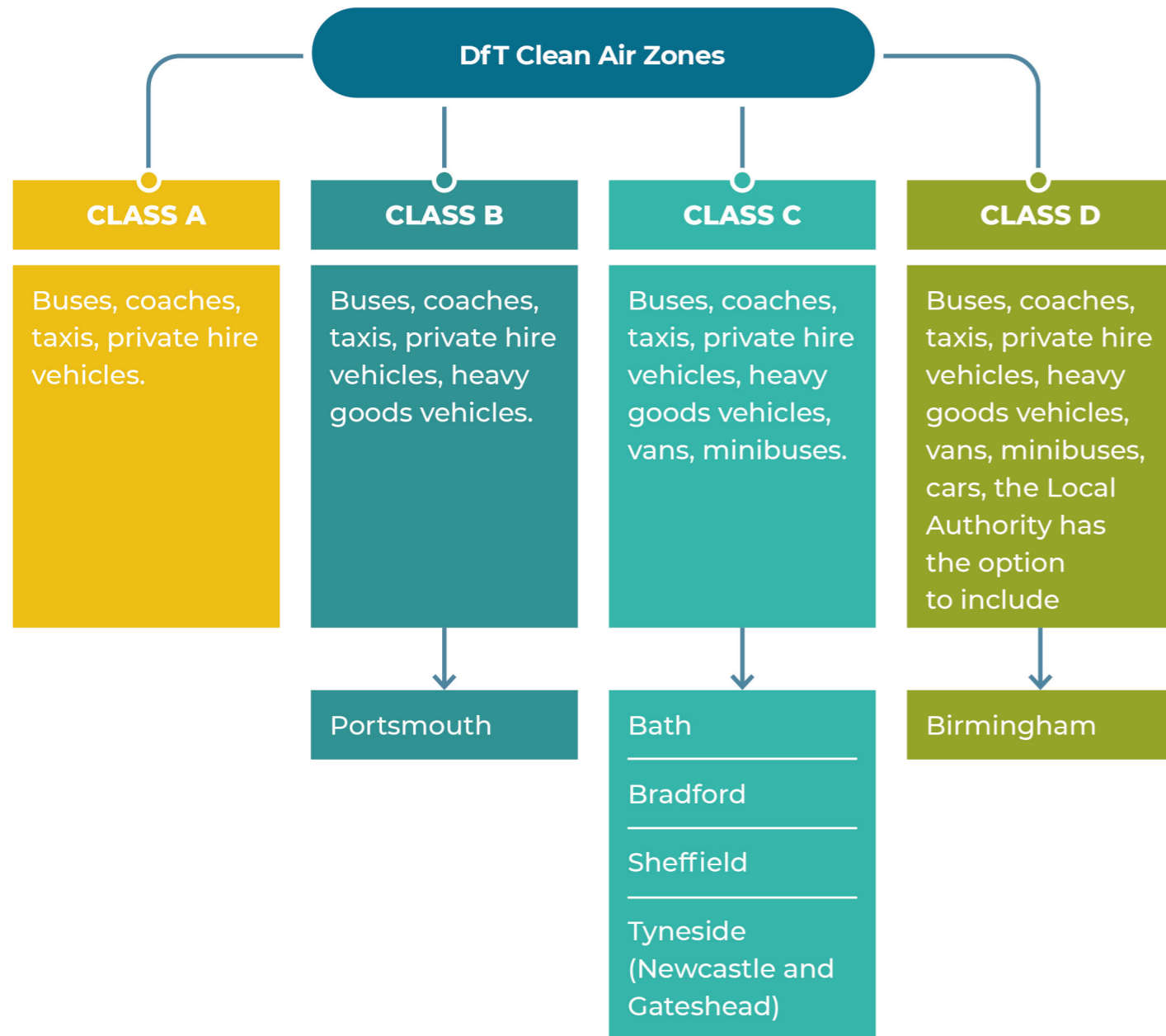
²⁷ - <https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Parking-roads-and-travel/road-user-payment/Pages/default.aspx>

In principle we acknowledge the potential benefits associated with establishing Low Emission Zones, but due to the primarily rural nature of north Wales and the absence of any Air Quality Management Areas, we do not see the benefit in introducing any Low Emission Zones at present.

That is not to deny the existence of localised pockets of road-based pollution in the region and air quality levels should

continue to be observed across the region. If emission levels are being exceeded in any area, a Low Emission Zone could be considered as one of a number of measures to reduce it.

We also encourage Welsh Government to work with Local Authorities to look at the issue nationally to see if such schemes may be of benefit in other parts of Wales.



Parking Management

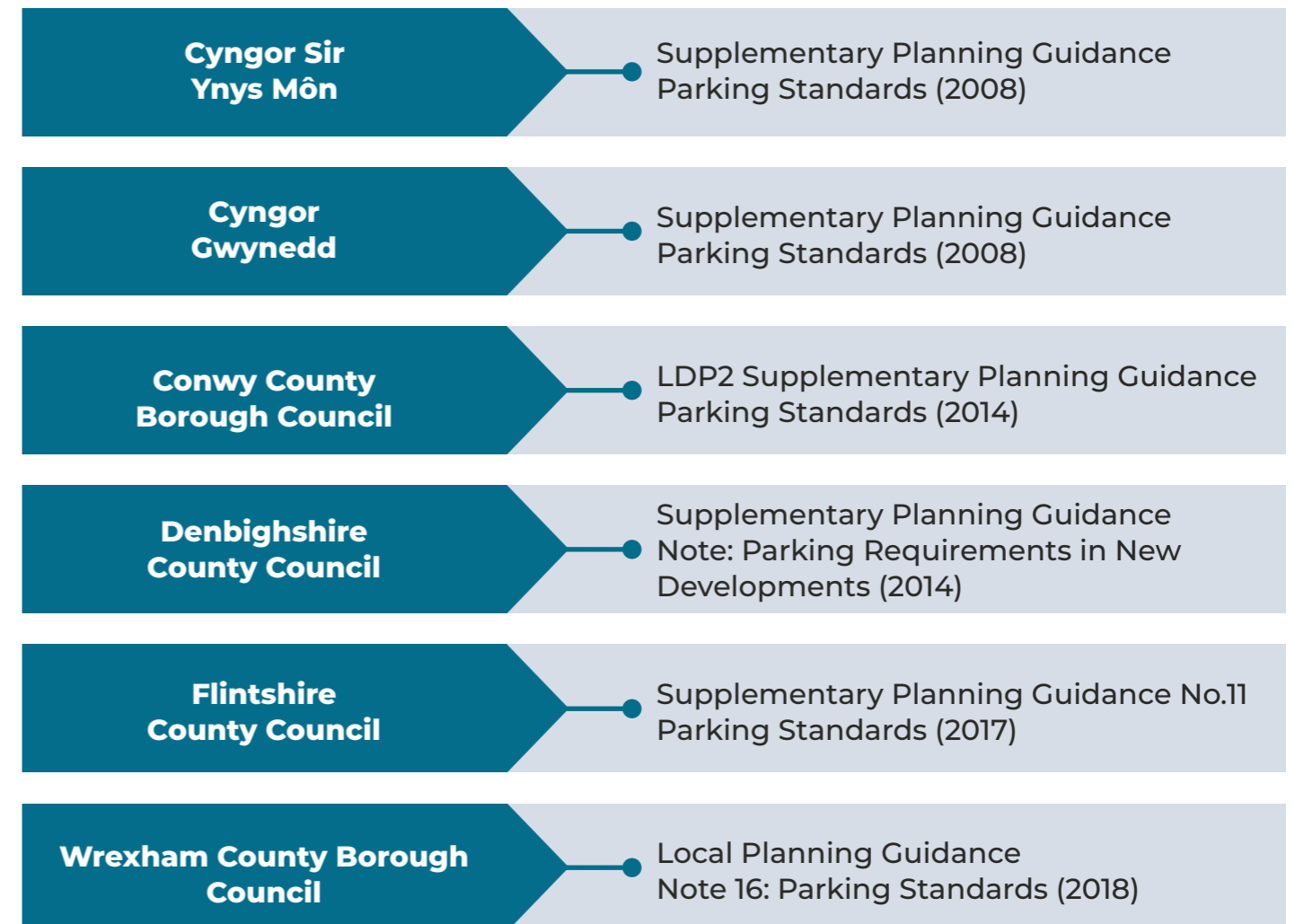
The approach to the management of parking across the region varies significantly by Local Authority area. This contributes to an effective 'race to the bottom' where cheap, and often free, car parking is provided within town and city centres to encourage access.

Whilst we acknowledge the purpose of this is to support high streets across the region, this is counterproductive in transport terms, as it increases the attractiveness of travelling by cars to town and city centres, where public transport or active modes could be utilised.

This is an area which the Corporate Joint Committee can consider in its work on a Regional Transport Plan.

We also understand that due to north Wales' unique position on the border with England and the location of prominent population centres nearby, such as Chester, Liverpool, and Manchester, any parking policy interventions should not put towns and cities in the region at a disadvantage to neighbouring areas.

Local Authorities and Parking Standards



Emerging Conclusions and Next Steps

The ultimate purpose of the Commission is to make specific recommendations to Welsh Government on ways to build sustainable travel and transport schemes in north Wales. This final section summarises our current, emerging conclusions and draft recommendations, all of which contribute to delivering an efficient, high quality and sustainable transport network for north Wales. Further modelling work and more detailed examinations of these will take place alongside stakeholder input to inform the recommendations within our Final Report.

Rail

1. Communities further away from a rail station should have access to a bus service which connects to the nearest station and comprehensive comfortable and attractive active travel routes separated from motor traffic.
2. Service frequency enhancements should be prioritised.
3. Rail fleet improvements that facilitate the proposed service frequency enhancements should also be prioritised.

Shrewsbury to Chester

4. Prioritise the signalling improvements at Gobowen to allow further delivery of improvements.

North Wales Main Line

5. The Commission supports improvements proposed at Chester Railway station to enable additional services to operate along both lines.
6. For our Final Report, we will consider the capacity of the branch line between Llandudno Junction and the urban areas of Deganwy and Llandudno town. Llandudno is one of the most popular seaside destinations in the UK, and improving access to Llandudno from the principal rail network could encourage more people to travel by rail.
7. Therefore, the Phase 1 service frequency improvements between Llandudno and Chester and supporting infrastructure works should be prioritised. Development of phases 2 and 3 should continue so that these are ready to progress when funding is available.

Borderlands Line

8. The issue with the Padeswood sidings requires a resolution before other work to improve the line can proceed, and achieving this should become a priority.
9. Additionally, the Borderlands improvements outlined need investment to reduce journey times and increase service frequency between Wrexham and Liverpool, and significantly increase the attractiveness of the route.
10. The Commission supports the creation of a new station at Deeside Industrial Park
11. The Commission supports work at Shotton to enable easier transit between the two railway lines and would suggest this work is prioritised to make Shotton station an important interchange in the network.
12. Use of new Merseyrail trains on the Borderlands line be developed.

Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast Lines

13. There could be merit in introducing increased frequencies during the peak seasonal period, and this should be explored.
14. Further service enhancements and infrastructure improvements to make the best use of the Conwy Valley and Cambrian Coast lines such as passing loops (as has happened to similar lines in Devon and Cornwall) may be beneficial.
15. In the immediate future, those communities served by stations along the route should have access to enhanced bus services to reduce dependence on car use.

Bus

16. The Commission's current view is that legislative changes and introduction of a franchising model for bus services are essential and need to be brought to fruition. Without the legislation, it may not be possible to construct a new bus network that improves services across the region.
17. We are looking at a revised bus network that at a whole-region level can effectively connect main locations and rail main lines.
18. Implement an effective core bus network of main travel corridors where there is no rail option to connect significant communities and employment areas across the region, providing good frequency services and longer, more consistent operating hours.
19. At interchange points with rail, buses should enter station sites to maximise the ease of interchange, where possible. This should, however, be examined on a site-by-site basis and journey times across the route should not be increased unnecessarily.
20. Greater weight needs to be placed in rural areas compared with urban areas on assisting the switch-over of the car fleet to be zero carbon emitting.
21. A combination of both local timetabled routes and Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services can be effective in providing access to the core public transport network for people living in more rural areas. Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services can enable people to access their nearest community where they can access goods and services and other public transport services.

22. Lessons learned and best practice relating to the Fflecsi pilots and other programmes be used in rolling out further Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport services in north Wales, in particular in rural areas.

Active Travel

23. The Commission supports the call for a National Delivery Plan for active travel setting out what needs to be done, by whom and by when.

24. We would like to see the highest impact active travel routes prioritised for delivery along with strengthened mechanisms for delivering coherent, attractive and comfortable active travel networks. These agreements could specify the quality of outcomes linked with funding, along with an enhanced delivery programme for active travel routes on both the local and strategic road networks. It may be that further strengthening is needed beyond this through changes to the Active Travel Act.

25. We have identified some priority areas for extensive active travel route development, with enhancements supported for locations such as the Wrexham Industrial Park, Deeside Industrial Park, Parc Menai, and the Caernarfon Road retail strip in Bangor.

26. We would like to see ways in which wider e-cycle use can be developed in the region, either through ownership or through short- or long-term hire schemes.

27. TfW completed a study in March 2023 investigating the most appropriate types and locations for cycle hire schemes across Wales. The Commission will consider the findings of the study, including the

recommendations in more detail ahead of the publication of our Final Report.

Micromobility

28. The Commission awaits the outcome of the UK government's deliberations on the future regulation of e-scooters. It notes with interest the Integrated Mobility Service contract that the West of England Combined Authority is letting in Spring 2023 for e-cycle hire, e-cargo cycle hire and e-scooter hire.

Integration

29. There could be opportunity to provide a distinct and consistent brand for the enhanced core bus network that matches with the rail network. Branding could draw on distinct local characteristics whilst also being consistent at a higher level across the whole region.

30. The Commission understands that TfW has developed station improvement plans for all railway stations across the region. The Commission welcomes this, and would suggest the following are also considered:

- Improvements to digital connectivity at stations to facilitate access to real time information and online booking and travel planning services.
- Effective integration between modes including active travel.
- More and better cycle parking that is easy to locate and use, safe and secure.
- Provision of signposting and information for travellers, including by active travel so that switching modes is easy.

- Public realm improvements to contribute to sense of place.
- Improved connectivity between town/city centres and bus and rail stations.
- Improvements to accessibility for disabled people.
- Equal status for the Welsh and English languages.
- Encouraging high density land use adjacent to stations.

31. Fully integrated ticketing across rail and bus modes with seamless connectivity across operators should be the goal, and Welsh Government/Transport for Wales should aim for delivery of a digital platform and app that provides this full integration.

32. We support work to integrate the public transport network in north Wales, particularly in relation to ticketing. For our Final Report, we will further consider potential multi-modal ticketing solutions. As part of this, the Commission will consider the suitability of a pilot for a ticket covering all modes of public transport in north Wales with a maximum fare, supported by tap-on/off infrastructure. This could mirror the offers now available in some European countries, such as the “Klimaticket” in Austria which costs €1095 (£960) a year, or £2.63 a day, for an unlimited number of public transport journeys within the country.

33. We are attracted by the introduction of bus priority measures wherever possible to minimise delays experienced by buses on the highway network.

34. At this stage we are considering that the study of congestion hotspots on the bus network is progressed further, and bus priority measures implemented wherever possible. In particular, the study should consider the management of main roads across the region and the need to give priority to bus services along and across these roads, as part of the objective of reducing bus journey times and improving journey time reliability.

35. Welsh Government has committed to delivering a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035, replacing 50% of the highest emission vehicles by 2028. The Commission is minded to support this commitment and the introduction of zero-emission buses. That said, we also understand that bus depots will need to be upgraded to enable either charging of electric, or refuelling of hydrogen, buses. Enabling infrastructure will be required in the shorter-term to minimise the potential for barriers in the future.

Governance

36. It is essential that in developing its regional transport plans the north Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) works closely with neighbouring English authorities such as the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Planning

37. Welsh Government to review TAN18 guidance to ensure policy intent translates to implementation.

Freight

- 38. Welsh Government, working in conjunction with the UK Government, Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn, and North Wales CJC should ensure that sustainable freight practices are a central consideration in the development of proposals as part of Ynys Môn's recently granted freeport status.
 - 39. A network of suitable road-side locations should be developed across the region.
 - 40. Elsewhere in the UK, there are high speed parcels services being reintroduced; in the longer term this may offer opportunities to reduce road freight in this sector and station development plans should allow for this.
 - 41. The Commission is supportive of the development of a Freight and Logistics Plan for Wales, and would advise that specific consideration is given to:
 - The role rail freight can play in decarbonising freight and logistics networks, noting the potential to significantly increase the number of journeys along the North Wales Main Line.
 - Plans to address pinch-points on the rail freight network, notably Padeswood Sidings, which is a significant barrier to improved services.
 - Potential measures to support the introduction of zero carbon emission heavy and light goods vehicle fleets within both the public and private sectors, including charging stations and possibly hydrogen fuelling stations.
 - Measures to reduce the impact of local deliveries on communities, including e-cargo bikes, area delivery and servicing plans, micro-consolidation centres, and delivery lockers at key locations such as transport and/or mobility hubs.
 - Opportunities to improve rail freight journeys across the UK Landbridge, which could include a swap-body service at the Port of Holyhead to avoid the need for HGV journeys through the region.
 - Procurement practices across the public sector to minimise the need for longer-distance freight journeys by road.
 - Developing facilities and programmes to support the well-being of HGV drivers.
42. In addition, we are minded to recommend that Welsh Government works alongside both the UK and Irish Governments to understand the impacts of Brexit on trade through Holyhead and reflect this within Welsh Government's forthcoming Freight and Logistics Plan.

The Visitor Economy

- 43. Consolidation and expansion of the best practice schemes identified by this review. This could include learning from other parts of the UK such as the work in Loch Ness, Scotland.
- 44. It is important that more visitors can move around the region using public transport and active travel and we would like to consider how this might look in practice, and what further can be done in partnership with major attraction owners, Visit Wales and CADW.

Digital

- 45. We support digital literacy schemes, such as the Digital Communities Wales programme,²⁸ and would like to see more done to make sure individuals and communities are made aware of their existence.
- 46. Planning for accessibility should recognise the contribution of digital connectivity and that better access to goods and services and the choice of working at or near to home needs a joint consideration of travel and digital options.

²⁸ - <https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/>

Behaviour Change

- 47. Strategic travel planning partnership proposals to be developed by Welsh Government working with Local Authorities and the major employers in the two employment areas identified.
- 48. Car clubs could support rural communities through increasing confidence in a model of lower or non-car ownership that can be supported by a combination of the sustainable transport network and community-led car clubs.
- 49. The commitments made within the National Transport Delivery Plan to produce tailored Travel Plan guidance for organisations across Wales, alongside an effective support programme to support their roll-out, is a welcome first step.

Staying in touch

We welcome your views on this report and the draft recommendations. If you would like to tell us about travel and transport provision in north Wales, you can contact us at northwalestransportcommission@gov.wales or visit our web pages at <https://www.gov.wales/north-wales-transport-commission>

Annex 01

Extended Remit of Commission - Menai Strait

We have been asked to consider options for how the connections to and from Ynys Mon can be made more resilient in the context of recent maintenance and the impact of bad weather events on the existing infrastructure.

This includes:

- How the use of existing infrastructure can be maximised.
- The role of connections to and from Ynys Mon in ensuring the movement of goods within and through Wales.
- How the connections to and from Ynys Mon can support our modal shift aims.
- How these connections fit in the wider context of transport connectivity across north Wales.
- Potential options for improvement in light of the above consideration, when taking a perspective of multi-modal transport across north Wales as a whole.
- Consideration of options that support modal shift and align to the purposes and conditions for investment set out in Welsh Government's response to the Roads Review Panel's recommendations.

As we examined the options for improving resilience, we have been struck by the amount of planning and feasibility work that has already taken place, therefore we are looking in detail at all of this to understand what is best in the current environment.

We are considering options consistent with delivering the priorities set out in the Wales Transport Strategy* and the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy:

- **Priority 1** – Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel.
- **Priority 2** – Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure.
- **Priority 3** – Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport.

At this stage, and in keeping with our approach to make the infrastructure that is already available work better, it is the view of the Commission that the current bridges can be made more resilient, and we are looking at options that can achieve this. We will also examine additional work which is being carried out in partnership with Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn, Cyngor Gwynedd and Transport for Wales to improve connections to and from Ynys Môn.

Options being considered include:

- Three lane running or tidal flow on Britannia bridge.
- Reconfiguration of A55 junctions adjacent to Britannia bridge.
- Provision for active travel on Britannia bridge.
- Priority for active travel on the Menai Suspension bridge.
- High quality, continuous active travel paths on both sides of the Menai connecting communities to the bridges and key destinations.
- Travel planning in partnership with major public and private sector organisations.
- Cycle hire schemes including e-bikes.
- Priority for active travel and buses on the bridges.
- High frequency bus services connecting Ynys Mon and Gwynedd.
- Rail and bus-based park and ride including electric vehicle charging points.
- Wind deflectors on Britannia bridge.

Annex 02

Work to Date and Our Approach

The North Wales Transport Commission was established in Spring 2022. Since then, the Commission has met frequently to analyse and discuss a broad range of transport issues across the north Wales region.

We started with the principle that investing in existing infrastructure to make it work better is our highest priority, with new infrastructure only being recommended if the current infrastructure cannot be improved to the standards required to meet priorities. This is a principle which we have applied across our work and draft recommendations.

Our Progress Statement was issued in January 2023 and was followed by a programme of engagement activities until March 2023. This allowed us to let people know about our work to date, to allow people to share feedback on the findings presented in our Progress Statement, and to discuss local issues, challenges and concerns relating to transport in north Wales.

The Commission has learned about much good work already underway or in development in the region. Some of our draft recommendations support and endorse this work, whilst seeking to place it in a wider, more coherent transport network.

This interim report focuses on what we have found so far, whilst setting out the recommendations we are considering for our Final Report. We want to discuss these draft recommendations with people who live, work and visit north Wales.

The Commission has taken a systematic approach to our work:

Understanding the Problems: The Commission first undertook a detailed review of available travel data to establish a baseline of how people travel into and around the region. The findings from this evidence-based review were included in our Progress Statement. Our understanding of problems and opportunities in the region has been refined through site visits, specialist advice, research and stakeholder briefings.

Setting Priorities: Based on national and regional priorities for transport in Llwybr Newydd, and knowledge of the transport problems and opportunities identified, the Commission defined seven high-level objectives to improve the travel options for the people of north Wales:

- Identifying priority projects and schemes for delivery that will have the most impact in improving rail services.
- An enhanced revised bus network for the whole region.
- Providing comfortable and attractive active travel infrastructure that connect to key locations and public transport services.
- Integrating rail, bus and active travel more effectively through improvements in ticketing, access to information, branding, fare structures, and comfortable, attractive and secure access and parking infrastructure.

- Enabling and encouraging better travel choices for businesses and individuals
- Improving transport options for people living and working in rural areas.
- Reducing the impact of the visitor economy on the transport network.

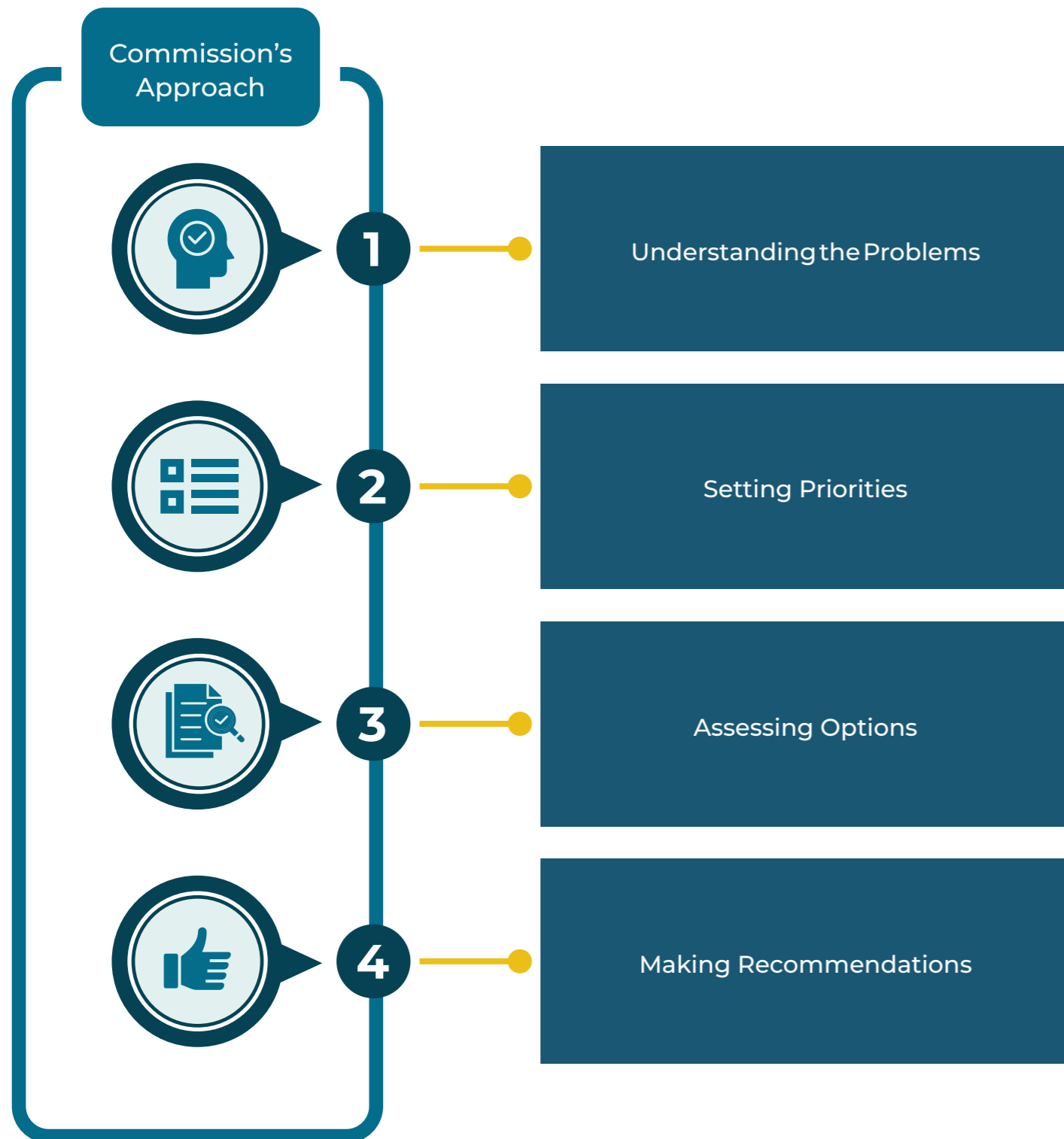
Assessing Options: Through Commission discussions, technical reviews and input from stakeholders, we have identified draft recommendations based on their potential impacts and the extent to which they will address the challenges of the region. Following publication of this report, we will assess the proposals in further detail using stakeholder feedback, transport modelling and further analysis to provide a full list of recommendations in our Final Report.

The options assessment will also include consideration of alignment to Welsh Government targets on sustainable travel (45% of journeys by 2040), as set out in Llwybr Newydd and Net Zero Wales, well-being goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, financial and socio-economic impacts and technical feasibility.

Detailed modelling of a number of these measures is being undertaken to project the impact on passenger numbers, revenues and use of sustainable transport modes, making use of Transport for Wales' North Wales Transport Model and other suitable data.

Making Recommendations: This assessment process will enable the Commission to make recommendations to Welsh Government in our Final Report. These recommendations together will form a priority package of initiatives for the short, medium and long-term.

To support delivery, we will make a smaller number of recommendations on wider matters such as policy, funding, considering the best use of available resources, and governance. This will support the creation of a holistic programme of work to be delivered in partnership between in Welsh Government, UK Government, Local Authorities , Transport for Wales, and other public and private partners, as the Welsh Ministers see fit.



Annex 03

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

Public Transport

Public transport in north Wales is not sufficiently cheap or convenient to offer a genuine, appealing alternative to the private car. Bus services are infrequent, unreliable, and do not align to the rail network. As for rail, rolling stock is in a poor condition, services are overcrowded, infrequent, and expensive. People in north Wales do not trust the Public Transport network, which leads to a dependence on car ownership.

Rural Communities

North Wales is a mix of rural and urban areas. Whilst many people rely on their cars for work and leisure across the region, this is particularly prevalent in rural areas due to a lack of suitable alternatives. People are concerned that changes to the transport system will unfairly penalise people in these communities who currently do not have a viable alternative to their cars to access basic services. People told us that they want the Commission to understand the key differences between the needs of people in rural and urban area, and be able to distinguish between the needs of both communities.

Some felt that the Progress Statement had not adequately addressed the separate issues faced in rural parts of north Wales, and that the Welsh and UK Government do not understand the rural transport issues they face. Concerns were raised that modal shift in rural areas was not a realistic aim and that their perception that the Commission might ask people to give

up their cars would incur increased costs individuals in rural communities and is not currently a feasible option.

Nonetheless, people put forward measures they felt would particularly help in rural areas for non-car modes. These include the promotion of demand responsive transport (such as Transport for Wales' Fflecsi services), implementation of village-to-town and town-to-town active travel routes, car sharing/pooling, and effective real time information for rural bus services.

Many felt that the focus in rural areas should be on the decarbonisation of car travel; expanding the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and promoting the uptake of low zero-emissions vehicles rather than mode-shift to public transport.

Use of Cars

Alongside the recent Roads Review announcement, people felt that Welsh Government is trying to 'demonise' drivers and are concerned that the North Wales Transport Commission will reinforce that message.

Delivery Scepticism

Many of those spoken to feel as if they 'have been here before'. People feel that the issues in north Wales are well documented and well understood historically. They have built cases for the interventions that they feel can resolve these issues, but they have been disappointed by the lack of Government funding to implement them, such as a lack of investment in rail electrification in north Wales by UK Government, and the recommendation not to proceed with major road schemes such as the Flintshire Corridor, Third Menai Crossing, and

A55 Penmaenmawr schemes by Welsh Government's independent Roads Review.

Integration of Public Transport Modes

Bus and rail services are not only perceived as poor individually, but are also poorly integrated with one another.

Borderlands Rail Line

People recognised the importance of the Borderlands Line (Wrexham – Bidston) in connecting north Wales to Liverpool, Wrexham and the potential for better serving the Deeside Industrial Park. Reliability and frequency were noted as key issues by people we spoke to who use and rely on the line. Some people also noted that the line's naming does not signify its importance or potential, and that a name that associates it with Liverpool or the Wirral could raise its profile.

Budgetary and Resource Constraints

Local Authorities are concerned over the delivery of new infrastructure, particularly with regard to active travel. Many feel that the capital funding might be available to deliver new infrastructure but revenue and other maintenance funding to maintain and monitor this infrastructure simply poses an unaffordable additional maintenance liability.

Road Congestion

People felt that congestion is perceived to be an issue in specific locations, such as the A55, A494, and A483, particularly at weekends, bank holidays and school holidays, driven in part by demand associated with the visitor economy.

Visitor Economy

Tourism is an important component of travel patterns in the region and contributes to congestion on the road network, particularly on the weekends and during the summer period along the A55 corridor, associated with cross-border demand from England.

Across the region inconsiderate parking, congestion on narrow unsuited roads, and noise and air quality impacts have a negative impact on the environment and local communities. People did not believe there are currently suitable alternatives to the car in these areas.

Another key element raised was that the type of trips being made to and within north Wales for the visitor economy are largely incompatible with sustainable modes. Of particular note, stakeholders noted that it is difficult for people to use public transport when they are travelling as a family or when bringing equipment for activities such as camping.

Gwynedd to Ynys Môn

There was concern from the people we spoke to following the announcement that a third crossing will not be pursued in its current form, that the future prospects of Ynys Môn will be negatively impacted.

Engagement sessions took place following the Roads Review announcement in February 2023, which recommended a third crossing of the Menai Strait not be progressed in its current form. The Commission was subsequently asked by the Deputy Minister to consider alternatives in line with its terms of reference. During these engagement sessions, resilience of the existing crossings (Britannia Bridge and Menai Suspension Bridge), congestion, the absence of active travel facilities, and the impact on the economic development of Ynys Môn - relating to the Port of Holyhead, its freeport proposals, and tourism - were raised as concerns.

People from Ynys Môn in particular were concerned that the recent closure of the Menai Suspension Bridge had demonstrated the potential negative impacts on the economy owing to a lack of resilience of these crossings. People wish to see the commission put forward solutions to address these issues.

Annex 04

Case Studies

West Midlands

The West Midlands bus network covers a wide polycentric area incorporating several significant towns as well as the cities of Birmingham and Coventry.

Local bus networks are planned around a large number of town centre and local centre interchange locations. Bus stops are co-located with large supermarkets and small local shopping precincts close to significant suburban housing sites.

In this way, the bus network across the West Midlands area consists of several hub and spoke networks with local routes timed to serve nominated interchanges allowing travel across the local area and connection to core network services radiating from Birmingham, the local rail network, and radial routes such as the inner and outer circle routes, the latter being the longest bus route in Europe.

“Late Bus” Technology

Swansea Council has recently implemented a software change to its urban traffic management controller (UTMC) to provide a soft benefit to public transport journey times across its managed network.

The project has served to integrate locational data from individual public transport service buses, with the published timetables and the traffic signals within the UTMC. The late bus technology monitors the buses as they approach traffic signals, comparing their position to the public transport timetable, and if the vehicle is found to be running behind schedule it is afforded priority at the junction. The particular merit of this approach is that it allows the highway authority to apply blanket bus priority across a UTMC within a software environment, which is more easily and efficiently deployed than many other physical bus priority alternatives. The use of late bus technology also deploys bus priority in a more measured approach which benefits only the vehicles which require it.

Swansea Council has worked with its partners over a number of years to grapple with the complexities of this approach and it is believed that this technology could now be transplanted to other managed telematics networks across Wales. The late bus project is in the early stages of deployment and its ultimate performance is still being appraised, although early indications are very positive.



Loch Ness Hub, Scotland

The Loch Ness Hub is a community-run tourism hub in Drumnadrochit, on the shore of Loch Ness in Scotland. The hub integrates a visitor information centre with baggage shuttle service for walkers, e-bike hire, a pick-up/drop-off location for coach tours, and tickets for tours and local attractions. Profits from the operation of the hub are reinvested in the local community and utilised to fund further transport initiatives.

Transport for London – Bus Stop Design Guide

The Transport for London (TfL) Accessible Bus Stop Design Guidance sets out requirements and guidance for the design of accessible bus stop environments.

According to this guidance a bus stop needs to meet the following three criteria to be compliant as an accessible stop: a clearway in place, the kerb >100m (ideal height of 125-140mm, however 100mm is compliant) and an access free of impediments.

A key TfL aim at the time of the production of the TfL Accessible Bus Stop Design Guidance was to make 95% of all bus stops in London accessible by March 2017. As of 2021, according to the Mayor of London, 94.1% of bus stops within London were accessible. Given the constant change since this, TfL believe that this figure has since risen to over 95%.

The development of a design guide is now seen as best practice and allows a common standard to be set for all bus stops – ensuring a recognisable network in which travellers have confidence in using.



Perth, Australia

Perth train timetables represent one of the purest examples of clockface timetabling. Sunday and evening services run every 30 minutes, whereas weekdays are every 15 minutes. Passengers simply have to remember a certain number of minutes past the hour and (peak times excepted) will then know all times for their station without carrying a timetable.

For peak periods, the approach is to add further services, which may be turned short to run only across the peak load sections, in between the 15-minute headway. This creates a non-clockface timetable of every 7.5-minutes but moves the service to a turn-up-and-go operation where peak customers do not aim for a designated train, they simply wait for the next one, with an average wait time of just over 3.5-minutes.

This approach to rail planning allows feeder and complementary bus services to be planned in an efficient way to allow easy interchange.

Swansea

Swansea Railway Station is over 150 years old and has had little material investment since the 1970's. As a result, pre-2012, the station was unappealing to users, and lacked key facilities. Great potential was realised for the station to be established as a gateway and re-establish a sense of place and welcome to the city.

A package of improvements which aimed to address a number of objectives surrounding improving the physical appearance and accessibility of the station were assembled. The project led to a number of cosmetic improvements to the station, the construction of a customer information pod and ticket office, digital information boards and bi-lingual signage. New safety elements included an increase in CCTV cameras and more open spaces. Tactile wayfinding and additional cycling space were added to improve accessibility.

The project was completed in 2012. Post-works, customer satisfaction scores (measured by the Transport Focus NRPS survey) increased from 50% to 93%. Feedback from disabled users has been noted as particularly positive. Since the upgrades, two significant residential developments have been planned within the vicinity of the station area. The investment has resulted in the station existing as a landmark, and a fixed point around which other initiatives can be developed.

Fast Cycling Routes In The Netherlands

Fast cycling routes (Snelle Fietsroutes) in The Netherlands are defined as high standard bicycle routes reserved for cyclists for fast and direct commuting over longer distances. They should allow cycling at a mean speed of 20 km/hr, and be wider than four metres, separated from motor traffic and pedestrians, and avoid steep gradients and frequent stops (such as Give Ways at crossings).

The benefits of the routes

The high quality, safety and speed they provide means they contribute to encouraging more people to cycle. They would contribute to increasing the use of e-bikes and cargo-bikes. Cycling superhighways 7 and 3 in London have demonstrated increases in use of between 46 and 83% respectively in one year. In North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany, a 100 kilometres of fast cycle route contributed to removing 50,000 cars from the road network every day, with a benefit to cost ratio of 4.8:1.

Delivery in The Netherlands

Provincial government takes a lead role in planning and constructing fast cycle routes. Provinces provide grants to fund their design and construction. Collaborative agreements with municipalities are put in place which cover matters such as the quality of the route including width, surfacing and lighting. In summary, the agreements set scheme aims, enforceable engineering standards and financial control.

Sources

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Sustrans E-Move Project

Funded by Welsh Government, the Sustrans e-move project is a pilot scheme which offers people living in Aberystwyth, Rhyl, Barry, Swansea, Newtown and surrounding areas the opportunity to loan an e-bike for four weeks, for free. At each location there are 20 e-bikes available to be used, and at some locations there are also e-cargo bikes available for businesses and organisations to loan for up to three months.

The aim of the scheme is to make e-bikes more accessible to people, and to promote the positive impacts that the bikes could have on well-being and the environment.

Feedback from users of the loan scheme broadly concludes that they were able to travel further, more quickly, were more confident in their ability and that the e-bikes reduced their physical exertion barrier. 75% of users felt that their wellbeing had improved after borrowing an e-bike. In a number of instances, users have proceeded to purchase their own e-bikes and/or convert their existing bikes to electric following the loan end. E-cargo bikes proved useful for existing business owners in transporting goods, and in the case of one user, even led to them starting up their own business after realising the potential of the e-cargo bike.

Following this success, Welsh Government have decided to extend funding, meaning that the project will now run until 2024.



Co-Wheels

Co Wheels is a car club company that started as a small pilot operation in 2008 and has since grown to operate in over 60 towns and cities across the UK. The aim is to reduce car ownership and make lower emission, less harmful transport modes available to all, at a price which helps members save money. Co Wheels is a community car hire scheme, whereby members can use the quick and easy pay-as-you-go facility to book any available car online.

Co Wheels is an accredited car club operator, alongside others such as Co Cars, Enterprise, Hiyacar, Ubeeqo and Zipcar. Co Wheels also manages two 40kWh Nissan LEAF cars which are part of the Arleosi Gwynedd Wledig pilot project. The project is trialling community electric cars in Gwynedd and is supported by Co Wheels' booking technology.



South Denbighshire Community Partnership

The South Denbighshire Community Partnership is an example of a Community Transport organisation in the region. Its primary aim is to benefit the inhabitants of South Denbighshire, and one way in which they do this is by providing community transport options. This is key for providing transport to users who need to travel but may not be able to do so by bus, or who lack access to a car.

The Dial-a-Ride scheme provides a vehicle service which can be booked via telephone to take users anywhere in the local area of either the Dee Valley or Edeyrnion. Membership is £15 a year and a small fee is taken on top of this for each journey. There is also a community bus which is available for groups and organisations who are members of the partnership to book.

As of the end of 2022, Denbighshire County Council partnered with the South Denbighshire Community Partnership to relaunch the community car scheme described above. The new business plan aims to employ volunteers over a wider area, and thus expand the scheme. The project is recognised rightly as being key for developing transport in the rural areas of Denbighshire.



Eryri National Park

In 2020, Partneriaeth Yr Wyddfa, which is a partnership of organisations set up to create and implement a management plan for the mountain, commissioned a substantial parking and transport review for Yr Wyddfa and the Ogwen areas following a comprehensive consultation process.

The review concluded that the current over-reliance on cars to access key honeypot sites and the chronic parking problems at busier times of the year is failing the National Park's core purposes, including a principle of 'Sustainable Tourism'. It also stated that local communities and the local economy suffer negative impacts associated with visitor levels, whilst not receiving as many benefits as they could.

Since the review, the Partnership has received support from TfW to implement the recommendations as part of a Delivery Group consisting of Cyngor Gwynedd, Conwy County Borough Council, and Eryri National Park Authority.

The recommendations of the review included:

- Initial consultation with proposed gateway communities.
- Pre-booking system for Pen y Pass.
- Scoping active travel routes.
- Sensors installed at Eryri National Park car parks around Yr Wyddfa and in Ogwen.
- The T10 pilot offering a valuable service in Dyffryn Ogwen and beyond.
- Re-brand of Sherpa'r Wyddfa and improvements to network and timetables.
- Signage strategy for the entire Eryri National Park.

From this, the Partnership future aspirations and priorities include:

- Continued support for the early successes including improvements to the Sherpa network, the T10 pilot and the installation of the signs as part of the signage strategy.
- The area is marketed strongly on sustainable tourism credentials.
- A shuttle bus service is operated throughout the area.
- Arrival by public transport or parking at gateway sites, where frequent, low-cost or free buses pick up.
- Parking is expanded in the gateway villages and at strategic park and ride locations on approaches to the area.
- New funding model, including a visitor contribution.

Cornwall

Cornwall offers interesting parallels – like north Wales, it is a largely rural area with a large visitor economy and also areas of poverty and deprivation.

Cornwall Council has for some years been developing “One Public Transport System for Cornwall” and this has resulted in real improvements to the public transport system in the county.

In particular, Cornwall has:

- Improved and upgraded services on its main line between Plymouth and Penzance, with re-signalling and extra track; similar to the ambitions for the North Wales Main Line.
- Upgraded and increased frequencies on branch lines, with passing loops enabling increased frequencies, for example on the Falmouth branch, and this is continuing with “mid-Cornwall metro” plans.
- High quality interchanges between buses and trains at main rail stations, with real-time information.
- An upgraded and replanned bus network, with “Transport for Cornwall” branded services on subsidised routes.
- Simplified and reduced fares– unlimited bus travel across the whole county on all operators at £5 a day or £20/week, and £2.50 a day or £10/week “town zones” in all Cornwall towns.
- Tap on/tap off ticketing with capped fares on all buses.
- Multi-modal ticketing, with a ‘Ride Cornwall’ ticket available at £18 per day and valid on both bus and rail services across the region.

This combination of measures shows that improved public transport is achievable in areas similar to north Wales and can produce much better and more attractive services with the right investment.

Go-Hi

Launched in 2021, Go-Hi allows users to book, manage and pay for all travel in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, using just one single app. This project is one of the first to be developed in a rural setting, with all travel mode information and ticketing on one platform. The user can compare mobility options easily and pay for their trip in one transaction, improving accessibility to integrated services. This service is particularly useful for viewing and booking first/last mile journeys from rail stations, which contributes towards promoting modal shift away from private modes.

The region-wide solution is significant for rural areas in Scotland. Moray, a rural Local Authority in Scotland with a low population density, will benefit from the door-to-door feature that the app allows, rather than a corner-to-corner system that is often deployed in urban environments. This service is ideal for people with reduced mobility, and for rural locations in general where the population is widely distributed.

As of September 2022, the app had around 1500 active users, with the aim to grow this to 5000 within the next year.

Healthy Travel Wales

Healthy Travel Wales is an organisation which ultimately exists to promote healthy and sustainable travel in Wales. The organisation primarily works with Public Service Boards and other public, private and third sector organisations to achieve this. The organisation largely focuses on rolling out Healthy Travel Charters.

Healthy Travel Charters are available for organisations and businesses to sign up to, to pledge their commitment to using healthier and more sustainable transport modes.

The charters are structured to contain different commitments that organisations can undertake over a period of two or three years – commitments surrounding enabling and supporting staff to walk, cycle and use public transport more often. Healthy Travel Wales have launched six charters and are currently developing a number of others across Wales, including for north Wales. At present, over 60 organisations in Wales have signed up to one or more of these Healthy Travel Charters. Signatory organisations are supported throughout the movement of change, with information and help from local networks, toolkits and other resources.

