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## **TRANSPORT DELIVERY SUB-GROUP**

### **14 May, 2021**

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Present:

Voting Members - Councillors - David Bithell (Wrexham County Borough Council), Robert G. Parry (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Greg Robbins (Conwy County Borough Council), Gareth Wyn Griffith (Gwynedd Council), Brian Jones (Denbighshire County Council) and Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire County Council).

Officers Present – Darren Williams (Wrexham County Borough Council), Huw Percy (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Stephen Jones (Flintshire County Council), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Iwan G D Evans (Monitoring Officer – Lead Authority), Peter Daniels (Denbighshire County Council) and Natalie Jones (Democracy Services Officer – Lead Authority).

Others invited: - Iwan Prys Jones (North Wales Economic Ambition Board), Lee Robinson (Transport for Wales)

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Geraint Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council), Emlyn Jones (Denbighshire County Council), Dafydd Edwards (Finance Officer - Lead Authority), Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council).

#### **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Councillor David Bithell declared a personal interest in Item 3 as he worked for Network Rail.

#### **3. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

#### **4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 7 December 2020, were accepted as a true record subject to:

- Amend the English version of the minutes to note that Peter Daniels works for Denbighshire Council and not Flintshire Council.

#### **5. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD AND TRANSPORTATION GROUP**

##### **COMMITTEE**

A report was submitted by the Chair, updating the Sub-group on the work streams and their progress over the past two months.

The main points were discussed, including the following;

- That the Sub-group presents a report to the Economic Ambition Board twice a year, to provide an update on the work.
- An overview was provided on the situation with the Corporate Sub-groups, noting that they would discuss more restricted matters than those discussed at this Sub-committee.
- It was noted that they were expecting further guidance following the recent parliamentary elections

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

No further observations were received.

## **6. UPDATE - REGIONAL BUSES AND NORTH WALES METRO**

**Presentation by Lee Robinson, TfW.**

### **North Wales Metro**

A presentation was shared with the Sub-group, explaining the national picture and then focusing on North Wales and the projects in progress. The context of the North Wales Metro programme was explained and the Sub-group was guided through the proposed timetable and the zones in question.

The main objectives of the North Wales Metro were discussed, including:

- A few of the current timetables needed to be amended as they were restricted
- A number of sections had dated signage
- On the whole, the line speed was low
- That the current condition of the assets relating to the Metro needed to be evaluated
- That some stations continued to be inaccessible
- Railway crossings disrupted the ability to maintain the trains running quicker and more frequent.

The next steps were highlighted as follows:

- Ongoing work with Network Rail in order to evaluate railway crossings and address the needs in the hope of reaching a permanent solution to the situation.
- Improvements to come, e.g. in Shotton and Deeside in order to increase inclusion.
- Understanding the use made of cars as a mode of transport when travelling between North Wales and cities such as Manchester. Look into the connection with HS2.
- Look into places that could adapt the provision without needing a substantial change to the infrastructure, e.g. around Chester and Llandudno.
- Look into extending the service in places such as Caernarfon and the Amlwch Line.

### **Regional Buses**

A discussion was held on matters relating to regional buses, drawing attention to the main principles as follows:

- Local authorities had agreed that the main objective was to increase use on the bus network.

- Attention was drawn to a number of areas in North Wales where users did not have an alternative option and that is why high proportions of users could be seen.
- The finding was to introduce the networks in a way that allows for better connectivity as the network was so complex.
- Ticket contracts had been arranged to facilitate ticket purchases, to access user data and to improve efficiency.
- Reference was made to projects across North Wales in areas such as Bangor, Prestatyn and Holyhead.
- It was noted that work was being done with Local Authorities to identify potential Park and Ride sites, such as Bangor, Rhyl and Llandudno Junction, which would also have a positive impact on the National Park and reduce parking problems.
- It was explained that a pilot scheme was in progress to restrict ticket prices
- Traws Cymru bus company was looking at ways to allow integration with trains in order to facilitate travel.

The following comments were raised during the discussion:

- The Chair requested more information regarding the likely timescale for the next steps.
- One member expressed that work was needed on the North Wales Metro branding in order to promote it.
- It was agreed that the timetabling service was very important when there was a high number of users, in order to retain confidence in the service
- It was asked whether there were any plans to adapt the vision as the new transport minister undertook his post.  
A member asked about finance and whether long-term finance had been confirmed in order to fund the projects that were underway.
- It was noted that connections from the Bangor railway would improve the travel network for a number of residents, including facilitating the journey to the workplace or School/College.
- This was reiterated to note for certain that it was not just a matter of satisfying the needs of visitors; the importance of satisfying local needs was emphasised.
- An interest was expressed in collaborating with the National Park to monitor the transportation situation in Snowdonia. The importance that members of the Sub-board had input to discussions was emphasised.
- Lee Robinson was thanked for the report, which highlighted how much work was happening within the transport fields.

In response to the above observations, the following was noted:-

- That consistency with the marketing element could be ensured to highlight the concept of a North Wales Metro.
- It was expressed that there was no intention to change the direction of the proposed work or the current theory after Ken Skates stood down as the minister for the Economy, Transport and North Wales
- With regards to finance, it was noted that there was no definitive assurance to fund the projects in question; however, a five year plan in principle suggested that finance would be available.
- Reference was made to the Labour Party's manifesto on Transport, particularly regarding improving transport in the North.

- Active travel was very important and there was a need to look at ways to allow for access to stations and trains by bicycle or on foot.

It was suggested that another meeting was needed in the Summer before the next proposed meeting in the Autumn, in order to discuss the Sub-group's priorities.

## **7. ITEM FOR INFORMATION - TRANSPORT DECARBONISATION AND AN UPDATE ON THE HYDROGEN HUB**

This item was presented for information only.

The report was welcomed, noting the opportunities and jobs that would emanate due to the development of Hydrogen filling stations.

It was reiterated that hydrogen vehicles for the purposes of refuse collection, etc. would be available by the end of the year.

The following observations were made in relation to the report:

- It was noted that members of the Sub-group were not aware of the steps in the pipeline with Hydrogen. It was reiterated that there was an opportunity to establish whether there was a regional need for green hydrogen, so that it could be reported to Welsh Government.

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The former member of the Sub-group, Carolyn Thomas MS, asked whether it would be possible for her to attend the meetings as an observer in the future.

It was agreed that there was no objection, and it was reiterated that it would be useful for a Member of the Senedd to attend.

The meeting commenced at 11.00am and concluded at 12.25pm.