

Environment, Planning and Transport Committee Consultation Report:

Policy Review of Public Transport Response of the Countryside Council for Wales

- 1.1 CCW shares the report's Vision of a high quality public transport system that contributes to reducing pollution, provides access to the mobility impaired and car-less, and which is linked to walking and cycling strategies. CCW is actively working, through our Transport Advisory Service (TAS), to develop innovative public transport services, which can secure this Vision and provide enhanced opportunities for access to the Welsh countryside.
- 1.2 We welcome the fact that the suggested Regional Public Transport Strategies (para. 3.17) will address walking and cycling, as well as bus, rail and community transport developments. The NAW's draft Walking and Cycling Strategy also stresses this need for regional policies to reflect walking and cycling issues. Mainstreaming walking and cycling issues in Regional Public Transport Strategies, will address the concern, expressed in the draft Strategy, that the development of regional plans and funding bids could lead to the marginalizing of walking and cycling.
- 1.3 CCW agrees with Recommendation 3, that there is a need to improve interchange facilities. The Committee may find '*Tourism Friendly Transport Interchanges*' by the Sustainable Transport Tourism for Wales campaign of interest in this regard as it presents a checklist of the different facilities which should be provided at interchanges in Wales, depending on their size and place in the network. A copy of the report is enclosed.
- 1.4 The question of which organisational changes will offer most benefit is outside CCW's remit and we must therefore leave it to others to consider. As we said in response to the first consultation, CCW can see the advantages of through ticketing on all bus and rail services and the need to support marginal and experimental bus services, particularly in rural areas.
- 1.5 Recommendation 12 asks that results of public transport policies and programmes are collected to show 'what works in Wales'. We would offer the following examples:
 - The *Freedom of Wales Flexi Pass*, developed by the Sustainable Transport Tourism for Wales campaign offers a single ticket that gives access to trains, buses, visitor attractions and accommodation. This initiative was developed with funding from Objective 2 and 5b.
 - Our own work through the Transport Advisory Service is also seeking to try out innovative solutions in rural public transport. The TAS has led to the establishment of a number of bus services such as the *Beacons Bus* in the Brecon Beacons National Park, the *Clwydian Ranger* serving the Clwydian Hills AONB, and the *Puffin Shuttle* in Pembrokeshire.One of the conclusions of the TAS is that more funding is needed to support innovative

rural transport projects along the lines of the *Rural Bus Challenge Competition* in England, which has £20m pa for innovative bus projects. Existing funding streams could also be used more effectively and opportunities for funding innovative public transport projects under Objective 1,2 and Wales – Ireland INTERREG programme maximised. Please let us know if you would like further information or a presentation on the work of the TAS.

1.6 In line with Recommendation 14, ‘what does and doesn’t work elsewhere’:

A useful source of research on rural public and community transport is the European Commission’s VIRGIL project funded by DG TREN & DG Information Society as part of its Transport Programme. We have included the final report that examines rural transport problems and gives examples of ‘Best Practice’. One such example, in annex 3 of the report, is Devon County Council’s Transport Co-ordination Centre that integrates all the transport services within the council. This local model of integration, within an authority, may be of interest to you in looking at regional organisational structures. For more information on the VIRGIL research project see: <http://www.bealtaine.ie/virgil/>

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Countryside Council for Wales
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