

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-03-143
Ein cyf/Our ref: CS/05194/11

Naomi Stocks
Clerk Petitions Committee
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff
CF991NA

14 June 2011

Thank you for your letter of 1 June on behalf of the Petitions Committee about the Welsh Government's plans for funding local bus services and protecting rural services.

As far as local bus services are concerned, we have been able to protect the funding of around £32m that is being made available in 2011-12 for Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG) and Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). This is a good result in the face of tight public spending settlements and will help to keep cuts in local and rural subsidised services to a minimum. We are also close to completing our review on how LTSG and BSOG are used to support the provision of local bus services and I will announce my decisions on a way forward in due course.

The TrawsCymru Service is our flagship longer-distance bus network that provides important links between rural communities across Wales. We recently announced plans for a major new investment in the new TrawsCymru T4 service which will link Newtown - Llandrindod Wells - Builth Wells - Brecon - Merthyr Tydfil - Cardiff. This new service will benefit from the introduction of new easy access coach-style vehicles, enhanced frequencies, better connections to other public services at key hubs and improved ticketing offers. This new service will be fully operational by March 2012. In the meantime, an interim timetable is in place with services operating between Newtown - Llandrindod Wells - Builth Wells - Brecon - Merthyr Bus Station (with onward connections to Cardiff).

I am taking the opportunity to look again at the range of measures that are in the National Transport Plan for improving local bus and rural services following the Welsh Government's published spending plans. I will announce my priorities in due course as they will need to

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be affordable and delivered within the agreed budgets. I will want to secure the best outcomes from our resources and will also want to see greater collaboration between local authorities in order to encourage innovation and increased efficiency in the way that local transport services are contracted and delivered.



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