

Aelod Cabinet Amgylchedd
Cabinet Member for Environment
Y Cynghorydd / Councillor
William Gareth Roberts
Ward – Aberdaron



Gofynnwch am/Ask for: Aled Davies

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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: **AD/gmo**

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

William Powell AS /AM
Cadeirydd / Chair
Y Pwyllgor Deisebau / Petitions Committee
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

29th July, 2013

Dear Mr. Powell

Thank you for your letter to our Chief Executive Officer dated 26th June 2013 regarding a petition signed by 174 signatures asking for Welsh Government to:

- *Review the funding for rural bus services to ensure adequate levels of service for the whole of Gwynedd but particularly south Meirionnydd*
- *Consider funding to be ensured for additional services to improve access to health services, education, and employment, and thus support the economy and tourism in the area.*

I am pleased to inform you that we are actively looking at options to improve the levels of service in the Meirionnydd area within the budgets available to us. We are currently out to tender for services between Tywyn and Dolgellau, and have also recently secured additional connections from Porthmadog to Ysbyty Alltwen to allow residents of south Meirionnydd to attend appointments and visit friends and relatives.

In what I can only describe as challenging financial times in the provision of all local authority services, whatever the nature of the service provided by the authority, it is difficult to envisage that all petitioners will be satisfied. It is likely that they will all have different travel needs, but we do very much hope to be able to offer an adequate level of service which allows reasonable travel choices.

I have included recent correspondence regarding the present situation for the service between Tywyn and Dolgellau and correspondence relating to Ysbyty Alltwen to give you a fuller picture of the situation.

I trust that meets your immediate needs, if however you require further information or an update at some time in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Cynghorydd/ Councillor W Gareth Roberts
Aelod Cabinet Amgylchedd
Cabinet Member for Environment

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Public transport in Meirionnydd

Delivering sustainable public services in a challenging period for public finances means that councils must think of creative ways of providing services that meet the needs of local residents.

As part of this effort, Council Cabinet Member for the Environment, Councillor Gareth Roberts has instructed officers from Gwynedd's Integrated Transport Unit to look in detail at options to meet some of the public transport needs in the Meirionnydd area of the county.

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Gwynedd Council Cabinet Member for the Environment said:

"As a Council, we make every effort to support sustainable travel across the county whilst making the best possible use of the decreasing resources available to us.

"We realise that public transport is an important link in rural areas like Meirionnydd and make every effort to ensure that services are in place to enable convenient travelling choices to educational facilities and other public services.

"But, the hugely challenging financial climate means that we can't continue to plough public money into bus services that aren't being used - as a Council we are trying to deliver the best possible service despite the fact that the funding available to us is reduced.

"That is why we want to look at the current use of the bus services available in the area and consider whether we can introduce new, smarter and practical alternatives along routes which require significant subsidy from the public purse.

"The work currently ongoing which is looking at usage within Meirionnydd will help to inform future decisions on the public transport network in the area."

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Meeting the transport needs of residents

Ensuring suitable and sustainable public transport is vitally important so that Gwynedd residents can get from A to B.

As part of this commitment, Gwynedd Council transport officers are currently looking in detail at the current transport links to Ysbyty Alltwen in Tremadog.

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Gwynedd Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment said:

"Delivering effective and regular public transport for the residents of Gwynedd is hugely important to the Council. We recognise that in a rural area like Gwynedd, many people depend on public transport to get to work, make the weekly shop or visit a relative in hospital.

"With changes currently being implemented in the health provision in this area of the county, I am especially keen to ensure that there are suitable transport links in place so that residents can get to their appointment on time or visit a relative or friend as easily as possible.

"That is why I have asked the Council's Integrated Transport Unit to carry out research work to look at the local public transport links with Ysbyty Alltwen."

As part of this work, officers are looking in detail at the connecting bus and train services in the area to consider how they can be provided at regular and dependable times in order that passengers can reach the hospital for visiting times and appointments.

Councillor Roberts added: "When this initial research is completed, we will then be well placed to consider the options for the future."

Pennaeth Adran Rheoleiddio
(Cynllunio, Trafnidiaeth a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd)
Head of Regulatory Department
(Planning, Transportation & Public Protection)
Aled Davies

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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: **AD/gmo**
Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

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Mrs D M Harper
Chair – Public Affairs Sub-Committee
The WI
Argraig
Talsarnau
Gwynedd

4th June, 2013

Dear Madam

Parking & Public Transport

A copy of a recent letter written by yourself dated 20th May 2013, was recently brought to my attention. The letter raised two issues which lie within the responsibilities of the Regulatory Department at Gwynedd Council and I have been asked to provide an update for you on these issues.

Firstly, with regard to parking, your comments are noted. However, I should also point out the only free parking provided in Gwynedd's "Pay and Display" car parks has been the two weeks free Christmas parking. There is considerable evidence that the arrangement is extremely popular amongst business owners and shoppers.

The arrangement is provided at an annual cost of around £40,000 to the authority. Whilst acknowledging that many people would welcome an extended period of free parking, I'm sure that you would agree that incurring an additional burden in the current financial climate would be challenging for the authority and may have an effect on the ability to maintain other services.

I can however, confirm that a review of parking provision is currently underway and this will include an assessment of the provision of free Christmas parking. A decision on the recommendations of the parking review is likely to be made at the end of the year.

You have also raised the issue of public transport to enable access to Ysbyty Alltwen. I can confirm that Councillor W Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member for the Environment, who has responsibility for Transport, has already asked the Council's Integrated Transport Unit to specifically look at how public transport services connect with Alltwen. The work will specifically look as to whether services meet the needs of local communities in the context of changes currently being made in the provision of local health services. It is hoped that the Unit will be able to report on the first phase of this work within the next few months, which will then allow the Council to consider the options for the future. This may mean commissioning additional work on actions based on the findings of the initial work.

I hope this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

Aled Davies
Head of Regulatory Department

c.c. Economy & Community Department

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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: **AD/gmo**

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Mrs Tingey
4 Pant yr Onnen
Llanfair
Harlech
Gwynedd
LL46 2SP

29th May, 2013

Dear Mrs Tingey

Petition – Bus Service Between Porthmadog Railway Station and Alltwen Hospital

Thank you for the recent correspondence and petition relating to public transport services and connections to Ysbyty Alltwen in Tremadog. I apologise for the delay in responding.

An encouraging message for me from your covering note is that it is clearly possible to make the journey from Llandanwg to Alltwen by public transport. However, I do note your view that the current timetable does not suit everyone and that the waiting times for onward journeys at Porthmadog are excessive.

The Council makes every effort to ensure that the public transport services in the County are fully integrated. The Council is also always open to suggestions relating to improving routes and connections.

I am pleased therefore to confirm that, I had already asked the Council's Integrated Transport Unit to specifically look at how public transport services connect with Alltwen and whether they meet the needs of local communities in the context of changes currently being made in the provision of local health services. The issues you have raised relating to connecting services from Porthmadog bus and rail stations can now feed into this work. I hope that they will be able to report on the first phase of this work within the next two months which will then allow me to consider the options for the future. This may mean commissioning additional work or actions based on the findings of the initial work.

I hope this clarifies the Council's current position on your concerns.

Yours sincerely



Councillor W Gareth Roberts
Cabinet Member for Environment

C.C. Cllr E Caerwyn Roberts; Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department

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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: **AD/gmo**

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Mrs Barbara Snowball
1 Bryn Coch
ARTHOG
Gwynedd
LL39 1BX

29th May, 2013

Dear Mrs Snowball

Re: Public Transport in Meirionnydd

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the above and I apologise for the delay in providing a response. The contents have been noted.

Many of the issues e.g. relating to the purpose of the public transport within the context of all transport opportunities, have been raised and responded to in previous correspondence either from myself or from the Officers of the Integrated Transport Unit and I will not go over these issues again.

I also note the examples that you have provided relating to the difficulties that some people are experiencing. Whilst I can not argue that such examples do exist and that in an ideal world where resources are not a problem they could be addressed, it is difficult to gauge that actual size of the issue in relation to each example you provide. As you are fully aware, use of early morning and evening services on this route in the past was very low and it is difficult to justify the introduction of 'traditional' bus services which would be extremely costly for the public purse in terms of level of use.

In your correspondence, you specifically ask if I could consider allocating some of the RTSG grant recently given by the Welsh Government for the purpose of improving service. I am sure that you are aware that the grants have been repackaged by the Government but that it is not new money to support services. In reality, the effect of the changes is that the overall sum of money being invested by the Government to support the provision of local transport services has reduced from £33 million a year to £25 million a year over the last two years. This will have a direct effect on the ability of Gwynedd Council and all other local authorities to sustain the current level of services, let alone provide additional services such as the provision of later buses between Tywyn and Dolgellau.

As you are aware, Gwynedd Council are currently undertaking a re-tendering exercise for all public transport services. When that is completed in 2014, the Council will be in a better position to assess whether the services currently provided are meeting community needs or whether some should be stopped or amended because of lack of use. It will also enable the Council to assess whether there is justification for additional services to be provided in certain areas.

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I can confirm that the Integrated Transport Unit is continually reviewing the levels of service provided, as well as investigating innovative ways of addressing weaknesses in the public transport network. From previous correspondence, I am sure that you can appreciate that clearly the subsidy per passenger for the additional journeys between Tywyn and Dolgellau at around £58 subsidy for every £1.00 taken in fares was prohibitively high.

I can also confirm that I had already instructed the Unit to look whether it would be possible to bring the costs on this route down to a reasonable level, and to seek funding opportunities from the Transport Consortia (TAITH) to fund a pilot scheme in the area for a specified period.

However, I should stress at this early stage that practical and affordable model for a pilot service can be identified it is unlikely that this would take the form of a "traditional" bus service. I believe that if a practical option can be identified, it would provide a further opportunity to monitor usage which could inform future decisions on the public transport network in the Meirionnydd area.

I will keep you informed of developments. Hoping that this clarifies the Council's current position.

Yours sincerely



Councillor W Gareth Roberts
Cabinet Member for Environment

C.C. Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department