

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Y Pwyllgor Deisebau
Petitions Committee

Mrs Edwina Hart MBE CStJ AM
Minister For Economy, Science and
Transport
Welsh Government
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff
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Our ref: P-04-475/513/515

September 2014

Dear *Edwina*

Petitions on Funding for Bus and Community Transport Services

As you will be aware, the Petitions Committee has received a number of petitions about Bus Services in different parts of Wales. The Committee, therefore, agreed to carry out a focused inquiry looking at funding for bus and community transport services. The Committee has received evidence from a number of petitioners and stakeholders and would now be grateful for your input as the responsible Minister.

I understand that you have indicated that you are not available to give oral evidence to the Committee so I would be grateful if you could provide a written response to the following questions, which are based on the terms of reference for our inquiry. These are:

- Whether current levels of public financial support for bus and community transport services are sufficient to secure an effective network.
- The effect of recent changes, and proposed future changes, in public funding levels and mechanisms on bus and community transport services.
- The social and economic impact of recent and proposed future changes in public funding levels and mechanisms for the bus and community transport sectors.
- The steps the Welsh Government should take to support bus and community transport services, given the overall reductions in Welsh Government budget since 2009-10.

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Recent trends in bus and community transport in Wales

In relation to recent trends in bus and community transport in Wales we would be grateful if you could provide:

- Your assessment of the reasons why there has been a decline in bus passenger journeys in Wales since 2011-12, as indicated by both the relevant Programme for Government indicator and Department for Transport quarterly bus statistics;
- Your assessment of wider trends in the bus and community transport sectors, including any changes in the number and quality of services, fare levels and passenger satisfaction levels;
- Details of any work undertaken or planned by the Welsh Government to understand these trends in the bus and community transport sector.

Potential impact of changes in levels of funding available

In relation to the potential impact of changes in levels of funding available from **both** Welsh Government **and** Local Authorities own budget allocations we would be grateful if you could provide:

- Your response to the suggestion from Bus Users Cymru that as a result of changes in concessionary fares funding “across Wales it is estimated that 10% of all buses on the road could be taken out of service and many rural lifelines could be lost altogether”;
- Details of any work being undertaken by the Welsh Government to assess the impact of changes in public funding levels since 2010-11 from **both** Welsh Government bus funding streams **and** Local Authority Revenue Support Grant on service levels, fares and quality;
- Your response to the suggestion that the bus industry is the “Cinderella of public transport” given evidence we have received suggesting that while Wales and Borders Rail Franchise subsidy equates to £9 per passenger journey, total public funding for the bus industry equates to “rather less than one pound per journey”;
- Your assessment of how changes in Welsh Government funding levels have impacted on the achievement on **each** of the Welsh Government Programme for Government objectives which relate to bus and community transport policy.

Development of Welsh Government bus and community transport policy

In relation to the development of Welsh Government bus and community transport policy we would be grateful if you could provide:

- Details of the Welsh Government’s strategy for the bus and community transport sectors including:
 - The steps being taken to support and develop the bus sector including an update on the work of the Bus Advisory Group, particularly the

approach being taken by the group, its terms of reference, likely outputs, the timeframe for delivery of recommendations and how delivery will be monitored **and** evaluated;

- Details of how the Welsh Government engages with the Community Transport sector, its vision for the future development of this sector and the steps being taken to implement this;
- The steps the Welsh Government is taking to enhance public transport integration, including the bus and community transport sectors.

I would be grateful for an early response to allow the Committee to move forward with its work in this area.

Yours sincerely



William Powell AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair

(Please respond to the Committee Clerk at: Stephen.George@wales.gov.uk)