

PET(4)-09-12 : Tuesday 29 May 2012

P-04-380 Bring back our bus! Petition against the removal of scheduled bus services from east Lampeter, Cwmann & Pencarreg

Cyng / Cllr Trevor Roberts, Cadeirydd / *Chairman*

Swyddfa TraCC Office, Canolfan Rheidol, Rhodfa Padarn, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3UE

Mr William Powell AM
Committee Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Eich cyf / *Your ref:* P-04-380
Ein cyf / *Our ref:* BUS008/05/2012

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Dyddiad / *Date:* 8th May 2012

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Dear Mr Powell

RE: 'Bring Back Our Bus!' Petition.

Thank you for your letter dated 19th April 2012 with regard to the 'Bring Back Our Bus!' Petition. I have taken some time to look into the matter and can offer the following response.

In general terms, decisions affecting particular routes and services remain the responsibility of individual local authorities (rather than being a function delegated to the regional transport consortia) for non-commercially-operated services supported through public subsidy. Local bus operating companies may choose to run any bus service or network of services on a commercial basis and whilst such occurrences might generally be welcomed, local authorities do not have any control over such a decision and its implications for the wider network. This situation is of course similar across the whole of Wales. In Mid Wales, almost 95% of local bus services are operated under public subsidy rather than on a commercial basis and this has significant implications for government at a time of restrained public finances. The particular challenge is to continue to support (or improve) access to employment, education and skills training, healthcare and other essential services in rural areas. Alongside the local authorities, the Welsh Government retains an interest in supporting existing TrawsCymru-branded services and further developing the network.

In Feb 2012, Arriva Buses Wales introduced a new number 40 commercial service between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen. This service replaced the X40 TrawsCambria service that was subsidised by Carmarthenshire County Council and Ceredigion County Council, with funding from the Welsh Government. The new Arriva service operates a different route in the Lampeter area and now misses out the villages of Cwmann, Pencarreg and Cribyn.

The Welsh Government in partnership with Carmarthenshire County Council and Ceredigion County Council looked at a range of options for protecting services to these villages. However, the provisions in the Transport Act 1985 and the Transport Wales Act 2006 prohibit the Welsh Government or local authorities from taking any action that would inhibit open market competition in the provision of commercial local bus services. This meant that the



previous X40 service could no longer be subsidised as it would compete with the new commercially-operated 40 bus service.

The Welsh Government and the local authorities were concerned about the impact these service changes would have on people living in Cwmann, Pencarreg and Cribyn. To address this, the very popular rural Bwcabus demand responsive service was extended so that people

in these villages could maintain access to Lampeter and could also connect with the new number 40 service. So far, the feedback has been positive in terms of the on the take-up of the Bwcabus service from people living in these villages.

I understand that the local authorities and Welsh Government continue to monitor the situation and are working closely together with bus companies to create a new Statutory Quality Bus Partnership scheme for the corridor to improve quality standards further.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wilson
TraCC Co-ordinator
On behalf of the Chair

CC: David Hall, TrawsCymru Manager, Welsh Government
John Forsey, Interim Passenger Transport Unit Manager, CWIC




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