

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

**RESPONSE TO TRAFNIDIAETH CANOLBARTH CYMRU'S (TraCC)
REGIONAL BUS AND COMMUNITY NETWORK STRATEGY
CONSULTATION**

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for giving Natural Resources Wales (NRW) the opportunity to comment on the draft TraCC Regional Bus and Community Network Strategy. From 1 April 2013, Natural Resources Wales brought together the work of the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales, as well as some functions of Welsh Government. Our purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced and used, now and in the future.

NRW welcomes this Strategy, which enables further integration in public transport service planning and delivery. NRW is supportive of those initiatives that prioritise, provide, promote, integrate and improve sustainable forms of travel. As such, we value the intention of the Strategy to identify priority outcomes, ensuring that maximum benefit is achieved from investment.

While broadly welcoming the Strategy, we do have some comments which we hope you will find useful.

If you require any clarification about any of the points made, please do not hesitate to contact Helen Fletcher at helen.fletcher@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk in the first instance.

Yours sincerely



Tim Jones
Executive Director for Operations, Mid & North Wales

DETAILED COMMENTS ON TraCC REGIONAL BUS AND COMMUNITY NETWORK STRATEGY

1.4 Relationship to Regional Policies and Strategies

NRW would welcome integration between this Strategy and Local Development Plans within the TraCC region. There is a need for Local Development Plans to align sites for development with existing passenger networks, as well as to plan to improve facilities where current passenger transport accessibility is poor. This type of integrated development is vital to achieve reduced demand for travel, to help underpin behaviour change and to support a modal shift from the private car to passenger transport.

1.5.1 Consultation

If not already part of the stakeholder engagement process, we suggest that it would be very helpful to involve relevant Local Service Boards (LSBs) in discussions about the development of the Strategy. LSBs, made up of leaders of key public and third sector organisations, focus on delivery of public services and access to transport is often a key theme. Ceredigion's LSB, for example, have a priority of 'Access to services' and accessibility to transport was much discussed during development of the One Powys Plan.

2.1.2 Vision

NRW welcomes the vision for the bus and community transport network and, in particular, the intention to seek to reduce the impact of travel on the environment.

2.2.3 Outcome 1 – Key services and facilities are accessible

It is not clear what is covered by 'key services', although this includes education, training, jobs and healthcare. NRW would welcome widening the scope of 'key services' to include the consideration of prioritising transport to locations that offer significant opportunities for outdoor recreation. Passenger transport has an invaluable role to play in opening up access to the countryside and the resulting potential for enhanced health and wellbeing, as recognised in the Welsh Government's *Creating an Active Wales Strategy*¹. It should also be recognised that linking public transport to outdoor recreation can also contribute to tackling social exclusion, by giving car-less households' access to the benefits of the natural environment.

2.2.3 Outcome 3 – Networks are integrated

As part of network integration, NRW would welcome the opportunity to input into discussion about new routes that link to outdoor recreation facilities where appropriate. Opportunities for outdoor recreation can play a key role in delivering the Welsh Government agenda for mental and physical health and well-being. Such opportunities include public rights of way, National Trails, the Wales coast path, bike trails, cycle ways, nature reserves and visitor centres. As just one example, the local

seasonal tourist bus linking coastal settlements in Ceredigion - known as the 'Cardi Bach' - is viewed as an asset, especially by those walking the Wales Coastal Path.

3.6.5 Interchanges

NRW supports access and parking for cycles at bus interchanges. We would encourage integration here with the Active Travel (Wales) Bill, which seeks to encourage Local Authorities to improve facilities and routes for cyclists (and walkers).

Additional comments

- 1) NRW would welcome the inclusion of a section on environmental issues and opportunities for improvement. Such opportunities might include vehicle-based targets for emissions reduction and eco-driver training, both of which would support the National Transport Plan priority to achieve reductions in Greenhouse Gas emissions. There could also be further opportunities for infrastructure - low carbon lighting, grey water recycling and inclusion of 'green infrastructure', design that works with and benefits the natural environment.
- 2) It would be beneficial to include information about involvement in any partnership work to promote behaviour change and a modal shift from the private car to bus transport.

1. *Creating an Active Wales*, Welsh Government 2011.