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CYNULLIAD CENEDLAETHOL CYMRU  
LLYFRGELL YR AELODAU

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
**Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister**

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Jeff Cuthbert AM  
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At Plenary on 15 July, I promised to write to you about the bus provisions in the Local Transport Act 2008 and rail services on the Rhymney Valley line.

The provisions in the Local Transport Act 2008 promote more effective partnership working between local authorities and bus operators to plan and deliver local bus services that are better matched to the needs of passengers in their local areas. They will also make the implementation of quality contracts schemes a more realistic option in areas where it is in the public interest for local authorities to take greater control over buses.

Under the proposals, local authorities and bus operators can enter into either voluntary partnership agreements or quality partnership schemes. In either case, the local authority can agree with participating operators the provision of various standards of service that can cover timetabling, service frequencies and fares. In return, participating operators will benefit from access to infrastructures facilities that have been improved under the scheme. Where a quality partnership scheme has been made, it may be possible to exclude operators from the scheme if they do not agree to meet the service standards and excluded operators are unable to use the improved facilities.

In some circumstances, quality contract schemes can be an effective way for local authorities to secure a coordinated network of bus services in their area by putting in place a franchise type arrangement that will suspend the deregulated market in a specific area. In the case of a quality contract there is a bidding process for the right to use the facilities and only one operator will succeed.

I issued guidance to local authorities on voluntary partnership agreements in April 2009. I plan to issue guidance and regulations to enable local authorities to take advantage of the plans for quality partnership schemes later in the year. This will then be followed by similar arrangements for quality contracts.

We have worked closely with both local authorities and bus operators to ensure that we have a basket of measures that will provide more flexibility for delivering the high standards of local bus services demanded by passengers. I will continue to keep Members informed of my plans.

I am also committed to providing additional capacity on the Valley Lines and this includes 6 car trains on the Rhymney Valley line as this is a busy commuter route. I am taking this forward as part of my broader plans for improving capacity at Cardiff's major train stations and a 45% capacity increase in peak time Valley services. This is being done in partnership with Network Rail and the Department for Transport.

Yours sincerely

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
**Minister for the Economy and Transport**