# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Principles for Public Transport Connectivity** |
| **DATE**  | **24 September 2019** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates AM, Minister for Economy and Transport** |

Following the transfer of responsibility for the Wales and Borders franchise to the Welsh Government, its successful award by Transport for Wales, and the commitments to improve and expand services across Wales, we now need to consider our longer-term vision for our transport system, the connectivity that is critical to our future prosperity, and the services needed to reduce transport’s impact on the environment.

The benefits of specifying clear policy objectives and outcomes were apparent through the procurement of the franchise where bidders were free to develop innovative solutions to deliver key requirements around the rolling stock requirements, service frequencies, and journey times.

However, not all of our ambitions can currently be delivered through Transport for Wales. As I set out in my submission to the Williams Rail Review in December, a position which the Assembly later endorsed, we need a fairer funding settlement from the UK Government, we need better cross-border services through Department for Transport franchises, and we need improvements to our infrastructure – infrastructure which in the long term we believe we should control - but in the short term must have improvements delivered through Network Rail.

This is why I am setting out a set of principles for connectivity across Wales to inform our public and private sector partners of our ambitions and objectives and I expect these principles to be considered when infrastructure schemes are being planned and services procured.

In the medium term these principles will form part of the Wales Transport Strategy, and as such they will be formally consulted upon so that the views of stakeholders and users across Wales and beyond can be taken into account

The principles set out here focus on mass passenger transport. Further work is being done to establish principles for private transport, freight and other modes.

The principles set out below relate fixed corridor connectivity, usually by rail but perhaps in future bus type vehicles operating on dedicated/segregated infrastructure, especially for Metro services. Our wider vision for local bus services is being developed under the wider bus reform agenda which I set out in July.

**Strategic**

Around three quarters of our trade is with the rest of the UK. It is clear, therefore, that efficient, attractive and fast connections between our cities, and with national and international transport hubs across the border are critical to Wales’ future prosperity. Our principal interchanges require service frequencies that allow efficient and fast interchanges from our regional services, making public transport a more attractive and viable option for more of our journeys.

* Reinforce Cardiff Central, Newport and Swansea High Street as Principal Interchanges serving south Wales.
* Llandudno Junction and Wrexham General to be classified as Principal Interchanges in north Wales.
* Minimum of 1 service per hour direct to Heathrow from south Wales Principal Interchanges;
* Minimum of 2 services per hour to each of Liverpool and Manchester Airports from north Wales Principal Interchanges.
* Minimum of 2 services per hour to Birmingham Airport from Principal Interchanges.
* Minimum of 2 services per hour to HS2 hubs from all Principal Interchanges
* Minimum of 6 services per hour between each of the south Wales Principal Interchanges and Bristol, with at least four of these being to Bristol Temple Meads.
* Minimum of 1 service per hour to Wales’ ferry ports from one Principal Interchange.
* Minimum of 1 service per hour between Principal Interchanges in north and Principal Interchanges south Wales.
* Direct connectivity between Cardiff Central and all peer Core Cities across GB
* In North Wales journey times between principal interchanges to be no more than 60 minutes.
* Journey times between Swansea High Street and Cardiff Central to be no more than 30 minutes.
* Journey times between Cardiff Central and Bristol Temple Meads to be no more than 35 minutes.
* Journey times between London Paddington and Cardiff Central to be no more than 85 minutes.

**Regional**

The general peripherality and dispersed populations of Wales’ regions mean that regular services between our Principal Interchanges and well connected, modern, and integrated regional transport hubs is critical to improving links between our cities and towns, and from our regions across the border.

Equally important to us therefore is the role that public transport plays in supporting our rural communities, delivering vital connectivity to employment and services, while enhancing accessibility to our world class tourist destinations.

Improving access in a way that is consistent with our decarbonisation targets and the recently announced climate emergency across our regions with our own economic infrastructure including our ports, airports and Enterprise Zones is therefore critical to promoting a stronger, more inclusive, and more equitable economy.

* In south east Wales establish Pontypridd, Caerphilly, Bridgend, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff Queen Street and Cardiff Parkway as Regional Interchanges.
* Establish Bangor as a Regional Interchange serving north Wales.
* Establish Neath, Carmarthen, and Shrewsbury as Regional Interchanges serving south-west and mid-Wales.
* Minimum of 4 services per hour between Principal and neighbouring Regional Interchanges
* Principal and Regional Interchanges to be served by local bus services, rail services and comprehensive active travel provision linking the interchange to key parts of the settlement.
* Minimum of 4 services per hour to Cardiff Airport from the south Wales Principal Interchanges
* Minimum of 1 service per hour to Enterprise Zones from a Principal Interchange
* Minimum of 1 service every two hours in each direction at every station in Wales

The above discussions about service patterns envisages these services operating Monday to Saturday, with a slightly reduced variant of the service patterns on Sundays.

**Urban/Local**

The lack of sufficiently large conurbations has been cited as one of the reasons for our poor productivity relative to the rest of the UK, so far limiting the agglomeration benefits that larger labour markets, more efficient supply chains, and more customers can bring. However, our regions cannot be just about the cities. Two way flows of people, commerce, fair work and social interaction are crucial if all parts of Wales are to develop economically and as part of a flourishing society. The connectivity within our City Regions and our development of the South Wales Metro, and plans for the North-east Wales Metro and the Swansea Bay Metro is therefore critical to increasing our GVA and our prosperity.

These services will be provided by zero emission vehicles. Stations will be fully accessible with step-free access, and level boarding to vehicles. Pricing strategies will be developed that incentivise use by disadvantaged communities, maximise the use of the network, and cap daily and weekly costs for multi-modal journeys. As with strategic and regional services, no one will have to stand for more than 20 minutes because of a lack of a seat.

High capacity park and ride/park and share facilities will be provided at key network nodes, particularly where the network intersects with strategic or arterial roads, to maximise access to regional and principal interchanges, integrating payments for all facilities at any Metro or interchange station.

* All Metro stations to benefit from at least 4 services per hour in each direction Monday-Saturday.
* All Metro stations to benefit from at least 2 services per hour in each direction 7 days per week.
* In South-east Wales, journey times to a principal Interchange shall be no more than 60 minutes.
* In South-west Wales, journey times to a regional Interchange shall be no more than 60 minutes.
* In north Wales, the journey time to a principal interchange shall be no more than 60 minutes.
* Metro services to operate between 06:00 and midnight.

These are not promises. They are not commitments. No funding has been allocated. But they do inform our direction of travel. They inform others of our ambitions. And, most importantly, they signal that Wales that is open to visitors and to business.

This is a 20 year plan. Our intention is to transform services, accessibility and usage of public transport across all of our regions as part of an integrated transport network and fulfil its potential as one of our most socially and economically valuable assets.