



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Menter a Busnes **The Enterprise and Business Committee**

Dydd Iau, 29 Tachwedd 2012
Thursday, 29 November 2012

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Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport: Evidence Session

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Byron Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Eluned Parrott	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Nick Ramsay	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
David Rees	Llafur Labour
Kenneth Skates	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Yr Athro/Professor Stuart Cole	Athro Emeritws ym Maes Trafnidiaeth, Canolfan Ymchwil Trafnidiaeth Cymru, Prifysgol Morgannwg Emeritus Professor of Transport, Wales Transport Research Centre, University of Glamorgan
Richard Cope	Rheolwr yr Uned Trafnidiaeth i Deithwyr, Cyngor Sir Fynwy Passenger Transport Unit Manager Monmouthshire County Council
Tracey McAdam	Rheolwr yr Uned Trafnidiaeth Integredig, Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd Integrated Transport Unit Manager Newport City Council

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Chloë Davies	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Andrew Minnis	Ymchwilydd Researcher
Siân Phipps	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.24 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.24 a.m.

Ethol Cadeirydd Dros Dro
Election of Temporary Chair

[1] **Ms Phipps:** Bore da. As clerk of the Enterprise and Business Committee and under Standing Order No. 17.22, I call for nominations for a temporary Chair for this morning's meeting.

[2] **Eluned Parrott:** I nominate Alun Ffred Jones.

[3] **Ms Phipps:** Diolch. I declare that Alun Ffred Jones has been duly appointed temporary Chair and invite him to open the meeting.

*Penodwyd Alun Ffred Jones yn Gadeirydd dros dro.
Alun Ffred Jones was appointed temporary Chair.*

9.25 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[4] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Croesawaf yr Aelodau, y tystion ac aelodau o'r cyhoedd i'r cyfarfod. Bydd y cyfarfod yn ddwyieithog a gallwch ddefnyddio'r clustffonau i wrando ar y cyfieithiad ar sianel 1. Mae'r cyfarfod yn cael ei ddarlledu a bydd y trawsgrifiad o'r trafodion ar gael i chi yn nes ymlaen. A wnewch chi ddiffodd eich ffonau symudol ac unrhyw offer electronig arall, os gwelwch yn dda? Nid oes raid ichi fel tystion gyffwrdd â'r meicroffonau. Os bydd larwm dân, dilynwch y swyddogion allan o'r ystafell.

Alun Ffred Jones: I welcome Members, witnesses and members of the public to the meeting. The meeting will be bilingual and you can use the headsets to listen to the interpretation on channel 1. The meeting is being broadcast and there will be a transcript of the deliberations available to you later on. Will you please switch off your mobile phones and any other electronic devices? You, as witnesses, need not touch the microphones at all. If there is a fire alarm, please follow the officials out of the room.

[5] Rydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau oddi wrth Keith Davies, Julie James a Dafydd Elis-Thomas. Nid oes unrhyw ddirprwyo.

We have received apologies from Keith Davies, Julie James and Dafydd Elis-Thomas. There are no substitutions.

9.26 a.m.

Cynnig i Sefydlu Is-bwyllgor ar gyfer Rheoliadau Mangreoedd etc Di-fwg (Cymru) (Diwygio) 2012 Motion to Establish a Sub-committee for the Smoke-free Premises etc (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

[6] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Cynigiad

Alun Ffred Jones: I move that

fod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu, o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.17, sefydlu is-bwyllgor i gymryd tystiolaeth ar y Rheoliadau Mangreoedd etc. Di-fwg (Cymru) (Diwygio) 2012;

the committee resolves, under Standing Order No. 17.17 to establish a sub-committee to take evidence on the Smoke-free Premises etc. (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012;

mai cylch gwaith yr is-bwyllgor hwnnw yw cymryd tystiolaeth, ar y cyd â'r is-bwyllgor a sefydlwyd gan y Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol ar y Rheoliadau Mangreoedd etc. Di-fwg (Cymru) (Diwygio) 2012. Bydd yr is-bwyllgor yn ceisio cytuno ar gynnwys adroddiad a lunnir ar y cyd â'r is-bwyllgor a sefydlwyd gan y Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol er mwyn llywio trafodaethau'r Cynulliad ar y rheoliadau. Bydd yr is-bwyllgor yn cael ei ddiddymu unwaith y bydd trafodaeth wedi'i chynnal ar y rheoliadau yn y Cyfarfod Llawn;

that the remit of the sub-committee is to hear evidence, concurrently with the sub-committee established by the Health and Social Care Committee on the Smoke-free Premises etc. (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. The sub-committee will seek to agree on the content of a joint report with the sub-committee established by the Health and Social Care Committee to inform the Assembly's consideration of the regulations. The sub-committee will cease to exist when the regulations have been considered by the Assembly in Plenary;

fod aelodaeth yr is-bwyllgor yn cynnwys Alun Ffred Jones, Eluned Parrott, Nick Ramsay, David Rees, Ken Skates, gyda Nick Ramsay wedi'i ethol yn Gadeirydd.

that the membership of the sub-committee comprises Alun Ffred Jones, Eluned Parrot, Nick Ramsay, David Rees, Ken Skates, with Nick Ramsay elected as a Chair.

[7] Gwelaf fod y pwyllgor yn gytûn.

I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

9.27 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Drafnidiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport: Evidence Session

[8] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Dyma'n sesiwn dystiolaeth gyntaf ar drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus integredig. Rwy'n falch iawn o gael croesawu'r Athro Stuart Cole, sy'n hen gyfaill i'r Cynulliad ac i'r pwyllgor hwn. Rydym yn falch iawn o dy gael di yma, unwaith eto, Stuart.

Alun Ffred Jones: This is our first evidence session on integrated public transport. I am very pleased to welcome Professor Stuart Cole, who is a great friend of the Assembly and this committee. We are pleased to have you with us, once again, Stuart.

[9] **Yr Athro Cole:** Diolch, Gadeirydd.

Professor Cole: Thank you, Chair.

[10] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolch am y dystiolaeth gynhwysfawr rwy'ti wedi'i chyflwyno; mae'n cynnwys lot o wybodaeth, ond fe wnawn ni dy holi di yr un fath.

Alun Ffred Jones: Thank you for the comprehensive evidence that you have presented; there is a great deal of information, but we will still ask questions of you.

[11] **Yr Athro Cole:** Roedd llawer o gwestiynau, Gadeirydd. [*Chwerthin.*]

Professor Cole: There were a lot of questions, Chair. [*Laughter.*]

[12] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Rydym am ddechrau gyda chwestiynau oddi wrth Byron Davies.

Alun Ffred Jones: We will start with questions from Byron Davies.

[13] **Byron Davies:** Bore da. Thank you for your paper, Professor Cole. You have detailed the issue that I want to start with, which is the integration within and between different types of transport. What factors have led to regional variation in public transport integration across Wales?

[14] **Professor Cole:** A lot depends, particularly at a local level, on the degree of interest and resource that a local authority puts into the integration of bus and bus, and bus and rail. It varies, but it does not depend on whether it is a rural or urban setting, because we see good bits and bad bits in all settings. Cardiff, for example, has very good bus stop information, but the integration information between bus and rail at Cardiff Central station requires an awful lot of improvement. Some of the information there goes back to January 2011, which is clearly out of date, given that there are now services coming into that bus station that are not listed, and the directional signs for interchanges at Cardiff are not good. Swansea is better and Aberystwyth is much better. So, you have a town the size of Aberystwyth that has a bus station immediately adjacent to the railway station, so integration there is easy, and that has

been very much up to the local authority.

9.30 a.m.

[15] Similarly, at Cardiff, the discussion on building the new bus station so that it is fully integrated with the railway station has been going on for at least six years. So, it varies a lot, depending on what priority or resource local authorities are prepared to give it or put into it. It also depends a lot on the bus company. Some companies are co-operative and, one might say, warm towards integration, while others like to keep themselves very much to themselves and merely run their operation without mixing with other bus companies.

[16] **Byron Davies:** To widen the question, if I may, and give you a specific example, I think that we all appreciate that Wales has diverse needs because of its topography, but I was talking this week with Network Rail, which has an operation just west of Swansea where it has been putting the dual line back in and where Gowerton station is being reopened as a two-platform station, east and west. There is very limited parking there and there is absolutely no plan to increase the parking, despite there being none, because it is not prepared to invest in it. What is your view on that? It seems crazy to me.

[17] **Professor Cole:** To take that as one example, and, as a part-time resident of Llanelli, I think that it is a perfect piece of work that Network Rail should have done, the issue is often to do with land. A park-and-ride facility is an essential part of integration between private transport and public transport—I think that the implication of your question is what we do about that—however, five years ago, a lot of interest was not taken in park and ride. It was a bit of a sideline, but it has now come to the forefront, and, in a lot of locations, we are seeing that land has been sold by what is now called Railpath, the old British Rail property board, for commercial reasons, because it was not directly needed for the railway.

[18] At Gowerton, the car park is relatively small; there is room there for about 25 to 30 cars. There is another car park, however, which has been built about 400 yards away on the bypass road, which is meant to be part of that railway station car parking facility. So, it is there, but it is not immediately obvious and it is certainly not signposted as well as it might be. So, there are facilities at that location. Network Rail has done what it can to release its own spare land, for example, at Treforest, but in many cases the land is just not available. I know that there is a significant move in the Vale of Glamorgan, with the increased number of trains that are coming on the Vale of Glamorgan line, to try to find new land for parking, but it just is not there. The only option is to build upwards with a multistorey car park, which is more expensive than a ground-level car park and which may raise objections from local residents. So, it is not the easiest solution to find, but it is a solution that we have to find if we are to keep traffic away from primary arteries like the A470.

[19] **Byron Davies:** I totally agree, but pressure groups such as Sustrans would like to see people cycling, as would I, to railway stations, and there is absolutely no provision in places like Gowerton, which I use only an example, or Bridgend for that matter. That cannot be right at this stage of planning.

[20] **Professor Cole:** You mean provision for cycles.

[21] **Byron Davies:** Yes.

[22] **Professor Cole:** You are absolutely right. There is little provision for cycles and that is part of the process that is taking place. Five years ago, there was no real thought of integrating private forms of transport, be it the car or the cycle, and now there is. Of course, much of the land is not available, and it is difficult to find ways of acquiring land, but that is what much of it is about. It is also to do with the degree of resource that Network Rail and the

local authority, depending on which is the landowner, will put into park-and-ride facilities.

[23] **David Rees:** On land use, is the problem historic in that many railway stations were built where they are many years ago while bus stations may have been built closer to the town, therefore, there is a difference between them and, in the meantime, local authorities tend to have developed as much as possible in their town centres?

[24] **Professor Cole:** There are two issues here. One is to do with the fact that the Victorians built the railway stations and people either walked there or, if they were wealthy enough, their carriage took them there, and then the carriage went away again. There was no real thought given to park and ride, because the motor car was not around then. Much of the railway network that we have in Wales was built between the 1850s and 1870s, so we have that historical legacy, and that is part of the reason why there is not land available for the kind of things that Byron was asking about.

[25] Then there is the fact that much of the land was sold. So, on one side, we have the fact that it is an old railway, with no real thought given to park and ride, and we also have a situation, in general terms, of the motor car having been the definitive mode of transport for the location of particular activities, like shopping. When shopping was done in the centre of towns, it was much easier for people to get there by public transport, and public transport still tends to go to the centre of towns. Swansea is a good example, where even the bus station moved with the shops. Swansea is fortunate, in many ways, in that there is a substantial city centre facility for shopping, and people can still get there easily by public transport, but, in many cases, what you have are locations for activities. You can take a string of examples of out-of-town developments, whether they be the shopping centre at Parc Pemberton in Llanelli or new housing proposals in Cardiff. Perhaps this leads on to your point about how we get future developments to fit in to the public transport network. Certainly, there are some developments now planned in Cardiff where the opportunity is there to integrate a housing development, such as the Plymouth estates at Creigiau, with the reopening of an old railway line.

[26] **Eluned Parrott:** I just wanted to follow up on the question of people using cycling as a method of transport, on integrating that with both buses and trains. What provision could be made for people who wish to take their cycles on the bus or the train with them, in order to commute at both ends of their journey?

[27] **Professor Cole:** On the train it is easier, certainly on First Great Western's 125 trains—the London trains. There is provision on most of Arriva Trains Wales's trains for bicycles in the guard's van, but it is often at the discretion of the guard. There is no real provision on the Pacer units—those are the trains that are predominantly used on Valleys lines. They were never built to take bicycles. It is a matter of the design of the vehicles and many of the vehicles that we have on the Welsh network are 30 years old. The 175s have room for bicycles, and one hopes that new designs, when electrification comes, will include facilities for bicycle stands in what we commonly call the guard's van of the electric trains that we are hoping will come our way.

[28] In terms of buses, it is difficult, because there are two issues that come up there, and one is the safety issue of taking the bike on and off the bus. You cannot get it into the bus. We did some research recently into having a hanging facility inside the new TrawsCymru vehicles, and it just became impossible—it took out so many seats that it just was not possible. There have been issues about having a stand on the back of the bus, and drivers are not happy with the safety issue involved.

[29] **Alun Ffred Jones:** May I just make a plea for Members to keep the questions short and for Stuart to restrain himself in his answers?

[30] Rwyf eisiau gofyn dau gwestiwn byr i ti ar gyllido. Wyt ti'n credu bod y cydbwysedd yn iawn rhwng buddsoddi mewn ffyrdd a buddsoddi mewn trafndiaeth gyhoeddus?

I want to ask you two short questions on funding. Do you believe that the balance is right between investing in roads and investing in public transport?

[31] **Yr Athro Cole:** Mae rhan o'r peth yn hanesyddol. Roedd y Swyddfa Gymreig yn adeiladu ffyrdd—dyna'r cwbl roedd yn ei wneud. Mae adran fawr yn dal i wneud hynny, gan edrych ar brosiectau cyfalaf ar y ffyrdd a gwario llwyth o arian. Mae llai o arian yn cael ei wario ar gludiant cyhoeddus, gyda'r rhan fwyaf yn cael ei wario ar gymorth refeniw a llai ar fuddsoddi mewn pethau fel gorsafoedd bysiau. Yn fy marn i, mae'n rhaid inni edrych ar y posibilrwydd o wario mwy o arian ar gludiant cyhoeddus.

Professor Cole: Part of it is historic. The Welsh Office used to build roads—that was all it did. A huge department is still doing that, looking at road capital projects and spending vast amounts. Less money is spent on public transport, with most being spent on revenue support and less on investing in things like bus stations. In my opinion, we must look at the possibility of spending more money on public transport.

[32] Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn rhoi pwyslais ar gludiant cyhoeddus. Mae'n gwario llwyth o arian ar hynny—efallai mwy na rhai lleoedd eraill—ond mae'n rhaid inni edrych ar beth y gallwn ei wneud i gael gwared ar geir nad oes angen iddynt fod ar y ffyrdd. Dyna'r opsiwn mwyaf sydd gennym o ran cludiant cyhoeddus. Mae parcio a theithio yn rhan o hynny, yn ogystal â'r cwestiwn o sut i ddatblygu'r gwasanaethau hynny er mwyn tynnu ceir oddi ar y priffyrdd.

The Welsh Government is putting an emphasis on public transport. It is spending a vast amount on it—perhaps more than some other places—but we have to look at what we can do to get rid of cars that do not need to be on the roads. That is the most considerable option that we have in terms of public transport. Park-and-ride comes into that, as does the question of how to develop those services in order to take cars off the main roads.

[33] **Alun Ffred Jones:** O safbwynt clymu'r gwahanol foddau cludiant at ei gilydd, beth wyt ti'n meddwl yw'r flaenoriaeth, o gofio'r cyllid cyfyngedig sydd ar gael? Beth y dylem ganolbwyntio arno?

Alun Ffred Jones: In terms of tying different modes of transport together, what do you think is the priority, given the limited funding that is available? What should we be focusing on?

[34] **Yr Athro Cole:** Mae proses. Y pethau mwyaf syml yw ceisio gwneud yn siŵr bod yr amserlenni yn cyd-fynd â'i gilydd a chael tocynnau y mae pobl yn gallu eu defnyddio ar fysiau a threnau. Mae tipyn o hynny ar hyn o bryd gyda Plusbus, ond, gan amlaf, rhaid i bobl brynu dau docyn ac nid yw nifer o'r gwasanaethau bysiau a threnau yn cyd-fynd â'i gilydd. Mae hynny'n rhywbeth sy'n syml iawn i'w wneud.

Professor Cole: There is a process. The simplest things are to try to ensure that the timetables fit together and that there are tickets available that people can use on both buses and trains. That is available at the moment through Plusbus, but, usually, people have to buy two tickets and a number of bus and rail services do not fit together. That is something that it is very simple to remedy.

[35] Yr ail beth yw datblygu'r hyn a elwir yn *quality bus corridor* a *quality bus partnership*, sy'n ceisio annog cwmnïau i drafod gydag awdurdodau lleol i gael gwell gwasanaethau gyda'r adnoddau sydd gennym ar hyn o bryd. Os nad yw hynny'n gweithio,

The second thing is to develop the so-called quality bus corridor and quality bus partnership, which seek to encourage companies to enter into discussions with local authorities to get better services with the resources that we have at present. If that does

rhaid ystyried rhyddfrenio. Dyna'r unig ffordd ymlaen os nad yw cwmnïau bysiau yn fodlon gweithio mewn rhyw fath o bartneriaeth gyda Llywodraeth Cymru a llywodraeth leol. Paratowyd adroddiad gan Syr Rod Eddington ryw chwe blynedd yn ôl ar gyfer y Llywodraeth Brydeinig o'r enw 'The Eddington Transport Study'. Wrth drafod gwasanaethau cludiant cyhoeddus a bysiau, siaradodd am y tair C—cystadleuaeth, cydlynu a chydweithio. Mae'n glir yn awr nad yw'r system sydd gennym yn gweithio. Nid yw cystadleuaeth yn y farchnad, ar ei phen ei hun, yn gweithio'n iawn ac mae'n costio mwy i wasanaethau cyhoeddus. Felly, y *middle ground* yw cael y ddau i weithio mewn partneriaeth gyda'i gilydd. Os nad yw hynny'n gweithio, mae'n rhaid inni symud ymlaen at ryddfrenio.

not work, it is necessary to consider franchising. That is the only way forward if bus operators are unwilling to work in some kind of partnership with the Welsh Government and local government. Sir Rod Eddington compiled a report some six years ago for the British Government called 'The Eddington Transport Study'. In discussing public transport and bus services, he spoke about the three Cs—competition, co-ordination and co-operation. It is now clear that the system that we have does not work. Competition in the market, on its own, does not work properly and it costs more for public services. So, the middle ground is to get the two to work together in partnership. If that does not work, we must move on to franchising.

[36] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning, Professor Cole. Thanks for your report, which raised lots of questions, one of which is: is the current devolution settlement adequate and sufficient to allow the Assembly to deliver an integrated transport system?

[37] **Professor Cole:** To take the national level to start, the Welsh Government has certain powers over roads and, therefore, over park-and-ride services, as do local authorities. It is the controller of the Wales and borders franchise. So, that is in the hands of the Government jointly with Arriva Trains Wales, the contractor. However, there are other issues that make it very difficult to achieve the kind of integrated public transport that I think this inquiry is about.

[38] Public transport policy generally still stays with the Department for Transport in London. Rail investment is partly with the Department for Transport, partly with the Welsh Government and partly with Network Rail, and that needs to be brought together much more clearly. There was a move, both in the National Assembly and the House of Commons, in the joint report on the Transport (Wales) Bill to have, on the face of the Act, a relationship between Network Rail and the Welsh Government. There is no such relationship; it is one of agreement and partnership rather than a statutory relationship, which the Department for Transport has with Network Rail.

9.45 a.m.

[39] Moving onwards, rail regulation sits with the rail regulator, and one might say that that is one of the things that maybe sits halfway. However, when you come on to the bus side, bus industry regulation is effectively non-existent. The Transport Act 1985 introduced the free market, and that free market has not worked. What has happened is this: the bus companies, quite reasonably, are private companies and their job is to maximise their profits—I have no objection to that—but it means that they will go for the most profitable parts of the route and times of day, leaving the local authorities to pick up the pieces. It happens all the time. It is happening currently in various parts of Carmarthenshire, for example, and there is nothing that the local authority or the Welsh Government can do about it, other than to try to plug the gaps themselves and at a cost to them. If that whole package of profitable and non-profitable sections and times of day were put together into one, it would cost local authorities and the Welsh Government less money than it does now for the same level of service.

[40] There is one other point, namely the traffic commissioner—I will throw him in as well. Nick Jones's current responsibility is to the Department for Transport in London, and I think that the traffic commissioner for Wales needs to be made responsible to the Minister in Cardiff.

[41] **Joyce Watson:** Is any further devolution required to make the system that you have talked about at length—you have given a lot of examples, including Transport for London and other areas—a system in which the power is vested in one person and the whole package sits in one place? Would there be any advantages in further devolution of powers, if the Government wanted that, to help it to deliver that?

[42] **Professor Cole:** I think that there are. As I have said, I would like to see the traffic commissioner's responsibilities transferred to the Minister in Cardiff. I would want to see the regulation of the bus industry transferred to Cardiff. It would then be very much up to the Welsh Government to decide what it wanted to do. At the moment, we have a situation that does not work in favour of the public authority. So, there is a need to transfer the commissioners, a need to transfer powers over the bus policy and bus regulation policy, and a need to transfer, for example, regulatory powers over taxis. It is quite clear that we could then start to look, in Wales at least, at a much clearer integration of bus and train companies' operations, and, indeed, park-and-ride facilities at railway stations and bus stations alike. Those are two essential elements that have to be transferred before we can even think about a fully integrated public transport policy.

[43] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Moving along, David Rees will take franchising and quality partnerships.

[44] **David Rees:** Taking on board the point you made about franchising and the Local Transport Act 2008, which looked at quality contracts and quality partnerships, effectively, let us first look at franchising. When it comes to rail, I have been hearing an awful lot of criticism of the concept of franchising, because it does not provide stability for the organisation through long-term future projections. Is franchising the right way? I would take London out of this—I see London as being a totally different scenario, because of the community that it serves. Is franchising done elsewhere in the UK?

[45] **Professor Cole:** There is no franchising of buses. There is franchising of the railways throughout the UK. I do not think that we ought to allow our view of franchising to be coloured by the recent occurrences on the West Coast main line rail franchise. There were issues there that I am sure will come out in Richard Brown's report. However, franchising is a very successful means of running an operation; otherwise it would not be used by people such as McDonald's, Marks and Spencer, Holiday Inn Express and so on—all very successful companies.

[46] The concept of franchising does not have a problem; what it does provide is a framework that gives stability. I possibly know where the source of the thought process that it does not give stability comes from. The bus companies, in the main, are not very happy with either the quality bus contract or franchising of bus operations, although all the companies involved in Wales are quite happy to take part in that facility in London. So, I do not see that they will have a philosophical objection to it. However, as a means of bringing together a co-ordinated whole, franchising probably gives you the strongest facility to do that.

[47] Quality bus contracts come next. If the bus companies are prepared to accept a partnership, there are things within the partnership that will do a lot. It is whether they are prepared to accept that or not. If you want a guaranteed, stable facility with supply-side competition—that is that there is competition for the contract to run the services, rather than

competition on the street—that gives you the stability that most people would be looking for.

[48] **David Rees:** Would we get the service delivery on those service routes that are not commercially viable and which, as you have mentioned, have effectively been dropped by some of these companies? Would that be a way of getting them, through a franchise, or would quality bus contracts be better for that?

[49] **Professor Cole:** The difference between quality bus contracts and a franchise is the degree of control by the public authority. Under a franchising system, the public authority effectively owns the routes and will contract them out, in the main to private companies. With a quality bus contract, however, it is a contract between the bus companies doing their bit and the local authority doing its bit. In the main, it is the local authority that provides the infrastructure and the agreed subsidy for the route, if one is required, with the bus company then guaranteeing things such as the timetable, the standard of vehicle, and the fact that the bus will turn up—and it is often the case that that does not happen. So, all those things are a part of the contract, and, of course, there would be a financial penalty for the company that did not do that. At the moment, there is a penalty, but it is very much in the hands of the traffic commissioner, whose staff cannot be everywhere. With a contract, you are in a much stronger position, and a franchise is, from a public authority's point of view, a stronger version of that.

[50] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Byron, you have a question on land-use planning and integration.

[51] **Byron Davies:** Yes, it is planning, again. The practical steps that should be taken to improve the consideration of public transport integration in the planning process—what are your views, please?

[52] **Professor Cole:** As mentioned earlier, over the past 25 to 30 years, we have seen the growth of out-of-town shopping centres, and that has very much been a response to the market. Since the 1960s, and certainly the 1970s, car ownership has gone up, and the out-of-town shopping centres have grown only because people now have cars to go shopping, and people like doing that. The question is whether it is good for them. Well, they clearly think that it is good for them, and so does the market; otherwise, we would not have new out-of-town shopping centres being built. Unfortunately, it becomes very difficult to serve those shopping centres by public transport. Almost by luck, a good service will run between two towns—and I go back to the example of Llanelli and Parc Pemberton, which is an out-of-town shopping centre that sits on the Swansea side of Llanelli, and there is a half-hourly bus service between the town and the city anyway, which makes it possible to serve that out-of-town shopping centre reasonably well. However, it is still a car-based operation, and we are still finding that bids are being put forward by the developers of either housing or shopping centres to build out of town.

[53] However, there comes a point when there will be restrictions on the use of motor cars. That is inevitable, but for the moment, people are still prepared to drive out there. Nevertheless, things such as the price of petrol and so on are having an effect on many retailers, as we have seen recently.

[54] When it comes to out-of-town housing developments, again, there is a need within the local development plan to allocate pieces of land that can be served adequately by public transport and, within the development process and the planning permission process, for section 106 requirements to include the payment of a capital sum for a public transport improvement. I mentioned the example of housing to the west of Cardiff. All the developments currently in the LDP application process are adjacent to the motorway—they are motorway derived. If you look at it from the centre of Cardiff, it looks as though it is in north Cardiff and west Cardiff, but when you look at where the motorway is, you see that it

actually follows the motorway. Now, two of those developments, one near Creigiau and the other near junction 33, are classic developments. There is an old railway formation, and the track is largely still there and is still owned by the British Rail Property Board. That can be reopened and taken down to the city line at Danescourt. Unfortunately, one or two houses got built on the track bed, but it is not that difficult to get around that. It is possible to put in a requirement with that development to reopen the railway line, which would take away from the profitability of the developers, but that is their commercial decision to make. That is the only way that we are going to get out-of-town shopping centres and out-of-town housing developments in the future that can be serviced by adequate public transport.

[55] **Byron Davies:** Do you agree that the only way forward here is to have proper transport hubs? For example, it is absolutely hopeless to get in and out of Swansea high street. With electrification, we need to have a proper parkway and a transport hub around that, for example in Carmarthen, because of its rurality. As far as Wales is concerned, that, to me, is the only way forward.

[56] **Professor Cole:** You are absolutely right. Swansea bus station is state of the art, and is one of the best-designed bus stations in western Europe—with no exaggeration. They have thought it out, they have control over who comes in and out of it, and its operations are well run. It was built to be adjacent to the shops, because the shopping centre in Swansea, as those of you who know the city will know, has moved from near the railway station down to the beach almost, next door to the bus station.

[57] There is currently an opportunity in Swansea and in other places, but in Swansea in particular. When you come out of the train part of the train station, you are directed towards the Swansea Metro, the new bus service. However, you are not directed to a whole string of around 15 bus services that stop at a different bus stop and that have a side entrance to the railway station, which people could go through to get on a whole string of vehicles to a lot of other places, including places outside Swansea. On the other side of the road at that location, there are two other bus stops with buses going to all sorts of places, such as Llandeilo, Pontarddulais, and so on.

[58] My view of the train station is that it was badly designed when it was re-designed. The buses should have been put alongside the railway station where the taxis now are. There is the opportunity—and part of it has been taken by Swansea Council—to build a bus way alongside the railway line. There is an issue with expenditure on a bridge, but many of these things are technically possible, although there is a financial implication. The best way to run that operation is to have the buses where the taxis are and to build the extension to the bus way into that area so that people can directly go from bus to train very easily.

[59] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Your knowledge is encyclopaedic, but I am trying to get through the questions. Joyce, did you have a question on this issue?

[60] **Joyce Watson:** We undertook an inquiry into town centre development, because there are an awful lot of shops, not out of town but on the edge of town. It became quite clear that the way in which you plan how your bus routes go around during the planning stages can stop people from using their cars unnecessarily, and people also had to take the park-and-ride quite seriously in those cases. Have you been involved in any work that might facilitate that thinking that we could take forward?

[61] **Professor Cole:** With regard to edge-of-town housing and shopping developments, I am currently advising on the edge, I guess, of one of the developments in Cardiff. The suggestions made to the developers are that, first of all, they look at means of improving services via Lisvane, because part of the development is not very far from Lisvane station and from one of the other stations on that line. The other is to look at a bus way, because one of

the developments is so far away from the railway that you would not even think about driving to the railway.

10.00 a.m.

[62] However, the issue then arises of what you do in the interim as that development is being built, because 8,000 houses are not built in one go. They get built 200 or 500 at a time, and it builds up in bits. So, unless the bus service is in there right from the start, people will start to buy their second car, make their arrangements for car sharing and so on. That means that, when all the houses are built and the bus service is viable, no-one, or not many people, will use it. So, it is about getting that service in there early on.

[63] Cardiff Bus has made an attempt now with a morning and evening bus service to a new development, to see how that works, and it will be interesting how it develops that service over the next few months.

[64] **Alun Ffred Jones:** We have five minutes for each block of questions now, so we must be ruthless. Eluned is next on innovative transport solutions and community transport.

[65] **Eluned Parrott:** Professor Cole, as I understand it, you are one of the architects of the Bwcabus scheme, so I imagine that you are quite the enthusiast for it. Can you give us an idea of how things such as Bwcabus and the TrawsCymru network could be developed over the next few years?

[66] **Professor Cole:** I should declare an interest because I created the Bwcabus concept, and I am working on the development of the network, and I am also adviser to the TrawsCymru board. The objective with Bwcabus was, instead of having a lot of buses running around empty or half empty, to have a primary route and guaranteed connections. The system is sophisticated; its use is not. From the traveller's point of view, it is easy: he or she makes a phone call and they are then booked on to a connecting set of vehicles. The technology is what controls the vehicles. The controller knows where every vehicle is and vehicles are guaranteed to meet. They cannot not meet—unless a vehicle breaks down in the last 200 yd before it gets to the meeting point, the controller knows where the vehicles are and the route set out is designed to meet the through-bus service. At the moment, there is a Bwcabus service every hour, in each direction, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., and we are now looking at Sunday services. Demand has been pushed up by 40%, in the first rural area that it served, which was Carmarthen, Newcastle Emlyn and Aberteifi, while, normally, there has been a constant reduction in rural transport.

[67] The service has moved northwards. We have extended it, with the Minister's authority, to Aberaeron and Tregaron. We have a slight problem there, because of the problem with the T1 service—it is not the T1 service, but a service run by Arriva, the 40 service. We are in negotiations with Arriva, and I hope that the present stage of those negotiations will enable us to integrate that particular route, between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen, into the Bwcabus network.

[68] We have a service from Newtown to Cardiff, which is running very well and is picking up more and more passengers, and we are looking at developing a Bwcabus service in the area around Llangors near Brecon to see how those services will be integrated. However, the sophistication of the system is what does the integration. It guarantees the meeting of buses. People were worried that the small bus would not meet the big bus, but there is a 99.9% chance of them meeting. The remaining 0.1% would occur if someone drove some sheep across the road and all traffic came to a stop. However, that has not happened yet. One bus is always met by another.

[69] **Eluned Parrott:** The Welsh Government's programme for government describes Bwcabus as a community transport system. Could you briefly explain, for the record, the difference between community transport and Bwcabus?

[70] **Professor Cole:** That was an interesting description. I can offer you the traditional view of community transport, the kinds of Community Transport Association services, which are not what Bwcabus is. Bwcabus is a service that serves the community, that is true. All bus services serve the community, but it is not a traditional CTA operation. It is a centralised, integrated network. You can live, for example, in Capel Dewi, in rural Carmarthenshire, and you can travel to Paris without leaving public transport. So, you book through Bwcabus and you get on the 460 service to Carmarthen, where you get on the train to London Paddington, from where you get on the Eurostar to Paris—all without leaving public transport. That is what Bwcabus is about: an integrated network. Most CTA operations, in their traditional sense, are local operations in areas that would never otherwise get public transport. For example, we see the area around Boncath, down from Cenarth, and down towards Haverfordwest as being CTA country. We could not operate the Bwcabus service there, because there is not enough of a population to make it work. So, CTA comes wonderfully underneath that level, where a lot of it is volunteer drivers, it is low cost, and it is very much to do with small communities. I would like to see a lot of the CTA operations linking in to the main bus network. Some of them do, but many do not; it is very much a local issue and a local product at the moment. I would like to see it come further in.

[71] I have seen complaints from some CTA operators that they could not get a Bwcabus contract. They were all invited to put in tenders for the Bwcabus contract. They were tendered, and the tenders happened to be won by local bus companies: Brodyr Richards, Morris Travel and the company in Llanrhystud. A CTA group could have won just as easily, but Bwcabus is a system, whereas community transport is, in my view, based on my years in transport, a different kind of facility.

[72] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Ken Skates, we are going to jump to you.

[73] **Kenneth Skates:** On rail network integration, what action do you believe Network Rail and the Welsh Government should be taking to ensure that the Network Rail Wales route supports public transport integration? Looking ahead to future franchises, what do you believe should be done, before the new franchise and subsequently, to ensure better integration between rail and other transport services?

[74] **Professor Cole:** In my experience, the working relationship between Network Rail and the Welsh Government is good. As I have said, it is not on the face of the Act, but it is a matter of managers working together, and that does seem to work. It has worked in Gowerton and on the Chester-Wrexham link with the doubling of the track, and it has worked on the Aberystwyth line. Funding has come in from both sides, and the work has been done by Network Rail. So, from the point of view of developing the railway, there is a working relationship there.

[75] Electrification again shows the working relationship between Welsh Government, demand for transport and Network Rail. Electrification is clearly what we are looking towards in the longer term.

[76] In the new franchise, I will be looking for a different kind of franchise to the one that we have at the moment. The Strategic Rail Authority is no longer with us, but it specified the contract for the Wales and borders franchise. The new franchise, I think, will be a totally different kind of franchise; it will be much more aligned towards integrating the trains with, for example, TrawsCymru. A long-term view of TrawsCymru is that it becomes an integral part of the rail network—not necessarily the same company, but it will be an integral part of

the rail network as far as the customer is concerned—and that will form part of the need for Network Rail and the Welsh Government to look at things such as developing good interchange facilities for bus and train at railway stations, all of which are owned by Network Rail.

[77] So, the new franchise, I think, is a different kind of franchise to the one that we have. There are all sorts of options there as well, as you know, and I will not go into them now, but the not-for-dividend companies and so on have been discussed.

[78] The arrival of the new route—a division, if you like, of Network Rail—and the fact that a director of development and planning has been appointed for Wales, to run in parallel with that, are both tasks or jobs that I think will help to bring together what the Welsh Government wants and what Network Rail is able to provide.

[79] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Of the questions that are left, does anybody have any pressing ones to ask?

[80] **David Rees:** Regional transport consortia: how effective, in your view, are they? Clearly, there appear to be different governance arrangements for each one, but how effective are they? Also, should we perhaps be looking at the passenger transport executives in England and the joint transport authority model that has been applied there?

[81] **Professor Cole:** The regional transport consortia are, in principle, just what we want. Unfortunately, they are not statutory bodies. When the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 was passed, it was examined by both the National Assembly and the House of Commons. On the joint transport authorities, I have to declare an interest, as I advised on the Bill during its passage. I think that the joint transport authorities, and the joint transport executive that will go with them as a statutory body, would be in a much stronger position to provide a regional and local bus network that would feed into the rail network. I am very much a believer in franchising. I will accept quality bus contracts if that is all that we can get, and, at the moment, that is all that is possible under current legislation. However, the ideal, as I see it, is to have four joint transport authorities that match the current consortia—there is nothing wrong with the current consortia areas; the one in south-east Wales is probably the first one to go for, because it has the biggest congestion problems to be dealt with and to try to resolve by public transport—and to get all the local authorities to work together as a group, which they do under the consortia, and perhaps we will see how the funding works through the consortia, although there will need to be a lead authority, because they are not statutory bodies. Hence my feeling that we ought to take the provisions of the 2006 Act and go for four joint transport authorities in four different parts of Wales.

[82] **David Rees:** I think that I read in your paper that JTAs cannot issue contracts. Is that right?

[83] **Professor Cole:** The consortia cannot issue contracts, because they are not statutory bodies. The provision in the Act is for the establishment of a statutory joint transport authority, and that would have all the powers of any other statutory body.

[84] **Byron Davies:** I have a general question, which might be a difficult one for you to answer. What is your view on the performance of the Welsh Government and where we are now with transport in Wales with regard to integration?

[85] **Professor Cole:** It is a difficult question. The relationship between Welsh Government and Arriva Trains Wales is based on a contract that was not signed by the Welsh Government, unfortunately. I am sure that it would have been a different contract had it been prepared in Wales rather than by the Strategic Rail Authority. It was a no-growth contract:

there were to be no new trains for 15 years and no new services. That is not what has happened, of course; what has happened is that the Welsh Government has had to pay additional sums of money to Arriva for extra trains and extra capacity, and so on. So, the performance there has been good because it has responded to the demand requirements.

[86] On the buses side, the biggest problem facing the Welsh Government is that, other than the quality bus contract, which goes a certain distance, there is no way in which bus companies can be required to co-ordinate their services with the railways. They can be required to operate along a particular route in a certain way, but they cannot be required to integrate.

[87] **Byron Davies:** So, what do we need to make it work?

[88] **Professor Cole:** In my view, it needs either the powers in the section of the Transport Act 1985 that brought in deregulation of buses to be transferred to the National Assembly for Wales for it to decide on what it wants, or that piece of legislation to be repealed and replaced by a different type of legislation. The Local Transport Act 2008 took us a long way towards what is needed, but it was a watered-down version of what was there in the first place, which was much more like the London-style franchising than the quality bus contract and the quality bus partnership that we now have. So, it is a matter of changing those rules.

[89] There is also a need in Government to understand that the general civil servant is possibly not the best person to deal with the companies. Government must bring in specialists from outside who understand the operation of the railways and bus companies, who have had a career in that area and who also understand franchising and contract-making. The people in the bus companies do—they have been doing it for a long time. We have to be as clever as they are.

[90] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Joyce, you have the last question.

[91] **Joyce Watson:** It has already been asked.

[92] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Iawn. Diolch yn fawr iawn i Stuart am y wers ddaeryddiaeth honno—rydych wedi mynd â ni o Foncath i Wrecsam a Thre-gŵyr. Os bydd cwestiynau ar ôl, efallai y gwnawn ni eu hanfon atat ti os ydym yn teimlo bod unrhyw faes heb gael ei drafod.

Alun Ffred Jones: Okay. Thank you very much to Stuart for that geography lesson—you have taken us from Boncath to Wrexham and Gowerton. If any questions remain, perhaps we will send them to you if we feel that any area has not been covered.

[93] **Yr Athro Cole:** Diolch yn fawr, Gadeirydd, a diolch i'r pwyllgor. Byddwn yn hapus iawn i gael sgwrs gyda'r clerwr neu'r cynghorydd. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Professor Cole: Thank you, Chair, and thanks to the committee. I would be very happy if the clerk or adviser came to have a discussion with me. Thank you very much.

10.15 a.m.

[94] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I see that our Chair has arrived. He had a difficult journey here, apparently, so Nick, I invite you to take over the chairing of the committee.

*Daeth Nick Ramsay i'r Gadair am 10.15 a.m.
Nick Ramsay took the Chair at 10.15 a.m.*

Ymchwiliad i Drafndiaeth Gyhoeddus Integredig: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth
Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport: Evidence Session

[95] **Nick Ramsay:** I welcome the witnesses Richard Cope and Tracey McAdam. Could you please outline your roles for the record?

[96] **Mr Cope:** I am Richard Cope, passenger transport manager for Monmouthshire County Borough Council and current chair of the Association of Transport Coordinating Officers Cymru.

[97] **Ms McAdam:** I am Tracey McAdam and I am integrated transport unit manager for Newport City Council and an ATCO member.

[98] **Nick Ramsay:** Thank you for being with us today. Joyce Watson has the first question.

[99] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you very much for being with us and thank you for your paper. I want to kick off by asking questions around the competition rules and their impact on integration and whether, in your opinion, the recommendations of the Competition Commission's local bus service market investigation might address some of those issues.

[100] **Mr Cope:** Overall, the Competition Commission's recommendations aim to promote bus on bus competition, rather than supporting the passenger's preference for integrated urban public transport. However, within the recommendations, it did recognise the need for effective multi-operator ticket schemes that will provide benefits to passengers, improve integration and increase patronage. The recommendations suggest the introduction of legislation to give powers to the regional transport consortia to introduce mandatory, competitively-priced, multi-operator ticketing schemes. Although this is a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough, because the commission suggests that multimodal schemes tend to have price premiums and therefore prove unattractive for those passengers who only need to use the bus.

[101] The Office of Fair Trading has been invited to review the ticketing block exemption that exists at the moment, as it pertains to E-pur schemes, and also to revenue sharing for certain multi-operator ticketing schemes. There are numerous multi-operator bus modal tickets available, such as Plusbus, Network Rider, Explorer and flexi-passes, many of which have geographical ranges, and are premium-priced with restricted validity. These arrangements will not deliver integrated ticketing or integrated public transport. Current competition issues a vast majority of through tickets. Some have second-operator tickets, where other operators will take tickets at the moment, but obviously others do not. Some of the smaller operators do not take part in multiticketing schemes or second operator schemes. There is no multi-operator travel card around; most bus companies have schemes of their own, so they will have their own types of tickets.

[102] The Competition Commission recommended that local authorities consider the potential of voluntary or statutory partnerships rather than franchising to increase the number of bus operators in the market and improve the quality of information provided to passengers. The regional transport consortia requirement to develop a regional bus network strategy envisages that voluntary partnerships with the operators will be implemented to provide a more integrated transport system with comprehensive, accurate public transport information.

[103] **Joyce Watson:** Okay. So, how do you think the Welsh Government should seek to influence the UK competition rules in the context of the Competition Commission's recommendations, bearing in mind that we just heard the other side of the story from

Professor Stuart Cole, who says that the only way to go is franchising?

[104] **Mr Cope:** Do you want to answer that, Tracey?

[105] **Joyce Watson:** If you do not feel comfortable answering that now, you could write to us.

[106] **Nick Ramsay:** That is my decision, but yes, the witnesses can write to us. Would you rather write on that point, Mr Cope?

[107] **Mr Cope:** Yes, we would.

[108] **Nick Ramsay:** Okay, fine. I now bring in Byron Davies.

[109] **Byron Davies:** Good morning. I have read your paper, and you have been quite keen to tell us that the competition policy is a

[110] ‘key deterrent to inter-operator co-ordination timetabling (and ticketing)’.

[111] I would like you to expand on that, and give us more information on your view of the impact of the current profusion of multi-operator and multimodal tickets on passengers, and on how we can move forward on that.

[112] **Mr Cope:** Basically, at the moment, operators are not really allowed to talk to one another on multimodal ticketing. We have a situation in our area where two operators run the same route but will not accept each other’s tickets. Something needs to be brought in, in relation to the Competition Commission’s recommendations, whereby the block exemption on ticketing is reviewed, allowing those operators to talk more freely to each other and to look at a more integrated ticketing system. At the moment, competition precludes that.

[113] **Byron Davies:** Are we ever going to arrive—and how could we arrive—at a situation whereby people can jump on a bus in Newport and arrive at Swansea, and then get on a bus with the same ticket and travel all the way to Aberaeron, Aberystwyth or wherever?

[114] **Ms McAdam:** A national ticketing scheme would probably be the answer.

[115] **Byron Davies:** Could we have that in Wales?

[116] **Ms McAdam:** Not within the current legislation.

[117] **Byron Davies:** Right, so what do we need to do to change that situation?

[118] **Mr Cope:** You would basically have to change some of the legislation around the competition side of things. Many of the laws at the moment are made by the Department for Transport; they are not made by the Welsh Government. Operators have to abide by those rules. Local authorities are in a situation whereby we are not allowed to step in within competitive areas—where commercial services are running. We do not really have a say in the way that the service is being run. We can talk to the operators, but we cannot have a say on timetables or anything else. To achieve an integrated ticketing system running all of the way through, you would need multi-operator buy-in.

[119] **Ms McAdam:** Multi-operator buy-in is essential to promote a national ticketing system.

[120] **Byron Davies:** So, there is no progress at all in that area.

[121] **Ms McAdam:** No, not currently.

[122] **Eluned Parrott:** I would like to follow up on that, if I may. There are places where there are integrated ticketing procedures in operation in the UK. So, this cannot just be about the legal framework. The legal framework must allow for it, if it is successfully operating elsewhere.

[123] **Mr Cope:** There are examples of that. London, for instance, is a franchised area and has regulated bus and train services that are all regulated by one authority. To achieve that, there are passenger transport executives running in different areas that have these franchises out there. However, we do not have that within Wales.

[124] **Byron Davies:** I do not understand why that is the case, though. Is it reluctance, and if so, on whose part?

[125] **Mr Cope:** I think that a lot of it comes down to funding, at the end of the day. If you set up a joint transport authority, for instance, it takes quite a lot of money. Would it be better to use that money to try to bring people together, rather than using it to set that up in the first place? Is it a big enough area to cover, and what areas would it cover? You have to look into all of these things, to see whether or not it is a viable proposition.

[126] **Alun Ffred Jones:** I wish to address information provision for passengers. How do we get consistent information to passengers across Wales? At the moment, it is very patchy. We heard from Stuart Cole that, in fact, it is non-existent in some places and very good in others. So, how do we improve that?

[127] **Mr Cope:** The Association of Transport Coordinating Officers has always advocated that there should be consistent public transport information throughout Wales. Even if you look at it on a regional basis, we would like to see consistency in information provision—timetables being of the same consistency and readability, public transport information booklets being produced, and buy-in from operators. At the moment, it is patchy; some local authorities are good at providing information and put money towards that, and some operators are very good at providing information, but you have all the smaller operators feeding in to some of these services that do not really provide that information. If the local authority does not provide it, that leads to patchiness around Wales.

[128] It all comes down to funding a lot of the time. We do not have a great amount of funding in local authorities at the moment to produce timetables. In our authority, we produce a timetable booklet and timetables, but commercial bus operators change their timetables on a regular basis. To keep up with timetabling and to keep that information provision going, you could have to change your timetables four or five times a year. We would like to see only two changes per year, with services changed on a six-monthly basis—that would be a lot easier than having them changed haphazardly. One operator could make changes this month and, within three or four weeks, another operator could make changes. Therefore, if there are four or five services on a timetable, you could have to change it every month to keep it up to date. There is a funding issue to that.

[129] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Why is electronic information not consistent?

[130] **Ms McAdam:** What do you mean by ‘not consistent’?

[131] **Alun Ffred Jones:** That it is not the same. It is very good in some places—we have heard that it is good in Cardiff and in Aberystwyth, apparently.

[132] **Ms McAdam:** Again, it is a resourcing issue. The real-time passenger information systems that are in operation in Cardiff, Newport and some other areas are quite costly to operate and need constant updating. Given how technology is improving, there are systems that are more geared towards what the bus operators are doing, linked to ticket machines. They should be able to provide better information, going forward. Investment is needed to upgrade the real-time passenger information. Some of the older systems are based on GPS locations, with information fed back to a central unit and radioed across to the boxes. That is then compared to the times against a standard timetable, and counted down as it is assumed that buses arrive at the stops. You then get cases where buses disappear from the real-time information system before they get there. It is down to the technology, but it has improved greatly over recent years.

[133] **Mr Cope:** It is also down to the operators; they sometimes change their vehicles and do not put the transponder on the vehicle, so it does not pick up the real-time information.

[134] **Ms McAdam:** You get good operators and bad operators. There are good operators that buy in to the system and use it for scheduling and monitoring their services, to ensure that there is as little downtime as possible for its operation, and make sure that the real-time passenger information systems are running correctly. However, there are others that rely on it running itself, but it does not run itself. It needs input from bus operators.

[135] **Nick Ramsay:** Part of our challenge this year is to try to get to the Assembly by public transport. I tried to get from Raglan to Cardiff by bus once—not today—and, as Byron said, the timetable on the internet was completely out of date. That needs to be addressed.

[136] **Mr Cope:** That is another problem. Traveline Cymru is kept up to date with information from the operators but, because there are so many changes all the time, keeping that up to date is a challenge for everybody. In our authority, we have it on our website but it is time-consuming to change those all the time, because they are being changed on a regular basis.

[137] **Kenneth Skates:** Are you telling us that you do not have the capacity within your organisations to keep it updated?

10.30 a.m.

[138] **Mr Cope:** Not on a regular basis. We have the capacity to do and change these things, but because of the regularity of changes to the bus timetables, keeping that up is a challenge.

[139] **Kenneth Skates:** Why is it a challenge?

[140] **Mr Cope:** If you have only one person in your authority doing it all, he has to do the timetables out on site, the bus guide, the internet guide and possibly provide information to Traveline Cymru as well. He is not just doing one activity.

[141] **Ms McAdam:** If you have 700 or 800 bus stops that need to be changed on the same day, it is a struggle for one person to do all that work on the same day.

[142] **Kenneth Skates:** So, it is an employment issue.

[143] **Ms McAdam:** It is a resourcing issue. The person may not then be required to do that work for two or three months. The work is subject to changes that come from the bus operators. We do not dictate to the bus operators when they change their timetables.

[144] **Nick Ramsay:** Do the passengers care? Do they want more information?

[145] **Mr Cope:** They want the information.

[146] **Byron Davies:** This might seem like a really silly question, but why do timetables need to change all the time?

[147] **Mr Cope:** A great deal of it comes down to commercial business sense. If there is a new development in an area that needs to be serviced, an operator may fit that into its timetable. Operators may tweak the timetable because of capacity issues. They may not have enough vehicles. They take on extra contracts—some operators may have school contracts and some may have tendered service contracts, and that may change their peak vehicle requirements for the day. They have to change their timetables to counteract that. They may want to increase the frequency of a service on a commercial route as it picks up. They might go from a 20-minute frequency to a 10-minute frequency.

[148] **Ms McAdam:** There may be congestion on certain parts of the route, which will mean they need to change the intermediate timing points. That can have a knock-on effect on the timetable.

[149] **Kenneth Skates:** I have one more point on this. Do you think that such regular changes to timetables damages confidence?

[150] **Mr Cope:** I think so. For example, if we provide a bus guide in April and an operator changes its service in May, the bus guide is already out of date. We do not have the resources to print another bus guide, so people have the wrong information—for example, they may turn up at 8.10 a.m. for a bus that actually left at 8.06 a.m.. So, too many changes are not good for the public and they are certainly not good for authorities, regional transport consortia or whoever is actually running the service. It is not conducive to running a good integrated service and providing accurate information.

[151] **David Rees:** It sounds as though commercialisation takes priority over passengers.

[152] **Mr Cope:** Unfortunately it does, yes.

[153] **David Rees:** Moving on to the position we find ourselves in with the Welsh Government and its policies, with regard to effectiveness, Professor Cole referred to the Transport Act 1985, which brought in the deregulation of buses and this free-for-all. He would like to stop that and go back to greater regulation. Is there a need for the Welsh Government to have more powers to allow better integration, or is it the case that the Welsh Government is not using its powers correctly in developing its policies at the moment?

[154] **Mr Cope:** At the moment, bus services in Britain are still effectively governed by the Transport Act 1985. Changes were made in 2000 and 2006, but it is still basically the 1985 Act. There are limits to what can be done through that Act. As local authorities, our primary role is defined as reactionary rather than leading the way on this. With a commercial network, we have to look at where we can integrate our services that need to be tendered. To put it bluntly, more regulation would probably help with integration, because we would be able to bring the services together. We are looking at this new regional transport network strategy for bus and community transport services. We will obviously work in line with the operators on that, and perhaps something may come out of that whereby we could get a better network out there.

[155] **Ms McAdam:** It is a matter of putting the funding into a strategic network rather than just paying operators for operating miles. I think that it has to be a better way forward.

[156] **David Rees:** In that sense, I suppose that that takes us on to my next question. We have transport consortia. Clearly, the transport consortia at the moment are non-statutory; therefore, there is a variation in the governance of those. Is it better to have a model such as a joint transport authority or passenger transport executive to basically create that and have opportunities to do that, rather than a non-statutory body?

[157] **Mr Cope:** I do not see that setting up a JTA would guarantee better integration. It may help with it, but obviously you still have that competitive element of the commercial services out there. There is very little that we can do if someone says that they are going to put a commercial service on that could conflict with the network. If we are looking at JTAs, it will cost a fair amount of money to set one up in the first place. It is a question of whether that money would be better worked through the regional transport consortia to actually take on the role of setting up a network, whereby we could work with the operators, possibly under voluntary partnerships, to set that network up. I think that the governance will have to be strengthened because you still also need that sort of locality. So, I think that you still need your local authorities feeding into that regional network strategy to keep the local communities together with services.

[158] **David Rees:** May I ask a simple question? Would establishing a JTA actually create more problems? As local authorities are on the ground and therefore know some of the areas that are disadvantaged and the services involved, would a JTA take that away and put it at a distance?

[159] **Mr Cope:** Quite possibly, because if you look at community transport services, for instance, and even some of the tendered local bus services in urban and rural areas, you will see that the local element is crucial to delivering those services. Within our area we had a lot of bus services running to rural areas that were very poorly used, and we have replaced them with community transport through our Grass Routes scheme. We have almost doubled some of the patronage on those services because we are now offering something that the public wants. If you have a regional or joint transport authority overlooking it all, it will take into account the largest numbers that have been travelling, and the people in rural areas and the small conurbations within urban areas may end up with a worse service than they have now.

[160] **Joyce Watson:** In theory, I agree that that could be an outcome. I cover Mid and West Wales, so I know about rural issues. It would depend on what you put into the contract thereafter and how you put your deals together, would it not? Would it help if you had a quality bus contract, where you put in some rules that would act against what you think might happen to prevent them from actually happening?

[161] **Mr Cope:** Quality bus partnerships are a useful tool for improving the quality of bus services. That is granted. Again, local authorities would be brought into it to put the infrastructure in place for that quality bus partnership. I know that they have tried to bring in many quality bus partnerships over a period of time, but very few have been able to be implemented simply because of the cost of implementation and the time that it takes to implement them. The operators are not all that conducive to signing up to them.

[162] **Joyce Watson:** I am sorry to interrupt, but that is my very point. At the moment, what they do, because of the competition rules, is that they cream everything off. We understand the profit element, but they are not really concerned about delivering non-profitable services. That is what I am trying to get at, if we changed the system.

[163] **Mr Cope:** Looking at it another way, through ATCO, we advocate that voluntary partnerships with the operators would be just as good. They would not take as long to set up and they would be a lot more cost-effective than implementing quality bus partnerships.

There may be places where quality bus schemes or contacts work, and we would not advocate that they be outlawed altogether, but voluntary partnerships will work with operators in the area.

[164] **Ms McAdam:** A new funding mechanism is being introduced next year with the regional bus strategies, so funding will be allocated on the basis of what you need to sort out issues. So, the bus service operators grant element will be paid only on the services that you think are necessary. So, if an operator is creaming off parts of the network during the day, but not providing the service in the evening or on the weekend when it is not profitable, then there is a question as to whether the operator should be receiving the BSOG for that element as well. So, the changes to the funding mechanism may be able to readjust that.

[165] **David Rees:** You mentioned voluntary partnerships in comparison with the quality bus partnerships. Are you aware of any voluntary partnerships that currently exist?

[166] **Mr Cope:** There are a couple that already exist in north Wales between operators and local authorities. We work closely in our region with the operators and the Confederation of Passenger Transport. We work on a partnership basis and we try to speak to them when we are looking at our networks and the way that we are moving things on. Tracey is right that, with the upcoming change in the bus funding, when it becomes regional and we can set the criteria for those bus services to be run, a lot of this creaming off of services may stop, because they will have to provide a certain level of service, with a certain type of vehicle, to be able to run that service and to get the funding towards running it.

[167] **Ms McAdam:** There have been limited quality bus partnerships, again, I think, in north Wales, mainly, if you could protect the tendered routes from cherry picking by the smaller operators. I think that TrawsCymru is one of the routes that is being looked at for a quality bus partnership or quality contract, again, to protect that franchised service.

[168] **Eluned Parrott:** You have already touched on the regional transport consortia developing regional transport network strategies. Could you briefly tell me what you think ought to be included in such a strategy and how it would help to integrate bus and community transport with other passenger transport, for example rail?

[169] **Mr Cope:** Regionalising bus services is a step forward, and we all support it. However, there is a concern that, with the 25% cut in bus funding, a lot of these networks will not be able to emerge as we would like them to, which will not improve integration. There should be an emphasis in these strategies on promoting integrated ticketing and on the contribution to standardising public transport information and ensuring timetable integration, where feasible.

[170] Rail integration is probably more needed in rural areas, because if you have a railway station within a major city, most of the services running from that station will have a frequency of 10, 20 or 30 minutes. Interchanges are key, because you want good-quality interchanges within those areas—good bus stations, good rail stations and good drop-off and pick-up points—rather than timetable integration, because those services are regular and people can catch a service within 10 or 15 minutes throughout the day. However, in a rural area, where you have two-hourly or hourly services, timetable integration is crucial, particularly with rail.

10.45 a.m.

[171] We have worked within our area of Monmouthshire. We are in a rural area and we have three or four railway stations within that area. We try to integrate some of the timetables with the train timetables. Of course, the problem with train timetables is that they change,

probably twice a year, as well. However, we have started a demand-responsive service to the Severn Tunnel Junction station through our Grass Routes scheme. We have found that that has helped because people have confidence that it will turn up for them, get them to the railway station on time and, if their train is late, wait for them, rather than a timetabled bus that will drive off according to the timetable. So, that type of thing that needs to be brought into this network strategy so that there is the best fit for each situation.

[172] **Ms McAdam:** It should include flexible transport services in rural areas that connect to the main bus service networks, perhaps run by a community transport scheme such as Bwcabus.

[173] **Mr Cope:** You have schemes like Bwcabus, which is not a community transport scheme, but is run by a commercial bus operator, that provide links to the main bus network.

[174] **Joyce Watson:** I will move on to funding and the balance between capital and revenue or, in other words, highways and byways. Do you think that the balance is right as it stands and are you content with that balance? I will ask that first.

[175] **Mr Cope:** The balance needs to be looked at. In the longer term, a consistent funding stream needs to be developed to support long-term planning and capital investment. In terms of capital investment, if we are going to promote public transport, some of that money should be ring-fenced to go towards interchange facilities. At the moment, especially in the south-east region, the interchanges are poor. Cardiff, Newport, Merthyr and all those bus stations need redevelopment and they need money to be put into them. If people are to have the confidence to use public transport, they need somewhere where they can feel safe and that is clean, tidy and warm enough for them to change clothes. Other resources could be put towards information.

[176] **Joyce Watson:** Do you think that there is scope—whether this is a fair question, I do not know—for the local government borrowing initiatives to be used to fund some of the things that you have just mentioned?

[177] **Mr Cope:** That would be a good way forward on it, yes, because that funding has proved successful with the roads. We would advocate that.

[178] **Joyce Watson:** We have talked about what we would like, but now we have to get to the real world of money. If you were going to prioritise something in terms of integrating transport, what might it be?

[179] **Ms McAdam:** On a capital or revenue spending basis?

[180] **Joyce Watson:** In terms of integration; I suppose that it is a mix of both, but mostly capital, I would think, but it is for you to tell me.

[181] **Mr Cope:** In terms of integration, there need to be facilities at interchanges, where people are changing modes or vehicles or bus to bus. There is more bus-to-bus integration than there is bus to rail. I think that it is three or four times more. However, in rural areas, you have more bus to rail. Certainly, interchanges and facilities for passengers need to be looked at.

[182] **Byron Davies:** When you use the word ‘interchanges’, are you talking about transport hubs?

[183] **Mr Cope:** Yes.

[184] **Byron Davies:** I am a great fan of those. Good.

[185] **Nick Ramsay:** Are you happy with the transport hubs? I see that you are. Ken Skates has the next question.

[186] **Kenneth Skates:** I will move on to talk about common standards for integration. Could they be beneficial and, if so, precisely what sort of standards are required?

[187] **Mr Cope:** I think we mentioned that public transport information needs to be at a good and consistent standard throughout Wales. We have advocated this for many years. There should be a minimum and consistent standard because you can read a lot of timetables but you cannot read others. If there is a consistent standard, people will have more confidence in looking at them and being able to read them and find what they want.

[188] **Ms McAdam:** Integrated ticketing is another common approach that would be beneficial—a full, national ticketing system that incorporates multimode, multi-operator, multijourney ticketing. That is another common approach.

[189] **Mr Cope:** Another one, going back to interchanges and transport hubs, is that the standard has to be good—it has to be good quality. Obviously, vehicles also have to be of good quality. We all like to see accessibility to different places, but the standards have to be there. It has to be good quality for people to have confidence in using public transport.

[190] **Kenneth Skates:** We were talking earlier about changes to timetables, and it strikes me from what you are saying that the commercial nature of some operators leads them to perhaps speculate over routes or scheduling. Is there scope for implementing some sort of common standard on changing schedules and routes?

[191] **Ms McAdam:** I think that that is part of the public transport information package. You would have to standardise the dates on which operators could change their timetables so that resources could be allocated at those times to ensure that the information was kept up to date and accurate.

[192] **Eluned Parrott:** I wanted to talk a little more about contract schemes. We have talked about quality partnerships and contracts and how they are used. I am wondering what evidence you have from elsewhere about how they can be used to drive integration in the transport network, because clearly we do not have a huge number of them operating here in Wales.

[193] **Mr Cope:** There are very few quality bus partnerships and contracts operating throughout the whole of Great Britain, actually.

[194] **Ms McAdam:** Especially quality bus contracts. They are difficult to implement, quite time-consuming to bring about, and they are a last-resort option, really, when nothing else works. To be fair, the bus operators are not in favour of them.

[195] **Eluned Parrott:** So, what is the alternative to these kinds of contracts? Clearly, we have talked about things like franchising as solutions. Is this essentially a failed policy area?

[196] **Mr Cope:** It is difficult to say. The quality bus partnerships have been mooted throughout Government for a long time, but their actual delivery on the ground is not easy to implement. There are so many things that you have to bring into them. I know that Cardiff tried to put one on one corridor, and that was probably six or seven years ago, and it still has not been implemented. This is because funding decreases and there might be part of that actual route that they cannot do anything with—there might be a railway bridge that they

would have to replace, or something like that. There are a lot of barriers to forming a quality bus contract, and of course it costs a fair amount of money to implement them.

[197] **Eluned Parrott:** In which case, looking to the future, what ought we to replace them with if they are not working in their current form?

[198] **Mr Cope:** For Wales, a lot of things can be put into this regional network strategy, including the quality of vehicles, integrated ticketing and good transport information, and this would probably form part of a quality bus contract. However, the actual work on the ground that needs to be done could be done through the local authorities with their local government borrowing, probably.

[199] **Nick Ramsay:** Does anyone have any further questions?

[200] **David Rees:** On that point, I read through your papers, and, as you mentioned earlier, you are very much more for the voluntary partnership than any compulsory/statutory-type partnership. Will voluntary partnerships work?

[201] **Mr Cope:** I think that they will. Obviously, the bus operators are going to be more susceptible to coming on board with local authorities, or with the regional transport consortia, in working with a voluntary partnership.

[202] **Ms McAdam:** Also, there are going to be benefits from integration. You are going to see passenger numbers increase and, hopefully, with the development of bus priority measures as part of the integration package, journey times are going to be reduced. Therefore, it is of benefit to the bus operators to work with us, because they are going to see the benefits through their ticket machines.

[203] **David Rees:** One of the concerns that I have is the need to ensure that we serve those areas that are not viable. I wonder whether voluntary partnerships will work in that type of scenario.

[204] **Mr Cope:** Well, they can, because we can set out criteria for those partnerships that bring in more integration, so that we can bring those services that are not profitable for an operator, through voluntary partnership, and possibly through the use of *de minimis* payments, or whatever, into the partnership.

[205] **Nick Ramsay:** Just before I bring Alun Ffred Jones in, I should say that you have been extremely succinct, so we have time for the last few questions. As local authority officers, how successfully do you think public transport has integrated with the other areas of local authorities, such as economy and education, and what practical steps can be taken to integrate them if this is necessary?

[206] **Mr Cope:** A lot of work has been done over the past six or seven years whereby a number of authorities have formed integrated transport units or passenger transport units. There are much more co-ordinated links now between education and social services in a lot of authorities—I am not saying all authorities, because not all of them have gone down this road. Nevertheless, this has brought economies of scale to working with different areas of—

[207] **Nick Ramsay:** Has there been more success in rural authorities, because of the necessity of providing transport for those services?

[208] **Mr Cope:** No, I do not think so.

[209] **Ms McAdam:** No, not necessarily. We work quite closely with our main bus operator

in Newport, and a lot of our home-to-school transport is done through the local bus service network, which then provides revenue to support the bus service network. That has to be of benefit to both the community and the local authority, because it provides extra revenue to maintain those bus services.

[210] **Mr Cope:** In our authority, we formed a passenger transport unit, and we run our own school buses as well. There are a number of reasons why we did it that way, one of which being that the number of operators is not out there, especially on school bus contracts. We are very short of operators in some areas. Other areas have plenty, but there is a shortage of operators in some areas.

[211] The integration of passenger transport within authorities has brought a lot of the local authority functions together, and economies of scale have been achieved.

[212] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Another area is planning. How closely is the public transport element linked to the planning authority, especially in the local development plans?

[213] **Mr Cope:** We advocate that we are informed from the start when they are planning new developments. It used not to happen in the past—many times, a new school has been built and they have not been able to get a bus in there. Lately, however, we have a lot more input into the planning of developments and, through section 106 moneys, we are trying to develop good transport interchanges and links with those developments. Also, regionally, there should be an input into all developments within that region through the regional transport consortia.

11.00 a.m.

[214] **Byron Davies:** I would like to ask a question that might be slightly off-track. How effective do you think ATCO Cymru is at pulling all of this together?

[215] **Mr Cope:** We have many good officers within ATCO Cymru. We have developed many different policies and we work in different areas. We work closely with the regional transport consortia and local authorities.

[216] **Ms McAdam:** We also worked with the Welsh Government in reviewing bus funding and the concessionary fare scheme.

[217] **Mr Cope:** We have officers working on all of the groups within the Welsh Government, providing information and working to take things forward in Wales to provide a better integrated transport system.

[218] **Ms McAdam:** We share best practice between each of the authority areas. We normally have representatives from most of the authorities in Wales, and we share good practice with regard to what has been done.

[219] **Mr Cope:** We also have links with the ATCO executive in London and with Scotland, and we see the sort of schemes that they are bringing forward in their areas. If there are schemes that we think are viable, we bring them forward in Wales as well.

[220] **Byron Davies:** Does the Government listen to you?

[221] **Mr Cope:** Yes, on occasion.

[222] **Nick Ramsay:** The same is true here; it listens occasionally.

[223] I thank Richard Cope and Tracey McAdam for giving evidence today to our inquiry into integrated public transport in Wales. It has been really helpful. Thank you very much for being here. With that, I close the meeting.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.01 a.m.
The meeting ended at 11.01 a.m.