

BRECON BEACONS AND POWYS VISITOR TRANSPORT PLAN



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For Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
and Powys County Council

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Brecon Beacons and Powys Visitor Transport Plan

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - BRECON BEACONS AND POWYS VISITOR TRANSPORT PLAN.....	3
CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL	8
1. INTRODUCTION	14
1.1 Overall aspiration.....	14
1.2 Targets.....	15
1.3 Background	15
2. STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT.....	17
3. CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE VISITOR TRANSPORT	23
3.1 Barriers to use of transport alternatives.....	24
3.2 Incentives to change behaviour	26
4. REVIEW OF VISITOR TRANSPORT IN POWYS	28
4.1 Transport audit.....	28
4.2 Tourism audit.....	32
4.3 Summary of the current situation in Powys and the Brecon Beacons	35
5. THE STRATEGY	37
5.1 Visitor Transport Plan Objectives.....	37
6. ROUTES AS TRAVEL EXPERIENCES	39
7. VISITOR TRANSPORT HUBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE	44
7.1 Visitor Transport Hubs.....	44
7.2 First impressions count.....	46
8. TOURISM PROVIDERS ON BOARD.....	47
9. MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND TICKETING	49
9.1 Marketing	49
9.2 Re-thinking information provision.....	50
9.3 Ticketing as a key marketing tool.....	51
10. WALKING AND CYCLING.....	54
10.1 Walking	54
10.2 Cycling.....	56
10.3 Other activities.....	57
11. ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT.....	58
11.1 Electric vehicles	58
11.2 Demand Response and Community Transport	60
12. DELIVERY	62
12.1 Management of the Plan	62
12.2 Delivery.....	63

12.2	Monitoring.....	66
13.	VISITOR TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN	67
14.	APPENDICES	77
	Appendix 1 List of people who have contributed to this plan	77
	Appendix 2 Relevant strategy and research documents	79
	Appendix 3 Transport Audit	81
	Appendix 4 Draft Guidelines for Visitor Attractions.....	89
	Appendix 5 Go Lakes Travel Programme	90
	Appendix 6 Rail Franchising	91

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - BRECON BEACONS AND POWYS VISITOR TRANSPORT PLAN

Visitor Transport Plan – the aim and ambition

The aim of the Visitor Transport Plan is to improve the sustainability of tourism across Powys and the Brecon Beacons National Park by encouraging visitors to use low-carbon transport modes and reduce car mileage.

It is estimated that 88% of visitors travel by car to reach Mid Wales and most of these continue to use the car to travel around once here. Most visitors drive over 300 miles to and from their holiday in this area and a further 300 miles or more a week while here. Encouraging visitors to use alternatives to their cars can be difficult but there are examples of successful schemes around the UK and abroad. Continuing rises in fuel prices, increasing concern for environmental issues and the trend towards fewer people owning cars, especially younger age groups, means that the prospects for making change have never been better. There also appears to be a stronger political will to address the issue, for example the proposed Active Travel Bill which aims to change the transport culture of Wales, placing a much greater emphasis on walking and cycling.

The overall aspiration of the plan is to position Mid Wales as a place where low carbon travel is integrated into the tourist experience, i.e. through making transport part of the fun and educative element of tourism rather than simply a means to an end. The plan seeks to develop a quality public transport network which integrates the needs of the tourist and resident. It will also bring economic benefits as visitor spending is focused more in their locality and on alternative locally provided forms of transport.

Powys and the Brecon Beacons is ideally situated to take forward this opportunity. It can act as an exemplar for the whole of Wales as to what can be achieved. Targets include increasing the proportion of visitors travelling to Powys and the Brecon Beacons by public transport, reducing the level of visitors' car mileage to travel around Mid Wales and increasing patronage on the core bus network and train services.

Background

This plan was commissioned through the Sustainable Tourism Powys project, funded by the Rural Development Plan and managed by Powys County Council, in association with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. In addition funding was made available from SWWITCH (South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium) to enable the work to cover the south western portion of the national Park as well, so that the whole area could be adequately considered. The plan covers the whole of Powys, which includes much of the Brecon Beacons National Park, plus the natural gateway towns and corridors into Powys and the National Park. This includes towns such as Merthyr Tydfil, Neath, Llandeilo and Llandovery, border towns in Herefordshire and Shropshire and key transport interchanges such as Abergavenny and Shrewsbury.

This Visitor Transport Plan has included: a review of tourism and transport policy documents and studies; an audit of the public transport routes and infrastructure; an audit of visitor attractions and countryside sites and their accessibility by alternative transport; research into examples of best practice from the UK and Europe; discussions with a wide range of transport and tourism managers, operators and businesses; a workshop with over 30 stakeholders, a specialist study into the potential of electric transport options.

Strategic review

The review of transport and tourism policy documents revealed that while most tourism strategies mention transport and most transport plans make reference to tourism there is, in the main, no strong integrated message. There are indications that this is changing and that the two sectors are coming closer together with more joined up recommendations. The main area which is seen as a priority in both transport and tourism documents is providing better information on sustainable travel options.

Challenges and barriers to use of sustainable transport

The mind-set, knowledge and perceptions of the visitor are key – they need to feel confident if they are to use public transport or alternatives to the car. As well as perceptual barriers, such as being worried about using the bus or the fear of things going wrong with public transport journeys, there are also many structural and practical barriers which make it more difficult for visitors to choose to leave their cars behind. These include poor information and infrastructure, lack of Sunday services, lack of bicycle racks or space on trains and a lack of knowledge amongst many tourism operators.

However, experience has shown a range of incentives which can be used to change behaviours including promoting public transport as a mainstream option and an enjoyable way to explore and experience the scenic area. Endorsements, special offers, cost comparisons and branding may also help boost visitor confidence.

Audits of current situation

The transport and tourism audits revealed a range of positives and negatives:

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekday core bus network is good for a rural area and provides access for day trips from a wide range of locations • Flagship routes e.g. T4, 39, 461, X32, X43, X47, X63, X75, X85 • BBNP Visitor Transport Initiative and Partnership -changing cultures • Beacons Bus-good promotion and quality • Cambrian and Heart of Wales Railways - imaginative promotions • Innovative electric vehicle activity • Strong walking (and cycling/riding) product • Some green aware tourism businesses • High proportion of visitors are public transport aware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High proportions of visitors arrive and travel round by car • Very limited Sunday bus network outside the Beacons Bus network • Variable quality of bus operators and vehicles • Lack of bus-train connectivity • Limited activity from Wales Transport and Tourism Assessment Group • Few large visitor attractions and many not directly accessible by public transport • Walking and mountain biking viewed as car based ‘activities’ not as transport • Few businesses promote sustainable travel options proactively

Strategy and objectives

The key to delivering a successful visitor transport plan will be to bridge the cultural divide between transport and tourism sectors. Tourism tends to work in local hubs and wider area destinations, while transport is a network of linear routes radiating out of a small number of key hubs and interchanges. Our approach is to work both with hubs and routes and to identify what actions need to be delivered for a route and what actions are best delivered through local stakeholders in hub towns or groups of towns within each destination area.

1. To develop and promote public key transport routes as travel experiences

The top priority is to achieve a major shift in visitor numbers from car based trips to and around Powys and the Brecon Beacons to public transport trips. Scenic bus and train routes should be developed as ‘tourist experiences’ in order to attract new patronage. Each route should be branded to alert the market to its special features. Energy will need to focus on the routes with most chance of delivering such a shift – backing the winners. Top priority is the T4 Cardiff to Newtown, followed by the X75 Shrewsbury to Llangurig/Rhayader, X43 Abergavenny to Brecon and 461 Hereford to Llandrindod Wells. For train routes there is scope to improve promotion, capacity, frequency and the experience.

2. To establish strong visitor transport hubs and deliver infrastructure improvements

The weaknesses in transport infrastructure along these routes, especially at bus stops, need to be addressed and local communities and businesses in visitor transport hub towns, which the routes link, have to be engaged. Visitors will find good information, seven day a week services, itineraries, walks from public transport and a proactive local tourism industry in each visitor transport hub town. Top priority visitor transport hubs are Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Brecon, Machynlleth and Abergavenny.

3. To engage tourism providers in promoting low carbon transport options to their visitors

All those who work in the visitor economy are key players; providing visitors with information and hosting them. This plan will not be successful unless it can bring on board a large number of tourism providers and convince them of the benefits of sustainable visitor transport. The plan recommends training and familiarisation trips, smart travel planning especially for attractions and major events, discounts for those travelling by public transport and a range of promotions.

4. To strengthen marketing, communication and ticketing for sustainable visitor transport across Powys

Information provision and marketing is key in all this – promoting positive messages but most importantly making it easy to find out about, book and buy sustainable transport options. Attractive propositions in the form of itineraries and good value tickets with discounts and benefits will be required. The plan makes recommendations on websites, timetables, publications and the use of mobile technology. Traveline Cymru’s role is crucial.

5. To develop and promote walking and cycling as key elements of a strategy to reduce visitor fuel consumption

Substituting some of the time visitors spend in cars for walking or cycling during their visits is another important part of the strategy. Zero carbon activities such as these are already well catered for in most of the area. The challenge is to reduce the dependence on the car to access walks etc. and develop attractive new offers. There are opportunities working through Walkers are Welcome towns, the Walking with Offa Programme, walks from trains and buses, taxi drop offs and luggage transfer and tourism operators promoting walking

and cycling opportunities. Increasing the profile and availability of cycle hire is also a priority, along with other outdoor activities and canal based transport options.

6. To develop the use of electric vehicles, community transport vehicles and other vehicles with ‘fun-factor’ for visitors

Finally there are a range of technological developments in low carbon transport which the area is already pioneering. Increasing the use of electric cars, buggies, bicycles and boats would reduce fossil fuel consumption and can be promoted as fun ways to travel. They are likely to attract considerable PR due to their novelty and fun factors and are therefore valuable in raising the profile of the area as a sustainable travel destination. There may also be scope to link with community transport organisations to help fill some of the gaps in public transport provision and serve specific visitor needs.

Delivery and management of the plan

This five year plan will be managed by a Powys wide Visitor Transport Management Group with action being undertaken at a Tourism Destination Area level in concert with the local Destination Management Partnership (DMP). In some cases (such as the Brecon Beacons) it may be advisable to set up a destination wide Visitor Transport Partnership. Elsewhere the DMP will build it into their work. Delivery of the network of routes across Mid Wales would be best done by one body operating as if they were a virtual commercial bus company to plan, co-ordinate, monitor and market all the bus services. The merger of the Powys and Ceredigion Transport Units and the contemplated inclusion of TraCC’s responsibilities and possible addition of the Meirionydd part of Gwynedd suggests that this organisation should be the lead body (although, for the moment, it is the Powys Transport Unit) for all the partners in the project.

It would be valuable if there could be a senior role at Powys County Council Transport Department overseeing quality, development and marketing for the whole county (and in due course possibly extending to the regional level). This person would be responsible for delivering visitor transport objectives along with helping the whole service develop. If the service is indeed to act as a ‘virtual bus company’ then it is important that it invests in revenue development, with visitors potentially providing a healthy income. It is envisaged that greater emphasis will be placed on marketing transport and tourism. This should be undertaken in partnership with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and other Mid Wales tourism organisations but would best be delivered through at least two Visitor Transport Officer (VTO) posts. These would be dependent on funding but would perform the essential roles of communication, community and trade liaison/training and marketing.

The VTO roles would be to work with hub town communities and businesses (especially along flagship routes) and to develop itineraries, walks from routes, launch adopt a bus stop scheme, support community transport services etc. In the Brecon Beacons this could be an extension of the current Visitor Transport Officer role, but new resource will be required to cover the rest of Powys.

Recommendations

The plan includes 71 recommendations – grouped under the six objectives plus delivery. Those seen as **very high priority** are:

- 1.1 Bus companies to engage with the Visitor Transport Plan Partnership so as to upgrade service delivery and imagery
- 1.2 Engage with clusters of tourism businesses to involve local community in the brand, interpretation, bus stop enhancement, itineraries and to build advocacy

- 1.10 Work towards longer term objectives – prepare for rail refranchising
- 2.1 Secure commitment from the public sector to invest in the routes and infrastructure.
- 2.2 Secure commitment in visitor transport hubs from the local organisations to motivate and engage businesses, develop walking and days out itineraries and PR
- 3.1 Engage businesses in improving their visitor transport knowledge and provision. Walkers and cyclists welcome schemes. Awareness sessions and familiarisation trips.
- 4.1 Complete new visitor websites ensuring transport information is effectively integrated
- 5.11 Strengthen cycle hub towns and set up new hubs, to develop and promote more circular cycle routes, mountain bike routes and cycling itineraries
- 6.1 Establish a Powys and Brecon Beacons-wide large scale e-bike (and e-vehicle) network based at accommodation businesses
- 7.1 Establish a Powys and Brecon Beacons Visitor Transport Management Group and partnerships
- 7.2 Present this Visitor Transport Plan to the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders
- 7.3 Review existing regional public transport delivery model and engage quality/marketing manager
- 7.4 Appoint two Visitor Transport Officers to deliver actions from this plan along flagship routes and in visitor transport hubs
- 7.5 Work with existing and new tourism destinations

Twelve **quick wins** are also identified including 3.1, 4.1 and 6.1 above, plus:

- 1.6 Invest in improvements to CRP websites and systems including the Trainstaysave campaign
- 2.4 Launch 'Adopt a bus stop' scheme for local communities or businesses, install more bike racks at bus stops. Install a 'best practice' bus stop in a high profile locations
- 2.6 Rail station interface upgrades – Audit and improve rail station information, orientation maps, planting, promotional signage
- 4.8 Market the Powys Day Rover and South Wales Network Rider tickets heavily
- 5.2 More walks from buses – itineraries with maps, routes to include pubs and cafes and local businesses
- 5.7 Long distance walks – amend web and printed material to promote access by public transport
- 5.17 Travel Plan for Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. Ensure up to date, accessible information and promote local links more proactively
- 6.2 Promote e-bike rental more heavily from existing companies and set up new hire at specific sites such as Rhayader/Elan Valley, Brecon, Lake Vyrnwy
- 6.3 Extend the charging network for electric cars, electric buggies and e bikes across Powys and the Brecon Beacons and promote as most extensive network in UK.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL – CYNLLUN TRAFNIDIAETH YMWELWYR BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG A PHOWYS

Cynllun Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr – y nod a'r uchelgais

Nod y Cynllun Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr yw gwella cynaliadwyedd twristiaeth ar draws Powys a Pharc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog trwy annog ymwelwyr i ddefnyddio dulliau trafodaeth carbon isel ac i leihau'r milltiroedd a deithir mewn ceir.

Amcangyfrifir bod 88% o ymwelwyr yn teithio mewn ceir i gyrraedd canolbarth Cymru a bod y rhan fwyaf o'r rhain yn dal ati i ddefnyddio'r car i deithio o gwmpas unwaith iddynt gyrraedd. Bydd y rhan fwyaf o ymwelwyr yn teithio dros 300 milltir ar y ffordd i'w gwyliau yn yr ardal hon ac yn ôl a 300 milltir yr wythnos ymhellach neu ragor tra byddant yma. Gall annog ymwelwyr i ddefnyddio dewisiadau eraill yn hytrach na'u ceir fod yn anodd ond mae enghreifftiau o gynlluniau llwyddiannus o gwmpas y Deyrnas DU a thramor. Mae codiadau parhaus ym mhrisiau tanwydd, pryderon cynyddol ynglŷn â materion amgylcheddol a'r tueddiad tuag at lai o bobl yn perchen ar geir, yn enwedig ymysg pobl iau, yn golygu na fu'r rhagolygon i newid pethau erioed yn well. Hefyd, mae ewyllys gwleidyddol cryfach i'w weld i fynd i'r afael â'r mater hwn, er enghraifft y Mesur Teithio Byw arfaethedig sy'n anelu at newid diwylliant trafndiaeth Cymru gan roi mwy o bwyslais o lawer ar gerdded a seiclo.

Dyhead cyffredinol y cynllun yw gosod canolbarth Cymru fel rhywle lle y mae trafndiaeth carbon isel yn rhan annatod o'r profiad twristaidd, h.y. trwy wneud trafndiaeth yn rhan o'r elfen hwyliog ac addysgol sydd i dwristiaeth yn hytrach na bod yn fodd i gyrraedd pen y daith yn unig. Mae'r cynllun yn ceisio datblygu rhwydwaith trafndiaeth gyhoeddus o ansawdd da sy'n integreiddio anghenion twristiaid a phobl leol. Bydd hefyd yn dod â manteision economaidd yn ei sgil wrth i wariant ymwelwyr gael ei ganolbwyntio'n fwy ar yr ardal ac ar ddulliau trafndiaeth eraill a ddarperir yn lleol.

Mae Powys a Bannau Brycheiniog mewn lleoliad delfrydol i fynd â'r cyfle hwn rhagddo. Gall y cynllun weithredu fel enghraifft i Gymru gyfan o ran yr hyn y gellir ei gyflawni. Mae'r targedau'n cynnwys cynyddu canran yr ymwelwyr sy'n teithio i Bowys a Bannau Brycheiniog gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus, gan leihau milltiroedd ceir ymwelwyr wrth iddynt deithio o gwmpas canolbarth Cymru a chynyddu'r niferoedd sy'n defnyddio rhwydwaith craidd y bysiau a'r gwasanaethau trenau.

Cefndir

Comisiynwyd y cynllun hwn trwy brosiect Twristiaeth Gynaliadwy Powys, a ariannwyd gan y Cynllun Datblygu Gwledig a'i reoli gan Gyngor Sir Powys, ar y cyd ag Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog. Ar ben hynny, roedd cyllid ar gael gan SWITCH (Consortium Cludiant Integredig De-orllewin Cymru) i alluogi'r gwaith i gynnwys rhanbarth de-orllewin y Parc Cenedlaethol hefyd, fel y gellid rhoi ystyriaeth ddigonol i'r ardal gyfan. Mae'r cynllun yn ymestyn dros Bowys yn ei chyfanrwydd, sy'n cynnwys llawer o Barc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog, ynghyd â'r trefi a'r coridorau porth naturiol i Bowys a'r Parc Cenedlaethol. Mae hyn yn cynnwys trefi megis Merthyr Tudful, Castell-nedd, Llandeilo a Llanymddyfri, trefi'r ffin yn Swydd Henffordd a Swydd Amwythig a'r prif gyfnewidfeydd trafndiaeth megis y Fenni ac Amwythig.

Mae'r Cynllun Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr wedi cynnwys: adolygiad o ddogfennau polisi ac astudiaethau o dwristiaeth a thrafnidiaeth; archwiliad o lwybrau a seilwaith trafndiaeth gyhoeddus; archwiliad o atyniadau ymwelwyr a safleoedd cefn gwlad a'u hygyrchedd o ran trafndiaeth amgen; ymchwil i enghreifftiau o arferion gorau o'r DU ac Ewrop; trafodaethau ag ystod eang o reolwyr, gweithredwyr a busnesau trafndiaeth a thwristiaeth; gweithdy gyda thros 30 o randdeiliaid ac astudiaeth arbenigol o ddewisiadau trafndiaeth drydan posibl.

Adolygiad Strategol

Datgelodd yr adolygiad o ddogfennau polisi trafndiaeth a thwristiaeth, er bod y rhan fwyaf o strategaethau twristiaeth yn sôn am drafnidiaeth a'r rhan fwyaf o gynlluniau trafndiaeth yn cyfeirio at dwristiaeth, nad oes, ar y cyfan, neges gref, integredig. Mae yna arwyddion bod hyn yn newid a bod y ddau sector yn dod yn nes at ei gilydd, gyda mwy o argymhellion cydgysylltiedig. Y prif faes a welir fel blaenoriaeth mewn dogfennau trafndiaeth a thwristiaeth yw darparu gwell gwybodaeth ar ddewisiadau teithio cynaliadwy.

Heriau a rhwystrau rhag defnyddio trafndiaeth gynaliadwy

Meddylfryd, gwybodaeth a chanfyddiadau ymwelwyr sy'n hollbwysig – rhaid iddynt deimlo'n hyderus os ydynt am ddefnyddio trafndiaeth gyhoeddus neu ddulliau eraill ar wahân i'r car. Yn ogystal â'r rhwystrau o ran canfyddiad, megis poeni am ddefnyddio'r bws oherwydd ofnau y bydd pethau'n mynd o'u lle ar siwrneiau trafndiaeth gyhoeddus, mae hefyd llawer o rwystrau strwythurol ac ymarferol sy'n golygu ei bod yn fwy anodd i ymwelwyr ddewis gadael eu ceir gartre. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys gwybodaeth a seilwaith gwael, diffyg gwasanaethau ar y Sul, diffyg rheseli neu ofod i feiciau ar drenau a diffyg gwybodaeth ymysg llawer o weithredwyr twristiaeth.

Fodd bynnag, mae profiad wedi dangos ystod o gymhellion y gellir eu defnyddio i newid ymddygiad, gan gynnwys hybu trafndiaeth gyhoeddus fel dewis y brif ffrwd ac fel ffordd bleserus o grwydro a phrofi ardaloedd sydd â golygfeydd hardd. Gall geirda, cynigion arbennig, cymariaethau cost a brandio i gyd helpu i roi hwb i hyder ymwelwyr.

Archwiliadau o'r sefyllfa bresennol

Datgelodd yr archwiliadau trafndiaeth a thwristiaeth ystod o bwyntiau cadarnhaol a negyddol:

Cadarnhaol	Negyddol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mae rhwydwaith craidd y bysiau yn ystod yr wythnos yn dda o ystyried mewn ardal wledig sydd dan sylw ac mae'n darparu cyfle i fynd ar deithiau diwrnod o ystod eang o leoliadau. • Y llwybrau trafndiaeth blaenllaw e.e. T4, 39, 461, X32, X43, X47, X63, X75, X85 • Menter a Phartneriaeth Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr PCBB – yn newid diwylliannau • Bws y Bannau – o safon dda ac yn cael ei 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canran uchel o ymwelwyr yn cyrraedd ac yn teithio o gwmpas yn y car. • Rhwydwaith bysiau cyfyngedig iawn ar y Sul heblaw rhwydwaith Bws y Bannau • Ansawdd amrywiol gweithredwyr bysiau a'u cerbydau • Diffyg cysylltedd rhwng bysiau a threnau • Gweithgarwch cyfyngedig ar ran Grŵp Aseu Trafnidiaeth a Thwristiaeth Cymru.

<p>hyrwyddo'n dda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rheilffyrdd y Cambrian a Chalon Cymru – hyrwyddiadau dychmygus • Gweithgarwch cerbydau trydan arloesol • Cynnyrch cerdded (a seiclo/ marchogaeth) cryf • Rhai busnesau twristiaeth sy'n ymwybodol o faterion gwyrdd • Canran uchel o ymwelwyr sy'n ymwybodol o drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ychydig o atyniadau ymwelwyr mawr yn unig a llawer heb fod yn hygyrch yn uniongyrchol gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus • Gwelir cerdded a beicio mynydd fel 'gweithgareddau' seiliedig ar y car nid fel trafnidiaeth • Fawr o fusnesau'n mynd ati i hyrwyddo dewisiadau teithio cynaliadwy
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Strategaethau ac amcanion

Yr allwedd i gyflwyno cynllun trafnidiaeth ymwelwyr llwyddiannus fydd pontio'r rhaniad diwylliannol rhwng y sectorau trafnidiaeth a thwristiaeth. Tuedda twristiaeth i weithio mewn canolfannau lleol a chyrchfannau ardal ehangach, tra mai rhwydwaith o lwybrau llinol yw trafnidiaeth sy'n ymestyn allan o nifer bach o ganolfannau a chyfnwdfeydd allweddol. Ein dull gweithredu yw cydweithio â chanolfannau a llwybrau trafnidiaeth fel ei gilydd ac i adnabod pa gamau y mae angen eu cymryd ar gyfer llwybr trafnidiaeth a pha gamau sy'n cael eu cyflawni orau trwy randdeiliaid lleol mewn canolfannau trefol neu grwpiau o drefi o fewn pob ardal gyrchfan.

1. Datblygu a hyrwyddo'r prif lwybrau trafnidiaeth fel profiadau teithio

Y brif flaenoriaeth yw sicrhau symudiad sylweddol o ran niferoedd ymwelwyr o deithiau yn y car i, ac o gwmpas, Powys a Bannau Brycheiniog i deithiau gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus. Dylai llwybrau bws a thrên sy'n cynnig golygfeydd hardd gael eu datblygu fel 'profiadau twristaidd' er mwyn denu cwsmeriaid newydd. Dylai pob llwybr gael ei frandio i hysbysu'r farchnad am ei nodweddion arbennig. Bydd yn rhaid canolbwyntio egni ar y llwybrau sydd â'r gobaiith gorau o gyflawni symudiad o'r fath – gan gefnogi'r enillwyr. Y brif flaenoriaeth yw'r T4 rhwng Caerdydd a'r Drenewydd, a ddilynir gan yr X75 rhwng Amwythig a Llangurig/Rhaeadr Gwy, yr X43 rhwng y Fenni ac Aberhonddu a'r 461 rhwng Henffordd a Llandrindod. O ran llwybrau trenau, mae yna le i wella hyrwyddo, capasiti, amledd a'r profiad.

2. Sefydlu canolfannau trafnidiaeth ymwelwyr cadarn a gwneud gwelliannau i'r seilwaith.

Rhaid mynd i'r afael â'r gwendidau yn y seilwaith trafnidiaeth ar hyd y llwybrau hyn, yn enwedig mewn safleoedd bysiau, a rhaid ymgysylltu â chymunedau a busnesau lleol mewn trefi sy'n ganolfannau i drafnidiaeth ymwelwyr y mae'r llwybrau hyn yn eu cysylltu. Bydd ymwelwyr yn cael hyd i wasanaethau gwybodaeth da saith diwrnod yr wythnos, manylion siwrneiau, teithiau cerdded a wneir gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus a diwydiant twristiaeth lleol rhagweithiol ym mhob tref sy'n ganolfan i drafnidiaeth ymwelwyr. Y canolfannau i drafnidiaeth ymwelwyr sydd â'r brif flaenoriaeth yw'r Drenewydd, Llandrindod, Aberhonddu, Machynlleth a'r Fenni.

3. Annog darparwyr twristiaeth i hybu dewisiadau trafnidiaeth carbon isel i'w hymwelwyr.

Chwaraewr allweddol yw pawb sy'n gweithio yn yr economi ymwelwyr, gan ddarparu gwybodaeth a lletygarwch. Ni fydd y cynllun hwn yn llwyddiannus oni bai ei fod yn gallu cynnwys nifer o ddarparwyr twristiaeth a'u hargyhoeddi ynglŷn â manteision trafndiaeth ymwelwyr gynaliadwy. Mae'r cynllun yn argymhell hyfforddiant a theithiau ymgynefino, cynllunio-teithio-call yn enwedig ar gyfer atyniadau a digwyddiadau mawr, gostyngiadau i'r rheini sy'n teithio gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus ac amrywiaeth o hyrwyddiadau.

4. Cyfnerthu marchnata, cyfathrebu a chynlluniau tocynnau ar gyfer trafndiaeth ymwelwyr gynaliadwy ar draws Powys

Mae darparu gwybodaeth a marchnata'n hollbwysig yn hyn i gyd – hybu negeseuon cadarnhaol ond yn bwysicaf oll ei gwneud yn hawdd cael gwybod am ddewisiadau trafndiaeth gynaliadwy a'u harchebu a'u prynu. Bydd angen cynigion deniadol ar ffurf cynlluniau teithiau a thocynnau gwerth am arian gyda gostyngiadau a manteision. Mae'r cynllun yn gwneud argymhellion ynghylch gwefannau, amserlenni, cyhoeddiadau a defnyddio technoleg symudol. Mae rôl Traveline Cymru'n hanfodol.

5. Datblygu a hybu cerdded a seiclo fel elfennau allweddol o strategaeth i leihau'r tanwydd a ddefnyddir gan ymwelwyr

Mae ffeirio peth o'r amser y bydd ymwelwyr yn treulio yn eu ceir am gerdded neu seiclo yn ystod eu hymweliadau'n rhan bwysig arall o'r strategaeth. Ceir darpariaeth dda ar gyfer gweithgareddau di-garbon fel y rhain yn y rhan fwyaf o'r ardal. Yr her yw lleihau'r ddibyniaeth ar y car i gyrraedd teithiau cerdded ac yn y blaen a datblygu cynigion deniadol newydd. Ceir cyfleoedd ar waith drwy drefi Croeso i Gerddwyr, y Rhaglen Cerdded gydag Offa, teithiau o drenau a bysiau, gollwng o dacsis a throsglwyddo bagiau a gweithredwyr twristiaeth yn hybu cyfleoedd cerdded a seiclo. Mae cynyddu proffil ac argaeledd llogi beiciau hefyd yn flaenoriaeth, ynghyd â gweithgareddau awyr agored eraill a dewisiadau trafndiaeth ar y gamlas.

6. Datblygu'r defnydd o gerbydau trydan, cerbydau trafndiaeth gymunedol a cherbydau eraill sydd ag elfen o hwyl i ymwelwyr

Yn olaf, ceir ystod o ddatblygiadau technegol o ran trafndiaeth carbon isel sydd eisoes yn cael eu harloesi gan yr ardal. Byddai cynyddu'r defnydd o geir, bygis, beiciau a chychod trydan yn lleihau'r tanwydd ffosil sy'n cael ei ddefnyddio a gellir eu hyrwyddo fel dulliau hwyliog o deithio. Maent yn debygol o ddenu cryn dipyn o sylw yn y wasg a'r cyfryngau oherwydd eu newydd-deb a'u natur hwyliog ac felly maent yn werthfawr wrth godi proffil yr ardal fel cyrchfan teithio cynaliadwy. Gallai fod yna le hefyd i gysylltu â sefydliadau trafndiaeth gymunedol i helpu i lenwi rhai o'r bylchau yn y ddarpariaeth trafndiaeth gyhoeddus ac i ddiwallu anghenion penodol ymwelwyr.

Cyflwyno a rheoli'r cynllun

Rheolir y cynllun pum mlynedd hwn gan Grŵp Rheoli Trafndiaeth Ymwelwyr ar draws Powys gyda chymrudd ar lefel Ardal Cyrchfan Twristiaeth ar y cyd â'r Bartneriaeth Rheoli Cyrchfan (PRhC) leol. Mewn rhai achosion (megis Bannau Brycheiniog) efallai y byddai'n ddoeth sefydlu Partneriaeth Trafndiaeth Ymwelwyr ar draws y cyrchfan. Mewn mannau eraill, bydd y PRhC yn ymgorffori hyn yn ei gwaith. Byddai'n well i'r rhwydwaith llwybrau trafndiaeth ar draws canolbarth

Cymru gael ei gyflwyno gan un corff a fyddai'n gweithredu fel pe bai'n rhith-gwmni bysiau masnachol er mwyn cynllunio, cydgyssylltu, monitro a marchnata'r holl wasanaethau bysiau. Mae uno Unedau Trafnidiaeth Powys a Cheredigion ac ystyried cynnwys cyfrifoldebau TraCC (Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru) a'r posibilrwydd o ychwanegu rhanbarth Meirionnydd o Wynedd, yn awgrymu mai'r sefydliad hwn ddylai fod y corff arweiniol (er, ar hyn o bryd, Uned Drafnidiaeth Powys yw hi) i'r holl bartneriaid yn y prosiect.

Byddai'n werthfawr pe gallai uwch swyddogaeth fod yn Adran Drafnidiaeth Cyngor Sir Powys, sy'n goruchwyllo ansawdd, datblygu a marchnata ar gyfer y sir gyfan (gan ymestyn yn y man, o bosibl, i'r lefel ranbarthol). Byddai'r unigolyn hwn yn gyfrifol am gyflawni amcanion trafnidiaeth ymwelwyr ynghyd â helpu i'r gwasanaeth cyfan ddatblygu. Os yw'r gwasanaeth wir i weithredu fel 'rhith-gwmni bysiau' yna, mae'n bwysig iddo fuddsoddi mewn datblygu refeniw, gyda'r posibilrwydd y bydd ymwelwyr yn darparu incwm iach. Rhagwelir y bydd mwy o bwyslais yn cael ei osod ar farchnata trafnidiaeth a thwristiaeth. Dylid ymgymryd â hyn mewn partneriaeth ag Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog a sefydliadau twristiaeth eraill yng nghanolbarth Cymru, ond byddai'n cael ei gyflawni orau gan o leiaf ddau Swyddog Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr. Byddai'r rhain yn ddibynnol ar gyllid ond byddent yn cyflawni rolau hanfodol o ran cyfathrebu, hyfforddi/cysylltu â'r gymuned a'r fasnach a marchnata.

Gallai rolau'r Swyddogion gynnwys gweithio â chymunedau a busnesau trefi sy'n ganolfannau (yn enwedig ar hyd llwybrau trafnidiaeth blaenllaw) a datblygu cynlluniau teithiau, teithiau cerdded o lwybrau trafnidiaeth, lansio cynlluniau mabwysiadu safle bysiau, cefnogi gwasanaethau trafnidiaeth gymunedol ac yn y blaen. Ym Mannau Brycheiniog, gallai hyn fod yn estyniad i rôl bresennol y Swyddog Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr, ond bydd angen adnoddau newydd i'w hestyn dros weddill Powys.

Argymhellion

Mae'r cynllun yn cynnwys 71 o argymhellion – wedi'u casglu o dan y chwe amcan a chyflenwi. Y rheini a welir yn rhai sydd â **blaenoriaeth uchel iawn** yw:

1.1 Cwmnïau Bysiau i ymgysylltu â Phartneriaeth y Cynllun Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr er mwyn uwchraddio darpariaeth a delwedd y gwasanaeth

1.2 Ymgysylltu â chlystyrau o fusnesau twristiaeth i gynnwys y gymuned leol yn y brand, dehongli, gwella safleoedd bysiau, cynlluniau teithiau ac i feithrin eiriolaeth

1.10 Gweithio tuag at amcanion yn y tymor hirach – paratoi at ailgyflwyno masnachfaint y rheilffyrdd

2.1 Sicrhau ymrwymiad gan y sector cyhoeddus i fuddsoddi yn y llwybrau trafnidiaeth a'r seilwaith

2.2 Sicrhau ymrwymiad o ran canolfannau trafnidiaeth ymwelwyr gan y sefydliadau lleol i ysgogi ac ymgysylltu â busnesau, datblygu cynlluniau teithiau cerdded a diwrnodau allan a Chysylltiadau Cyhoeddus

3.1 Annog busnesau i wella eu darpariaeth a'u gwybodaeth am drafnidiaeth ymwelwyr. Cynlluniau croeso i gerddwyr a seiclwyr. Sesiynau ymwybyddiaeth a theithiau ymgynefino.

4.1 Cwblhau gwefannau ymwelwyr newydd gan sicrhau bod gwybodaeth am drafnidiaeth yn cael ei hymgorffori'n effeithiol

- 5.11 Cryfhau trefi sy'n ganolfannau seiclo a sefydlu canolfannau newydd i ddatblygu a hybu mwy o gylchdeithiau seiclo, llwybrau beiciau mynydd a chynlluniau teithiau seiclo
- 6.1 Sefydlu rhwydwaith e-feiciau (ac e-gerbydau) ar raddfa fawr ar draws Powys a Bannau Brycheiniog sy'n seiliedig ar fusnesau llety
- 7.1 Sefydlu Grŵp Rheoli Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr i Bowys a Bannau Brycheiniog ynghyd â phartneriaethau
- 7.2 Cyflwyno'r Cynllun Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr hwn i Lywodraeth Cymru a rhanddeiliaid allweddol eraill
- 7.3 Adolygu'r model cyflenwi trafndiaeth gyhoeddus ranbarthol presennol a chyflogi rheolwr ansawdd/marchnata
- 7.4 Penodi dau Swyddog Trafnidiaeth Ymwelwyr i weithredu camau o'r cynllun hwn ar hyd llwybrau trafndiaeth blaenllaw ac mewn canolfannau trafndiaeth ymwelwyr
- 7.5 Gweithio â chyrchfannau twristiaeth newydd a'r rhai presennol

Nodir hefyd ddeuddeg **ffordd sydyn o ennill** gan gynnwys 3.1, 4.1 a 6.1 uchod, yn ogystal â:

- 1.6 Buddsoddi mewn gwelliannau i wefannau a systemau Partneriaeth Rheilffyrdd Cambria gan gynnwys yr ymgyrch *Trainstaysave*
- 2.4 Lansio ymgyrch 'Mabwysiadu Safle Bysiau' i gymunedau neu fusnesau lleol, gosod mwy o reseli beiciau ger safleoedd bysiau. Gosod safle bysiau 'arferion gorau' mewn lleoliadau sy'n uchel eu proffil
- 2.6 Uwchraddio rhyngwyneb gorsafoedd rheilffyrdd – Archwilio a gwella gwybodaeth, mapiau ymgyfeirio, plannu, arwyddion hyrwyddo mewn gorsafoedd rheilffyrdd
- 4.8 Marchnata Tocynnau Crwydro Powys a Thocynnau Teithiwr Rhwydwaith De Cymru'n helaeth
- 5.2 Mwy o deithiau cerdded o fysiau – cynlluniau teithiau gyda mapiau, llwybrau i gynnwys tafarnau a chaffis a busnesau lleol
- 5.7 Teithiau cerdded dros bellter hir – diwygio deunyddiau ar y we a phrintiedig i hyrwyddo mynediad gyda thrafnidiaeth gyhoeddus
- 5.17 Cynllun Teithio i Gamlas Sir Fynwy ac Aberhonddu. Gwneud yn siŵr fod gwybodaeth gyfredol a hygyrch ar gael a mynd ati'n fwy i hybu dolenni lleol
- 6.2 Hybu llogi e-feiciau'n helaethach gan y cwmnïau sydd eisoes ar gael a sefydlu cyfleoedd llogi newydd mewn safleoedd penodol megis Rhoadr Gwy/Cwm Elan, Aberhonddu a Llyn Efyrrwy
- 6.3 Estyn y rhwydwaith gwefru i geir trydan, bygis trydan ac e-feiciau ar draws Powys a Bannau Brycheiniog a'i hybu fel y rhwydwaith ehangaf yn y DU

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Visitor Transport Plan is to improve the sustainability of tourism across Powys and the Brecon Beacons National Park by encouraging visitors to use low-carbon transport modes and reduce car mileage.

Sustainable tourism has been an ambition in the UK for many years now. Much progress has been made: sustainable tourism strategies, green accreditation schemes and many green tourism products have been developed. However visitors' means of transport has always been the area that has proved most challenging, particularly in rural areas. Research in the field indicates a resistance to reducing car travel when on holiday. Therefore any plan needs to look to overcoming ingrained habit and scepticism about alternatives through a combination of fun, information and common acceptance. This will be a dynamic process through the lifetime of the Plan and beyond.

It is estimated that 88% of visitors travel by car to reach Mid Wales¹ and most of these continue to use the car to travel around once here. By visitors we mean both leisure day visitors and staying visitors. Staying visitors will include those on holiday, those visiting friends and relatives and people on business trips, although this latter group are less likely to be interested in all the leisure transport options. It has been estimated that most visitors drive over 300 miles to and from their holiday in this area (150 miles each way) and then a further 300 miles or more a week while here² - i.e. as much as 50 miles a day. Encouraging visitors to use alternatives to their cars can be difficult but there are examples of successful schemes around the UK and abroad from which lessons can be learned. Added to this the continuing rises in fuel prices, the increasing concern for environmental issues and climate change and the trend towards fewer people owning cars, especially younger age groups, means that the prospects for making change have never been better. The Welsh Government announced an Active Travel Bill³ in May this year which, if passed, aims to change the transport culture of Wales, placing a much greater emphasis on walking and cycling.

1.1 Overall aspiration

The overall aspiration of the plan is to position Mid Wales, and its constituent destinations, as a place where low carbon travel is integrated into the tourist experience, i.e. through making transport part of the fun and educative element of tourism rather than simply a means to an end. This includes the bus, bikes, electric bikes and buggies, walking and train travel in the main but also embraces water activities such as canal boats, canoeing and pony trekking. In sum, the plan seeks to develop a quality public transport network which integrates the needs of the tourist and resident.

The outcome is to achieve an increase in visitor numbers to the area whilst reducing visitor travel by car through shifts to alternative modes; this sits firmly in line with the national transport plan and regional transport strategies. It will also bring economic benefits as visitor spending is focused more in their locality and on alternative locally provided forms of transport.

In our consultations several people referred to the Go Lakes Travel project in the Lake District funded by the Department for Transport, which seeks to bring about a step-change in sustainable tourism travel. It is time for a similarly ambitious project in Wales. Powys and the Brecon Beacons is ideally situated to take forward this opportunity. It can act as an exemplar for the whole of Wales as to what can be achieved.

¹ Mid Wales Tourism Strategy 2011

² Visitor Travel in the Brecon Beacons National Park Survey 2010

³ Consultation on Active Travel (Wales) Bill, 9 May 2012

1.2 Targets

Targets that will demonstrate the significant step change in visitor transport usage which this plan aims to deliver need to be established. They must be relatively easily monitored over the five year period through sample visitor surveys and statistics which are collected on an on-going basis. If this programme were to be implemented in full the following targets are achievable within the 5 year plan period:

1. To increase the proportion of visitors travelling to Powys and the Brecon Beacons by public transport by 2% a year.
2. To reduce the level of car mileage undertaken by visitors to travel around Mid Wales by 15% over 5 years.
3. Increase the patronage on the core bus network by 8-10% a year.
4. Increase the patronage on trains to and through this area by 5% a year.
5. To increase the proportion of visitors in walking and cycling by more than the Welsh Government targets for residents⁴ to 65% walking and 15% cycling.
6. Reduce the level of carbon use of the visitor by 15% over 5 years.

1.3 Background

This plan was commissioned through the Sustainable Tourism Powys project, funded by the Rural Development Plan and managed by Powys County Council (PCC), in association with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). In addition funding was made available from SWWITCH (South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium) to enable the work to cover the south western portion of the national Park as well, so that the whole area could be adequately considered. The plan covers the whole of Powys and the Brecon Beacons National Park, which includes much of the Brecon Beacons National Park, plus the natural gateway towns and corridors into Powys and the National Park. This includes towns such as Merthyr Tydfil, Neath, Llandeilo and Llandovery, border towns in Herefordshire and Shropshire and key transport interchanges such as Abergavenny and Shrewsbury. There is a map of the area covered in Appendix 3. The plan takes a visitor-centred perspective and has been pragmatic in tackling cross border issues.

Two related sustainable visitor transport studies are underway concurrently. The first covers the whole of the Welsh English border as part of the Walking With Offa project. That study reports back three months later than this one and will draw on discussion and recommendations in this plan, while some of the actions recommended here could be taken forward through Walking With Offa. Secondly a report for SEWTA and Capital Region Tourism is to provide a strategic overview of issues to be considered in the implementation of the regional transport plan and tourism strategy.

This Visitor Transport Plan has included:

- A thorough review of tourism and transport policy documents and previous tourism and transport studies
- An audit of the public transport routes and infrastructure across the area
- An audit of popular visitor attractions and countryside sites and their accessibility by and provision for alternative means of travel
- Research into examples of best practice from the UK and Europe
- Discussions with a wide range of transport and tourism managers, operators, businesses and other stakeholders.

⁴ A Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales, 2009 - 2013

- A workshop bringing together over 30 of these stakeholders to review recommendations
- A sub-contracted specialist study into the potential of electric transport options for visitors

A full list of people who have contributed to the plan is given in Appendix 1. Examples of good practice have been referenced throughout the plan, with links where relevant.

The plan is deliberately action focused. A short review of the strategic context and a summary of challenges for sustainable visitor transport in sections 2 and 3 are followed by six sections focusing on the key objectives and areas for action emerging from the research. The plan then considers how best the actions can be delivered and actions are summarised in a five year action plan table.

2. STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

The review of transport and tourism policy documents revealed that while most tourism strategies mention transport and most transport plans make reference to tourism there is, in the main, no strong integrated message. There are however some indications that this is changing and that the two sectors are coming closer together with more joined up recommendations. The most significant policy recommendations are referenced in this section and a full list of documents reviewed is given in Appendix 2.

The main area which is seen as a priority in both transport and tourism documents is providing better information on sustainable travel options. This includes improved co-ordinated, distributed and promoted information on choices. The other shared priority which emerges strongly is to improve partnership working and joining up policies and practices.

The **Sustainable Transport and Tourism Assessment** (WAG, 2009) is the key document which has tackled transport and tourism in Wales and attempted to roll out a programme. It sets out short and longer term objectives.

Short term objectives:

Focus will be on getting visitors to move around their destination by sustainable forms of transport (bus, cycle, rail, foot):

- *Provide better information to visitors on what sustainable transport options are currently available*
- *Encourage more local services linked to visitor attractions*
- *Offer incentives to visitors to use public transport*
- *Simplify ticketing arrangements including integrated ticketing for different modes of transport*
- *Travel planning for key visitor attractions.*

Longer Term Objectives

To increase the number of visitors using transport for the main part of their journey (i.e. to get to Wales) through:

- *Improving access into Wales – continued investment in public transport*
- *infrastructure and services*
- *Improving integration of services and information to facilitate multi modal travel.*

Key recommendations of the report included:

- *Encouraging more attractions and accommodation to provide information on how to get there by public transport/foot/cycling on their websites ensuring it is placed before information on getting there by car.*
- *The Visit Wales website as well as local destination websites to give more prominence to public transport and cycling options including timings, public transport and cycling itineraries and a rotating 'top ten list of things to do' by public transport.*
- *Encouraging local authorities to work closely with train/bus operators to provide information at railway stations to include bus timetables, taxi telephone numbers, signage to town centres/visitor attractions in the vicinity, ordnance survey town maps. Work with Journey Solutions to take this forward in Wales. Ensure this is included in development of Sustainable Travel Towns.*
- *Exploring whether conditions relating to public transport information and ticketing can be attached to bus subsidies and contracts.*

- *Developing further incentives for visitors to use sustainable forms of transport through offering discounted entry to attractions e.g. Cadw sites and discounts at accommodation. Drawing up a proposal for a Sustainable Tourism Transport Challenge Wales*
- *Conducting research into which market segments are most likely to use public transport and communicate these to the public transport operators and wider partners.*
- *Exploring opportunities to provide customer care training courses for bus/taxi drivers in visitor related matters. Encouraging more train/public transport familiarisation trips for visitors*
- *The regional transport plans to place further focus on sustainable transport for tourism.*
- *The Sustainable Tourism Forum to establish a Tourism and Transport sub group to strengthen partnership working.*

The Sustainable Transport and Tourism Sub Group is monitoring progress in implementing the report's recommendations. It has issued several updates, the latest in February 2012. Progress has been made in piloting actions such as smart travel training and travel planning in the Centres of Excellence (none of which are in Powys) and in the National Parks, including the Brecon Beacons through the Visitor Transport Initiative. The group is able to share best practice, but is said to be dependent on partners feeding information in and when transport is not top of tourism bodies' agendas this has been variable. The role of the Sub Group is being re-examined to identify the best format to drive more progress.

Sustainable transport features in national and regional tourism policy documents.

The **Sustainable Tourism Framework for Wales** (2007) has as one of its four objectives *Minimising tourism's environmental impact*. Actions recommended include:

- *Encourage tourism businesses to make visitors aware of transport options*
- *Active promotion and marketing of sustainable transport options to visitors*
- *Investment in appropriate services/ infrastructure (cycle trails, rail and bus services, coach parking, interchanges) with the needs of visitors in mind*
- *Locating new, large scale tourism development near public transport*

The **Mid Wales Regional Tourism Strategy** (2011) has an objective: *to provide the appropriate infrastructure and high quality, sustainable, distinctive destinations, facilities and services*. Recommended actions include:

- *Initiate visitor research into visitor transport usage*
- *Prepare a visitor travel information strategy and action plan*
- *Coordinate evidence and support i.e. the tourism case for key transport infrastructure improvements*

The **Brecon Beacons National Park Sustainable Tourism Strategy** (2011) has broad strategic objectives to ensure the success of the Brecon Beacons as a sustainable tourism destination. Specific recommendations include

Ensure best possible integrated public transport services supported by information and promotion:

- *Securing funding for a renewed Visitor Transport Initiative to deliver an agreed transport plan.*
- *Continuing to support Beacons Bus and where possible to expand the service to additional days of the week or times of the year*
- *Investigating commercial opportunities, including sponsorship and discounted entry arrangements for public transport users.*
- *Promoting more joint working between bus and rails service providers*

- *Maintaining good up to date transport information on websites and targeted material*
- *Ensuring all tourism enterprises provide clear information on public transport options and where possible facilitate their public transport options and facilitate their use.*
- *Continuing to work with events providers on promoting use of public transport.*
- *Identifying other specific concentrations of visitors which might feed into public transport services (e.g. caravan/ camping sites).*
- *Supporting packaging and promotion of transport experiences(e.g. Heart of Wales line).*
- *Pursuing incentive pricing, including rover tickets.*

The **Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan** (2010) has a series of policies which support the further development and promotion of sustainable transport and the reduction of fossil fuel usage. The National Park also has a **Walking Strategy** (2009) and a **Cycling and Mountain Biking Strategy** (2009) which contain several relevant policies for the further development and promotion of walking and cycling in the area.

The **South East Wales Strategic Tourism Framework** (2008) includes transport planning as a high priority with a key action to *develop closer strategic relationships between the tourism sector and transport operators and planners to ensure tourism is better understood and higher on their agendas.* Next steps are to include:

- *Input to the national signage review*
- *Prepare a Regional Visitor Transport Strategy*
- *Identify key one-to-one links with people in the transport sector and build on them*

National and regional transport plans provide the framework for delivering the Wales Transport Strategy. The **National Transport Plan** (2010) includes a range of policies on sustainable transport, accompanied by a shift in expenditure towards sustainable improvements such as multimodal interchanges and an increase in walking and cycling in order to achieve the One Wales targets for reducing carbon emissions. The plan contains a specific reference to tourism in Mid Wales:

Another important issue with regard to sustainable travel is the fact that a major component of the Mid Wales economy is tourism. The main attraction being the environment – the Brecon Beacons and Snowdonia National Parks, the Cambrian Mountains, the Cardigan Bay coast and the regions historic/market towns. TraCC will need to address not only tourism trips to the area but once visitors are based in Wales to provide appropriate alternatives to the private car for visiting and exploring the area’s attractions (5.1.24)

There are some specific interventions included of relevance to this plan including:

- *Improve provision of effective transport information (by 2011) (NP14)*
- *Improve customer experience on public transport services (NP16)*
- *Support innovative transport services (NP 19)*
- *National Station Improvement Programme (by 2014) (NP 23)*
- *Improve provision for cycles on new and existing train services (NP25)*
- *Develop Traws Cambria long-distance bus network (NP7)*
- *Daytime hourly services between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury (by2011)(NP96)*
- *Re-evaluate business case for introducing additional services on Heart of Wales line.(NP97)*

TraCC (Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru) is the Regional Transport Consortium for the Mid Wales region, which includes Powys. The **TraCC Regional Transport Plan** (2009) identifies some specific tourism related problems:

- *Employment is predominately in small businesses with significant numbers in the agricultural, forestry and tourism industries. Such businesses tend to be highly dispersed and are difficult to access by public transport. As a result a higher proportion of trips to work are made by car and average travelling distances are longer than elsewhere within Wales*
- *A large proportion of tourist trips in Mid Wales are made by private car*
- *There is a lack of integration between public transport services and the needs of visitors, with public transport serving largely local needs.*

Other problems identified include:

- *There is a lack of facilities at rail stations including parking, disabled access and interchange with bus services, walking and cycling routes*
- *It is difficult to co-ordinate a large number of small independent bus service operators and other national operators with no base in the region*
- *There is a poor public perception of public transport*
- *There is a lack of resources within the TraCC authorities to progress sustainable travel initiatives.*
- *The priorities of Mid Wales with regard to cross-border infrastructure improvements, often do not match those of the adjacent, more populous regions.*

Opportunities identified in the plan include:

- *There are many good examples of providing public transport and sustainable travel for tourists that could also be further developed.*
- *The current investment and improved performance on the Cambrian Main Line provides the opportunity to support an hourly service and potentially to open or reopen stations to significantly enhance the potential of the line.*
- *There is an urgent need to increase the frequency of services on the Heart of Wales Line which currently offers a timetable with gaps of nearly four hours between trains, making it hard for most people to use. The current use of one coach trains also needs to be addressed as there is often inadequate capacity to meet need.*
- *There is an opportunity to build on the success of the TrawsCambria regional bus network, including the development of feeder services.*
- *Further development of the National Cycle Network offers the opportunity to further encourage leisure cycling in the region*

The area covered by this Visitor Transport Plan also incorporates parts of the SE and SW Wales Regional Transport Plans.

The **SEWTA** (South East Wales Transport Alliance) **Regional Transport Plan** (2009) includes a specific policy on tourism:

- *Sewta supports measures to improve access to tourism and leisure sites in South East Wales, especially by walking, cycling and public transport*

Recommended actions include improved walking and cycling infrastructure and cycle carrying facilities on trains, better quality public transport interchanges, integrated ticketing and better public transport information.

SEWTA has recently commissioned a **Tourism and Transport Study** (with a similar time frame to this plan) in partnership with Capital Region Tourism. The study aims to provide a strategic overview of issues to be considered in the implementation of the regional transport plan and tourism strategy. Issues include:

- *Promotion and marketing*
- *Information, (including the Welsh Government review of tourism signage)*
- *Intermodal transport issues, such as ticketing, interchange arrangements, ability to carry bikes on public transport, etc.*
- *Responses to concentration / dispersal of attractions and accommodation*
- *Opportunities to offer discounted entry for users of sustainable modes*
- *Making better use of existing resources (such as VMS signage)*
- *Training needs, such as customer care requirements*
- *Links to Cardiff Airport*

The **Regional Transport Plan for South West Wales** (SWWITCH 2010) identifies specific opportunities:

- *Further development on improving the range of alternative (to the private car) transport options*
- *Increasing emphasis on raising awareness and marketing sustainable transport and multi modal ticketing*
- *New technology facilitating reduced demands for travel and cleaner vehicles and fuels*

Strategic Objectives include:

1. *Improving Strategic Bus Corridors – to create more reliable and attractive connectivity between key settlements*
2. *Promoting integration – to encourage more sustainable travel choices and reduce the barriers to interchange*
3. *Providing more and better information – to raise awareness on the range and use of sustainable transport options*

Priorities identified include:

- *Five trains per day on the Heart Of Wales Line*
- *Reducing train journey times to Cardiff, London and beyond*
- *Key Attraction Travel Plans - SWWITCH will:*
 - *Work with the owners of large attractions to develop and raise awareness on alternative options for accessing their sites*
 - *Work with tourism and visitor organisations to encourage the development of publicity for more sustainable forms of access*
 - *Provide advice and guidance and facilitate partnership working across the region on suitable information, discounts, advice and guidance to encourage sustainable travel*

In summary, there is already a substantial level of strategic and tactical advice available for any destination in Wales to progress a sustainable transport and tourism initiative. However this is still a time of shrinking public sector budgets and difficult decisions about what services can be sustained. Within this climate, there is limited scope for significant new investment but there remain major opportunities for improvement to existing networks and facilities which will in turn have an impact on demand, improve economic input and reduce environmental impacts.

The new emphasis on active travel and more sustainable travel options means that this plan is very timely. There are policies which should support more investment in sustainable visitor transport and more innovative approaches. Approaches may not have been very joined-up in the past but there are examples of progress and good practice such as the Brecon Beacons Visitor Transport Initiative and indeed the engagement in this current Plan.

A recent draft Visit Wales paper on ***Sustainable and Coastal Tourism Travel Development Plans*** (Jan 2012) sets out Visit Wales's intention to continue working through 2012/13 with the Regional Transport Co-ordinators to look at new transport action through the following actions:

- *Continue to attend Regional Transport Consortium Meetings*
- *Work with each project to look at ways of developing new transport projects*
- *Identify from the sustainability plans which areas could be developed*
- *Hold further Travel Planning Training to develop individual business travel plans or geographical areas.*
- *Work with Traveline Cymru and Sustrans to promote their services*
- *Work with Scenic Wales to look at development opportunities*

Natural England's report on ***Visitor Travel Plans for Countryside Destinations*** (2008) gives guidance on developing plans for countryside destinations and we have followed a similar process to this plan. Key elements include creating a vision, clear objectives and agreed, properly funded action points. It is seen as vital to bring stakeholders together into a formal partnership and to have a full or part time project champion to drive the plan and its implementation forward. Targeted marketing is essential at all stages of the process and monitoring and revision of the plan as it is implemented.

3. CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABLE VISITOR TRANSPORT

It is important to accept that the current situation encourages people to travel by car to Powys and the Brecon Beacons for a day visit or holiday. This behaviour is underpinned by habit, lifestyle and life-stage. There have been a small number of studies that have attempted to ascertain the extent to which people will shift modes of transport when on holiday and the core factors such as quality provision and information are built into the plan. There is, of course, an existing public transport based market which is already doing just that either through not having a car, for environmental reasons or reluctantly because of financial or health factors. Thus, the plan seeks to hold the existing market and build a new market in due course.

An examination of the market for tourism in Powys indicates the following headline figures (for 2010):

- 1.5m tourist trips
- 75% day visits to Mid Wales region
- Of the 25% staying visitors 46% are on a short break
- High percentage of repeat visits
- 45% of visitors are from Wales
- 50% of visitors are from the rest of the UK
- 5% are international visitors
- 44% of UK visitors originate from the West Midlands
- 16% from SE and London
- 9% from SW and 8% from NW
- In terms of profile 50% are empty nesters and 22% families

There is also a degree of market segmentation; each segment has different characteristics, values and preferences when choosing a destination and travel arrangements while on holiday. What is clear from these studies is that, however the market is segmented, some segments will be far more reluctant to consider change than others. That said, there is no firm evidence in Wales as to which visitors are more likely to trial alternatives to a day out in the car. We know from other studies that international visitors often have higher expectations of public transport services and provision for cycling than domestic visitors and younger people, such as adventure seekers, and older, 'empty-nesters', interested in a slower 'do little' type of holiday or excursion, are more likely to be persuaded to use public transport. The concessionary pass, for example, has encouraged older people to give bus travel a try.

Research in social marketing also indicates that all segments are more likely to consider behavioural change if they are asked to take small steps, such as a car free day on holiday, or use a complimentary ticket on a local bus. They would, however, consider it a tall order to leave the car at home while on holiday. Most studies conclude that making the alternative more commonplace, or mainstream, and hence acceptable as a norm is the way forward. This is, of course, dependent on there being alternatives in place. Finally, there is a need for a constant drip feed of information so that the visitor awareness rises to a point where intention is stimulated sufficiently to give something a try.

Thus in order to reverse the current trend towards increasing usage of the car and increasing dependence on high carbon transport in tourism this Visitor Transport Plan will need to tackle a range of challenges. The review of literature, examples from elsewhere, audits and discussions with stakeholders have helped identify many barriers – some real and others more to do with perceptions. These barriers are summarised below, followed by some of the incentives which can be used to address the changes required to our way of thinking.

3.1 Barriers to use of transport alternatives

The **mind-set, knowledge and perceptions of the visitor** are key – they need to feel confident if they are to use public transport or alternatives to the car.

Perceptual barriers include:

- **The car is the only way** - The deep rooted belief that access should always be by car. Many people treat this as the default mode. People do not think otherwise nor do they seek other transport information. Some people dislike the lack of 'control' over their travel if they are not in their own vehicle. Some dislike the public setting and the need to mix with other people and observe social conventions. Others think public transport is a last resort – for people with no alternative.
- **Not used to the bus** - People are more assured about using trains but may not have used a bus since childhood and are unfamiliar with the niceties of bus travel such as tickets, whether or not a dog can be taken on board or a wheelchair, for example. They may have poor memories of old fashioned, uncomfortable vehicles.
- **Timetables and routes** - Visitors will feel constrained by timetables – bus and train service frequency is much less in rural areas than in towns and cities. The limitations of using a route network can be frustrating and not provide access to exactly where people want to go.
- **Spatial distances** - Visitors are often unsure as to where they can go, the distances between places, how long the journey might be and where they should alight. It is hard for them to visualise all this in a new area. Perceptions of the geography and distances in rural areas affect some decision making.
- **Limited access to remote areas** – viewing and exploring the landscape is one of the main holiday motivations – if visitors think they will not be able to reach the most scenic areas they will feel their freedom to explore is constrained and prefer to have access to a car.
- **Fear of not getting back** - The fear of being left in the 'middle of nowhere' with no back up is a major barrier. Waiting in the wrong place, fear of service cancellations, delays, missing a connection and lack of information add stress. Negative anecdotes from other people or the media can make the fear worse.
- **Cost** – Some visitors and businesses do not have information on bus and train fares and perceive that they are expensive. They may not be aware of discounts and have not calculated comparable costs of fuel for cars. For people travelling in groups, costs of public transport are often higher than sharing their own vehicle. Taxis are often perceived as expensive options.
- **Poorly presented information** – When transport information is hidden away on obscure pages with poor photographic images it does not instil confidence.
- **Distrust of Information** - The concern that information provided is 'optimistic', wrong or more specifically out of date.

There are of course many practical issues which can prove challenging and some locations will present more problems than others.

Practical barriers include:

- **Information** - Choice of travel might be determined by lack of information of alternatives to the car; having the right information at the right time is important (e.g. at the point of booking accommodation). The ease of accessing and understanding the information is vital – timetables can be intimidating and difficult to understand. Ticket options can appear complicated. Tickets are not always transferable between bus operators.
- **Poor interchanges and connections** – bus and train stations may be some distance from each other and services may not be timetabled to provide connections.
- **Poor infrastructure** – visitors may be reluctant to wait at bus stops or train stations if there is no shelter or seating and if the environment is dirty or unpleasant.

- **Lack of Sunday services** – when many leisure visits take place – local day visits, weekend breaks etc.
- **Visitor targeted services may only run on Sundays** – e.g. the Beacons Bus.
- **Limited car and bike hire** – there are few car hire companies within the area for those arriving by coach/train. Bike hire is better provided for and several companies deliver bikes direct to accommodation but it is not available everywhere.
- **Taxis** – usually need to be booked ahead, may be reluctant to do short journeys in rural areas and for those walking precise timings may be difficult. Longer journeys can prove expensive.
- **Powys is hilly for cycling** – road cycling in Powys is best undertaken by confident, fit and healthy cyclists. Those with less experience dislike the fast main roads and narrow minor roads with many challenging gradients.
- **Lack of capacity for events** – some popular events such as those at the Royal Welsh Showground attract large numbers of visitors. Even if a large proportion might be happy to travel on public transport there is no capacity or flexibility to arrange additional trains or buses. Specific services would need to be chartered.
- **Cycle carriage on trains and buses** – few buses can transport bicycles. Trains tend to be limited to two per train and need pre booking– limiting their use by groups.
- **Some popular scenic areas are simply not accessible by bus** – either due to remoteness, or to very narrow roads or to the limitations of bus networks - examples include Llangorse Lake, Lake Vyrnwy, Pistyll Rhaeadr, Clywedog Reservoir and the Usk Reservoir.
- **Special requirements of some visitors** – visitors with or accompanying people with disabilities, infirmities or young children or pets may all find travelling by public transport more challenging than most. Uncertainties about access, comfort, toilet facilities, regulations, need for large amounts of luggage/equipment or fear of inconveniencing other passengers may all mean people prefer travelling in their own vehicles.
- **Payment** – the need (or perceived need) to pay in cash, with the correct change.
- **The weather** – concern about having to wait for public transport in the wind, rain, cold will put some people off – especially if there is no shelter or waiting room. These factors will also affect people's willingness to cycle or walk to get from A to B.

There are also a range of barriers which have more to do with the perceptions and ways of working within the destination area; amongst organisations and businesses. These could be called structural issues.

Structural barriers include:

- **The cultural divide between transport and tourism** – people and organisations in each sector have very different cultures, priorities and working practices. The sectors may not understand each other well – although there are specific exceptions to this.
- **Transport is not top of tourism agendas** – Tourism organisations and businesses are facing challenging times with reduction in public sector support and a rapidly changing market and marketing media. Encouraging more visitors to use alternatives to cars in a deeply rural area is seen as very challenging and is rarely given a high priority.
- **Visitors have not been a priority market** – Local authorities have prioritised provision of bus services for the local residents and rate payers – to reach essential services such as health and education. Services that meet leisure and tourism demands have not been seen as a high priority in times of funding cuts.
- **Lack of incentives** – there is no way of compelling businesses to provide information on public transport and alternative forms of transport. Tourism bodies have to rely on promoting the benefits.
- **Discouragement** – often tourism businesses and staff do not use local public transport themselves, perceive it as poor and may discourage visitors from using it either intentionally or unintentionally. Some feel they don't want to make visitors feel guilty for using their cars or make their stay more challenging when people are on holiday.

- **Lack of knowledge/inconvenience for businesses** – having guests without their own transport can be more hassle for businesses as they may have to arrange taxis, source timetables and discuss alternatives with such visitors.
- **Licensing constraints** – tourist accommodation businesses are not allowed to provide pick-ups and drop offs from the station/bus station/walk if they do not have a private hire licence. It is seen as competition for taxi companies and may not be covered by their vehicle insurance even if the service is provided free of charge. While some businesses offer to ‘arrange’ pick-ups and drop offs they are unable to promote this strongly to visitors in advance of their journeys.

3.2 Incentives to change behaviour

Previous studies and experience elsewhere have identified principles to build into our thinking and actions to help give visitors the confidence to change behaviours:

- **Buses and trains become mainstream** - Visitors can be encouraged to consider use if they see continual references to buses and trains: signs, branding, information in different formats, day and half day itineraries, endorsement by tourism providers, appealing designs of materials and incentives to trial (e.g. free first ticket) By encouraging use of alternative modes of travel, habitual behaviour can be modified.
- **Travel experience** - local buses and trains promoted as part of the tourist experience-glancing across landscapes, discounts at attractions, being on board with others (usually a good experience but not always!).
- **Endorsement** - If tourism providers endorse a product, this helps tremendously-hence the need for design of bus and train suggested itineraries that they can identify and promote. For this to happen, local people need to have confidence in their local service.
- **Personal Contact**- The bus driver, train conductor or guard is absolutely paramount in achieving a ‘feel good’ factor - passengers feeling comfortable when travelling, no anxieties, etcetera. Travelling as part of a group also helps give confidence and is a social experience.
- **Trust in information provided** - Information needs to be prominent, easily digested, coherent and current so that trust can be established. Thus, most stops and stations need to have names, core information and back up details. Clear details of bus frequency and the time of the final bus are essential. Good photographic imagery helps present a positive impression.
- **Safety Net** - This can be in the form of a taxi, accommodation provider pick up, bus company emergency number-it is essential if more passengers are to get on board.
- **Positive Experience/Incentives** - If someone has a positive experience first time around then they’ll try it again and recommend it. They may then try another route as well. An incentive to travel - a discount or free trial ticket or voucher, may encourage repeat usage. It is even better if a visitor feels that they are part of something - part of a group of people wanting to protect the Brecon Beacons or Cambrian Mountains.
- **Cost comparisons** – good information comparing the cost of tickets with car fuel plus parking, may encourage some visitors to consider public transport or taxi trips. Pricing has to be attractive to attract new patronage, especially with young people with limited disposal income.
- **Branding** – of the public transport to associate it with the destination strengthens the prospect of using transport to reach the place and reassures them that it is a good way to travel there. This helps to overcome scepticism about public transport services and offers a chance to feel good about a service.
- **New technology incentives** – there are new schemes such as www.recyclebank.com or apps such as re:route in London which offer member points for green actions such as travelling by public transport – promoting such schemes would encourage their members to continue using public transport while on holiday.

Many of these incentives could also be used to change the perceptions of tourism business operators and tourism bodies – to make them more confident to provide information and recommend alternatives to the car.

But before this, there firstly has to be tangible products that a visitor can try and this will require investment, for example, in appropriate bus services or electric bikes and buggies. Secondly, there will need to be strong incentives to encourage trial of alternatives and thirdly, a sustained marketing campaign to herald the new opportunities to enjoy the Brecon Beacons or Powys without the car.



Electric bike – newer versions do not have the battery carrier on the back

4. REVIEW OF VISITOR TRANSPORT IN POWYS

This section brings together the results of an audit of the transport network and infrastructure, an audit of access and transport information at main tourism attractions augmented by comments from consultations with transport and tourism stakeholders and mystery shopper trips. The commentary focuses on current provision, its strengths and weaknesses and identifies significant gaps and implications.

4.1 Transport audit

This section reviews the public transport network in relation to the needs of visitors to access and travel around Powys. More detail of the transport audit is given in Appendix 3.

The Network

The network of public transport services across Powys comprises three railway lines and a number of core bus routes linking the urban populations of South Wales and the West Midlands to key locations in the county. The rationale for most of these services is primarily to provide education, work and utility trips. However, the provision of rail services on the Cambrian Coast Line is designed to meet the influx of visitors during summer months and some bus services have been designed to encourage shopping and tourist trips between the traditional peak hours of early morning and late afternoon. In 2010/11 the estimated number of arrivals/departures at railway stations in Powys was over 490,000 (including Knighton) and bus passenger trips accounted for approximately 2 million in 2011 yet the resident population is 131,000 (2010). There are no firm estimates of the percentage of these trips made by day visitors or staying visitors but from a study undertaken in Herefordshire it is estimated that 10% of passengers on local bus services are visitors.⁵

Other bus services and licensed taxi operations satisfy demands for local trips into the main service settlements from their surrounding areas. These types of services tend to be less useful for the visitor market as they are often infrequent, sometimes organised on a demand response basis with pre-registration and booking making this facility less attractive to the visitor. Walking also forms an important part of the travel element too, for example, between terminals and town centres or to attractions.

Other forms of transport available include community transport initiatives, cycle and electric cycle or buggy hire and commercial day trips by coach/minibus offered from the South Wales and West Midlands conurbations, although there is no firm data regarding the number of hires or trips made by these modes of transport nor for car hire made by visitors. The number of suppliers in Powys and the Brecon Beacons is small scale and it is estimated that the overall market is currently limited.

Railway routes

There are three railway lines passing through Powys. The Cambrian Main Line offers a service from Birmingham International Airport and Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth with the Cambrian Coast branch extending from Machynlleth north into Gwynedd to Pwllheli. The railway stations (located in Powys) on these routes are Welshpool, Newtown, Caersws, Machynlleth and Dyfi Junction. Collectively these stations accounted for 382,804 arrivals and departures in 2010/11. The main service frequency is two hourly on a daily basis. Passenger numbers have been growing for several years but train capacity has not kept pace with the increasing demand. Despite the construction of additional infrastructure, plans to provide an hourly service by 2011 have been delayed until at least 2015.

⁵ Market Day Buses, UCLAN, 2005

The route is promoted by Arriva Trains Wales as part of its franchise agreement and by a Cambrian Lines Community Rail Partnership. The vibrancy of the partnership is reflected in the wide range of promotions which provide interpretation leaflets, links to accommodation providers offering discounts to rail travellers (trainstaysave).

The main issues relate to poor interchange facilities, especially between train and bus at the four stations in Powys; the issues have been highlighted in a previous report for TraCC (2009). Unfortunately, limited progress has been made in implementing the report's recommendations especially the availability of onward local transport information at stations and direction signs to them, and in some places matters have become less acceptable and revenue funding reductions have taken their toll. For example, it notes that the 704 bus (now the T4) no longer calls at Newtown railway station. At Welshpool the development of a major supermarket has altered the pattern of local bus services but there are still no bus stops or information within close proximity of the railway station, which has difficult pedestrian or cycle access to the town centre given the dominance of a by-pass road.

The Heart of Wales Line from Shrewsbury to Swansea is the other railway route which allows direct access to Powys via stations between Knighton and Llandovery and Llandeilo (the latter two are in Carmarthenshire but are key gateway towns for the Brecon Beacons). It has been promoted for some years now as a tourist line because of the exceptional and varied landscape through which it passes. In 2010/11 there were 107,322 arrivals and departures at stations in Powys on this line with the greatest footfall being at Llandrindod Wells (47,732).

This line has been developed by a Community Rail Partnership and the Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association. Both organisations have concentrated on promoting the line for tourism purposes including rail rambles in conjunction with the Ramblers and bus links from stations to nearby attractions such as The Towy Valley Explorer from Llandeilo railway station. Demand has risen at all stations within Powys during the past five years although there have been fluctuations between years at some stations.

The main issue is the limited timetable which can be provided by two trains, one based at each end of the line. This necessitates early starts from each end of the line and a lack of frequency of trains (only four trains each way on weekdays and two on Sundays) at other times of the day. Consequently, the line is unattractive to many day visitors. The single coach trains which form the mainstay of provision are not ideal for sightseeing and there's a lack of space for the carriage of luggage including cycles.

Powys is also served by a number of railheads on the Manchester to Cardiff 'Marches Line', the most important being Shrewsbury (1,676,850 arrivals and departures), Hereford (1,017,114) and Abergavenny (344,486). Other railheads where visitors transfer include Craven Arms, Ludlow, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath and Carmarthen.

Coach

There are also two National Express routes which pass through Powys and even though provision is limited there is a case for a promotional campaign to encourage holiday travel by way of the scheduled coach network from the Midlands and the South East.

In terms of group travel packaged day and holiday trips by coach are run by a number of coach and bus companies from around the country and day trips by minibus and coach from nearby population centres – e.g. Visit Herefordshire are promoting minibus tours to the Elan Valley currently. We do not propose to cover actions on increasing group travel activity within this plan.

Core bus routes

There are a number of core bus routes which offer access into and around Powys, six days per week:

- T4 Cardiff Bus Station-Newtown Bus Station via Brecon and Llandrindod Wells (summer Sunday journeys between Cardiff and Brecon by Beacons Bus)
- 39/39A Hereford Railway Station-Brecon Interchange via Hay-on-Wye (seven day service)
- 461 Hereford Railway Station-Llandrindod Wells Railway Station
- X32 Bangor Bus Station to Aberystwyth Railway Station via Machynlleth (seven day service)
- X43 Abergavenny Bus Station to Brecon Interchange (summer Sunday journeys by Beacons Bus)
- X47 Aberystwyth Railway Station to Llandrindod Wells Railway Station via Rhayader
- X63 Swansea Bus Station to Brecon Interchange via Neath Railway Station (summer Sunday journeys by Beacons Bus)
- X75 Shrewsbury Bus Station to Llanidloes and Rhayader via Welshpool
- X85 Newtown Bus Station to Machynlleth Railway Station via Carno

These routes offer between six and ten journeys per day with the exception of the X47 which runs twice daily. Only the 39/39A operates on a Sunday. All of these services offer scenic splendour and have the potential to offer a tourist experience. In all instances they have enjoyed increased patronage in recent years.

There are also several local routes which have tourism potential, such as the 41 route between Newtown and Kington or the 64 route between Brecon and Llandovery, which receive little or no promotion despite their appeal to walkers and sightseers.

All bus services in Powys (with the exception of routes 39 and 72) are provided by several bus operators under contract to Powys County Council. In the main the fleet is modern and standards of operation high, but some bus companies have an older fleet in operation. In such cases, many of the buses do not conform with DDA requirements, nor current environmental standards. Furthermore, they do not provide an attractive image to intending passengers.

Infrastructure

The Urban and Rural Interchange Study (TraCC 2009) highlighted several recommendations for the improvement of public transport infrastructure across Powys. Our subsequent investigation indicates that little work has been undertaken to improve most interchanges in the county with the exception of Brecon despite the National Passenger Survey (2010) pointing to low levels of satisfaction with interchange between public transport modes in the TraCC region.

Bus and rail terminals are the key places where visitors await public transport and these locations should be designed to engage interest, provide information and offer confidence to travel without a car. Some of the railway stations in the county have benefited from a national station improvement scheme and they all offer real time information. While these stations provide railway timetable information and varying levels of shelter, the National Passenger Survey highlights that personal security at stations remains an issue to address.

The audit of passenger transport facilities undertaken as part of the plan also identifies the public transport 'Gateways' to Powys from surrounding local authority areas. In many cases, these are relatively modern but there are many improvements that can be made to make onward travel into Powys easier.

Of particular concern is the interchange between trains at buses at Abergavenny, although there are longer-term plans to resolve the situation whereby buses cannot reach the railway station building. Currently visitors wanting to reach Crickhowell / Brecon need to find their way from the station with no information or signage to a bus stop on the main road which does not indicate that it serves the buses to Brecon. Short term, as well as long term, improvements are therefore vital.

Although not as poor as some locations visited in the course of this study, much of the bus roadside infrastructure in Powys is not of a sufficient standard to encourage visitors to wait and travel. Bus stop poles and shelters are often old, lacking maintenance and in some cases not comfortable places to wait. This has been identified in the Welsh Bus Passenger Survey (2010) where improvements need to be made to meet customer requirements. For example, in Presteigne the main timetable point is the 'Recycling Car Park' served by ten buses per day. There is a bus stop, timetable case, and shelter but they are all poorly maintained. Adjacent is a recycling point with an inevitable spillage of recycled material lying on the ground and this gives the locality an unwelcoming feel to it. In the town, there's also a bus stop by the police station served by all buses. It is closer to the centre, offers a secure location and is situated near to public toilets, car parking and with space for an information board and shelter. The visitor would find this a more pleasant place to wait.

The very rural nature of Powys and the Brecon Beacons has determined that most bus services stop by request at any safe location outside the urban areas. Thus, in some locations, there is no physical bus stop provision or shelter; places where tourists may wait should be marked to increase confidence in using these locations. The capital investment programme should be reviewed to improve the quality of the infrastructure and to use its presence to increase visitor awareness of bus routes. A detailed passenger transport audit is provided in Appendix 3.

The main issue is that the lack of quality of the public realm at bus stops and current key interchanges in towns. There's also a general lack of regular cleaning/maintenance which signals to many visitors that public transport is not valued and therefore not worthy of consideration.

The implications are clear. In order to improve the quality of public transport access the following should be actioned:

- Priority needs to be afforded to a rolling programme of interchange improvements at the key locations as indicated in the TraCC Interchange report (2009). The recommendations of the SEWTA study (2012) regarding interchange at Abergavenny railway station also need to be implemented to maximise the interchange potential of this location.
- An additional programme of upgrading roadside infrastructure at key hubs should be DDA compliant, offer travel information from the stop and about the network, include attractive shelters with solar powered lighting (where appropriate), visitor information and interpretation and cycle stands.
- In the short term the programme should prioritise the key routes:
T4, 39, 461, X32, X43, X47, X63, X75, X85

Beacons Bus network

The Beacons Bus network is provided by the Brecon Beacons Partnership as a network of bus services on summer Sundays and Bank Holidays to encourage visitor trips from the South Wales conurbations into and around the Brecon Beacons National Park. There are eight key routes which converge on Brecon as the major

interchange point, including the Bike Bus from Cardiff to Brecon, which pulls a trailer accommodating up to 20 bicycles.

The feeder services then provide additional circular routes from Brecon which focus on the main attractions and places to visit before offering a final departure from the Interchange back to the originating destination in the late afternoon.. The network is branded as 'Beacons Bus' and exhibits best practice in marketing. Despite 20%+ increases in passenger journeys year on year, attempts to increase the length of the season or operate parts of the network on Saturdays or during school holidays have been frustrated by reductions in the revenue support from the Partner authorities as a result of cuts to their own budgets.

Recent sustainable transport innovation

The Sustainable Visitor Transport Initiative, managed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in association with some of its partner local authorities, is an imaginative three year project which seeks to grow the usage of patronage on the National Park network by 15%. It aims to do this by encouraging use of weekday services through bus walks, visitor attraction endorsement, website and other promotional material and training. It has also pioneered linkages with taxi operators with a view to piloting 'Walkers Taxis'. It also continues to design and promote the Beacons Bus network of services.

Several locally based bike hire/cycling holiday companies offer electric bikes for hire. A locally based initiative has been working for several years to develop innovative electric vehicles in the Brecon Beacons. The group based in Talybont on Usk received support to develop and trial the B-Bug electric buggies which cover a distance of about 30 miles before needing recharging – through the Talybont community hydro scheme. They are popular with visitors and the scheme has recently been awarded an SDF grant to extend the trial and place buggies or new Renault Twizys with around five more businesses in the National Park. Zero Carbon World a charity involving Beacons based individuals is funding 100 electric charging points to be installed across the Brecon Beacons and Powys. There is also the Green Valleys Initiative, a Community Interest Company, which is working with local communities on green energy schemes. In other parts of Powys the Clean Energy Centre in Newtown specialises in offering electric bikes and there is of course the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth.

4.2 Tourism audit

An audit was carried out of 56 visitor attractions and popular countryside sites around Powys and the Brecon Beacons. The promotional leaflet and website for each attraction were analysed and in some cases the attractions were emailed or telephoned to find further details. In addition to checking facilities and visitor numbers the audit attempted to find out details of:

- Nearest bus stop and service
- Nearest rail station
- Bike racks, bike hire and nearby cycle routes
- Whether any incentives are offered to visitors arriving without a car
- Strengths and weaknesses in the transport information provided by each attraction were summarised.

Of the 56 attractions only 16 had easy to find information about public transport on both their website and leaflet. Even then the level of information provided was very variable. Attractions with the best information included the Centre for Alternative Technology, Blaenavon World Heritage Site, the National Botanic Gardens of Wales, King Arthur's Labyrinth and the Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Centre. Cadw have a set format for public transport information on their website and leaflets which is brief but works quite well (although the private sector website for Carreg Cennan Castle has no information about any forms of transport).

Some 34 attractions have very limited information on their website only (in some cases there is no leaflet for the attraction or it was not located). Many of these have very basic details for transport. Twelve only have either a Traveline Cymru search option or a Google/Multimap link which some people will know has a public transport search function. Three of these attractions buried information on transport deep in the website through several menu links under a heading such as tourist information. This can be the case when an attraction is run by a local authority such as the Powysland Museum or Llanymynech Limeworks.

Six attractions did not give any information on transport at all. In some cases, such as Brecon Cathedral, there may be an assumption that it is in the town and can therefore be reached by public transport. In other cases, such as Pistyll Rhaeadr Waterfall and the Elan Valley Centre, there may be a perception that public transport information is not relevant as it is too distant. But even at Pistyll Rhaeadr the nearest bus stop is four miles away and there is a promoted walk option from Llangynog to the waterfall and back which would be of interest to some visitors. In other cases, such as Glansevern Hall Gardens, the attraction is close to a bus route but no mention of public transport is made.

The default mode for attraction managers is to give directions by road and car parking information. Public transport information may not be included because either:

- The attraction is in a town and they assume visitors will be able to find out how to reach the town via a separate means – probably the case but it obviously takes longer to research.
- The attraction is some distance from a rail station or bus route. In this case other options such as an attractive walking route, cycle hire in the local town, taxi numbers etc. could be given but are very rarely offered.
- Public transport options have been overlooked or are not seen as relevant.

In many cases attractions include just very basic information or a link to Traveline Cymru or Google maps/multimap. Potential visitors would need to already be looking for public transport options before they use Traveline Cymru and know how to search for public transport options on Google maps. Usually, if these links are provided, there is no accompanying text which would help visitors e.g. 'The number 33 bus stops 200m from the centre – check Traveline Cymru for timetables'.

Our consultations also revealed that some businesses choose not to put much information on public transport on their websites as they feel it is a negative message when there aren't many options. Most will willingly check out information when requested but it is a reactive stance for visitors who do not have a car or are specifically requesting alternatives.

Only very few attractions take a positive or proactive approach to encourage visitors to consider and use alternatives to the car to reach them. The Centre for Alternative Technology website shows what potential there is to offer a range of positive choices for people. It is worth quoting the CAT website in full to demonstrate the range of information, suggestions, useful links and positive incentives that can be offered.

Obviously this fits with the ethos of the whole attraction but there is no reason why a similar approach could not be taken by other attractions. It starts with a Google map and follows with this text:

How to get to CAT

By Train

Machynlleth is on the Birmingham-to-Aberystwyth train line, which can be also accessed via Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. This line is served by [Arriva Wales](#) trains. To support sustainable transport we offer a 50% discount on our entry price on production of a valid train ticket to Machynlleth.

Groups of 10+ can get 25% off travel costs via the Arriva Trains Wales booking line 0870 9000 773.

The Visitor Centre is about three miles north of the Machynlleth train station, so you can continue your journey by bus, taxi, bicycle or on foot. If you arrive by person-powered or public transport you will receive a £1 off the entry price (the 50% train discount will be applied after this reduction)

By Bus

Buses travel from Machynlleth to CAT approximately every hour from Monday to Saturday. There are less frequent services on Sundays, with four buses a day. In Machynlleth you can catch the bus beside the clock tower in the centre of town or next to the train station. From the main entrance to the train station turn right and continue down the slope to the main road. The bus stop is located on the opposite side of the road in front of the Lloyds bus depot.

Sometimes there is a substantial wait between connecting trains and buses. If you find you need to wait a while, you could pop into the centre of Machynlleth (5 minutes walk from the train station) and keep yourself entertained in the wide variety of shops, pubs and cafes the town has to offer - amongst them, CAT's very own Quarry Cafe and Quarry Shop provide the local community with delicious wholefood meals and produce. When you're ready, you can take the bus up to CAT from the clock tower in the town centre.

Bus numbers 30, 32, X32 ([Arriva Buses](#)) and number 34 ([Lloyds Coaches](#)) serve the CAT Visitor Centre. The number 34 service passes the closest to CAT (drop off is a few yards from our car park) while the others stop by in the nearby village of Pantperthog, ten minutes walk from the entrance. To avoid walking along the main road, look for the footpath across the road from the bus stop.

Download the [Dyfi Valley Travel Guide](#) for an up-to-date bus and train timetable.

By bike or on foot

[Sustrans National Cycle Network](#) Route 8 passes via the rail station, right up to the entrance of the CAT Visitor Centre. This is a very pleasant, albeit a little hilly, route. The journey takes less than half an hour by bike and about an hour on foot.

As you leave the station's main entrance turn right to reach the main road and right again under the railway bridge. Proceed along the path on the left hand side of the road. As you near the Dyfi river bridge, cross over the road again and continue through the gates and alongside the riverbank until you reach the footbridge on the left hand side. Cross over the footbridge and continue through the gate and along the pathway until you reach the white cottage. Turn right onto the minor road and continue downhill across the stream. Take the first left immediately after the bridge (there is a sign to CAT here), and continue along this lane for approximately two miles. CAT Visitor Centre is clearly signposted on arrival.

Cycle parking is available on site and bikes are available for hire in the town centre.

By taxi

For a taxi to or from the Visitor Centre call (01654) 702048 or 07969997039.

By car

The Visitor Centre is located north of Machynlleth just off the A487 towards Dolgellau. It is clearly signposted from the main road. Car parking is available on site. If you would like to share your journey either by getting or giving someone a lift, visit www.liftshare.com

Other examples of good practice include:

- **National Botanic Garden of Wales:** Bus 166 from Carmarthen station drops off at the Gardens/link to bus timetables; New bus service from HoW station at Llandeilo linking attractions + link for further info: Traveline for public transport enquiries; cycling; taxi numbers; sightseeing tour companies. On website public transport information is presented before how to get there by car. Arrivals on bus or cycle get half price entry. Prompts car users to use the switch2share car share scheme.

- **Judges Lodgings, Presteigne:** Distance to nearest rail station and link to bus timetables; multimap transport search plus offer to help with public transport operations on phone.
- **The Thomas Shop, Penybont:** Distance to HoW Station + timetable through link to station; buses from Hereford, Kington and Llandrindod Wells; Google map search.
- **Abergavenny Museum:** Nearest railway station + links to National Rail enquiries and Arriva Trains Wales; Stagecoach telephone numbers; National Express run daily services to Newport and Cardiff connecting to local services at Abergavenny; Traveline search option; Google maps.
- **Blaenavon World Heritage Site:** Bus numbers, frequencies and routes; Nearest rail stations - need to get bus or taxi to get to Blaenavon; nearest cycle route; taxi numbers, link to Google map search and Traveline Cymru.
- **Garwnant Forestry Centre:** Nearest station + link to national rail enquiries; daily bus services by Stagecoach + link to Traveline Cymru; describes Beacon Bus service + link to website.

Several of the large events such as the Green Man Festival have made considerable efforts to provide public transport options, shuttle buses and encourage car sharing. Hay Literary Festival has a Hay 21 bus to Hereford railway station and an extensive range of shuttle buses. It also showcases green technology and uses the B Bugs for VIP transport etc.. However the Royal Welsh Showground, which hosts several large shows each year, is an example of an event which provides very limited information on anything other than car travel.

Implications of this audit include

- A more positive approach should be encouraged for all visitor attractions and events to promote access by sustainable transport
- significant improvements could be made relatively easily by supplementing online and printed information (see draft guidelines in Appendix 4).
- Attractions may need help in writing descriptions of transport options and in embedding links in websites.
- More incentives could be promoted and monitored
- Progress can be easily monitored by repeating the audit.

4.3 Summary of the current situation in Powys and the Brecon Beacons

Positives

- Weekday core bus network is good for a rural area and provides access for day trips from a wide range of origination locations
- Flagship routes eg T4, 39, 461, X32, X43, X47, X63, X75, X85
- BBNP Visitor Transport Initiative and Partnership -changing cultures
- Beacons Bus-good promotion and quality at forefront
- Cambrian and Heart of Wales Railways-imaginative promotions
- Innovative electric vehicle activity being developed
- Strong walking (and cycling/riding) product
- Proportion of green aware tourism businesses

- High proportion of visitors are public transport aware (key markets London and the south-east, Birmingham, Bristol and Newport/Swansea/Cardiff)

Negatives

- High proportions of visitors arrive by car
- Visitors tend to continue to use their cars throughout their stay
- Very limited Sunday bus network outside the Beacons Bus network during the summer months
- Variable quality of bus operators and vehicles, particularly for the non-core routes
- Lack of bus-train connectivity – at many interchanges
- Limited activity from Wales Transport and Tourism Assessment/Group (mainly focused on Centres of Excellence - outside Powys)
- Few large visitor attractions and many not directly accessible by public transport
- Walking and mountain biking viewed as car based ‘activities’ not as a means of transport
- Few businesses promote sustainable travel options proactively



The Beacons Bus

5. THE STRATEGY

The strategic review, audits of current provision, consultations discussions and research into what has been successful elsewhere has led us to develop a strategy to deliver the aim of this plan:

to improve the sustainability of tourism across Powys and the Brecon Beacons by encouraging visitors to use low-carbon transport modes and reduce car mileage.

We have already highlighted the cultural divide between transport and tourism sectors and how they function. The key to delivering a successful visitor transport plan will be to bring both agendas and sets of stakeholders together to work to best advantage. Tourism tends to work in local hubs and wider area destinations, while transport is a network of routes radiating out of a small number of key hubs – ideally so that visitors can make circular journeys. The transport product which needs managing and marketing is specifically a linear route, but including its relationship with other routes at hubs or interchanges to make up a network of services.

Our approach is to work both with hubs and routes and to identify what actions need to be delivered for a linear route and what actions are best delivered through local stakeholders in towns or groups of towns within each destination area. Tourism destination areas in Powys are still being firmed up by tourism stakeholders but there are already agreed destination areas of the Brecon Beacons, Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Valley.

5.1 Visitor Transport Plan Objectives

The top priority is to achieve a major shift in visitor numbers from car based trips to and around Powys and the Brecon Beacons to public transport trips. Energy will need to focus on the routes with most chance of delivering such a shift – backing the winners. These routes will need to be promoted as travel experiences – to change mindsets and attitudes over time.

In order to support this approach the weaknesses in transport infrastructure along these routes need to be addressed and local communities and businesses in the main hub towns, which the routes link, have to be engaged. We propose to refer to these as visitor transport hubs.

All those who work in the visitor economy are key players; providing visitors with information and hosting them. This plan will not be successful unless it can bring on board a large number of tourism providers and convince them of the benefits of sustainable visitor transport.

Information provision and marketing is key in all this – promoting positive messages but most importantly making it easy to find out about, book and buy sustainable transport options. Attractive propositions in the form of itineraries and good value tickets with discounts and benefits will be required.

Substituting some of the time visitors spend in cars for walking or cycling during their visits is another important part of the strategy. Zero carbon activities such as these are already well catered for in most of the area which is a popular destination for walking, cycling, riding and canoeing. The challenge is to reduce the dependence on the car to access walks etc. and develop attractive new offers.

Finally there are a range of technological developments in low carbon transport which the area is already pioneering. Increasing the use of electric cars, buggies, bicycles and boats would reduce fossil fuel consumption and can be promoted as fun ways to travel. They are likely to attract considerable PR due to their novelty and fun factors and are therefore valuable in raising the profile of the area as a sustainable travel destination – an important element in the strategy. There may also be scope to link with community

transport organisations to help fill some of the gaps in public transport provision and serve specific visitor needs. If this can generate income for community transport it would provide a win-win situation.

Thus we have six overarching **objectives** for the Visitor Transport Plan:

- 1. To develop and promote public key transport routes as travel experiences**
- 2. To establish strong visitor transport hubs and deliver infrastructure improvements**
- 3. To engage tourism providers in promoting low carbon transport options to their visitors**
- 4. To strengthen marketing, communication and ticketing for sustainable visitor transport across Powys and the Brecon Beacons**
- 5. To develop and promote walking and cycling as key elements of a strategy to reduce visitor fuel consumption**
- 6. To develop the use of electric vehicles, community transport vehicles and other vehicles with ‘fun-factor’ for visitors**

Each of these is further discussed in the following six sections (6-11) with recommendations for action.

We propose that the Plan is delivered by **Visitor Transport Partnerships** based on Tourism Destination Areas, **coordinated by a Powys Visitor Transport Management Group**. These would include the key tourism and transport organisations which need to be involved in the delivery of the Plan. The Partnerships and initial proposals for how they will operate to deliver all the recommendations for action are explained in section 12. This is followed by the action plan itself (section 13) which summarises the recommendations into one table.

6. ROUTES AS TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Objective 1. To develop and promote public transport routes as travel experience

There are a number of good practice examples of such routes from around the UK including the Jurassic Coast Bus, the Nidderdale Bus, the Norfolk Coastal Hopper, Pembrokeshire Puffin Bus and Breeze Up the Downs from Brighton onto the South Downs.

With regard to the train routes the branding has already been delivered and developed to good effect. The Heart of Wales line, for example, has a very strong local following and support from the West Midlands as well as Wales. The Heart of Wales Line Travellers' Association has done much to build a strong brand personality. A similar approach needs to be adopted with key bus routes across Powys.

Scenic Routes to Ride

The aim is to offer a collection of routes which could be branded as Powys 'Scenic Routes to Ride' (working title) to emphasise advantages over views from a car. The journey is an attraction in itself but also as a way to reach visitor destinations and attractions. Wildlife tourism is becoming increasingly important in Powys and the Brecon Beacons and this can be used to good effect in the marketing of core routes. Each route could be identified with a type of bird known to be common or special to the area through which the bus travels: Buzzard, Osprey, Merlin, Red Kite, Redstart are examples. The route names might be chosen by resident wildlife experts and writers such as Roger Lovegrove and Iolo Williams

These routes would become a must try 'product' when visiting Mid Wales. The tourism appeal would be developed as follows:

- Bring awareness of the diversity of the natural landscape through which the bus passes and the sightseeing advantages of bus and train travel over the car
- Interpretation about travelling through scenic splendour presented in an attractive format
- Take people to the heart of market towns and attractions en-route
- Design in visitor appeal (family quizzes for summer holidays, health walks, wildlife or rainy day bus-the one with the greatest number of indoor attractions).
- Promote suggested itineraries for days and half days out
- Welcoming, knowledgeable driving staff

Suggestions for linking these branded routes together as circular tours or leisurely trips across the area in two or three days (if places could be found to store luggage at the hubs) would strengthen the concept.

Key requirements for such routes include:

On each route there would be a template for a brand personality. This would include the following:

1. In most cases, a minimum two hourly frequency with smart, preferably modern environmentally friendly buses
2. Preferably a seven day service-at least in the summer months
3. Tourism quality appeal-vehicle, carriage conditions (dogs for example), information on board, possibly on board printed interpretation and/or the use of apps

4. Drivers trained as ‘ambassadors’ with honed customer care skills (with an award scheme for best/most welcoming driver) and driving for comfort of passengers. This has worked to good effect with Moorsbus in Yorkshire, Coastal Hopper in North Norfolk and Breeze Up the Downs in Brighton.
5. Community endorsement with towns and villages being involved in interpreting the history of the bus service-old photos, stories about bus companies and drivers
6. Improved infrastructure at core stops (see Appendix 3) including travel information, shelters, interpretation and cycle racks.

Recommendations for action are:

1.1 As almost all the bus services in Powys are contracted by the County, not only do quality features have to be built into the contractual arrangements with the bus operators but the Visitor Transport Plan Partnership has to engage with the operators to enthuse them to upgrade service delivery and imagery

- Management briefings and buy in
- Driver training – customer care, local knowledge, familiarisation with attractions along their route
- Podcasts of (bus/train) drivers and why they are passionate about the area through which they drive
- Branding of vehicles (for example, bus sides or rears) and naming of birdlife, for example, on the front of vehicle

1.2 The Partnership will need to engage with clusters of tourism businesses to:

- Involve community groups and individuals in the development of the brand through feedback meetings, heritage interpretation at village bus stop enhancement schemes
- Build a reputation with tourism providers on each route so as that they begin to advocate trips to visitors. This has worked well with the Coastal Hopper serving the North Norfolk AONB where tourist businesses see the local bus as an iconic brand and the drivers as core to service delivery
- Familiarise local businesses and tourist information staff to promote itineraries on the routes as ideas for days out. Itineraries to available as attractive downloads/apps.

1.3 Improve infrastructure at each visitor transport hub town on the route and at other places, such as near to tourist attractions, in order to bring about an overall enhancement of the route.

1.4 Search for additional sources of revenue funding to support the operation of some of the core bus routes every two hours on Sundays (at least during summer months) and the Beacons Bus network for more of the year and develop specific tourist routes on summer Saturdays and during school holidays.

1.5 Develop a strong PR/media campaign including a selection of travel writers, poets and musicians, preferably local, but above all else offering a Welsh perspective about the routes, both in Welsh and English

Our suggestions for taking these actions forward, and coordinating their development and implementation, are given in section 12 on Delivery.

Prime Route for development:

T4 Cardiff to Newtown

This route is delivering good results with approximately 1000 passengers being carried per day of operation and continuing high levels of growth. It has been branded as part of the Traws Cymru network but it has considerable potential for further tourism development in Powys as it traverses much of the County from north to south and has recently been equipped with new, high quality vehicles. An interpretive mobile app for the route could be developed. For example, as a route offering one hundred bus walks; one which could not be matched elsewhere in the UK.

Many local bus routes in Powys are currently being retendered so these should be avoided for development in the short term, as should those which use older vehicles. Initial contenders, therefore, are:

X75 Shrewsbury to Llangurig/Rhayader (building on the success of Celtic Travel's new vehicles)

X43 Abergavenny to Brecon (which will also need some investment in refurbishing the vehicles)

461 Hereford to Llandrindod Wells

However, more routes could follow in future years.



T4 near the Storey Arms, Flickr - Next Stop Please

Train routes

The key railway lines have benefited from the work of two Community Rail Partnerships, which have provided sustained promotional work in recent years. This need to be continued and developed in the following ways:

- Invest in improvements to CRP websites and systems.
- Further development of the Trainstaysave campaign. This offers a 10% discount (or other benefit as agreed with proprietor) for train travellers on accommodation at listed locations. It should be expanded to cover both Cambrian and Heart of Wales lines and possibly the T4 in the first instance but in due course to the core bus network.

Train service improvement

Demand is predicted to increase considerably with an improved service on the Heart of Wales line (i.e. five or more journeys each way on weekdays). There are currently discussions as to how this might happen. It has been suggested that this might be possible if the Heart of Wales trains terminated at Llanelli rather than Swansea. The disadvantage of this turnaround location would be offset by the increased frequency on the line so is an option worth pursuing in the short term. (Another possibility might be provided by the intended closure of Llandovery High School and the need to transport the pupils to the High School at Ffairfach, located next to that station.) There is demand for late evening services from each end as well, so a variety of factors will need to be addressed.

It is essential that the Heart of Wales line retains a minimum of two trains on Sundays all year, ideally more, as this is an important public transport link for tourists on weekend breaks in mid Powys. Improved rolling stock on the Heart of Wales line will enhance its appeal for sightseeing and bike carriage. Only by increasing capacity through more and longer trains would it be worthwhile contemplating attracting even more passengers by trialling minibus trips from a number of railheads to encourage similar ventures to 'The Train that Meets the Bus' Towy Valley service, for example, from Llandrindod Wells to the Elan Valley and Llandovery to Llanwrtyd Wells via Rhandirmwyn and Llyn Brianne.

The Cambrian Line would also benefit greatly from the introduction of an hourly service, as is currently being discussed.

Rail for Ramblers

There is an opportunity for the Heart of Wales line to be positioned as the prime route for railway walks in Wales, if not the UK. It has a similar heritage and landscape appeal to the Settle and Carlisle line; Dales Rail has increased its rail rambles programme with great success in recent years. The Heart of Wales train crosses at least six long distance walking routes. It has also developed a reputation through the long standing Rail Rambles programme as a route for walkers and has a range of other railway walks/festivals and promotions available along the line. This investment needs to be extended so as to make the line a destination in its own right for a walking holiday. Walks could be in printed booklet form, as downloadable pdfs or a Heart of Wales Line app.

Discussions with Arriva Trains Wales should attempt to ensure that on-train catering on both lines features more Welsh products and, perhaps, examine the feasibility of passengers ordering mini hampers (to picnic on the train) from local caterers, such as the buffet at Llandovery.

The Partnership should sustain dialogue with the Wales Government rail division to ensure that bidders for the new franchise (from 2018) are required to co-operate with integrated transport schemes, quality controls and

marketing initiatives. The new franchise should also contain arrangements to ensure that the successful bidder has access to adequate rolling stock: at present there is insufficient capacity to meet needs during the peak holiday season. Further details of the rail franchising process and current situation are given in Appendix 6.

Recommendations for action:

- 1.6 Invest in improvements to CRP websites and systems including the Trainstaysave campaign
- 1.7 Enhance capacity of the Heart of Wales Line by using longer trains and the addition of at least one additional weekday journey in each direction and strengthen the product through promotion of walks and minibus tours from the route.
- 1.8 Introduce an hourly service on the Cambrian Line supported by extended promotion.
- 1.9 Investigate feasibility of other ways to improve the 'experience' such as staff training or enhanced catering.
- 1.10 Work towards longer term objectives – prepare for rail refranchising



Knucklas Viaduct

7. VISITOR TRANSPORT HUBS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Objective 2 - To establish strong visitor transport hubs and deliver infrastructure improvements

7.1 Visitor Transport Hubs

The development of visitors transport hubs builds on the work of the tourism business clusters already developed across much of Powys and the mountain biking hubs in the Brecon Beacons. The inspiration for visitor transport hubs comes from continental Europe where twenty seven destinations in the Alps have combined forces to offer holidays without the car (see www.alpine-pearls.com). However, the first stage of development in Powys has to be to improve the quality of the hub.

What might a visitor expect of a visitor transport hub?

1. Seven day a week bus or train service linking to key markets - Sunday is a major day for recreational pursuits such as walking, shopping and return VFR trips.
2. Good infrastructure and information at interchanges, including details of the nearest toilets and refreshments.
3. Tourism transport champion/working group within the cluster, tourism association or chamber of trade to build commitment by the community and to monitor provision
4. Marketing of the travel experience as part of the destination (e.g. day out itineraries –making much higher prominence of travel on destination and hub town websites, with images and maps and integrate timings, costs of travel etcetera).
5. Endorsement by tourism providers so to encourage use of local public transport including taxis and demand responsive services-offering incentives to visitors who travel this way. It might be possible to offer guests, for example, a one day or trip travel card valid on some of these facilities at a discount.
6. A back up service (for walkers, cyclists, etcetera) offering support to get them back when things go wrong; this would be arranged between the cluster group and taxi companies offering a special rate. (The MoorsBus rescue taxi is a good example if the bus company is at fault they pay, if passengers are late they pay but know there is a fall back option.)
7. A strong walking tourism product including, wherever possible, ‘Walkers are Welcome’ town status and a good number of walker welcome accredited accommodation
8. Bus or train walks: self-guided and guided
9. Electric vehicles - bikes, buggies and cars for hire;

The main visitor transport hubs should be:

- **Newtown** for the Severn Valley including Welshpool, Llanidloes, Montgomery and Llanfair Caereinion
- **Llandrindod Wells** for Central Powys including Builth Wells, Llanwrtyd Wells, Rhayader
- **Brecon** for the Brecon Beacons including Hay-on-Wye, Sennybridge, Talgarth
- **Machynlleth** for the Dyfi Valley, including Llanbrynmair, Dinas Mawddwy, Corris, Dolgellau, Tywyn
- **Abergavenny** for the Usk Valley including Crickhowell, Blaenavon, Raglan, Usk

Other hubs could be developed, especially in more gateway roles. This may be dependent on the progression of emerging visitor destination areas. These could include:

- **Llandovery/Llandeilo** for the Towy Valley and including Ammanford, Brynamman, Llangadog, National Botanic Gardens
- **Knighton/Kington** for Radnorshire, including Presteigne
- **Neath** for Waterfall Country including Abercraf, Glynneath, Penderyn, Resolven, Ystradgynlais
- **Oswestry** for the Cain & Tanat Valleys including Llanfyllin, Llanrhaeadr YM, Llanymynech and the Ceiriog Valley including Chirk

Recommendation for action:

2.1 Secure commitment from the public sector to invest in the routes and infrastructure

2.2 Secure commitment in visitor transport hubs from the local tourism or business organisation to motivate and engage businesses in the improvements, ideally with a champion and the support of marketing and walking organisations to help develop walking itineraries, days out itineraries and effective promotion, photography and PR. The visitor transport hubs are a mechanism to deliver much of the content of this plan in targeted high priority locations. Our suggestions for how this can be supported and co-ordinated, are given in section 12 on Delivery.



Llanwrytyd Wells Station

7.2 First impressions count

Our audit highlights poor roadside infrastructure across Powys (see Appendix 3). This discourages new users, gives a poor quality feel and lack of confidence in the services provided. Visitors are on holiday and do not want to wait in unpleasant locations with poor information. Therefore, there is a need for upgrading roadside bus stops and railway stations as first impressions count. It is suggested these upgrades should be rolled out on a prioritised basis of both key hub interchanges and core, branded Scenic Routes.

Recommendations for action:

2.3 Bus stop programme to upgrade the existing infrastructure, maintenance, clean up and information provision. Redesign bus stop flags to include Traveline Cymru information, bus service numbers or names, location (as in Traveline Cymru database), txt, QR codes, timetable case and current information.

2.4 Enhance bus stop public realm, launch a local 'Adopt a bus stop' schemes for local communities or businesses, install more bike racks at bus stops. Install a 'best practice' bus stop in a high profile location.

2.5 Strengthen intermodal transport interchanges and gateways at, Llandrindod Wells , Machynlleth and Newtown and work with other local authorities at Abergavenny, Hereford, Llandovery, Shrewsbury, Merthyr Tydfil and Neath.

2.6 Rail station interface – Audit and improve rail station information, orientation maps, bus routes and timetables, taxi numbers, bike hire etc., application of consistent model and information, encourage planting (work with In Bloom schemes etc.), consider promotional signage e.g. at Abergavenny for the Brecon Beacons or Craven Arms for Heart of Wales.

2.7 Re-use of redundant station buildings in certain locations and/or new build station facilities. The re-use of Llandovery railway station is a model to follow.



Examples of good and bad bus stop flags – the Abergavenny one does not include the bus for Brecon

8. TOURISM PROVIDERS ON BOARD

Objective 3 - To engage tourism providers in promoting low carbon transport options to their visitors

Tourism providers in accommodation, attractions, food and drink and holiday businesses play a crucial role in attracting and hosting visitors. By providing good information on public transport and low carbon options for visitors, owners and staff can both make life easier for visitors who would like to use these options whilst at the same time encouraging other visitors to leave their cars behind for a trip.

The tourism audit and consultations revealed the poor level of information currently provided on leaflets and websites. It also revealed a reluctance amongst many businesses to promote alternative transport options. This was for varied reasons – lack of awareness and familiarity, lack of confidence and up to date knowledge, concern that visitors will find it difficult, additional hassle in providing information. Obviously there are some areas where there is no public transport service within several miles. This will apply in particular to remote self-catering cottages and businesses in isolated locations. However we are confident that every tourism business in the area could improve their information on alternative options – for example by welcoming cyclists, listing taxi or car hire companies or promoting walking/cycling routes from their site. Some may want to install electric charge points and offer bicycle or e-bike/buggy hire.

This plan seeks to change mind-sets amongst tourism providers as much as visitors. A day out on a scenic bus route, visiting a local attraction by bike or a walk from the Heart of Wales line should become the norm for an increasing number of visitors. . The Plan seeks to build on recent successes of the railways and bus companies to win back patronage in recent years. It will seek to upgrade the product on offer over the next five years and hence win an improved status with local residents. The Welsh Bus Survey (2010) of existing bus users show a high level of satisfaction with the actual bus service (rather than bus stops, etcetera) across Wales and also points to the willingness of customers to use buses and trains for leisure trips.

Holiday and accommodation businesses can promote public transport options for some markets travelling to Powys and the Brecon Beacons. By incorporating links to transport sites, recommending pick-ups and offering to organise bike hire in advance visitors may realise they do not need to drive all the way to the area. Featuring walking and cycling routes on websites and day out ideas visitors may have the confidence that they can enjoy the best of the area without having to bring a car. (Some urban residents do not own cars and actually hire them specifically for their holiday or use a car club when they would rather not have that expense.) This process of change will involve developing better linkages with businesses such as local taxi firms, bike hire etc. which will in turn encourage more spend in the local economy. If businesses provide bike hire, guided walks or electric vehicle hire themselves it strengthens their product and provides an additional income stream. Simply recommending more local visits to car based visitors will also reduce their mileage rather than suggesting they visit far flung attractions.

In reality, many tourism providers will want to test the water first and familiarisation trips can illustrate the levels of service available as the new routes and visitor transport projects gain ground. However, at the same time it is envisaged that alternative options to car based travel might be offered. i.e. being able to offer suggestions with confidence about the best options in their own area and to highlight these.

There may be some specific opportunities at visitor attractions which would give a high profile to non-car based options. Examples include:

- Elan Valley – where the Centre will be hydro powered in around 12 months time and where cycle and e-bike /e-buggy hire could be promoted for exploring round the lakes.

- Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust has plans for improvements at Cors Dyfi including possible shuttle minibuses between this site and other local attractions and ideas for a scenic bus route from Llanidloes to Machynlleth.
- Lake Vyrnwy – when United Utilities and the RSPB take over and plan major developments – this could include options for travelling round the lake using innovative e-vehicles or e-boats on the lake.
- The plans for the redevelopment of the BBNPA Centre at Libanus to make it easier to reach by bicycle or bus from Brecon.
- The proposed National Trust development at the Storey Arms.
- Brecon Mountain Railway – where a new stretch of line is opening in the next few years – trips to the railway could be promoted by bus and for walking and cycling back down to Merthyr.

Recommendations for action:

- 3.1 Engage businesses into improving their visitor transport knowledge and provision – via the visitor transport hubs, business clusters and transport champions. This includes the encouragement of more accommodation providers to join the walkers and cyclists welcome schemes. Awareness sessions and familiarisation trips for tourism businesses, TIC staff and taxi drivers to discuss relevant actions from this visitor transport plan.
- 3.2 Pro-active smart travel planning to follow up initial sessions – for clusters of businesses and along priority routes, plus target Green Tourism accredited businesses, attractions and larger caravan sites. This could include helping businesses develop walking, cycling and public transport itineraries from their site using standard templates and cost comparisons. Also help with adapting websites and advice on improving practical facilities such as charge points, bike racks, bus stops. Financial incentives for these improvements would help with take up. A visitor transport toolkit could be developed.
- 3.3 Encourage businesses including attractions to offer discounts to people arriving by public transport or bike e.g. trainstaysave scheme – promote the positive benefits. Investigate the feasibility of offering incentives such as free travel tickets to offer guests on completion of above.
- 3.4 Include transport as a compulsory element of BBNPA Ambassadors scheme, Green Tourism training and link into new Sense of Place (or other appropriate) tourism training initiatives.
- 3.5 Encourage more groupings of businesses offering a linked travel holiday e.g. Welsh Road Trips (with electric vehicles) or Brecon Riding Loops – other options might include e-bike routes, businesses along a canal and businesses along a cycle route.
- 3.6 Smart travel planning for events – to help integrate transport options into event information with incentives and discounts and improve facilities such as bike racks. Consider the scope for shuttle buses, additional services, park and ride, car sharing etc.
- 3.7 PR - Reinforce key messages through Visit Wales and regional tourism partnerships – communications, workshops, e-newsletter, PR etc. Additional PR focused on existing discounts and offers e.g. Wales Explorer passes and Cadw discounts, trainstaysave, and VIP e-travel options at events.
- 3.8 Consider the potential for a new event or challenge (possibly building on Llanwyrthd Wells green events e.g. electric (rain powered) vehicle race or Round Powys in 8 eco ways....to raise profile, bring enthusiasts to Powys and the Brecon Beacons to spread the word and generate PR
- 3.9 Investigate specific opportunities at visitor attractions

9. MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND TICKETING

Objective 4 To strengthen marketing, communication and ticketing for sustainable visitor transport across Powys

9.1 Marketing

A common thread in the discussions with practitioners has been the apparent lack of marketing of public transport, particularly in relation to buses in Powys rather than trains.

Trains into Mid Wales are marketed extensively by Arriva Trains Wales, National Rail Enquiries and a host of other organisations. There is wide coverage available and access to information about train travel into and within Powys. This is re-enforced by real time provision at every station in Powys and although visitors will not necessarily be aware of this; it is a strong selling point.

Buses are marketed primarily by way of a Powys County Council website as well as by some of the bus operators providing the services but it is by no means all of them. The Council's website includes ready access to maps and timetables in a digestible form. It also provides a printed timetable book and current timetables posted in cases at key bus stops. The main issue is whether or not information, which is currently provided as a customer service, can be used to target existing and potential visitor markets?

The tourist market for public transport is not easily segmented and the motivation to travel by public transport is variable. Price incentives (as compared to the cost of petrol) are important. There are a range of other motives such as is not having a car available, wanting to take a break from driving, or sharing green values. Thus, marketing messages need to be wide ranging rather than focused on any one factor. It is important to feature benefits such as good value travel prices where applicable (see ticketing) and opportunities for a more enriching travel experience.

Understanding the information chain or processes by which people get on board a bus or train are also important. Many researchers consider that the visitor chooses the destination first then decides how to travel secondly. A promotional campaign needs to recognise the need to sow the seeds with prospective visitors that it is possible to travel by public transport and that they can download or send off for the information prior to their holiday or day visit. Nevertheless, the Tourism on Board study (2007) also indicated that many visitors decide to use the bus or train when at the destination so a second wave of more detailed publicity such as itineraries, route promotions needs to be in place.

In the case of Mid Wales the appeal of the spectacular countryside is paramount in the minds of the visitor and outdoor activities feature more strongly than in other places. These appeals need to be built into the marketing communication of public transport both for the journey to and within Powys.

The message needs to convey that a visitor is missing out if they do not try the 'Scenic Routes to Ride', and this needs to be interfaced with opportunities for walking, watching wildlife, landscape reflections (poetry and painting), health and visiting attractions.

There is a plethora of literature and several websites which highlight tourism in Mid Wales but passenger transport is currently not featured well (although sites are currently being redeveloped) and yet the travel element is a core part of the tourist experience. The first stage of development needs to be a re-alignment of existing channels of communication so as to coordinate the message and to entice more visitors on board at each stage of the communication process.

9.2 Re-thinking information provision

There will always be a need for printed material in the short term but the balance is now shifting towards electronic information provision and this is likely to become dominant within a decade.

Information before travel

- **Websites**

There needs to be a website clean-up and integration; it is imperative that this is well designed with passenger transport integrated into the destination appeal, not as an after-thought. There's a real need for opportunities to download publicity leaflets as is currently the case with Beacons Bus, BayTrans and Cornwall public transport, for example, and not just timetables.

In particular, the Visit Wales website needs to take advantage of the progression of transport as tourism in Powys and the Brecon Beacons. This could be a dynamic campaign highlighting, in the first instance, concentrating on improved presentation of itineraries provided by the Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Transport Initiative and then other campaign elements from this plan.

Traveline Cymru: the plan needs to take advantage of the major improvements being made to Traveline Cymru and, rather like the National Rail Enquiries, make this the first call for information; thus it will be necessary to embed links wherever possible. It would be ideal if Traveline Cymru could also provide details of day and short stay travel tickets and samples of other fares. Its activities such as e-newsletters, challenges and events promotions provide opportunities to highlight Powys events and offers.

- **Timetables and promotional leaflets:**

Whilst there are currently good publications highlighting travel across Wales by public transport (Scenic Britain by Bus, Scenic Wales, etcetera) there could be a case for a Mid Wales based newspaper or brochure style publication which brings together a wide range of travel opportunities from itineraries, discounts, tickets, maps, etcetera which can be distributed widely during the summer season, targeting visitor already in the area. However the top priority is to integrate transport information effectively and attractively within all mainstream visitor publications and websites. The free Mid Wales and Brecon Beacons newspaper, for example, has very limited information on alternative transport options, mainly towards the back of the publication.

- The Powys County Council website currently offers an interactive map and timetables to download. The information contained here is essential for the would-be visitor to scope what is or is not possible without a car. It does not necessarily have to be hosted on the Council website.
- Timetables (and Traveline Cymru) should if possible include notes on timetables for key visitor attractions e.g. 'alight here for Tretower' giving the new visitor confidence when getting of a bus in an unknown rural area. (To be followed up by waymarking from the bus stop to the attraction.)
- Price information and incentives e.g. reminders about bus passes, rail cards, discounts, sample fares need to be made available as part of this pre-travel process. New discounted entry promotion with Cadw across mid Wales. Promotion of discounts at other attractions eg National Trust sites.
- Cross-selling of one bus route from another – e.g. targeting regular users of the Beacons Bus to try other services out of season or to reach other locations.
- Links to alternatives such as car sharing sites, car hire on arrival, traintaxis, transport tourism hubs and itineraries need to be clearly demonstrated

- Endorsements (and incentives to choose alternatives) Green Traveller, Car Free Walks, Hidden Europe, Slow Travel UK need to be presented as features
- An app which features the Scenic Routes to Ride needs to be developed
- More good imagery of people using buses and trains and the views from them is necessary to position public transport as part of the overall experience
- Capitalise on publicity, e.g. TV series on Arriva Wales in production

Information when travelling

There will always be a need for printed information at bus stops/stations, railway stations and tourist information centres including timetables, and preferably sample fares and promotional items. Not everyone has the new mobile technology nor is there always a signal and there is something re-assuring about the printed word. At tourist information centres information needs to be displayed in order to prompt enquiries not kept hidden below the counter. If multiple copies cannot be racked then display copies should at least be made visible.

There is nevertheless a need to develop a number of route apps, mobile websites and QR codes so as to take advantage of improved mobile technology and to attract wider markets than hitherto. Apps could also integrate interpretation alongside travel information and options include interpreting flagship routes to enhance the visitor experience and understanding of the areas through which they are travelling.

When things go wrong, Traveline Cymru, the primary website, should be advised by the operator so that enquirers can be made aware of the situation.

There also needs to be a back-up facility, by taxi companies or community transport willing to participate in a return to holiday home service so as to give assurance to visitors on bike or bus. This could be trialled with Traveline Cymru and well-advertised. The basis for this is already included in the forthcoming PCC re-tendering process.

9.3 Ticketing as a key marketing tool

One way to encourage modal switch is by having attractive, simple to understand, value for money tickets which offer discounts at attractions and hence heighten the appeal of public transport as a travel product.

The main task is to tie in the promotion of existing successful tickets into the travel experience of Mid Wales. The Explore Wales ticket should be featured as a way to travel to enjoy Brecon Beacons and Powys from traditional generating destinations such as the Capital region but also from the Avon conurbation, the Midlands, and Greater Manchester. It offers flexibility and good value for those backpacking or sightseeing in Wales. Brecon and other key hubs can also be promoted through developing the embryonic Cymru Connect ticket and the Plus+Bus scheme which add a bus link from key railway stations to Brecon as a destination.

There are a range of day tickets available for travel on the Heart of Wales and Cambrian Lines and these simply need to be sustained to develop the market. Samples of value fares on The Heart of Wales line need to be highlighted more as they will be attractive to visitors.

Multi-modal ticket: there is a case for a Mid-Wales ticket to encourage inbound travel by train which includes the rail and bus access with discounts and itineraries. This meets a demand for those on holiday on Mid Wales as the Explorer ticket (North and Mid Wales and South Wales) splits the region in coverage.

There are a number of day bus tickets available but there is a need to ensure that what is on offer made clear to the public: validity rules, where they can be purchased and with a map outlining the area of travel. In particular, two key bus tickets need to be promoted heavily:

- Powys Day Rover is a bus ticket only which suffers from limited publicity at present but is the ideal ticket for the visitor market. The first task is to market it heavily in order to build market awareness and encourage trials by visitors.
- Additional Rover tickets could prove popular such as a Week Rover ticket, a Family Rover and a combined Rover including train journeys on the Heart of Wales Line within Powys.
- As a second stage of development would be a family/group and non-Welsh concessionary day ticket version to attract the English holiday market. It is also worth evaluating the case for a pre-paid scratch card version (such as the Wayfarer ticket in Greater Manchester or Derbyshire) which can be sold on line and by tourism providers.
- South Wales Network Rider, which is also a bus only ticket, is key to attracting visitors from South Wales to the Brecon Beacons National Park and southern Powys. The validity of this ticket also needs to be made explicit but it could, at the same time, offer a solution instead of the proposed Brecon Beacons rover ticket.
- Promote child discounts (under 5s free on trains), family rail cards, young person's railcard, etcetera
- There are, in some cases bus company and rail tickets offer great value and these need to be promoted beyond each respective operator's publicity. For example, the West Wales Day Rover ticket offer great value from West Wales to Llandeilo and Llandovery; it might also be extended to include Bus 64 between Llandovery and Brecon.
- Price comparisons (with AA car travel costs) need to be made on web information and itineraries
- To stimulate trial of bus travel, a campaign to offer a free bus travel voucher/ticket provided as part of accommodation providers package where applicable. This could be tested on routes such as T4, X43, X47 or X75 and on the Heart of Wales railway line

Recommendations for action:

4.1 Complete the development and launch of new visitor websites ensuring transport information is effectively integrated

4.2 Improve transport coverage in all existing tourism publications and websites and consider additional options such as launching a Mid Wales based newspaper/brochure style publication to bring together a wide range of travel opportunities, itineraries, discounts, tickets, maps, etc.

4.3 Promote a range of low carbon travel itineraries with attractive presentation through national, regional and local websites

4.4 Feed into and build on the major improvements being made to Traveline Cymru

4.5 Collate and distribute information on sample fares, cost comparisons, incentives, discounts and endorsements via tourism organisations and business networks to be promoted to visitors.

4.6 Agree and promote a new discounted entry promotion with Cadw and other agencies such as the National Trust both locally and across mid Wales.

4.7 Develop an app which features the Scenic Routes to Ride

4.8 Market the Powys Day Rover and South Wales Network Rider tickets heavily, encourage trials by visitors and local businesses and develop additional versions of these tickets

4.9 Launch a campaign to offer a free bus travel voucher/ticket to visitors through their accommodation providers

4.10 Trial cross-selling promotions from one flagship route to another for leisure markets in key source locations e.g. target Beacons Bus users with details of services at other times of week/year.

10. WALKING AND CYCLING

Objective 5 - To develop and promote walking and cycling as key elements of a strategy to reduce visitor fuel consumption

Walking, cycling and taking part in other outdoor activities are major motivators for visits to Powys and the Brecon Beacons. Statistics are hard to come by but the SE Wales Visitor Survey⁶, which covered the Brecon Beacons, found that of the 42% of visitors who did some sort of activity about 60% went for a walk or low level ramble and 34% for a hill walk. In addition 5% went cycling, 5% mountain biking, 5% riding and 4% water sports (including canoeing) the figures were higher for the Brecon Beacons part of the region. The Welsh Outdoor Recreation Study (2008) shows that 86% of the whole population had been for a walk in the previous 12 months, (82% in the previous four weeks), while 21% had cycled and 16% been mountain biking.

Powys is exceptional country for walking. Increased walking and cycling will appeal to holiday visitors and is also important for local leisure use with consequent health benefits from regular participation.

These pursuits are usually viewed by visitors and tourism providers as activities rather than as means of transport for exploring the area. The majority of people currently drive to where they want to walk or mountain bike. One challenge is to encourage a shift in mindset so that more short trips are undertaken by walking or cycling e.g. walk to the pub for a meal and book a taxi home. Another is to encourage more cycling and walking direct from where a visitor is staying – or their arrival point at a rail station or bus stop – removing the car element from the journey.

The other approach – which can be followed in parallel, is to continue to promote walking, cycling and low carbon activities as great ways to explore and enjoy time in the area. Every day or half day a visitor is canoeing, riding, cycling or walking is a day that they might otherwise have spent driving round sightseeing. For those wanting to spend the majority of their time doing such activities special breaks could be encouraged which mean people do not have to bring a car on holiday at all. This obviously is the case with many activity providers currently. It is also the case with independent activities, for example, long distance walkers and cyclists following a specific route such as Offa's Dyke or the Taff Trail.

Walking and cycling are important elements of this plan. Action is needed to achieve improvements in the walking offer and to increase its role in visitor transport.

10.1 Walking

Walkers are Welcome is a community driven walking tourism award which includes transport in its criteria. There are therefore significant opportunities to engage with such groups to pursue common objectives. Several towns in the area have achieved Walkers Are Welcome status - Knighton, Llandrindod Wells, plus Llandeilo (shortly), Kington, Oswestry and Devil's Bridge. These towns should already have a series of four or more walks of varying lengths way marked from the town. The challenge with the Walkers are Welcome scheme seems to be how to build on the status and make more of it once achieved. Momentum could be continued by adding in the transport element and developing walks from local buses and trains or trialing a walkers bus service and or local taxi walks drop offs.

The Walking with Offa project is focusing on this type of approach and most of the towns up and down the English-Welsh border have or are considering gaining Walkers are Welcome status. There is scope to link

⁶ South East Wales Visitor Survey 2008 – 2009 Lynn Jones Research

with the flagship ideas developed through that project over the next two-three years and potentially funds to enable progress to be achieved.

Nevertheless, there is still greater scope for more accommodation providers to market walking breaks with a menu of walks which can be done from their location or using public transport or taxi drop offs. If the concept of walkers buses were developed the breaks could promote walks from these services, using itineraries developed by clusters of businesses in the visitor transport hub towns. Promoting walking breaks entails very little extra for the provider that is not already part of the walkers welcome accreditation, other than targeted offers on websites and in marketing. The Travel Brecon Beacons website and booklets includes good examples of well researched and presented walks www.travelbreconbeacons.info/things-to-do/walks-by-bus. The Leaping Stiles project across Powys researched and posted a wide range of walks on its website www.leapingstiles.co.uk which has a user-friendly searchable format.

Recommendations for action:

5.1 More walks from train routes; Rail rambles are a long standing product but a wide range of walks for other groups, independent markets, guides, pdfs, apps etc. can be developed and further promoted.

5.2 More walks from buses – itineraries with maps, routes to include pubs and cafes and local businesses wherever possible. With all these walks it is important to give estimated times for the walks as well as distances to give visitors as much information as possible to time their walks.

5.3 Promoting one particular train or bus route as the best for walking in Wales

5.4 Assist accommodation providers and pubs to develop circular walks from their premises. Good examples include walks developed some years ago by the bunkhouse network www.bootsbikesbunkhouses.co.uk/walk_trails.html and initiatives such as Bwlch with Altitude and Fortitude walks.

5.5 Work with taxis, especially in visitor transport hubs, to set up a series of good drop off points for walks – especially linear walks which return to town, to a rail station or to a pub with a bus stop outside. These drop off points could be mapped and promoted with set fares. This approach would particularly suit long one day linear routes such as the 15 mile long Kerry Ridgeway.

5.6 Luggage transfer by taxi is important for long distance routes - the Cab-a-bag scheme along the Ceredigion Coast Path tourism.ceredigion.gov.uk/walkcardiganbay is a good example of marketing this service along a linear route.

5.7 Long distance walks – amend web and printed material to promote access by public transport to help those completing the whole route in one go but especially for those who want to walk one and two day sections. Priorities include Offa's Dyke, Glyndwr's Way, the Beacons Way, the Wye Valley Way and Severn Way. This may need a short term resource to work with long distance routes and their websites to integrate public transport information within these and other promotions. A transport app for long distance routes might also be feasible.

5.8 Encourage more towns to join the Walkers are Welcome e.g. Brecon, Machynlleth, Hay on Wye, Welshpool. Walkers Are Welcome towns and local groups to strengthen their role as hubs for walking activity. Towns could develop a series of walking itineraries which could be promoted as a whole town based walking break. Circular walks from and back to the town or a circular route around the town are options - the BC Ring around Bishop's Castle which is a 62 mile route around the town taking five days with walkers coming back to the town each day.

5.9 Link to Walking With Offa activity along English-Welsh border – ensure compatible standards and inter-availability of information without duplication of effort

5.10 PR – work with tourism PR leads to get stories featured in walking and outdoor magazines

10.2 Cycling

Cycling is more challenging than walking for most visitors – especially in the hillier parts of Powys and the Brecon Beacons. The challenging terrain will continue to attract keen mountain bikers and road cyclists but the average visitor will be more interested in easier and car-free routes. These do exist e.g. the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal towpath, the route around the Usk Reservoir and the Elan Valley trail, however they are currently limited in number. Sustrans does have plans for more cycle routes across Powys but most will take many years to realise.

People are more likely to decide to hire a bicycle or e-bike if they can see it and if there is an easily grasped proposition for the route, so increasing the visibility and ease of bike hire should be a priority. Safety and security are concerns so routes with little or no traffic are at a premium and bike racks at destinations are important – and still missing in many locations as our audit discovered.

Linking cycling to public transport would open up many more route options but to date only the Beacons Bus with trailer carries bicycles (especially for people riding the Taff Trail back to Cardiff) and the Heart of Wales and Cambrian lines will only take two per train. Attempts to carry non-folding bikes on regular bus services usually fail – either through capacity demands for limited space by bikes, wheelchairs and buggies or time-consuming security issues with exterior bike racks.

In the Brecon Beacons National Park mountain biking hubs have helped focus activity and route development on certain town locations, although some hubs have been more successful than others. The model of working from hub towns could obviously be extended across Powys and link with the visitor transport hub proposals.

Electric bike hire opens up the activity further – to those less fit, confident and youthful – who would not need to worry about hills. Section 11 considers electric vehicle in more detail.

Recommendations for action:

5.11 Strengthen cycle hubs towns, including new hubs such as Abergavenny, Newtown, Llandovery to develop and promote more circular cycle road routes on quiet roads, mountain bike routes and cycling itineraries. Make these routes available as web downloads or as apps. Promote routes and local cycle hire in hub towns, e.g. via familiarisation rides, special offers etc.

5.12 Cycle hire – increase visibility and ease of hiring bicycles - support existing outlets, more tie ups with accommodation, highlight bikes can be delivered to the visitor, cycle hire from stations (e.g. Llandovery), install more bike racks outside pubs, cafes and attractions and in town centres and at stations. To also include extending and promoting electric bike hire and providing varied models of bicycles and e-bikes including tandems, children's bike, bikes with trailers, disabled adapted etc. and also charge points at cycle stands to widen access and increase desirability of using the bikes.

5.13 Promote cycling holiday breaks in Powys and the Brecon Beacons cycling from/to South Wales, the West Midlands and Merseyside (NCN routes and cycle friendly accommodation) with itineraries

5.14 Bike hire and taxi firms to have more bike trailers to bring groups into the area to cycle back or to offer cycle rescue back up e.g. www.muckyweekends.co.uk in Llanidloes and www.rideandhike.co.uk in Brecon.

Station bike hire trailers in popular sites at busy times to encourage spur of the moment usage and trialling of bikes.

5.15 Re-examine scope for bike carriage on buses and key cycling routes which could be served by bus and/or highlight that bikes can be delivered to meet the bus. Research the potential for a specific new bike bus service e.g. monitoring the new Go Lakes Travel bike bus; and trial a new bike bus.

5.16 Continued liaison with local authorities, Sustrans and British Waterways on additional cycle route development

10.3 Other activities

Powys and the Brecon Beacons have several canals and rivers used by visitors for canoeing, boat trips and narrow boat holidays – they are in effect linear attractions. The Monmouthshire and Brecon canal offers the most potential to increase its role as a leisure transport resource – with a series of towns and villages from which boat and canoe trips could be taken, especially if more boat/canoe hire were available. There is already a network of electric charge points along the canal so there is scope to increase the number of electric boats. The 43 and X43 bus service runs parallel and could provide good access at several points. The Montgomery branch of the Shropshire Union Canal could also be approached in this way. Partners should work with the successor body to British Waterways to ensure up to date, accessible information about boat and canoe hire (plus cycling and walking) from locations along canals and promote local links more proactively, including how to reach the canal by public transport. Information currently available in printed format such as the recently produced M&B canal trails might make popular apps. This could be addressed in the form of a travel plan for the M&B Canal so that actions are co-ordinated along its length and given added impetus.

Activity companies around the area could promote more day or multi day activity propositions which involve canoeing down rivers or up canals and walking or cycling back to the start.

Powys and the Brecon Beacons is good riding country and there have been multi centre riding holiday propositions established for some years – in the eastern Beacons and also along the Powys/Shropshire border. There is likely to be more scope for promoting riding loops, centre to centre trails and riding holidays.

Other slow transport activities which could be promoted include linking routes with heritage railways, promoting more walks around towns, possibly as themed heritage guided walks and there may be potential for experimental services like pedicab tours such as those available in Hereford.

Recommendations for action:

5.17 Produce and deliver a Travel Plan for Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Ensure up to date, accessible information about boat and canoe hire (plus cycling and walking) from locations along the canal and promote local links more proactively.

5.18 Encourage activity providers to incorporate more low carbon options into their day or multi day activity propositions

5.19 Encourage riding businesses to further develop and promote riding loops, centre to centre trails and riding holidays

5.20 Explore or encourage businesses to develop innovative slow and low carbon transport options

11. ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Objective 6 - To develop the use of electric vehicles and community transport vehicles for visitors

11.1 Electric vehicles

Electric and electric assist vehicles use much less energy than ordinary cars, and much of that energy can be derived locally from sustainable sources. Powys has significant potential to make more of electric vehicles - it is at an advantage compared to many other areas due to having several pioneering companies and groups and relatively plentiful hydro, solar and wind-generated electricity. It could position itself as at the cutting edge of rural electric vehicle experiences – green, easy and fun – dealing with the hills and even making energy out of Welsh rain. (E.g. B-Bugs were promoted as “rain powered transport”.)

A stand-alone report into electric powered transport options was commissioned as part of this Visitor Transport Plan⁷. The key findings of this are:

Pure electric cars are still few in number in the UK (only about 3,000) and most have a realistic range of less than 100 miles. Few will visit Powys and the Brecon Beacons in the next five years but those that do can be recharged overnight from standard sockets. Higher speed charging is difficult, costly, not yet standardised and not essential for most visitor travel within the county. There is little action that this plan can recommend to increase electric car usage unless a company such as a car hire firm felt there was an advantage to buy and rent out such vehicles – currently unlikely due to their relatively high prices. However a charging network would benefit any EV drivers coming into this area.

Plug in hybrid cars (or range extended) electric cars can more easily reach the area using power from their on board generators and then relying on battery power while here. Again these are normally recharged overnight from domestic mains electricity. Making such recharging easy to access will help. Action is already being taken as Zero Carbon World is providing free charge points to tourism businesses in the area – 17 are in place to date with a total of 100 planned by the end of the year – already placing Powys ahead of any other UK rural area.

Electric bicycles are very low energy and take most of the effort out of climbing hills or travelling longer distances or pulling a trailer/child/disabled person. Rented e-bikes rarely need charging en route as they are unlikely to travel more than 30 miles using power. However cyclists may feel reassured by the knowledge of there being a network of places where they can recharge their batteries using a normal socket as long as they carry their own charger (as these vary from model to model). E-bikes will be attractive to older, less fit or confident cyclists and groups with mixed abilities. They will be more attractive if the newer ‘cool’ designs are used. It is important however to encourage additional cycling with e-bikes, not to substitute existing cycling.

In order to make the maximum impact to reduce car miles and carbon usage, electric alternatives need to be available in large numbers and accessible where people are staying or visiting. Diverse forms, including electric bikes, cars, buggies and quadricycles such as the new Renault Twizy featured on the front cover, will help meet the varied needs of visitors. The main selling point is that they offer a different, fun experience to ride or drive and are a better way of experiencing the landscape than from the inside of a normal car.

⁷ Personal electric transport for visitors to Powys and the Brecon Beacons Peter Williams and Alison Kidd, The Prospectory 2012

There are some tourist destinations in Powys which offer 10-20 mile 'scenic drives' e.g. the Elan Valley, Lake Vyrnwy and perhaps the Dyfi Valley. Offering e-bikes and electric vehicles at these destinations, as an alternative to driving round by car, would offset some carbon and reduce traffic in sensitive areas which are not reached by public transport. Although only one or two trips per buggy/car a day would be possible it would give electric transport a high profile, especially if powered by hydro generated on site.

To make a significant impact on reducing carbon from visitor car journeys, however, Powys needs to find an economically viable way of flooding the area with electric vehicles and e-bikes ideally available at as many accommodation points as possible.

The Eco Travel Network in the Brecon Beacons www.ecotravelnetwork.co.uk, the Electric Bicycle Network www.electricbicyclenetwork.com (which operates in three National Parks so far) and Exmoor Unplugged www.exmoorunplugged.co.uk are all exploring ways of offering this on a sustainable economic basis. The projects are all experimental, and are operated by not-for-profit Community Interest Companies (CIC). They do not hire vehicles and bikes directly to visitors, but effectively lease them to local tourist businesses to promote and rent out to their customers. This spreads the purchase, insurance, and running costs across many small tourist businesses who take the rental revenue themselves.

This model is likely to require start-up subsidy. It could be managed by a local authority, National Park Authority, a new CIC or by one or more of the existing hire businesses. This may depend on the appropriate area that can be covered given the need for maintenance back up etc. Careful negotiations would be required with existing electric bike businesses.

Other more bespoke electric options for specific locations could include more electric boats on the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal (and the Montgomery canal if charge points are available and possibly on some reservoirs). Road train type vehicles in scenic locations with large numbers of visitors such as Lake Vyrnwy or even Brecon promenade might be an option. Some UK attractions are using Land Rover towed road trains (e.g. those manufactured by Severn Lamb) which appear more appropriate to Powys than urban or resort style designs. These can be converted to run on biodiesel or even straight vegetable oil, to provide an even lower carbon option. There may also be scope to convert more buses and community transport vehicles to use biodiesel or invest in hybrids.

Recommendations for action:

6.1 Establish a Powys and Brecon Beacons-wide large scale e-bike (and e-vehicle) network based at accommodation businesses – organised through a scheme/organisation (such as the electric bicycle network www.electricbicyclenetwork.com or local bike hire company(s) or setting up a local Community Interest Company). Promote itineraries and attract PR.

6.2 Promote e-bike rental more heavily from existing companies and set up new rental at specific sites such as Rhayader/Elan Valley, Brecon, Lake Vyrnwy, Dyfi Valley (e.g. pump prime funding for new bikes and local launches with tourism businesses, video podcasts, itineraries, endorsements)

6.3 Extend the charging network for electric cars/hybrids, electric buggies and electric bikes (to include bike racks) across Powys and the Brecon Beacons National Park – at visitor attractions, facilities and accommodation and promote as most extensive network in UK.

6.4 Monitor, and if successful, build on and extend the developing Eco Travel Network www.ecotravelnetwork.co.uk starting this summer in the BBNP and part funded by the BBNPA Sustainable Development Fund. This encourages accommodation businesses to host and promote lightweight open air

electric vehicles and could spread from BBNP to rest of Powys – 2013 onwards with more members and different vehicles such as the Renault Twizy.

6.5 Promote the existing electric narrow boats and day boats – encourage operators to supply/convert more boats (e.g. Dragonfly Cruises at Brecon) and promote benefits (silent and clean boat trips)

6.6 Develop marketing messages and supporting PR about day trips and holidays using green electric from sustainable sources, including fun element – work with tourism PR leads.



A Renault Twizy being recharged

11.2 Demand Response and Community Transport

There are few examples of demand response or community transport services for visitors in Powys and the Brecon Beacons currently. The Towy Valley Explorer www.thebusthatmeetsthetrain.co.uk operates from Llandeilo and Heart of Wales services two days a week during the summer and takes visitors to Parc Dinefwr, National Botanic Garden of Wales, Aberglasney House and Gardens and Dryslwyn Castle at a cost of £5 per adult. This uses a community transport vehicle, which has the advantage of being accessible. Some minibus trips used to be organised from Llandrindod Wells rail station on a small scale but these have not run for several years. There are demand response services running in neighbouring areas using mini/midi bus size vehicles including Bwcabus in Carmarthenshire and Shropshire Link. Shropshire Link is trialling promotion to visitors in the Bishop's Castle area – which still requires booking ahead but can drop walkers off or meet trains as required. Monmouthshire's Grass Routes scheme, which requires a £5 membership payment, may also be useful in some areas and is offering a link to Severn Tunnel Junction station.

In theory community transport vehicles could be used for visitor journeys as the demand might dovetail with the community requirements time wise and could provide much needed additional revenue to help sustain community transport services. The smaller vehicles and local knowledge of volunteer drivers may suit deep rural locations and could provide access to attractions off main bus routes. Good examples exist in some other areas such as the Cuckmere Rambler Bus www.cuckmerebus.freeuk.com in East Sussex.

However challenges include whether volunteer drivers will want to provide a more commercial service and how such a service can be developed and promoted well enough to generate sufficient numbers of passengers. There is also some concern that such a service might undercut taxi companies. It will be important to monitor how existing services perform.

It is likely that there may be particular applications which could work in specific locations – where there is a community transport organisation which is keen to trial a service and where a desirable route for visitors can be established. An obvious option is to put on a morning walkers bus, say at 10am from a number of locations – perhaps being able to keep that slot available every day. The bus would drop off at several key start points for popular walks, perhaps even on a demand responsive, pre-booked basis. Potentially this could also be run as a commercial service as an advertised, shared taxi service. It might need to do a pick-up service at the end of the day as well. If several towns offered such a service they could be promoted across the county and form a major element of the green transport offer.

Another option which was raised in consultations is a service which links a series of visitor attractions (like the Towy Valley Explorer) but operating from a visitor transport hub town. Such a service would probably need to run three times a day in order that people could move on to a second visit and also get home at the end of the day. A service from Brecon to the National Park Centre at Libanus and onto several other locations such as walkers car parks/Llangors Lake, or a service to Blaenavon via Crickhowell were suggested. This option might also suit locations with limited or no public transport – such as a service to Lake Vyrnwy and Pistyll Rhaeadr, around the Elan Valley or to the Waterfalls area at Pontneddfechan.

A further opportunity to use community transport would be for events. As a limited time period and large number of people would be involved this could be a useful service to raise funds for community transport. Opportunities include shuttle buses to and from stations (e.g. Builth Road to the Royal Showground) or around a town hosting a large festival, although capacity may be an issue for some such routes. Again accessible vehicles would be a priority. If such community vehicles could be powered on bio-diesel (especially if it were oil from local chip shops) it would add an additional green promotional message.

There may also be advantage in working with community (or commercial) organisations outside Powys who are bringing people into the area for leisure visits (for example trips from Chester or Shrewsbury to Lake Vyrnwy at weekends).

As far as demand response transport services are concerned there appears to be limited opportunities for development currently but it would be useful to monitor the success of services in other areas such as Shropshire.

Recommendations for action:

- 6.7 Work with community transport organisations (via PAVO) to identify those keen to develop visitor targeted services. Develop simple but attractive offers (e.g. walkers bus or events shuttle or route to attractions) and trial.
- 6.8 Monitor these trials and other demand responsive options.

12. DELIVERY

The implementation of this Visitor Transport Plan could form an exemplar for Wales, putting into practice a wide range of actions which will collectively deliver the step change in visitor transport required. The proposals below aim to develop strong and flexible working relations without imposing cumbersome new structures.

12.1 Management of the Plan

The five year plan will be managed by a Powys wide Visitor Transport Management Group with action being undertaken at a Tourism Destination Area level in concert with the local Destination Management Partnership (DMP). In some cases (such as the Brecon Beacons) it may be advisable to set up a destination wide Visitor Transport Partnership (VTP). Elsewhere the DMP will build it into their work.

The Management Group will agree the allocation of responsibility for seeking funds, progression of actions and monitoring of outcomes.

It is envisaged that the Management Group would include relevant officers and members from the following organisations:

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Powys County Council (Public Transport and Tourism)
- WG Transport Dept
- WG Dept for Environment & Sustainability
- Visit Wales
- TraCC
- Wales Train Franchisee
- Cambrian Railways CRP
- Heart of Wales Line CRP
- Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales
- Destination level private sector bodies
- Sustrans
- British Waterways successor body – Rivers & Waterways Trust
- Representatives of the DMPs or local VTP
- WANPA

Other Partners

The success to date of developing a much improved passenger transport network across Powys and the Brecon Beacons has involved a wide range of other partners such as government agencies, neighbouring local authorities, voluntary sector partners, tourism associations and private sector providers. There may well be a need to co-opt representatives from some or all of these bodies in order to progress some elements of the collaborative projects, for example cross border projects.

12.2 Delivery

Delivery at the National and Regional level

The overall policy frameworks developed by the Welsh Government in terms of economic regeneration, health, social inclusion, rural development as well as tourism and transport (particularly the proposed Active Travel Bill) have been taken into consideration in the development of the plan. The Partnership will need to engage a number of Welsh Government departments in the Plan – to ensure ensure grants of ‘seed’ funding, a successful launch and profile, interest in the results of pilot projects (e.g. flagship routes or electric bike network) and how successful actions can be replicated in other parts of Wales.

The Plan fits with the overall transport strategy of TraCC and its involvement will be essential in order to ensure policy coordination, bid development and financing of some of the small scale capital projects. The Plan will also help deliver the objectives of the Wales Sustainable Transport and Tourism Assessment across Powys where there has been limited progress to date. It will hopefully be able to influence the way forward for the Sustainable Transport and Tourism Group.

It is also in alignment with the Mid Wales Regional Tourism Strategy and Brecon Beacons National Park Sustainable Tourism Strategy, which is equally important if the interface between the two sectors is to work well; one of the aims of the plan is to make passenger transport for tourism more mainstream in the development of future strategy.

In addition existing roles such as travel plan co-ordinators could be targeted towards tourism businesses and events for an extended period to ensure a significant impact across the area, especially in visitor transport hubs and along scenic routes. The co-ordinators will need to offer advice on website amendments, drawing up itineraries and the installation of new facilities - mentoring businesses with the changes.

Tourism bodies including TPMW, MWT, BBT, CRT, SWWTP will need to champion much of the activity and integrate messages in both communications with the industry and marketing to visitors. Cross-boundary and cross-border links with SEWTA, SWWITCH, Shropshire Council, Herefordshire Council need to be continued to engage wider support for the plan with particular reference to cross border routes and the existing Memorandum of Understanding between wales and England should be used to promote this cooperation.

Delivery of Routes and Network

Delivery of the network of routes across Mid Wales would be best done by one body operating as if they were a virtual commercial bus company to plan, co-ordinate, monitor and market all the bus services. The merger of the Powys and Ceredigion Transport Units (which has already started) and the contemplated inclusion of TraCC’s responsibilities and the possible addition of the Meirionydd part of Gwynedd suggests that this organisation should be the lead body (although, for the moment, it is the Powys Transport Unit) for all the partners in the project.

Potentially it would be valuable if there could be a senior role at Powys County Council Transport Department overseeing quality, development and marketing for the whole county (and in due course possibly extending to the regional level). This person would be responsible for delivering visitor transport objectives along with helping the whole service develop. If the service is indeed to act as a ‘virtual bus company’ then it is important that it invests in revenue development, with visitors potentially providing a healthy income. It is envisaged that greater emphasis will be placed on marketing transport and tourism. This should be undertaken in partnership with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and other Mid Wales tourism organisations but would best

be delivered through at least two Visitor Transport Officer (VTO) posts. These would be dependent on funding but would perform the essential roles of communication, community and trade liaison/training and marketing.

We envisage that one post would cover the Brecon Beacons National Park (including those parts outside Powys):

- Brecon
- Ammanford, Brynamman, Glyn-neath, Hirwaun, Llandeilo, Llandovery, Neath, Pontneddfechan, Sennybridge, Ystradgynlais
- Abergavenny, Blaenavon, Crickhowell, Hay-on-Wye, Talgarth, Talybont-on-Usk

A second post would cover Central and Northern Powys :

- Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Llanwrtyd Wells, Newbridge-on-Wye, Rhayader
- Chirk, Glyn Ceiriog, Llanfyllin, Llangynog, Llanrhaeadr YM, Oswestry
- Berriew, Bishops Castle, Caersws, Llanfair Caereinion, Llangurig, Llanidloes, Montgomery, Newtown, Welshpool
- Kington, Knighton, Leintwardine, New Radnor, Pembridge, Presteigne
- Dyfi Valley and Machynlleth (which could in due course be linked to a similar VTO post covering North Ceredigion and Meirionydd)

Delivery at the Destination and Hub level

The two new VTO posts would build on the success of the Brecon Beacons National Park Visitor Transport Initiative so that the investment of the last decade is not lost. The VTO for central and northern Powys would need to work closely with the emerging destinations such as the Cambrian Mountains and Dyfi Valley.

Destinations will need to support and facilitate the work at visitor transport hubs with the existing and future sustainable tourism projects and cluster business groups. In the Brecon Beacons the Collabor8 programme is ending and the Rural Alliances programme just becoming established and visitor transport could be embedded as an activity within the new programme working with businesses and communities. Across all of Powys other opportunities to support visitor transport action include Sustainable Tourism Powys digital projects, RDP projects, Walkers are Welcome and along the border Walking with Offa.

The Visitor Transport Officer roles would be to work with hub town communities and businesses (especially along flagship routes) – and to develop itineraries, walks from routes, launch adopt a bus stop scheme, support community transport services etc. In the Brecon Beacons this could be an extension of the current Visitor Transport Officer role, but new resource will be required to cover the rest of Powys. It will be important for these posts to have a budget for photography, promotional material and web design to support actions developed.

Within the overall team, the Visitor Transport Officers could point the existing Travel Plan Co-ordinators towards tourism businesses and major events for an extended period to ensure a significant impact across the area, especially in visitor transport hubs and along the core scenic routes. The co-ordinators will need to offer advice to tourism businesses on website amendments, drawing up itineraries and the installation of new facilities - mentoring businesses with the changes. It may be that these resources may be more efficiently used by gathering businesses together at the cluster level or in pre-arranged training courses but bigger businesses would be better targeted individually.

VTOs and TPCs should develop a team approach at a Powys level under the aegis of the Powys senior officer to swap good practice and efficiently organise their work.

Targeting sustainable tourism investment

Priorities for the Sustainable Tourism Powys programme should be drawn from the following recommendations:

- The electric bike network – installation of charge points, pump priming the new network by subsidising the cost of e-bike purchase/rental to businesses
- Bus stop improvements – for example installing a best practice bus stop and shelter, and/or launching an adopt a bus stop scheme
- Rail station improvements – interpretation/orientation boards at all Powys stations, new best practice shelter on Llanwrtyd station platform or refurbishments at Llandrindod Wells station.
- Work with Traveline Cymru on their app to add extra layers of visitor information for Powys on attractions, walks
- An app for the flagship scenic route T4 to pilot the technology and what can be achieved
- An app with a series of walks from the Heart of Wales line
- Pilot bus branding for example the Brecon-Abergavenny route
- E-vehicles and/or e-bikes at a high profile countryside site – perhaps initially Elan Valley with Lake Vyrnwy a later option to tie in with new visitor facility proposals
- E-technology at a high profile/popular attraction e.g. conversion of Dragonfly Boat at Brecon to renewable power (alternatively this might make a possible Sustainable Development Fund application)
- Set up a low carbon challenge type event/scheme to raise PR about the project
- Funding for the Visitor Transport Officer role(s) and budget to support implementation of itineraries etc. at visitor transport hubs.

Financing delivery

While some area of the plan can be delivered through existing budgets and ways of working, to make the kind of step change envisaged to deliver the overall aspiration additional funding will be required.

The Go Lakes Travel Programme covers about one third of the Lake District but is receiving £6.9 million for a three-four year initiative – funded through the Department for Transport’s Local Sustainable Transport Fund. See Appendix 5 for more details of the programme.

The budget in Powys is more limited but we think that by learning from other experiences, using existing resources and using additional funding wisely we can have similar aspirations.

Potential opportunities include:

- The Welsh Government’s Invest-to-save Fund might be appropriate to help fund some of the proposals. It supports the introduction of new and/or proven ways of working so that public services become more efficient and effective. A case could be made for the more effective delivery of transport services plus significant contributions to the active travel, energy savings and health

agendas. Round V11 (funding for 2013-14) expressions of interest have to be submitted by January 2013.

- BBNPA Sustainable Development Fund – small amounts of funding e.g. for businesses wanting to trial new approaches or install new facilities
- Other European Union funding programmes, including the Rural Development Programme, including LEADER.

12.2 Monitoring

This plan is for five years and will require monitoring at least annually to measure progress and ensure actions are implemented. Monitoring the agreed targets for the Plan should be the priority. The Partnership should take responsibility for monitoring. Suggested mechanisms include:

- Analysis of ongoing train and bus usage figures
- Collate numbers of participants in electric buggy/bike network and annual hiring figures
- Repeat the tourism audit in 24 months to see what improvements have been made
- Utilising existing visitor surveys, perhaps by enhancing the information on transport collected.
- Collect data on actions such as training/familiarisation to include number of people participating and their feedback.
- Monitor hits on key visitor transport webpages, downloads of walks/cycle rides/apps
- Mystery shopper surveys on train and bus routes with awards for high performing operators/drivers
- Specific monitoring of any trial community bus services etc.

Recommendations for action:

7.1 Establish a Powys and Brecon Beacons Visitor Transport Management Group

7.2 Present this Visitor Transport Plan to the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders

7.3 Review existing regional public transport delivery model and engage a quality/marketing manager

7.4 Appoint two Visitor Transport Officers to deliver actions from this plan along flagship routes and at visitor transport hubs

7.5 Work with existing and new tourism destinations

7.6 Integrate transport into discussions about future funding such as the new EU Rural Development Programme from 2014

7.7 Apply for additional funding to support key elements of the plan.

7.8 Develop and implement monitoring system

13. VISITOR TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN

This section brings together all the recommendations from the Visitor Transport Plan and presents them in the form of a five year action plan. The plan needs to be delivered collaboratively by a range of partners. A key to the acronyms in the table is given after the table.

Objective 1. Routes as travel experiences		Priority and Timescale	Lead body	Partners
1.1	Bus companies to engage with the Visitor Transport Plan Partnership so as to upgrade service delivery and imagery	Very High priority Years 1-3	PCC, other Councils and Bus companies	VTMG
1.2	Engage with clusters of tourism businesses to involve local community in the brand, interpretation, bus stop enhancement, itineraries and to build advocacy	Very High priority Years 1-3 and ongoing	VTOs	VTP, RTPs, STP, PCC, BBNPA, tourism bodies Links to 2.2
1.3	Improve infrastructure at each visitor transport hub town on the route and key places such as tourist attractions	High priority Year 1-2	PCC	TraCC TPCs
1.4	Sustain Beacons Bus and extend to Saturdays	High priority Year 2-5	BBNPA	VTI
1.5	Develop a strong PR/media campaign including a selection of travel writers, poets and musicians offering a Welsh perspective about the routes	Medium priority Year 2-4	VTP	VTOs and tourism bodies
1.6	Invest in improvements to CRP websites and systems including the Trainstaysave campaign	High priority Year 1-2 Quick Win	CRPs	RTPs
1.7	Introduce an additional train journey on the Heart of Wales Line and strengthen the product and promotion through walks and minibus tours from the route.	High priority Year 2	HOWCRP	WG, ATW, HOWLTA
1.8	Introduce an hourly service on the Cambrian Line supported by extended promotion	High priority Year 2?	CLCRP	WG, ATW

Brecon Beacons and Powys Visitor Transport Plan

1.9	Investigate feasibility of other ways to improve the 'experience' e.g. staff training, enhanced catering.	Medium priority Year 2-5	ATW, Bus Co.s	CRPs, VTOs
1.10	Work towards longer term objectives – prepare for rail franchising	Very High priority Year 3-5	CRPs	TraCC, WG, BBNPA, PCC

Objective 2. Visitor transport hubs and infrastructure

Priority and Timescale

Lead body

Partners

2.1	Secure commitment from the public sector to invest in the routes and infrastructure.	Very High priority Year 1-3	VTMG	PCC, TraCC, WG Links to 2.3
2.2	Secure commitment in visitor transport hubs from the local organisations to motivate and engage businesses, develop walking and days out itineraries and PR.	Very High priority Year 1-5	VTPs	VTOs, Links to 1.2
2.3	Bus stop programme – upgrading, maintenance and information provision. Redesign bus stop flags.	High priority Year 1-3	PCC	Inc in 2.1
2.4	Launch 'Adopt a bus stop' scheme for local communities or businesses, install more bike racks at bus stops. Install a 'best practice' bus stop in a high profile locations.	High priority Year 1-2 Quick Win	VTMG	VTOs, STP
2.5	Implement intermodal transport interchange and gateway improvements –Llandrindod, Machynlleth, Newtown Abergavenny, Hereford, Llandovery.	High priority Year 1-5	TraCC	SEWTA, SWWITCH, Herefordshire, ATW, NR
2.6	Rail station interface upgrades – Audit and improve rail station information, orientation maps, planting, promotional signage.	High priority Year 1 Quick Win	TraCC	CRP, ATW, SEWTA, In Bloom schemes

2.7	Re-use of redundant station buildings in certain locations and/or new build station facilities.	Medium priority Year 3-5	CRP	NR, ATW
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Objective 3. Tourism providers on board**Priority and Timescale****Lead body****Partners**

3.1	Engage businesses in improving their visitor transport knowledge and provision. Walkers and cyclists welcome schemes. Awareness sessions and familiarisation trips.	Very High priority Year 1-3 Quick Win	VTPs	Tourism bodies, businesses, VTOs, BBNPA Links to 3.2
3.2	Pro-active smart travel planning for clusters of businesses. Walking, cycling and public transport itineraries. Adaptions to websites and advice/financial incentives for improving facilities. Develop a toolkit.	High priority Year 1-5	VTOs	TPCs, STP, VTP Leads on from 3.1
3.3	Encourage businesses including attractions to offer discounts to people arriving by public transport or bike e.g. trainstaysave scheme. .	High priority Year 1-3	VTOs	TPCs, BBNPA, Tourism Assocs
3.4	Include transport as a compulsory element of BBNPA Ambassadors scheme, link into Green Tourism and new Sense of Place training initiatives.	Medium priority Year 1-2	BBNPA, PCC, STP	RTPs, VTOs
3.5	Encourage more groupings of businesses offering a linked travel holiday - e-vehicles, riding, walking, cycling	Medium priority Year 2-4	VTPs, BBNPA	
3.6	Smart travel planning for events	High priority Year 1-2	VTO	TPC
3.7	PR - Reinforce key messages through Visit Wales and regional tourism partnerships. Additional PR focused on	High priority	VW and RTPs	

	discounts, offers, VIPs.	Year 1-5		
3.8	Consider the potential for a new event or challenge.	Low priority Year 3-5	VTPs	
3.9	Investigate specific opportunities at visitor attractions.	Medium priority Year 1-5	VTPs	TPCs, BBNPA, VW

Objective 4. Marketing, communication and ticketing

Priority and Timescale

Lead body

Partners

4.1	Complete new visitor websites ensuring transport information is effectively integrated.	Very High priority Year 1 Quick win	BBNPA and PCC Tourism	
4.2	Improve transport coverage in all existing tourism publications and websites; text, imagery, detail and prominence.	High priority Year 1-5	VTOs, PCC Tourism, BBNPA	Leads on from 4.1
4.3	Promote a range of low carbon travel itineraries through national, regional and local websites.	High priority Year 1-3	VW	RTPs, PCC, STP, VTOs, BBNPA
4.4	Feed into and build on the major improvements being made to Traveline Cymru.	High priority Year 1-3	VTOs	
4.5	Collate and distribute information on sample fares, cost comparisons, incentives, discounts and endorsements via tourism organisations and business networks.	High priority Year 2-5	VTOs	
4.6	Agree and promote a new discounted entry promotion with Cadw across mid Wales.	Medium priority Year 1	Cadw, NT,	VTP, VW

4.7	Develop an app which features the Scenic Routes to Ride	Medium priority Year 1	VTMG	STP
4.8	Market the Powys Day Rover and South Wales Network Rider tickets heavily	High priority Year 1-3 Quick Win	PCC, SEWTA, BBNPA	
4.9	Launch a campaign to offer a free bus travel voucher/ticket to visitors through their accommodation	Medium priority Year 2	VTMG	PCC

Objective 5. Walking and cycling**Priority and Timescale****Lead body****Partners**

5.1	More walks from train routes	High priority Year 2-3	CRPs	BBNPA
5.2	More walks from buses – itineraries with maps, routes to include pubs and cafes and local businesses	High priority Year 1-3 Quick Win	VTOs, BBNPA, WaW towns	
5.3	Promoting one particular train or bus route as the best for walking in Wales	Medium priority Year 3	CRP	VTO, Ramblers, tourism bodies
5.4	Assist accommodation providers and pubs to develop circular walks from their premises.	High priority Year 1-5	Tourism bodies	
5.5	Work with taxis, to set up drop off points for walks. Map and promote drop off points with set fares.	High priority Year 1-3	VTOs	
5.6	Extend and promote luggage transfer by taxi for long distance routes	Medium priority Year 1-2	VTOs	

5.7	Long distance walks – amend web and printed material to promote access by public transport	High priority Year 1 Quick Win	Offa's Dyke National Trail Officer	CCW, PCC, BB Park Society
5.8	Encourage more towns to join Walkers are Welcome and strengthen their role as hubs for walking activity.	High priority Year 1-5	Tourism bodies	WWO, BBNPA
5.9	Link to Walking With Offa activity along English-Welsh border	High priority Year 1-3	VTPs	WWO, BBNPA
5.10	Walking PR – work with national/regional tourism PR leads to get features in walking/outdoor magazines	High priority Year 1-5	Tourism bodies	VW, RTPs, BBNPA
5.11	Strengthen cycle hub towns and set up new hubs, to develop and promote more circular cycle routes, mountain bike routes and cycling itineraries.	Very High priority Year 1-4	BBNPA, VTPs	
5.12	Cycle hire – increase visibility and ease of hiring bicycles - support existing outlets, tie ups with accommodation, cycle hire from stations	High priority Year 2-4	companies	VTOs
5.13	Promote cycling holiday breaks in Powys cycling from/to South Wales with itineraries	Medium priority Year 2-4	PCC, BBNPA	Companies, Sustrans
5.14	Bike transport and hire direct from trailers	Medium priority Year 3-5	Cycle companies	VTO
5.15	Re-examine scope for bike carriage on buses and bike hire delivery to meet buses. New bike bus.	Medium priority Year 2-3	Bus and bike companies	VTP, BBNPA
5.16	Continued liaison with local authorities, Sustrans and British Waterways on new cycle route development	High priority	VTPs, British Waterways successor, Sustrans	

		Year 3-5		
5.17	Travel Plan for Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. Ensure up to date, accessible information and promote local links more proactively.	High priority Year 1-2 Quick Win	BBNPA, BW successor	Local businesses
5.18	Encourage activity providers to incorporate more low carbon options into their activity propositions	Medium priority Year 2-4	Tourism bodies	VTOs
5.19	Encourage riding businesses to further develop and promote riding loops, trails and riding holidays	Low priority Year 3-5	Tourism bodies	
5.20	Explore or encourage businesses to develop innovative slow and low carbon transport options	Low priority Year 3-5	Tourism bodies	Private sector

Objective 6. Electric vehicles and community transport**Priority and Timescale****Lead body****Partners**

6.1	Establish a Powys & BBNP-wide large scale e-bike (and e-vehicle) network based at accommodation businesses	Very High priority Year 1-3 Quick Win	VTPs	STP, tourism bodies
6.2	Promote e-bike rental more heavily from existing companies and set up new hire at specific sites such as Rhayader/Elan Valley, Brecon, Lake Vyrnwy	High priority Year 1-3 Quick Win	VTPs	STP, Welsh Water, tourism bodies
6.3	Extend the charging network for electric cars, electric buggies and e bikes across Powys and promote as most extensive network in UK.	High priority Year 1-2 Quick Win	ZCW	STP, VTP
6.4	Build on and extend the developing electric buggy and Twizy initiative to encourage additional tourism	Medium priority Year 2-4	VTMG	

Brecon Beacons and Powys Visitor Transport Plan

	businesses to host and promote electric vehicles			
6.5	Promote the existing electric narrow boats and day boats – encourage operators to supply/convert more boats	Medium priority Year 2-3	BBNPA	BW
6.6	Develop marketing messages and supporting PR - work with tourism PR leads.	High priority Year 1-5	Tourism bodies	VW
6.7	Work with community transport organisations (via PAVO) to identify those keen to develop visitor targeted services. Develop simple but attractive offers and trial.	Medium priority Year 1-5	VTPs	PAVO, CRPs
6.8	Monitor these trials and other demand responsive options.	Medium priority Year 2-5	VTP	

Objective 7. Delivery, management and monitoring

Priority and Timescale

Lead body

Partners

7.1	Establish a Powys and Brecon Beacons Visitor Transport Management Group and partnerships	Very High priority Year 1	PCC, BBNPA	
7.2	Present this Visitor Transport Plan to the Welsh Government and other key stakeholders	Very High priority Year 1	VTMG	
7.3	Review existing regional public transport delivery model and engage quality/marketing manager	Very High priority Year 1	TraCC, PCC	
7.4	Appoint two Visitor Transport Officers to deliver actions from this plan along flagship routes and in visitor	Very High priority Year 1	VTMG	PCC, BBNPA

	transport hubs			
7.5	Work with existing and new tourism destinations.	Very High priority Year 1-5	VTMG	VW, TPMW, BBNPA
7.6	Integrate transport into discussions about future funding such as the new EU Rural Development Programme from 2014/5.	High priority Year 1-2	WG	PCC
7.7	Apply for additional funding to support key elements of the plan.	High priority Year 1-3	VTMG	PCC, BBNPA
7.8	Develop and implement monitoring system	High priority Year 1-5	VTMG	

Key to acronyms

ATW = Arriva Trains Wales

BBNPA = Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

BW = British Waterways

CCW = Countryside Council for Wales

CLCRP = Cambrian Line CRP

CRPs = Community Rail Partnerships

HOWCRP = Heart of Wales CRP

HOWLTA = Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association

NR = Network Rail

NT = National Trust

PAVO = Powys Association of Voluntary Organisation

PCC = Powys County Council

RTPs = Regional Transport Partnerships

SEWTA = South East Wales Transport Alliance

SWWITCH = South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium

STP = Sustainable Tourism Powys

TPCs = Travel Plan Coordinators

TraCC = Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru Mid Wales Transport Consortium

VTI = Visitor Transport Initiative

Brecon Beacons and Powys Visitor Transport Plan

VTMG = Visitor Transport Management Group

VTO = Visitor Transport Officers

VTP = Visitor Transport Partnership

VW = Visit Wales

WaW = Walkers are Welcome

WG = Wales Government

WWO = Walking with Offa programme

ZCW = Zero Carbon World

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 List of people who have contributed to this plan

Aberhyddnant Cottages	Liz Matthews
Arriva Trains Wales	Ben Davies, Michael Vaughan
Baytrans	John Davies
Brecon Beacons National Park Authority	Richard Tyler
BBNPA Visitor Transport Officer	Annie Lawrie
BBNPA Volunteer	Richard Carr
Bikes and Hikes, Brecon	Keith Lee
Brecon Beacons Tourism	Punch Maughan
Brecon Mountain Railway	Tony Hills
Bus Users UK	Tudor Thomas
Cadw	Carys Hewitt
Cambrian Mountains Initiative	Nick Venti
Capita Symonds	Mark Shaw
Capital Region Tourism	Peter Cole
Carmarthenshire County Council (Towy Valley)	Alwyn Evans, Meirion Morgan Jones
Centre for Alternative Technology	Rosie Strickland
Drovers Holidays, Hay	Luke Skinner
Dyfi Biosphere Group	Andy Rowlands
Elan Valley Lodge	Roy Davies
Gwynedd County Council (Dyfi Valley)	Gerwyn Jones
Heart of Wales Line	David Edwards, Gill Wright
Herefordshire Council	Alan Lewis
Knighton Tourism Group	Julia Roberts
Lake Vyrnwy Tourism Marketing Association (and Chair TPMW)	Neil Bale
Llandrindod Wells Chamber of Trade	Sue Green
Mid Wales Tourism	Val Hawkins
Monmouthshire Council	Mark Youngman

Brecon Beacons and Powys Visitor Transport Plan

National Showcaves of Wales - Dan yr Ogof	James Price
Powis Castle (National Trust)	Jenny Knight, Shane Logan
Powys Action for Voluntary Organisations	Sarah Leyland-Jones
Powys County Council	John Forsey
Powys County Council	Rod Jenkins
Powys County Council Tourism Officer	Julie Lewis
Royal Welsh Agricultural Society - Showground	Barry Jones
Sergeants Bros Coaches	Mike Sargeant
SEWTA	Christian Schmidt
SWWITCH	Sue Miles
Shropshire Council	Jonathan Hayes, David Koring, Matt Johnson
Stagecoach in South Wales/West	Nathan Griffith Williams
Sustainable Tourism Powys Manager	Martin Cooke
The Prospectory – electric transport consultants	Alison Kidd, Peter Williams
Tourism Partnership Mid Wales	Dee Reynolds
TraCC	Chris Wilson
Traveline Cymru	Martyn Dunn
Traws Cymru Officer	David Hall
Visit Wales	Ceri Turner
Welsh Assembly Government Transport Unit	Tim James, David Hern
Welsh Water	Ed Parsons

Appendix 2 Relevant strategy and research documents

Brecon Beacons Cycling and Mountain Biking Strategy 2009

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Visitor Transport Initiative, Business Plan 2012-16

Brecon Beacons National Park Management Plan 2010

Brecon Beacons National Park Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2011

Brecon Beacons National Park Walking Tourism Strategy

Brecon Beacons Tourism Marketing Strategy 2010

Making Sustainable Transport Easier in Rural Communities – YDCW/CPRW/Sustrans

Mid Wales Tourism Strategy 2011

National Transport Plan 2010 Welsh Assembly Government

Natural England Research Report Good practice in sustainable leisure travel: Twenty case studies

Natural England Research Report Visitor travel plans for countryside leisure destinations

NAW Rural Development Sub-committee – Inquiry into Rural Tourism in Wales 2011

Powys Community Transport Review 2012 PAVO

Progress in Partnership: The Regional Transport Plan for South West Wales 2010 -2015

Rail Access in the Brecon Beacons National Park – Report by CCW Sustainable Transport Advisory Service

Regional Transport Plan South East Wales Transport Alliance 2009

Regional Transport Plan TraCC 2009

SEWTA Tourism and Transport Study – Draft Study Brief 2012

Shared Demand Taxi Service for Visitors in the BBNP- Project Proposal

South East Wales Strategic Tourism Framework 2008

South East Wales Visitor Survey 2008 – 2009 Lynn Jones Research

Sustainable Tourism Framework for Wales 2007

Sustainable Transport and Tourism Assessment - Sustainable Transport and Tourism Task and Finish Group 2009

Sustainable Transport for Tourism Wales Initiative: Phase 3 Strategy

Sustainable Transport in National Parks Achievements and Opportunities Elwyn Owen Associates for Countryside Council for Wales Sustainable Transport Advisory Service

Tourism on Board: survey of passengers using buses in tourist areas, Institute of Transport and Tourism 2007

Urban and Rural Interchange Study TraCC 2009

Visit Wales Sustainable and Coastal Tourism Travel Development Plan – draft January 2012

Visitor Travel in the Brecon Beacons National Park - Alison Kidd and Peter Williams 2010

Wales Spatial Plan: Swansea and Western Valleys – Tourism Leisure, Culture and Heritage Opportunities 2006

Walking and Cycling Action Plan 2009-2013 Welsh Assembly Government

Welsh Bus Passenger Survey 2010 Welsh Government

Welsh Government White Paper Consultation on Active Travel (Wales) Bill, May 2012

Welsh Outdoor Recreation Study 2008 Countryside Council for Wales

Appendix 3 Transport Audit

An audit of transport infrastructure has been undertaken as part of this work. Detailed spreadsheets are available listing all the infrastructure currently in place in each of the towns in Powys and gateway towns, plus along all of the bus routes.

A map of the main routes and visitor transport hub towns is presented overleaf.

The audit checked **town websites** to see what information is available for visitors seeking information in advance or while in the area. Most but by no means all of such websites include transport details for local buses, trains and taxis etc. Not all had a Traveline Cymru or (English) Traveline link.

Rail Stations

Most medium-sized and larger Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) railway stations have two information panels containing some information about onward travel from that station. Unfortunately, the ‘i’ Information’ and ‘i’ Continuing your journey’ panels are often not located together and, in some instances one is missing, despite cross-referencing between the boards. Despite the headings, contact details of local taxis and ‘nearest bus stop located at...’ (without any additional details) are included on the former, not the latter ‘i’ panel. The latter panel has a map of the immediate locality but not a walking route to either the Town Centre or the main bus stops or Bus Station. It does, however, suggest telephoning Traveline Cymru for bus information.

Without much effort, the information on these two panels could be more logically reallocated between them and with the map including walking routes to the Town Centre and onward bus stops / stands. Every effort should be made to display them prominently together by the station exit.

ATW should ensure the appropriate local authority is given space adjacent to these two onward travel panels to display and update their own and more detailed local bus service information.

Bus Stations at Visitor Transport Hubs

Brecon

The 6-stand Interchange was originally opened in 2006 to replace congested on-street stops at the Bulwark. It has recently been upgraded with public toilets and information panels. Significant expenditure here is not required, other than to update the ‘Q Boards’ at each stand and complete the direction signage between the interchange and the town centre and the TIC (both ways). However, the opportunity should be taken to upgrade the other Town Centre bus stops and shelters at Bulwark (1), Free Street (1) and Ship Street (2)

Llandrindod Wells

The ground works for the 3 stands outside the Rail Station exist as high Kassel Kerbs but political disputes in the planning process have prevented the installation of waiting shelters or even bus stop flags on the 2 stands not under the Rail Station canopy. These issues should be overcome with high quality roadside furniture appropriate to the historic nature of the town, information boards and checking the direction signage (both ways). At the same time, the other Town Centre bus stops and shelters should also be upgraded : Auto Palace (2), South Crescent (1) and Spa Road (1).



Newtown

Upgrading the current Bus Station is not worthwhile as it is intended to rebuild it to modern standards within the next 5 years when funding can be prioritised in the Powys and/or TraCC budgets. However, improving information panels and direction signage can be undertaken if located where it will not be affected by future works. Improving the pair of bus stops at Newtown Rail Station (where the Town Bus Service will link the Rail Station to the Bus Station Interchange) should be considered, along with completing the planned walkway (excluding the foot bridge) between the two sites.

Welshpool

Upgrading the current bus stands in the High Street is not worthwhile as it is contemplated a new off-street bus station should be constructed closer to both the Town Centre and Rail Station, although the timescale is after rebuilding Newtown Bus Station. However, improving information panels and direction signage can be undertaken, as can upgrading the other town centre bus tops and shelter: Church Bank (1), Opposite TIC (1), Tesco's for Rail Station (2), Berriew Street (2), Co-op Car Park (1).

Bus and rail stations at Gateway Towns

Abergavenny Bus Station

Although relatively modern, Abergavenny Bus Station is poorly designed with narrow loading islands and only the ones at each end having shelters. A route index is displayed but not one of towns served and this omission is compounded by the timetables not showing all of the destinations served. Good directions to the adjacent TIC and to the Rail Station.

Abergavenny Rail Station

Although the planned rail/bus interchange will take some time to develop since it requires relocating the car park to the other side of the railway, no attempt has been made to provide bus information at the rail station or obvious directions to the bus stop at the end of Station Road or to the Bus Station. Meanwhile, the eastbound bus stop at the end of Station Road requires a shelter and seat and directions to the rail station.

Note that while most of the bus stop infrastructure around Abergavenny is of good quality all the flags show services 43 and X43 as '21' which they have not been for over 7 years. Most show an earlier Traveline Cymru telephone number. To avoid confusion with the Brecon service, the tendered Abergavenny Town Service 43 should be renumbered.



Cardiff Bus Station

Good location outside Cardiff Central Rail Station. Difficult to maintain quality while the Bus Station is being redeveloped.

Heads of the Valleys

Stagecoach Service X4 links Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil to Abergavenny and Hereford via the southern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park. While the general bus stop infrastructure in the SEWTA area is in reasonable condition, that specifically around Blaenavon is not having been subjected to vandalism. There are few direction signs or information panels between the Blaenavon transport infrastructure and the various tourism / heritage sites in and around the town.

The bus interchanges at Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar between the various north – south Valley bus routes and the east – west Heads of the Valleys route were not inspected.

Hereford Bus Stations

Careful explanation is required to inform intending passengers of the pick-up points used by bus services out of Hereford. The information provided at each is generally good for services using that location, as are directions between them, information about services departing from other locations would be useful, as would intermediate direction signs between them.

The small City Bus Station is only used by country services at times of day when these replace city services. When made DDA-compliant, the number of stands will have to be reduced to ensure vehicles can load adjacent to the kerbs. Its location, behind Tesco's, is obscure and access to it is impeded by parked supermarket trolleys.

The Country Bus Station is not so well used as it is located some way from both the City Centre and the Rail Station but it is a useful vehicle park, even though the country services also have to pick up at the more central Bridge Street, Maylord Orchards or Shire Hall stands on their way out of the city. Printed tourist maps and information boards do not make this clear. Passengers using inbound country services would find it more convenient if these unloaded at the City Bus Station rather than the Cattle Market stop (on the 'wrong' side of New Market Street) for the City Centre.

Hereford Rail Station

There is no information at the Rail Station about onward bus services. Outside the station building, the taxi stand is most prominent with one bus stop to the left under the canopy extension but the other out of sight around the corner. Neither bus stand has seats for waiting passengers and the latter does not have a shelter.

Early improvements could be effected by clear travel interchange information and direction signs coupled to moving the further bus stand into the place of the taxi stand and the taxi stand to the north end of the station building.

Kington Bus Station

Although well maintained, the Kington Bus Station is very cramped and cannot accommodate all the vehicles operating connecting services. The main stand is designed for 2 vehicles but only accommodates two if they are both midi-buses – and one is often full size. The third vehicle has to park in the bay marked 'coaches

only', providing it is not already being used by a private hire coach, and load passengers from the roadway. Passengers on vehicles terminating and heading for Sargeant's Garage have to alight around the corner, where there is no raised kerb, and make their own way to the bus stands. The bus station would benefit from a welcoming tourist information board, linked to others around the town, and direction signs to the Town Centre.

Leominster Bus Station

The Bus Station appears to be well designed and maintained. It would benefit from a welcoming tourist information board and direction signs between it and the town centre and the rail station. It is difficult to find from the Town Centre.

Leominster Rail Station

While there is no bus service information at the Rail Station, there are clear signs outside it to both the Town Centre and the Bus Station. These, however, peter out en-route.

Llandovery, Castle Bus Stand

Of recent construction and including most required features, including direction signs and information boards in close proximity.

Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station

This is of reasonably modern construction but the covered loading islands are too narrow for both queues of passengers waiting at one stand and other passengers trying to access the stands beyond. The travel information on each stand is well maintained but there is need, at the entrances, of an index of towns served linked to bus routes and departure stands and clear directions to the on-site toilets and TIC and also to the Rail Station. The greatest criticism of the Bus Station is that it is filthy and requires a deep clean.

Merthyr Tydfil Rail Station

It is unfortunate that the railway has been cut back from its former location, across the High Street from the Bus Station, to accommodate a shopping centre and supermarket and its location is now rather obscure. The only onward signage at the Rail Station is for directions to the supermarket, not the town centre or bus station.

Although there are two bus stands outside the Rail Station, they are not used as such and accommodate the overflow of taxis from the very cramped taxi rank. The rail station car park is also very small (40? spaces) and park & ride cannot be promoted as the adjacent supermarket's multi storey car park has a very high tariff after 2 hours.

Extending bus services from the Bus Station to the Rail Station cannot be suggested as, although the walking distance is still short, the road system is tortuous and congested at all times of the day by vehicles accessing the supermarket.

Within the Merthyr Tydfil CBC area, the three bus stops in Pontsticill village (for the Taff Trail) have dirty and damaged shelters without bus stop flags or timetable cases. The bus stop at Pant Estate (Pant Road / Tal yr Efail) which serves the Brecon Mountain Railway (0.2 miles distant) also requires upgrading and direction signs to that attraction.

Neath Bus Station

Reasonable quality is maintained although smaller operators post their timetables and adverts in a haphazard manner, sometimes obscuring information boards. Needs index of towns served linked to bus routes and departure stands and clear directions to the Rail Station.

Neath Rail Station

Clear tourism/transport information boards prepared by BayTrans are no longer updated. Only one bus shelter remains outside and is too small for demand. Needs clear directions to the Bus Station.

Note that the majority of bus stop infrastructure along the B4242 Waterfalls Country route (old A465 and Glynneath) in NPT is in a very poor condition with outdated timetables displayed.

Oswestry Bus Station

The information displays are haphazard and, sometimes, contradictory; The 'Q Boards' on each stand have not been updated for some years. Needs index of towns served linked to bus routes and departure stands as well as tourist welcoming panels and directions to the town centre. There is a display of bus services connecting to the nearest rail station at Gobowen. The greatest criticism of the Bus Station is that it is filthy and requires a deep clean.

Pontypridd Bus Station

Modern bus station, however information office and toilets closed by 1700hrs. Index of towns served linked to bus routes and departure stands at each end of concourse is not obvious as headed 'Bus Timetables'. Good 'TrawsCymru' promotions around those departure stands but the location of these stands should be more obvious. Many timetable case glasses are so dirty it is difficult to read the contents.

Shrewsbury Bus Station

A modern bus station with clear information panels and directions to the Town Centre and nearby Rail Station. Some travel information / leaflets available at the newsagents.

Shrewsbury Rail Station

Public Transport interchange information on the wall outside the Rail Station exit en-route to the (sign posted) Bus Station.

Swansea Bus Station

Good modern bus station with all necessary facilities. As Powys/Brecon Beacons bus services do not pass the Rail Station, ensure direction signs to the connecting ffrmetro service 4 (which stops in Ffordd Y Gorllewin outside the Bus Station).

Swansea Rail Station

The Rail Station is in the process of being upgraded with modern facilities. As Powys/Brecon Beacons services start from the Bus Station, ensure direction signs to the connecting ffrmetro service 4 (which stops in the High Street outside the Rail Station).

Bus Route infrastructure

Spreadsheets are available listing the existing and required infrastructure for all bus routes. To give an indication of the requirements the results for the flagship T4 route from Newtown to Merthyr Tydfil are summarised here. The table indicates the numbers of shelters, posts, flags and cases required to be added or replaced along the route, not including the requirements in each of the towns themselves.

T4 Route	Shelter	Post	Flag	Case
Newtown to Llandrindod	0	3	22	13
Llandrindod to Builth Wells	2	2	16	11
Builth Wells to Brecon	2	3	17	16
Brecon to Garwnant	0	4	15	13
Garwnant to Merthyr Tydfil	0	2	6	6
Total	4	14	76	59



Number of taxi companies in towns in and around Powys

The audit collected information on taxi companies in and around the area. As would be expected there are more companies in the surrounding gateway towns. There are also several areas with very few taxis available at all.

Gateway Towns	No.		No.
Abergavenny	11	Llandoverly	1
Ammanford	11	Ludlow	3
Hereford	20	MerthyrTydfil	20
Llandeilo	2	Shrewsbury	15
Tourist Hubs			
Oswestry	10	Kington	2
Llanfyllin	0	Knighton	1
Llangynog	0	New Radnor	0
Llanrhaeadr YM	1	Presteigne	4
Llanymynech	2		
		Brecon	8
Machynlleth	1	Blaenavon	1
DinasMawddwy	0	Crickhowell	3
Llanbrynmair	0	Hay on Wye	1
		Llangadog	2
Newtown	6	Sennybridge	0
Welshpool	6	Talgarth	1
Berriew	0	Talybont	0
Bishop's Castle	1		
Caersws	0	Neath	6
Llanfair Caereinion	1	Abercraf	0
Llangurig	0	Brynamman	1
Llanidloes	1	Resolven	0
Montgomery	1	Pontneddfechan	0
		Penderyn/Hirwaun	2
Llandrindod Wells	3	Ystradgynlais	5
Builth Wells	4		
Llanwrtyd Wells	0		
Newbridge on Wye	1		
Rhayader	1		

Car Hire

Car hire companies are only found in certain towns within Powys and the Brecon Beacons. There are individual companies in Brecon, Builth Wells, Newtown, Presteigne, Welshpool some of which are very small operations. There are also car hire outlets in the gateway towns of Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Abergavenny, Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth.

Appendix 4 Draft Guidelines for Visitor Attractions

The tourism audit helped develop a set of suggestions or guidelines for visitor attractions/sites which they could implement:

- Include public transport information on website under 'How to Find us' or 'Directions'
- Place information on public transport before information on how to get there by car.
- Where attraction features on a large website (like local authority or destination website) prompt use of public transport information on other areas of the site with a link
- Use Traveline Cymru logo and link
- As well as nearest railway station it is useful to give frequency of train services, key stations and contact numbers/links for rail operator and national rail enquiries.
- Provide bus routes and service numbers from key towns and rail stations if available, frequencies and nearest bus stop to your attraction. Provide contact numbers/links for bus and coach operators.
- If no bus available give taxi numbers/car hire companies. If walking distance give route, distance and estimated walking time.
- All this information could also be posted inside the attraction building to encourage people to use alternatives next time they visit.
- Provide cycle racks on site.
- Give details of nearest cycle route and link to Sustrans website if relevant.
- Provide electric charge point(s) for electric bicycles and vehicles
- Promote relevant dedicated services like Beacons Bus and The Bus that meets the Train.
- Promote Cymru Connect, Plus+Bus Explore Wales Pass, Powys Day Rover and any other relevant multi modal tickets.
- Promote sswitch2 share, liftshare and similar car sharing schemes.
- Consider incentivising use of public transport by reduced price entry/discount.
- Promote such offers, through tourism and transport marketing materials

Appendix 5 Go Lakes Travel Programme

Key objectives include:

- Improving public transport services and traffic management to tackle congestion and reduce delays
- Creating a network of pay-as-you-go car and cycle hire fleets, including recharge stations for electric vehicles
- Developing safe, continuous networks for walking, cycling and wheelchair use
- Making paying for, and changing between different modes of travel easier, through smarter and more integrated ticketing aimed at user markets
- Targeted marketing and information designed to change visitors' travel behaviour to/from and around the Lakes
- Ensure that, as far as possible, local residents and communities benefit from the programme

The Programme runs from 2011-15 and includes nine projects:

- Project 1: Improving passenger transport
- Project 2: Improving traffic management
- Project 3: Car hire network
- Project 4: Smart ticketing
- Project 5: Improving the cycle network
- Project 6: Improving access to cycling
- Project 7: Transport information
- Project 8: Marketing travel around the Lake District
- Project 9: Marketing travel to the Lake District

Further details are still emerging and key project personnel are being appointed:

The Marketing and PR strategy will communicate positive and fun messages about travelling around the Lakes without a car. In the first year existing routes, itineraries and ways to get around will be promoted to visitors via an integrated campaign and a marketing toolkit that will be available to all businesses. This will mean that visitors will be given vital information needed to start planning days out without the car before they arrive. As part of this campaign, the Go Lakes Travel branding will be seen on printed literature and leaflets, incorporated into information displays at transport 'hubs' including water jetties, cycle centres, train stations and bus stops. It will also feature on a number of vehicles including buses, hire cars and bicycles.

Walker targeted bus routes (many of which have been running for some years) include the five 'Rambler' buses. There is also an Osprey bus in the Bassenthwaite/Whinlatter area.

The Cross Lakes experience promotes itineraries using boats and buses across the southern lakes. Attractively produced itineraries feature on websites.

The 'bike bus' service will see specially converted buses, that are able to carry up to 12 bikes and riders, travel through the heart of the Lakes along the A591 from Windermere Railway Station to the Whinlatter Forest visitor Centre. The buses will stop at Ambleside, Rydal, Grasmere, Thirlspot, Keswick and Braithwaite on the way.

The car hire network will consist of a visitor facing pay as you drive car hire network with vehicles located at visitor accommodation and other transport interchanges, plus the development of a EV recharge infrastructure.

Appendix 6 Rail Franchising

Great Western Franchise

There are a four train operators currently bidding for the Great Western Franchise which will commence in May 2013. The companies, First Great Western, Great Western Trains (Arriva/DB), National Express and Stagecoach are in the process of finalising their bids which have to be submitted by October 2012.

It is therefore opportune for the Partnership to make a representation to all four bidders regarding the following issues:

1. The importance of maintaining a reliable and punctual service for all passengers including those on tourist trips to Mid Wales via Cardiff or Hereford.
2. The need to operate a seven day a week service and to offer fares which will encourage visitors to travel on holiday to Mid Wales by train.
3. To work more closely with respective local authorities to encourage improved integration of bus train and non-motorised transport at railway stations. In the case of onward travel to the Brecon Beacons and Powys there is a need to refer specifically to the T4 service from Cardiff to Newtown and also the poor appearance of Neath Railway station as a key interchange for onward travel to the southern Brecon Beacons.
4. Hereford is also an important railhead for Powys. It is essential for the franchisee to maintain 5 services per day between London Paddington, Worcester and Hereford. There is also a need to re-consider the spread of journeys per day as there is currently a 6.5 hour gap in the timetable on weekdays. End to end journey times could be improved by using new rolling stock and perhaps changing the current stopping pattern.
5. Travel via Newport to Abergavenny and Hereford for onward travel into Powys needs to be reviewed with the existing Marches line operator so as to improve connections at Newport, especially in the evening when journey opportunities become less frequent.

Wales and Border Franchise

This franchise is due to be re-written and put out to tender in 2017 with a new franchise coming into being in 2018. The current thinking from the Welsh Government is that the franchise could be organised on a not for profit basis with any surpluses being ploughed back into the system in future years.

It is still early days but the Partnership needs to press home the following points:

1. The need to design a franchise which seeks passenger growth.
2. To invest in Abergavenny station as a major railhead for the Brecon Beacons.
3. To invest in railheads to become seamless interchanges especially at Hereford, Llandoverly, Merthyr Tydfil, Neath, Newtown, and Swansea.
4. Build a case for additional trains to operate on the Heart of Wales line if it is to grow tourism traffic in any significant numbers.