

Summary of recommendations by Professor Stuart Cole

We commissioned Professor Stuart Cole of the University of South Wales to undertake a short 'High Level Review' of the TrawsCymru T3 route which currently links Wrexham to Barmouth. Professor Cole has now concluded his review.

Scope of Review

As part of his commission we specifically asked Professor Stuart Cole to:

- Consider the broad strategic merits of operating new direct TrawsCymru T3 journeys linking Wrexham to Aberystwyth (as opposed to Barmouth);
- Review and advise on what other cost effective improvements could potentially be introduced to further enhance the TrawsCymru T3 long distance bus service to further grow passenger numbers;
- Review and advise on what further improvements can be made to encourage more passengers to interchange between the TrawsCymru T3 services other bus services and rail services at Ruabon Station;
- Review what measures can be taken to improve bus connections at Corwen to key centres in the Vale of Clwyd; and
- Provide advice on targeted marketing and information improvements on the route.

Summary of Professor Cole's key recommendations

Professor Cole has looked at the above issues and suggested a number of interventions, which have been discussed with and agreed by local authorities structured around the following timescales:

- *Short Term* – improvements which can be delivered in the next 12 months;
- *Medium Term* – improvements which can be delivered within two years; and
- *Longer Term* – improvements which can be delivered in time for the start of the next T3 contract in 2022.

In terms of short term improvements, the main focus of Professor Cole's recommendations are on marketing and ticketing initiatives which are all considered to be deliverable within existing resources. He has placed particular focus on the need to develop a joint marketing plan for the route with key tourism providers.

Short term – next 12 months

- Reinstate evening journeys into Ruabon Station;

- Develop and implement joint ticketing and promotional package with tourism providers in the Dee Corridor;
- Introduce a multi journey ticket for regular passengers (T3, T2, Lloyds local // TC North Ticket add on// TC network day ticket add on)
- Ensure all bus stops on the T3 corridor have correct information;
- Introduce front window panel on vehicles not in TC livery;
- Ensure all timetables have TrawsCymru brand in place / alongside county brand;
- Provide better marketing of T3 service at Wrexham Bus Station; and
- Strengthen short workings between Barmouth and Dolgellau;
- Ensure connections are maximised between the T3 and the planned T10 services; and
- Ensure Lloyds X27 and X28 services are more closely integrated with the T2 and T3 services to further maximise connection opportunities at Dolgellau.

Medium term – between 12 and 24 months

- Discuss better bus rail interchange arrangements with new rail franchise operator at Ruabon and Barmouth stations;
- Further improve bus stop infrastructure along route and align with Visit Wales 'Wales Way' Initiative;
- Commission a more in depth study into interchange requirements along the corridor between T3 and T2, local services, and rail services at Ruabon Wreccsam. Also interchange to / from T2 and T1 / T5 network links;
- Work with Gwynedd Council to bring forward a detailed proposal to improve interchange facilities at Dolgellau;
- Further strengthen joint tourism marketing promotions on the corridor. This could include joint ticketing with e.g. heritage railways, Pontcysyllte viaduct and discount entry for other tourist attractions;
- Work up a detailed feasibility study to examine the operational costs and benefits of introducing additional fast workings avoiding the villages between Bala and Corwen; and
- Identify through passenger survey the minimum connection times at Dolgellau, Ruabon, Wreccsam (bus and rail), and Aberystwyth to determine priority interchange.

Longer term - over 24 months up to retendering in 2022

- Examine feasibility of introducing a new Bwcabus service to serve villages in the Dee Valley more effectively;
- Examine feasibility of separate school services (where students currently use T3);
- Subject to the viability of the suggested additional fast bus workings between Bala and Corwen consider the introduction of longer distance coaches on these journeys linking Barmouth to Wrexham interworking with low floor buses on the slower conventional route through the villages;
- Introduce a simplified fare structure for TrawsCymru services;
- Extend the route of the T3 service to terminate at Wrexham General Station – dependent upon bus turning circle improvements; and
- Consider the feasibility of operating specialist Bike Buses as part of the service on weekends and summer holidays. This would support the Active Travel agenda and could utilise cascaded vehicles off the existing T4 and T9 contracts which both come to an end within the next 12 months.