

## **A vision for buses in Wales**

### **Buses – good for people, good for communities, good for the environment, good for Wales**

Buses matter. They get us to work, education and shops. They connect us with friends and family and are a great way to explore Wales. Taking the bus can even be a better way of staying active than using a car.

People who take the bus also make a big difference for Wales. If more people make a positive choice to take the bus rather than use their cars, that is good news for the environment, for our communities and for our rural areas, towns and cities.

For example, bus users help reduce congestion in our towns and cities, and around local schools.

Bus users can also help reduce our carbon emissions – transport is one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions in Wales. Cars and buses both emit greenhouse gases, but if more people switch from cars to bus, less carbon is emitted for each journey.

And people who take the bus are helping to keep open services that can really make a difference to people's lives. In Wales, one in four of us do not have a car, so often rely on the bus to get to school, college or work.

So if more car users choose to use the bus, they will help to sustain reliable, affordable bus services, which in turn makes a big difference to local communities.

### **The challenge**

If we want to increase the benefits of buses to Wales we need more people to choose to take the bus rather than private cars.

Together we make around 100 million bus journeys each year in Wales. But over the past few years, the number of people who take the bus in Wales has generally been falling. Unless we take action now, that number will most likely stay steady or fall further. This will mean more people using private cars and so more congestion, more air pollution and fewer local services for people who rely on buses.

But before we can encourage more people to use buses, we need to understand why people don't use the bus. But users want:

- to be sure that the bus will get them there on time – which means reliable journey times and services when they need them;
- good value for money on bus fares;
- access to real-time information is a big issue for many bus users. They want to know when the next bus will come, whether it will be on time, and other information such as whether it will connect with the train;

- bus services that go where users want to go – to school, to work, to the sports centre or shopping, or to visit friends – and then be sure to get them home afterwards.

We know that bus journeys are often slower than the same journey in a car. We also understand that everybody's journey is different, so bus users need the flexibility to swap between different kinds of transport. Will the bus connect with the train? Can they use a bike for part of the journey or leave a car safely at a park and ride?

### **Our vision and priorities**

As Welsh Government, our role is to plan for transport in Wales. We help subsidise bus services (including free travel) and also work with our key partners to improve services, including the commercial bus companies who provide over 75% of bus services in Wales and the local authorities who have a critical role in planning local services, as well as passenger representative groups.

In order to improve bus services in Wales, we have developed a new vision and priorities.

At the heart of these is our big ambition to grow bus use in Wales because using the bus is good for individuals, for communities, the environment, for the economy and good for Wales.

We have identified seven priority actions to help deliver this, including making services easier to use, more accessible, more responsive, faster and seamless. We also want services to provide better value for money and to be greener.

We are already working on some of these but we want to do more, including developing new legislation that will give local authorities a wider range of tools, via new powers, to improve services in their area.

Ultimately we want more passengers to leave the car behind and take the bus. And if they don't have a car, they need to have the confidence to use the bus.

Here is our wider vision, and what we want to do to deliver better bus services in Wales.

## OUR VISION FOR BUSES

Our ambition				
Our ambition is to grow bus use in Wales - because taking the bus is good for individuals, for communities, the environment, for the economy and good for Wales				
Our priority actions				
In order to help more people to make a positive choice to take the bus, we want to make bus services:				
<b>Easy to use</b> <i>Better real-time information for bus users.</i>	<b>Accessible</b> <i>More people and a wider range of people are confident about using the bus.</i>	<b>Responsive</b> <i>Bus services that take us where we want to go, when we want to go there.</i>	<b>Seamless</b> <i>Bus services that are better integrated with rail, walking, cycling and car use.</i>	<b>Faster</b> <i>Fewer delays and less congestion on bus routes.</i>
<b>Good value for money</b> <i>for taxpayers, bus users and bus companies.</i>		<b>Greener</b> <i>A fleet of buses that emit fewer greenhouse gases.</i>		
What we are doing now				
Supporting reduced fares or free travel for some groups.	Rolling out a fleet of greener buses.	Providing better information for bus users.	Exploring new approaches to community transport.	Working with local authorities to improve local services.
What we will do next				
We want to pass new legislation for Wales that will provide local authorities with powers to tailor bus services to local needs and plan for the future. It will enable them to:				
Work in partnership with bus operators to improve services.	Let contracts to bus operators via a competitive bidding process (franchising).	Choose to provide services themselves.	Improve information for bus users.	
In the long term, we want:				
<b>Local authorities</b> to have greater control over local bus services in their area.	<b>Bus companies</b> to provide better information and to work in partnership with local authorities.	<b>Car users</b> to switch to bus.	<b>Bus users</b> to be confident that the service will be reliable.	<b>Our Welsh Government investment in bus services</b> to deliver good value for money.

We can't deliver that vision alone.

We need to continue to work with bus companies, local authorities and other partners to ensure that in a world of social and technological change, bus offers the people of Wales a stable and coherent network of services, fully integrated with other forms of public transport, which is reliable, affordable, easy to use and offers journey times that encourage a shift from car use.