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National Assembly for Wales
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
The future development of Transport
for Wales
Evidence from Older People's
Commissioner for Wales

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation regarding the future role of Transport for Wales (TfA) in delivering transport policy, specifically around what additional responsibilities it should take on and how these should integrate with the role of the Welsh Government, local government and emerging regional transport authorities.

Public and community transport is often seen as a lifeline by older people, providing access to key services and amenities, especially for those living in rural communities. Furthermore, public and community transport makes a significant contribution to older people's health and wellbeing, helping them to maintain their independence for longer and participate in community life.

My office has recently met with Transport for Wales as part of its integrated on-demand responsive transport (IRT) workstream, which forms part of its review of bus services across Wales. The experience of this work to date has been one of collaboration and openness, which has enabled members to share innovative ideas and has helped to inform an integrated and collaborative way forward.

Such an approach will be essential in the years ahead if we are to improve public transport in the ways outlined in the Welsh Government's White Paper consultation 'Improving public transport'¹ and I see Transport for Wales as having a key role to play in realising those plans.

Responsibilities at a national Joint Transport Authority (JTA) level, working alongside the emerging Regional Transport Authorities (RTA), would seem a logical way forward in order to benefit from Transport for Wales' skills and experience. Both the JTA and the emerging RTAs would greatly benefit from Transport for Wales' knowledge and expertise around overseeing network planning, procurement, franchising, updating and centralising back office function and ticketing systems, and facilitating partnership working.

Transport for Wales' experience of partnership working with local authorities could also lead to other benefits, such as aligning public transport proposals with local plans and proposals under the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, helping to ensure that older people are enabled to use pedestrian routes and walkways to convenient bus stops safely and with confidence.

¹ https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2018-12/improving-public-transport_O.pdf