Wales Centre for Public Policy
Canolfan Polisi Cyhoeddus Cymru

Executive Summary

Roundtable exploring the role of multisector collaboration in Welsh transport

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Key points

- This paper summarises the discussion, key findings, and priorities that emerged from a full-day roundtable convened by the Wales Centre for Public Policy in partnership with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.

- Overall, there was consensus that multisector collaboration has a valuable role to play in achieving a multi-modal, integrated transport network for Wales. Discussion surfaced two key roles for multisector collaboration: supporting the transport network to respond to need and supporting cultural and behavioural change.

- Participants called for transport in Wales to be connected, grounded, centred, and rooted in community. Multisector collaborations and partnerships can be a mechanism for action that is co-productive, co-creative, and collaborative. Future efforts should build on what's working well and seek to mobilise assets across Wales.

- Three clear focus areas for the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales emerged. We mapped seven priorities to these focal areas to support delivery against them:

1) Coproduce an enabling vision to guide the sector toward a common purpose.

   - Co-create a clear, stable, longer-term vision for multisector collaboration in Welsh transport.
   - Support the transport network to be responsive to place and adaptive to needs of communities.
   - Embed inclusivity, user need, and accessibility across Welsh transport.

2) Identify and pilot enabling practices that share accountability and participation in transport decisions.

   - Establish meaningful partnerships and mechanisms for multisector collaboration. This should simplify, align, and build on existing structures.
   - Ensure that sustainability is embedded across transport plans and partner delivery.

3) Invest in and develop enabling architecture to bring together the vision and practices.

   - Explore financial practices and approaches to funding that enable multisector collaborators/partners.
   - Evidence effectiveness.

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Background

The Welsh Government asked the Wales Centre for Public Policy to explore the feasibility of employee ownership and community ownership models for different transport assets. Preliminary findings from a desk review and conversations with experts revealed an evidence gap which led to this project exploring how the Welsh Government could increase stakeholder voice in transport decision-making (including employees, community, and other relevant stakeholders). This led us to investigate how multisector collaboration and partnerships can be mobilised to meet the integrated, sustainable transport needs of Wales.

To engage with stakeholders and build momentum, in April 2024 the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) convened a roundtable in partnership with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales on the role of multisector collaboration in the Welsh transport system. This brief provides a high-level overview of the key findings and recommendations that emerged from the full-day discussion. For a more detailed summary of the roundtable structure and themes that emerged from smaller group discussion, our more in-depth summary report is available on request.

The recommendations put forth should inform further action by Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government as they develop their transport policy and delivery plans over the next year. This document provides a synthesis of discussions from the day and is not exhaustive of participant views.

Policy context

Transport is a crucial enabler of social wellbeing and economic growth. To achieve its full enabling potential, transport needs to be integrated (joined-up), reliable, affordable, high-quality, and efficient.

Diversifying participation and voice are key for the Welsh Government to realise a fully accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system as outlined in **Llwybr Newydd Wales Transport Strategy 2021** and meet the target of 45% of journeys by sustainable modes by 2040 (up from 32% as outlined in Llwybr Newydd). With over a third of the Welsh population living in rural areas, and 80% of Wales being rural, the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales are already actively working together to develop and invest in innovative public transport solutions to meet the needs of places historically disconnected from traditional, mass transport modes.

Increasing sustainable and integrated transport options is critical for Wales to modernise its transport system and drastically reduce its carbon emissions to

achieve a Net Zero Wales by 2050. Modal shift and behaviour change are integral to this. Well-functioning, integrated public transport helps to increase usage to boost ticket sales, reduces costs, and make public, shared, and active travel options more attractive. In order to deliver better transport value for money to benefit the whole of Wales, Welsh Government is increasingly exploring how to work more flexibly, devolve decisions and funding to the local level, and attract more investment from Westminster to upgrade Wales's interconnected rail infrastructure and make services more reliable.

In the wider UK context, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales are in a leading position. The new UK Labour Government **Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill** will be used to bring rail services back into public ownership and the **Better Buses Bill** aims to equip local leaders with the tools to deliver better bus services. With recent Welsh Government policy developments around bus and Transport for Wales own transformation journey, there is a clear opportunity to share policy and practice, and lead the UK in developing innovative, collaborative practices across the transport system for better integration.

Roundtable overview

The roundtable was co-developed with project partners as a key step in facilitating strategic discussions between the Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, and wider stakeholders on how communities, employees, and wider stakeholders can play a more meaningful role in transport planning and decision-making. The roundtable brought together a diversity of stakeholders in Welsh transport to examine current evidence and best practice to inform future thinking. The roundtable had a particular focus on voices from community and shared transport. It consisted of 25 participants from the Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, and a range of relevant roles in: academia, third sector organisations, representative bodies, local government, accessibility groups, and transport operators/providers.

The guiding research questions for the full-day discussion were:

- What role might community (including community transport and shared transport schemes) play in the realisation of an integrated transport system?
- Are there examples of organisational models that enable communities and employees to have a more meaningful seat at the table?
- What policies can the Welsh Government consider to enable employee and community involvement and voice in transport decision-making?

To facilitate deeper participation, this roundtable used **Liberating Structures** — a collection of facilitation techniques that encourage lively discussion and focus on

including diverse voices to develop new initiatives. WCPP, as lead facilitators, adapted the **Purpose-to-Practice** (P2P) framework to explore the role multi-sector collaboration plays in an integrated transport system in Wales and to collectively identify principles, practices, and priorities for enabling its success.

Summary of key findings

Overall, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government partners saw the roundtable as a valuable opportunity to engage with other partners in the transport sector. Similar events should continue consistently to facilitate "more listening and talking" and maintain momentum with stakeholders.

Many participants came inspired to make a difference. Stakeholders were interested in how to increase the diversity of voices from communities to make transport more inclusive and accessible to those they support and represent. There was a general recognition among attendees that the value of this dialogue was to identify opportunities to improve transport by connecting to and collaborating with individuals and communities with a "diversity of experiences". Some attendees focused on the importance of closing the delivery gap through discussion about 'how' a plurality of modes can come together to achieve integration for modal shift. Many recognised the potential impact of working together to address large scale policy issues relevant to transport such as climate change.

The purpose of multisector collaboration

There was consensus that multisector collaboration has a key role to play in the achievement of multi-modal, integrated transport for Wales. One participant said: "if you're doing multimodal, you have to be multisector; you need organic growth and activity between actors to make it work."

Developing multisector collaborations and/or partnerships was viewed as a desirable way for the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to work together with community, shared, active, and other transport actors to deliver on wider, strategic ambitions and realise an integrated transport network that meets the needs of Wales. There was consensus around two key areas of value:

- **Supporting the transport network to respond to need**: enabling transport to reach those who currently excluded and/or needs are not being met.
- **Supporting cultural and behavioural change:** collaborators are better placed to understand and surface the real needs and motivations of their communities.

Participants want transport in Wales to be connected, grounded, centred, and even rooted in community. But they want more than just words, many raised examples of consistent gaps between rhetoric and action. There were repeated calls for the Welsh Government and Transport Wales to act in ways that are co-productive, co-creative, and collaborative that build on what's already working well and seek to mobilise assets across Wales. Establishing multisector collaborations and partnerships can be a mechanism for this.

An emerging hypothesis was that collaboration will enable cost reductions and the realisation of efficiencies across the network. Further research is needed to test this hypothesis. There was a desire for the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to use multisector collaboration to increase the diversity of participation in difficult discussions and decisions about trade-offs and challenges affecting transport. This could be achieved through engaging wider sector partners earlier in relevant strategic programmes outlined in the **National Transport Delivery Plan (NTDP)** (2023).

The roundtable also surfaced sector wide challenges that will need more time to address. However, there was a confidence that challenges could be overcome together, in a truly multisectoral way. The day surfaced three clear focal areas for the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to take forward to better harness and enable multisector collaboration and potential partners:

- Coproduce a shared enabling vision to guide the sector toward a common purpose.
- Identify and pilot enabling practices that share accountability and participation in transport decisions.
- Invest in and develop the enabling architecture to bring together the vision and practices.

Findings are preliminary and need further testing and refinement with stakeholders.

Coproduce an enabling vision to guide the sector toward a common purpose.

The Welsh Government and TfW should work collaboratively with potential multisector partners to develop and articulate a shared vision for the sector. This includes formulating a clear purpose which decreases ambiguity around the 'what', 'why' and 'when' of multisector collaboration in Wales and increases sector alignment around guiding principles for multisector collaboration in Wales.

Attendees clearly articulated that this enabling vision should be trusted, shared, connected to clear objectives, support roles and responsibilities to be defined, and be collaborative in how it is developed and delivered. There was a sense that the vision needs to be realistic and informed by what good looks like now for Wales, adding further detail to what is currently set out in the NTDP.

The vision should lead to coordination so that multisector collaborators and wider stakeholders play together to deliver on common objectives linked to a common goal. Coproduction, in the context of this request, is about co-creating an actionable vision that can be co-delivered through multisector collaboration.

Key principles for multisector collaboration

Principles help to build strong foundations for guiding vision and action. Attendees were asked to draft and prioritise the principles they felt were most essential for the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to develop further, seven emerged:

1. Meaningful engagement, collaboration, and co-creation
2. Respecting local variability, avoiding a one-size-fits all approach
3. Effective partnerships
4. Clear communication
5. Adaptive structures
6. Voice and inclusivity in design, delivery, and decision-making
7. Accessibility all the way through the levels of the system

These draft principles are a starting point. Welsh Government and Transport for Wales should work toward adopting these principles following further engagement and refinement with key stakeholders. The table of principles with supporting evidence is available upon request.

Identify and pilot enabling practices that share accountability and participation in transport decisions

Attendees want the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to develop consistent, collaborative practices that share accountability and decision-making with partners and wider stakeholders. Across groups, attendees mentioned how they wanted to take part in reconciling differences, considering trade-offs, setting priorities, and ultimately, work together to anticipate and address issues.

Prior to the roundtable, attendees reviewed a range of Wales-specific and international case studies on multisector collaboration in transport. Cases were compiled to stimulate discussion on enabling factors, gaps, and opportunities for transferring practice. WCPP has published a summary of those case studies.

In addition to the seven themes outlined below, participant reflections centred on the need to continue developing ways to engage communities in the process of designing and implementing transport policies. Groups also discussed how control could be decentralised in some areas to ensure that communities can take ownership of initiatives and deliver them based on their local knowledge. Identified themes are:

- **Rooting services and governance in the community:** harnessing local relationships and members of the community that are willing to give their time and energy was key to delivery.
- **Seeking to understand and respond to the nuances of place**: Establishing bespoke solutions to respond to each community's needs, developed with communities.
- **Taking asset-based approaches**: Identifying and utilising the existing resources, strengths, and networks within a community, building on what works in Wales.
- **Establishing ways to share and devolve power:** Ensuring an appropriate level of control and decentralisation within the transportation system are key enablers for fostering effective relationships with communities.
- **Amplifying the voice of underrepresented groups:** Diversity of voices and delivery agents was something that participants felt needed to be part of the new system.
- **Increasing certainty of investment and consistency of funding**: Short-term funding models were seen as inadequate for achieving long-lasting impact and addressing community needs effectively.
- **Understanding trade-offs:** developing approaches to enable better decision-making across the transport system. For example, providing users with clearer service options and also involving stakeholders in deliberating and allocating resources for transport initiatives.

To act on the seven themes outlined above, groups suggested further research into practices such as: joint boards, clear MOUs, decision-making frameworks, joint strategies, and joint budgets and/or funding. Co-productive and deliberative democracy techniques, such as mini publics and participatory budgeting, were also suggested. Further research and engagement is needed to adequately inform policy development on enabling practices.

Invest in and develop the enabling architecture to bring together the vision and practices.

To achieve the vision and support the practices, attendees expressed that further collaboration was needed to build the right structure for organising and aligning multisector collaborators. This request was about joining the dots to move away from ad-hoc, sporadic engagements to consistent 'spaces' and mechanisms for collaboration and action. The day did not produce a final way of organising actors but took steps in that direction. There is still work to clarify the respective roles of the Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, Corporate Joint Committees, and Local Government across different sectors.

A clear request was to avoid hierarchical structures. One group described how actors should come together as a "networked ecosystem" focused on putting communities and transport users at the heart of decision-making. Accountability, transparency, partnership, and community voice were recurring topics. Questions additionally arose around how partnership working could enable both stability of funding and access to funding (for example with UK Government funds). This support was especially seen as important for enabling actors at the local level through multisector collaboration.

Priorities and recommendations

The day closed with a prioritisation of possible actions. Based on group discussion, we asked attendees to put forward the crucial next steps for the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to take forward to embed multisector collaboration in Welsh transport. We thematically grouped these priorities and then refined them with key findings and recurring themes. We have reviewed these priorities against ambitions set out in the **National Transport Delivery Plan** (NTDP) and aligned our recommended actions to these where relevant.

A final summary of priorities and associated recommendations is detailed in Table 1 below. Underpinning participant requests was a desire to harness the energy and enthusiasm of the group and keep the momentum going, but to temper the ambition of the vision to the reality of what can be achieved. Culture change will be key to moving away from more institutionalised ways of working toward partnership working.

Table 1: Seven priorities and recommendations

To bring the summary together, we have grouped priorities and recommendations by the requests previously outlined in this report. Corresponding symbols are:

👁 = linked to enabling vision request
⚒ = linked to enabling practices request
🖼 = linked to enabling architecture request

	Priority	Recommendation
👁	**Request**: Coproduce an enabling vision to guide the sector toward a common purpose.	
1	Co-create a clear, stable, longer-term vision for multisector collaboration in Welsh transport.	Continue working with partners and wider stakeholders to build a clear, actionable, and shared vision for multisector partners and collaborators. This should prioritise learning by doing and build upon the National Transport Delivery Plan (NTDP, section 2.1) and the five ways of working of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015).
2	Support the transport network to be more responsive to place based challenges and adaptive to the differing needs of communities.	Build upon place-based partnerships described in the (NTDP) to trial, support, and evaluate different adaptive approaches and/or strategies for navigating modal shift in ways that respond to local needs and connect with the national network. Document learnings to enable spread and scale in Wales and the wider UK.
3	Embed inclusivity, user needs, and accessibility across Welsh transport.	Identify and trial mechanisms for strengthening the voice of people with lived experience and accessibility insight at all levels of decision-making across transport in Wales.
⚒	**Request**: Identify and pilot enabling practices that share accountability and participation in transport decisions	
4	Establish meaningful partnerships and engagement mechanisms for multisector collaboration to simplify, align, and build on existing roles and responsibilities.	Commission action learning and review of collaborative governance and practices in order to develop clear, accountable and democratic processes of engagement with multisector partners and wider stakeholders (when appropriate) to inform transport decision making in Wales. Action should align with existing regional and governance structures (e.g. CJCs).
5	Ensure that sustainability is embedded across transport plans and partner delivery.	Explore different policy approaches for adequately supporting smaller businesses and transport operators to transition to more sustainable operations. For example, grants to support community and voluntary organisations to take up zero emission vehicles.
🖼	**Request**: Invest in and develop enabling architecture to bring together the vision and practices.	

6	Create a more enabling financial environment for multisector collaboration to thrive.	Explore financial practices and approaches to funding that enable ongoing multisector collaboration.
7	Evidence effectiveness and measure what matters.	Develop more appropriate metrics to track transport performance and improvements. This can be achieved by building communities of practice to shape and oversee the evaluations of interventions that can be scaled to other geographies (as appropriate).

Conclusion

Roundtable findings demonstrate how multisector collaboration has a key role to play in the realisation of an integrated transport system. Two key value propositions are: that it can support the national transport network to respond to need and better reach those who are currently excluded or underserved at the more local level; it can also support the cultural and behavioural change necessary for modal shift to happen since collaborators are often closer to the real needs and motivations of the people they serve and support and are best placed to advise on and co-deliver strategies.

Establishing multisector collaborations and/or partnerships was viewed as a mechanism for Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to work together with community, shared, active, and other transport actors to deliver on wider, strategic ambitions and better meet the plurality of needs that exist across Wales. Thus, there is a clear request for Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to ensure multisector collaboration is embedded into Welsh transport and continue to lead the way for collaborative, innovative practice in the UK for economic growth and enhanced social wellbeing across Wales. Meeting this request will require the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to take action in three focus areas:

- Co-producing an enabling vision to guide the sector towards a common purpose.
- Identifying and piloting enabling practices that share accountability and participation in transport decisions.
- Investing in and developing the enabling architecture to bring together the vision and practices.

Each of these focus areas is defined with priorities and recommended actions outlined in Table 1. Further detail on recommended actions is available upon request.

More work needs to be done to align the roundtable findings, priorities and recommendations with existing plans and strategies in Wales. The Welsh Government and Transport for Wales should continue working together to adapt the National Transport Delivery Plan (NTDP) to encompass learnings from the roundtable (such as working toward adopting the seven principles) to more clearly embed multisector collaboration in Welsh transport. Our more detailed recommendations (available upon request) highlight key actions relating to the National Transport Delivery Plan (NTDP) such as:

- Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government can build on the engagement and momentum from the roundtable to involve communities in decision making around regional transport plans, and delivery of other strategic initiatives outlined in section 4.5.4 of the NTDP.

- The strategies outlined in section 4.5 of the NDTP could be socialised more widely with community transport organisations, and those they serve, making it clear there are opportunities for collaboration beyond the third sector.

- By revising the wording of section 4.5 of the NTDP from "third sector" to cover wider community partners, other types of organisations may see themselves better reflected in current plans.

- The MOU between Transport for Wales and the Community Transport Association outlined in section 5.4.1 could be truly co-developed, and expanded to include other organisations, to maximise resource available to deliver against priorities (e.g. utilising expertise of cooperatively owned technology solutions from car clubs).

Overall, Transport for Wales and Welsh Government partners saw the roundtable as a valuable opportunity to engage with other partners in the transport sector and that similar events should be done on an ongoing basis to facilitate 'more listening and talking' to maintain momentum. It was acknowledged that the roundtable surfaced bigger challenges that will need more time to address. However, there was a confidence that gaps could be addressed together, in a multisectoral way.

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