

Practice-based case studies: Multisector collaboration and transport

Background

These case studies were compiled to facilitate discussion for a roundtable on multisector collaboration in the Welsh transport system in April 2024. The roundtable was convened by the Wales Centre for Public Policy in partnership with the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales. It was co-developed with project partners as a key step in facilitating strategic discussions on how communities, employees, and wider stakeholders can play a more meaningful role in transport planning and decision-making.

Groups reviewed and discussed longer versions of the case studies below. These are practice-based case studies to highlight promising practice, draw out enabling factors for success, and identify gaps and opportunities for transferring practice to Wales. Cases are divided into Wales-specific cases and international cases. The key themes that emerged from discussing these case studies are in our roundtable **Executive Summary**.

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Local practice case studies

Fflecsi Pembrokeshire services

Location: Pembrokeshire

What: Demand responsive transport services now operate in five zones across Pembrokeshire. The original service in Northwest Pembrokeshire is run by Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport, with other zones operated by Pembrokeshire County Council and Richards Brothers. Developed with Transport for Wales, the service benefits from Welsh Government grant funding, particularly in Northwest Pembrokeshire.

Purpose: The service aims to provide flexible bus services in rural areas previously without coverage and to offer more frequent travel opportunities on a pre-booked basis than previous fixed routes or dial-a-ride services.

Key outcomes and good practice: Pembrokeshire County Council collaborated with the Community Transport operator and Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO)'s Development Officer to develop the original service in Northwest Pembrokeshire. The community-led approach involved working with community groups to address transport needs and identifying barriers to service use. Outreach efforts explain the unique service to communities, offering extra support to new users. The service caters to a diverse range of passengers, including visitors, young people, working-age individuals, and older adults.

Key enabling factors: Timely response to queries and feedback, investment in educating users about the service, and openness to change are crucial. Leveraging local community and third sector resources to build knowledge and skills aids in service promotion. Individual community members and drivers play vital roles in championing and promoting the service, with drivers providing valuable feedback and serving as key ambassadors.

Transport Connectors (Pembrokeshire)

Location: Pembrokeshire

What: Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) has integrated a team of Transport Connectors within the Pembrokeshire Community Hub, which serves as a primary contact for community information and support, helping people access services and activities to maintain independent lives.



Purpose: Transport Connectors assist individuals in finding and accessing suitable transport options, providing personalised support, including information on public and community transport, facilitating lift sharing, journey planning, liaising with transport operators and employers, and offering travel training to build confidence for independent travel. They also work with groups to provide information and training to better support users and enhance staff and volunteer knowledge.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: The Transport Connectors are embedded within existing community support structures, ensuring that transport challenges are part of the overall support package for individuals. This integration allows community support practitioners direct access to transport information and advice, enhancing their knowledge of available options.

Key Enabling Factors: The initiative benefits from a strong local tradition of networking and partnership across the third sector and public sector. PACTO, a trusted partner, brings specialist knowledge and expertise to the Community Hub.

Dolen Teifi Community Transport: Collaborative Communities

Location: Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion

What: Recognising the lack of affordable and accessible community transport in West Wales, Dolen Teifi Community Transport partnered with the Community Transport Association's Connecting Communities in Wales team, Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO), and Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO) in 2018. They developed a funding application to support group travel for social opportunities.

Purpose: The project aimed to improve quality of life by reducing loneliness and promoting well-being through group travel. From 2019 to 2022, the goal was to deliver 10,000 passenger journeys, provide 500 volunteer driver hours, and offer 100 hours of development work to help other community transport operators in West Wales.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: Dolen Teifi established transport services in high-need areas like Llandysul and Llanybydder, supporting diverse groups including young children, parents, older people, and disabled individuals. Key lessons include the importance of funding and decision-making by a knowledgeable charitable organisation to facilitate partnerships in the transport sector.

Key Enabling Factors: The Community Transport Association's Connecting Communities project, funded by the Welsh Government Rural Communities Development Program 2014-2020, brought together transport providers, supported new partnerships, delivered training, and secured funding for the community transport sector.



Machynlleth Car Club

Location: Machynlleth

What: The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Machynlleth, established in the 1970s, became a hub for early sustainability pioneers in mid-Wales. By the 1990s, a community of families committed to low-impact living had formed, and the Machynlleth car club was started by a group of friends, initiated by the donation of a vehicle from one of the founding members.

Purpose: For nearly 30 years, the club thrived locally on a volunteer-run basis. Eventually, a basic online booking system was developed by a member, and one member was paid to clean the car, manage the insurance policy, and handle billing. The group was never formally constituted, with members insured via the insurance policy of two founders, who were also the bank account holders.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: In 2020, funding allowed the club to join forces with another Mid-Wales car club in Llanidloes and replace the old diesel vehicle with a newer electric model, which was well-received by the members. The club's insurance and booking arrangements changed as members joined the formally constituted Llani Car Club CIC. Membership grew significantly, and there are now two electric vehicles available, parked next to a dedicated charge point at Dulas, a local renewable energy company with historic links to CAT.

Key Enabling Factors: The success and growth of the Machynlleth club are largely due to its organic emergence from the community it serves, unlike other car clubs that struggle to build momentum despite having deployed cars and paid local coordinators. Involving key active community members, often town councillors, has been crucial. As part of a wider network of EV car clubs coordinated by TripTo and Trydani, the club is beginning to use cooperatively owned technology solutions for booking and unlocking cars via a smartphone app. They are exploring a different insurance model and hope to secure an insurance partner to roll out a widespread solution across their network.

Sherpa'r Wyddfa

Location: Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park

What: Sherpa'r Wyddfa supports Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park by linking walking paths, car parks, villages, and attractions. TrawsCymru, fflecsi, rail, and active travel services also support this initiative, reducing vehicle numbers in the area.



Purpose: To address severe parking and congestion issues due to high visitor numbers, the Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA), Cyngor Gwynedd, Conwy Council, and Transport for Wales (TfW) reviewed the situation and formed a strategic group. Their objectives for Sherpa'r Wyddfa include reducing daily car use, supporting low-carbon transport, protecting the environment, encouraging behaviour change, promoting active travel, addressing seasonal congestion, and improving user experience.

Key Outcomes: The revamped Sherpa'r Wyddfa service has achieved significant improvements:

- Streamlined operators from three to one for consistency.
- Reduced routes from 15 to 6 comprehensive options.
- Rebranded service with the Welsh name Yr Wyddfa, visible across all materials.
- Multi-modal travel options supported by TfW, including TrawsCymru services, fflecsi Conwy, the North Wales rail network, and active travel routes.
- Enhanced traveller experience with online features, affordable fares, contactless payments, and fare-capping technology.

Key outcomes and good practice: The new service has increased patronage and revenue, reduced car volume, and supported behavioural shifts. Post-relaunch, patronage rose by 64% in April 2023 compared to April 2019. Total passengers for 2022/23 were up by 38% from the previous year, and early 2023/24 figures show a 43% increase over the same period in 2022.

TrawsCymru T1 Service

Location: Route between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth

What: TrawsCymru is a series of long-distance bus services in Wales, funded by the Welsh Government. The T1 route between Carmarthen and Aberystwyth, managed by Transport for Wales (TfW), leads the decarbonization efforts for the TrawsCymru fleet.

Purpose: The T1 route aims to deliver change through innovation and collaboration with vehicle manufacturers, local authorities, and operators, moving towards a decarbonized and integrated transport network.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: TfW ensures consistent service delivery across the network, operating to key performance standards. Reduced fares make the service more affordable, encouraging modal shift for short journeys. The T1 route achieved one of the UK's longest electric bus routes, covering 104 miles round trip, with each vehicle saving 3kg of CO₂ per round trip. Timetable information is readily available onboard, at train stations, and in key public buildings. The high-quality, customer-focused service is supported by bespoke training. The first year of operation saw a 65% increase in patronage. Recently, a pilot project with Hywel Dda Health Board was introduced,



providing free transport for NHS staff to address parking issues at Glangwili and Bronglais Hospitals. Additionally, an integrated rail/bus ticket from Cardiff to Aberystwyth has been introduced.

Key enablers: Community engagement played a crucial role, with public input informing route planning and integration with other transport services. TfW introduced new standards with a fully electric fleet, improved customer service, integrated ticketing, and a new website and app. The electric buses are designed for accessibility and comfort, featuring bi-lingual audio-visual announcements, live departure information, free Wi-Fi, wireless charging, USB ports, coat hooks, tables, and reading lights. Pre-launch community events showcased the new service, generating positive feedback. Technological advancements like mobile tickets, live vehicle tracking, and carbon savings calculations via the app have attracted new passengers.

International practice case studies

Ring a Link, Ireland

Location: Kilkenny, Ireland

What: Ring a Link, a non-profit, voluntary organisation, was established in 2001 to combat social exclusion by providing local transport services. It operates 23 minibuses and contracts 10 more daily, serving Kilkenny, Carlow, and Wicklow. Initially supported by the local LEADER Company, it now functions as a Transport Coordination Unit, offering both demand-responsive and fixed route services.

Purpose: Ring a Link aims to combat social exclusion by ensuring at least weekly travel opportunities for rural residents, improving access between villages and urban centres, optimizing resources through efficient route and ride-matching, and integrating rural transport services with existing transport provisions.

Key Enabling Factors: Supported by the Irish National Transport Authority, Ring a Link manages bookings and operates two-thirds of its services, contracting the rest to private operators. The organisation is structured with a Board of Directors, a Management Sub-Committee, and Transport Working Groups, ensuring community representation and inter-county cooperation. With five full-time staff handling multiple roles, the organisation ensures efficient operations and customer support. Strong governance, grounded in the community, with a representative board structure and Transport Working Groups, ensures a good understanding of local needs.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: Ring a Link has successfully developed community and social mobility services with an efficient booking and reservation system. It has



expanded its coverage and evolved into a comprehensive transport coordination unit. Effective collaboration between sectors, supported by financial aid from the Irish National Authority and non-financial support from Kilkenny County Council, has been a key factor in its success.

Barriers and Considerations: There is no formal structure or mandate for rural mobility at the local level in Ireland, requiring Ring a Link to operate by persuasion rather than authority. Funding limitations mean services are based on available funds rather than community needs.

Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program, Canada

Location: Ontario, Canada

What: In 2014, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (OMT) launched a grant program to help municipalities partner with community organisations to optimise transportation services. Twenty-two municipalities received grants, mainly to provide new or enhanced services, and some centralised information and trip availability.

Purpose: The program aimed to test a community transportation model to meet travel demands in small and rural Ontario communities and to create coordinated networks that pooled resources to support these areas better.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: Collaboration between the Federal Government, Ontario municipalities, and rural organisations improved rural travel options. An evaluation showed 100% of communities saw improved mobility, 78% gained new services, and 77% increased service capacity and connections to existing transport.

Key Enabling Factors: Municipalities received funding to run pilots with community transport groups, increasing capacity through shared resources. A strong collaboration framework was crucial in enhancing rural mobility.

Barriers and Considerations: The program's heavy reliance on community volunteers could be a challenge for scaling or adopting the initiative elsewhere.

Agora Verkehrswende

Location: Agora, Germany

What: Agora Verkehrswende, an initiative of the Mercator Foundation and the European Climate Foundation, focuses on achieving a climate-neutral transport system aligned with global climate goals like the 2015 Paris Agreement. In Germany, this is supported by the



amended Climate Change Act of June 2021, aiming for greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045.

Purpose: Agora aims to cut Germany's transport sector emissions by nearly half by 2030 and achieve zero emissions by 2045.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: Agora Verkehrswende's team includes diverse experts like engineers, economists, urban planners, and political scientists. It collaborates with research institutes, the German Advisory Council on the Environment, German Association of Towns and Municipalities, German Institute of Urban Affairs, and Climate Analytics. Through advisory bodies like the Agora Verkehrswende Council and Cities Network, it fosters open discussion and collaborative solutions across various sectors.

Participative Budgeting: Locals Decide

Location: Tartu, Estonia

What: Tartu, with a population of 95,000, exemplifies sustainable transport practices, using participative budgeting for mobility planning. Estonia, comparable to Wales in population, offers best practices in this area.

Purpose: Since 2013, Tartu's policy annually allocates 1% of the city budget for resident-suggested projects to address practical problems.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: Tartu serves as a model for sustainable mobility and energy efficiency. Participatory budgeting ensures citizen input in mobility planning, fostering community involvement and acceptance. The city offers cost-effective public transportation, including a comprehensive bike-sharing scheme.

Key Enabling Factors: Involving residents in decision-making ensures that urban planning changes are well-received and that expanded mobility options are utilised by locals.

LundaMaTs

Location: Lund, Sweden

What: The city of Lund has a well-developed transport plan titled LundaMaTs which it has further developed to consider wider environmental, economic, and social sustainability (LundaMaTs II).



Purpose: The long-term ambition of this plan is to encourage the use of active transport (walking, cycling and public transport), while also reducing the use of private vehicles.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: Measures include re-zoning, public-private partnerships, education campaigns, outdoor space redesign, and pro-cycling initiatives. The city offers an online service for comparing transport modes by cost, time, environmental impact, and health benefits, creating a co-produced map. Improvements to public transit include a coordinated bus system with 400 stops over 11 lines and a unified ticketing system with trains from Denmark.

Key Enabling Factors: Supported by adequate funding and a motivated, educated population, the LundaMaTs program implemented policies over a decade, allowing gradual adjustment, cost distribution, and long-term behaviour change.

Verkehrsverbund Rhine-Ruhr (VRR)

Location: Rhine-Ruhr, Germany

What: The Rhine-Ruhr Public Transport Association (VRR) is one of Europe's largest transport associations, managing public transport across the Rhine, Ruhr, and Wupper regions, including large rural areas.

Purpose: Since 1980, VRR has partnered with local entities to ensure the mobility of 7.8 million citizens, providing cost-effective public transport services tailored to their needs.

Key Outcomes & Good Practice: VRR organises local transport in 16 cities and seven districts, promoting investment plans to enhance regional public transport.

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