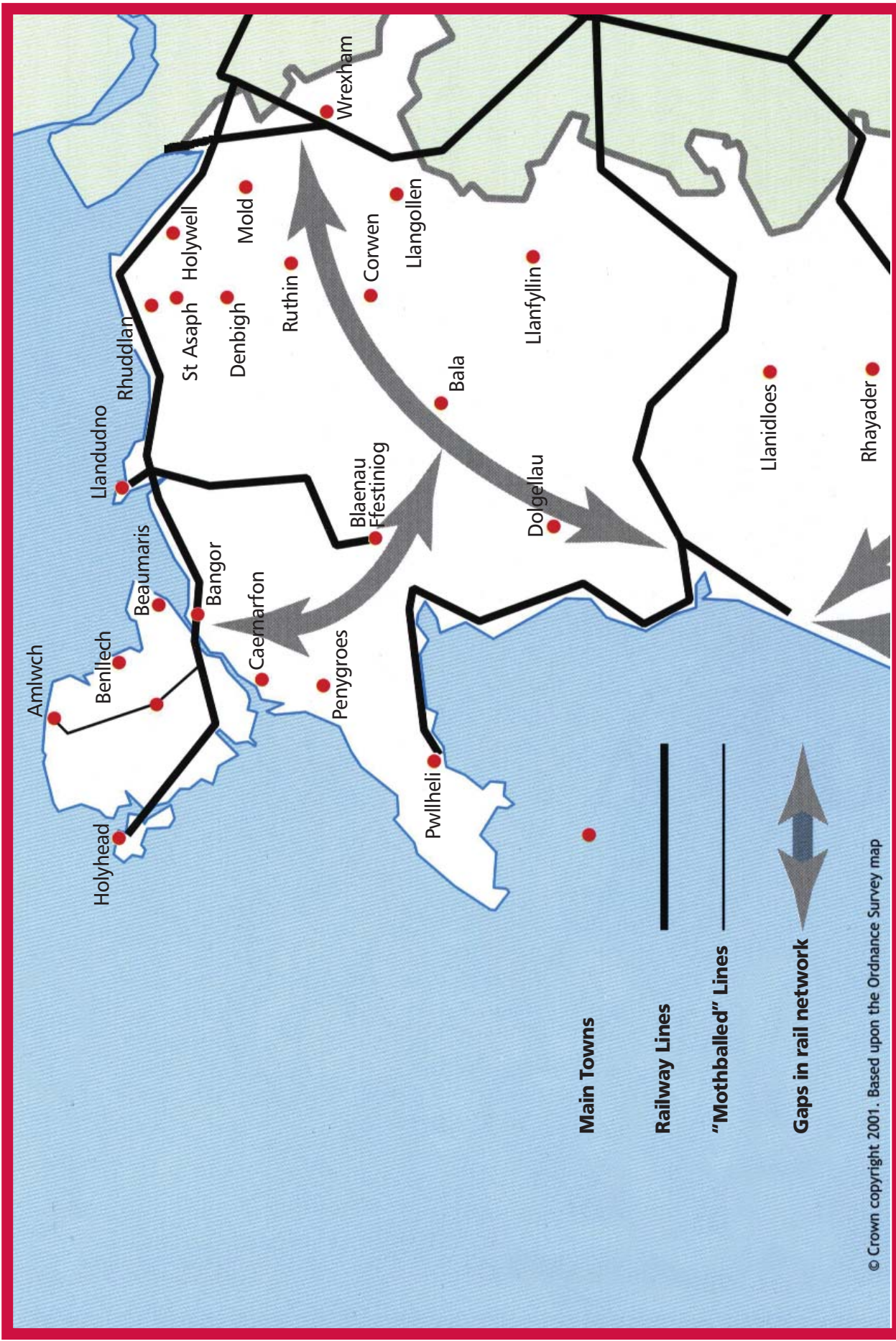




# Taith Regional Rail Strategy

Draft





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## **THE TAIH JOINT TRANSPORT BOARD**

### **REGIONAL RAIL STRATEGY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Taith is a legally constituted joint transport board comprising the local authorities of Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. Its aim is to deliver better coordinated and integrated transport of high quality for people and businesses in the region.

Taith works in partnership with a range of stakeholders including bus and rail operators, users representatives, North Wales Economic Forum and neighbouring authorities and has a close relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government.

It is recognised by Taith that the rail network has a vital role to play in improving access within the region and to and from the area. The future sustainable economic development of the region depends on an appropriate level of rail services. Train services also have a role to play in reducing social exclusion and improving access to employment, service and leisure opportunities.

The transfer of powers and responsibilities for the railways to Welsh Assembly Government and the creation of a Wales rail franchise has resulted in an environment in which a rail strategy is required to focus on the future needs of the region for the movement of passengers and freight.

This strategy builds on work already carried out by Taith and contained in the Regional Public Transport Strategy. It is intended to be an action plan to improve infrastructure and services that is realistic and achievable over the next 5 years.



## 1. Passenger Services

This section sets out the level of service that is required on services in North Wales.

### a. Long Distance Services

#### i. North Wales to London

Peak Time: Every hour from Holyhead from 0530 to 0830. Every hour from London from 1530 to 1830.

Off Peak: Every two hours.

#### *Key Elements:*

- An arrival in London from Holyhead by 0945.
- Hourly departures from London to Holyhead between 1530 and 1830.
- Arrival from London in Chester by 0900 and Bangor by 1030.
- Fastest journey time between London and Bangor of less than 3 hours 15 minutes.
- "Clock face" timetable to maximise connectional opportunities.

#### ii. North Wales to Cardiff

Two-hourly frequency via Wrexham and Shrewsbury. In addition one fast service operating in each direction with limited stops with a journey time of less than 4 hours 10 minutes.

#### *Key Elements:*

- An arrival in Cardiff from Bangor between 0930 and 1030 with a journey time of less than 4 hours.
- A departure from Cardiff between 1600 and 1630 with a journey time to Bangor of less than 4 hours.
- An arrival in North Wales from Cardiff between 0930 and 1030.
- Average journey time from Holyhead to Cardiff of 4 hours 35 minutes.
- Business/First Class on key trains with tables, sockets for lap-tops and internet access at reasonably enhanced fares.

### b. Inter-urban Services

#### i. North Wales to Manchester

- Hourly service throughout the day from Llandudno to Manchester.
- Additional services at peak time between Bangor and Manchester.
- Through trains between Manchester and Holyhead to connect with key ferry departures.
- Increased capacity by operation of all services with 3-car trains.



## ii. North Wales to Crewe

- Service co-ordinated with Holyhead to London trains to give an hourly service between Holyhead and Crewe.
- Good connections at Crewe with services to and from London, Birmingham and Cardiff.

## iii. North Wales to Birmingham

- In addition to connections via Crewe, at least 2 through services in each direction between Holyhead and Birmingham (as part of Chester – Birmingham service every 2 hours) co-ordinated with Holyhead to Cardiff service to give hourly frequency between Chester, Wrexham and Shrewsbury.

## iv. Bangor to Chester

- At least 2 trains an hour throughout the day.

## v. Sunday Services

- Services on Sundays and Public Holidays should be at least 50% of weekday frequency and provide sufficient capacity to avoid overcrowding.

## vi. North Wales to Liverpool

- Hourly through service from North Wales to Liverpool serving Liverpool South Parkway via Halton Curve.



### c. Local Services:

#### i. Conwy Valley

- Clock face timetable co-ordinated with parallel bus service to give hourly frequency between main points and Llandudno.
- Connections at Betws-y-Coed with Snowdon Sherpa.
- Free concessionary travel scheme extended to rail journeys.
- First arrival in Llandudno by 0850.
- Connections at Llandudno Junction with Virgin Trains to London.
- Connections at Blaenau Ffestiniog with Ffestiniog Railway and buses to Dolgellau and Portmadog.

#### i.i. Borderlands Line

- Half hourly daytime through service from Wrexham to Liverpool.
- Hourly evening and Sunday service.
- Improved interchange at Shotton with services on North Wales Coast Line.
- Free concessionary travel scheme extended to rail journeys within Wales.

#### i.i.i. Local Stations

- Minimum hourly service for all stations between Holyhead and Chester.

Project	Detail	Cost	Time Scale	Comments
North Wales - London	Hourly Peak Service	£0.0	2009	To be delivered as part of West Coast franchise.
	2-hourly frequency off-peak service	£0.0	2009	To be delivered as part of West Coast franchise.
	Integration with Arriva Trains Wales services	£0.0	2009	Needed to ensure good connections.
North Wales – South Wales	Revised timetable		2006/7	Current timetable does not give optimum journey times.
	Additional fast journeys		2006/7	
	Provision of Business Class		2007	Initially on fast trains.



Project	Detail	Cost	Time Scale	Comments
<b>Inter-Urban</b>	3-car trains on all services		2010	
	Additional hourly Bangor – Chester trains	£3.6m pa*	2008	Extension of existing Chester – Crewe journeys.
	Extra Holyhead – Birmingham services.	£2.9m pa	2010	Extension of existing Chester – Birmingham trains.
	North Wales – Liverpool service		2012	Dependent on use of Halton Curve and funding from English partners.
<b>Conwy Valley</b>	Clock Face timetable	£400,000 pa	2010	
	Increased capacity	£300,000 pa	2006	Price is for additional class 153 unit
	Extension of free concessionary travel	£57,000 pa	2006	
<b>Borderlands Line</b>	<i>See major infrastructure section.</i>			
	Extension of free concessionary travel	£27,000 pa	2006	Limited to section of the line in Wales
	Increased capacity	£700,000 pa	2006	Price is for 2 x class 150 units

\* price is estimated by Taith based on information provided by Arriva Trains Wales (other prices are actual figures provided by Arriva Trains Wales).

## 2. Freight Services and Facilities.

- a. To review the North Wales Rail Freight Strategy produced in 2002 and update the document to take account of changes and developments in conjunction with the Wales Freight Strategy. This review would consider the following proposals:



- i. The creation of a rail freight terminal using facilities available at Corus at Shotton.
- ii. The case for the Shotton Chord.
- iii. The need for increased capacity for freight between Chester and Wrexham.
- iv. Rail freight facilities for Airbus at Broughton.
- v. Developments at Port of Mostyn.
- vi. Improved facilities at Castle Cement at Padeswood.
- vii. Potential for rail freight at Port of Holyhead.
- viii. The creation of a freight terminal at Blaenau Ffestiniog and the upgrade of the Conwy Valley line to carry heavy freight trains.

### 3. Station Standards.

- a. It is important that railway stations in North Wales create a good impression of the railway. A range of facilities should be provided appropriate to the level of usage of the station. Stations in the region have been divided into the following categories:
  - i. Category 1: "Secure Car-park" status car park for at least 50 cars with reserved parking for rail users; booking office staffed for > 12 hours equipped to give information on train and bus times; heated waiting rooms; bus/rail interchange comprising adjacent facilities, real time passenger information (rtpi), cooperation between station staff and bus drivers, covered waiting area for bus users, cctv, bus and rail timetable information; disabled access to all platforms; lockable cycle lockers; train frequency at least hourly.
  - ii. Category 2: "Secure Car-park" status car-park for at least 25 cars; booking office staffed for > 6 hours equipped to give information on train and bus times; covered waiting accommodation; rtpi and cctv on platforms; disabled access to all platforms; bus/rail interchange facilities within 200 yards of station with rtpi and shelters; lockable cycle lockers; train frequency at least every 2 hours.
  - iii. Category 3: "secure car-park" status car-park for at least 10 cars; unstaffed; rtpi on all platforms; cctv; covered waiting accommodation; rail and bus timetable information and directions to bus stops and taxi information; cycle stands; train frequency at least every 2 hours.
  - iii. Category 4: car park for at least 5 cars; unstaffed; rtpi via phone line; cctv; covered waiting accommodation; rail and bus timetable information, directions to bus stops and taxi information; cycle stands.





Station	Category	Achieved	Target Date
Holyhead	1		2010
Valley	4		2008
Rhosneigr	4		2008
Ty Croes	4		2009
Bodorgan	4		2009
Llanfairpwll	3		2008
Bangor	1		2007
Llanfairfechan	4		2009
Penmaenmawr	4		2009
Conwy	4		2009
Llandudno Junc.	1		2008
Deganwy	4		2009
Llandudno	2		2008
Glan Conwy	4		2008
Tal-y-Cafn	4		2008
Dolgarrog	4		2009
North Llanrwst	4		2010
Llanrwst	4		2010
Betws-y-Coed	3		2010
Pont-y-Pant	4		2010
Dolwyddelan	4		2010
Roman Bridge	4		2010
Blaenau Ffest.	3		2010
Colwyn Bay	1		2011
Abergele & Pen.	3		2012
Rhyl	1		2012
Prestatyn	2		2007
Flint	1		2007
Shotton	2		2008
Hawarden Br.	4		2010
Hawarden	3		2010
Buckley	3		2011
Penyffordd	3		2011
Hope	4		2011
Caergwrle	4		2011
Cefn-y-Bedd	3		2011
Gwersyllt	3		2008
Wrexham General	1		2008
Wrexham Central	3		2008
Ruabon	3		2008
Chirk	3		2008
Pwllheli	2		2012
Abererch	4		2012
Criccieth	3		2012
Porthmadog	3		2012

**b. New Stations:** Taith believes that a case can be made for a limited number of new stations.

- i. The Borderlands Development Study together with the Northern Gateway Master Plan show a need for a new station at Deeside Industrial Park as part of the electrification enhancement. This would greatly improve access to employment and link in with the Deeside Shuttle.



- ii. The current study being undertaken into the future of the Chester - Shrewsbury line is investigating the case for new stations. Any recommendations with an economic case will be added to this Strategy.

#### 4. Capacity and Line Speed Enhancements.

There are a number of locations within the region where the development of services is restrained because of the need for infrastructure improvements to deliver increased capacity or journey time improvements.

- a. Improvements to signalling east of Rhyl Station.
  - i. The current arrangement means that every train approaching Rhyl from the east has to slow to walking pace before entering the station with a journey time penalty of 2 minutes.
- b. Improvements to signalling on Anglesey.
  - i. The long block section on Anglesey has a significant capacity constraint on the operation of trains across the Island. The insertion of an additional signalling section would have a significant impact on reliability and capacity.
- c. Single Track Section of line Saltney Junction to Wrexham.
  - i. The single line between Chester and Wrexham reduces capacity for passenger and freight traffic and has an impact on service reliability. A Study is currently underway to identify value for money solutions to this problem and Taith would wish to follow up the recommendations and seek funding for their implementation.
- d. The main line from Chester to Holyhead has a maximum speed of 90 mph with a number of sections with a lower maximum. Many of the trains operating on the line are capable of speeds up to 125 mph and as a priority it is intended to meet with Network Rail and produce a list of cost effective proposals to improve journey times on this section of line.

#### 5. Major Infrastructure Projects.

- a. Wrexham – Bidston Line Electrification. The line has a key role to play in the continuing development of Wrexham, the regeneration of Deeside and strengthening links with Wirral and Merseyside. A recent report has highlighted the benefits that would be obtained by electrifying the line to enable through services to Liverpool City Centre, a new station to serve Deeside Industrial Park and a more frequent service. Funding would be shared between Merseytravel, Cheshire County Council and Taith and cost estimates have been produced. The implementation of this project is a key element of Taith’s Rail Strategy.
- b. Conwy Valley Line Rail Freight Enhancement. There are extensive reserves of slate waste at Blaenau Ffestiniog which could be removed for re-use by rail if the line was upgraded and a terminal constructed. Feasibility studies are being finalised and the proposal is supported by Taith.



PROJECT	COST	TIME SCALE	PRIORITY	COMMENTS
Station Improvements	£30m	2006 - 2011	High	
Rail Freight Review		2006	Medium	Part of Wales Freight Strategy.
Rhyl signalling upgrade		2006/7	High	Potential saving of 2 minutes on all westbound trains.
Anglesey signalling upgrade		2007	High	Increases line capacity.
Wrexham – Saltney Junction capacity improvement.		2008/9	High	Detail of scheme dependent on outcome of current study.
Electrification of Borderlands Line	£60m	2008 -2010	High	Dependent on joint funding with English partners.
Conwy Valley Freight Enhancement		2007/8	High	
North Wales Coast Journey Time Improvements		2008 -2010	High	Detail will depend on discussions with Network Rail.
New Stations	£8m			Based on 4 new locations

## 6. Integration with Bus Services.

- a. Tocyn Taith is a multi-modal, multi-operator zonal ticket providing transport across the region. The Taith Consortium will administer and develop the scheme with the ultimate aim of moving to a smart-card based system inter- operable with other ticket schemes elsewhere in Britain.
- b. Taith will produce a strategic regional rail/bus timetable available in traditional paper form and on the internet, providing information on all rail services in North Wales, strategic bus links and interchange arrangements.
- c. The key rail/bus interchanges will be identified and interchange facilities will be designed with covered waiting areas, real time information for train and bus and telephone.
- d. In partnership with operators, timetables will be optimised to maximise interchange opportunities and Taith will facilitate agreement with operators and Traffic Commissioner to guarantee connections at key times e.g. early mornings, evenings and Sundays.
- e. A code of conduct will be produced with train and bus operators to facilitate cooperation between staff in ensuring key connections are made.
- f. On DRT services, Taith will identify key connections and create links between control rooms to ensure connections are made.
- g. Joint real time passenger information systems will be developed providing bus and rail information on single screens at main interchanges. Information to also be available by text messaging.

