



Subject: Cardi Bach Petition Additional Comments

Since the petition was submitted a community group consisting of local residents and business owners have been working to develop proposals for a viable alternative service.

The group has had a meeting with representatives of Ceredigion Council and our AM, Elin Jones. We are encouraged by the support we have received from the respective politicians whilst appreciating the difficult financial environment existing at the moment.

It is because of these financial constraints that the Community Group's approach has been to examine critically the delivery of a Cardi Bach type service developing proposals to operate a community service with reduced costs and an increase in income. Whilst at an early stage these proposals have been discussed with representatives of the company who ran the Cardi Bach, the Green Dragon Bus Service, who are supportive of the Group's aims.

Our proposals need further development but there is confidence that a cost effective community transport scheme operating under a Section 22 Permit could be developed given appropriate support from the Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council.

The communications we have received to date does however give us some concern. We are not clear if the Welsh Government is waiting for the Council or vice versa and therefore we are uncertain with whom to develop our proposals.

The Group welcomes the recent funding made available to support sustainable tourism along the Cambrian Coast but would like to bring to the Committee's attention that many of the areas served by the previous Cardi Bach service will

not benefit from this investment. Businesses in remote areas such as Cwmttydu will lose out as this was a key location for users of the service.

The Cardi Bach also served the local community (45% usage by residents). Loss of the Cardi Bach has severed the residents' link to these services. Examples of the impacts within the area already includes loss of transport to work, loss of access to social services and loss of transport to doctors.

23% of the population of Ceredigion is 65+. There is a projected 47% increase in the local 65+ age group by 2026 and a 67% increase in the 85+ age group (Draft Health, Social and Well Being Strategy for Ceredigion 2011-2014). It is inevitable that with such changing demographics there will be an increasing demand for public transport as increasing numbers of elderly will mean increasing numbers unable to drive.

An Age UK study showed that a viable public transport service was vital in enabling older people to remain independent and lead fulfilling lives, preventing isolation and loneliness.

Without public transport older people are often forced to make a choice between paying for taxis and staying at home curtailing their cultural, social and exercise activities. Improving the health of the elderly will reduce the burden of escalating social services costs, reduce the demand on scarce NHS services and the cost of delivering those services.

A sustainable transport policy needs to consider the impact of future significant social changes. It needs to ensure that everyone is able to access jobs and services via reliable public transport.

We ask for the support of the Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council, working in partnership with the local community, to achieve this.

Janet Richardson

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