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Date: 23 January 2024

Karl Gilmore – Rail Infrastructure Director

Gavin Hawkins – Bus Interchange Operations Manager

Ruth Jones - Communications Business Partner



By email

Annwyl / Dear

CARDIFF BUS INTERCHANGE

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 11th January 2024, I would like to thank you and officers for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the **Cardiff Bus Interchange**. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations, and requests which are listed at the end of the letter.

General

The committee welcomed the offer of a site visit prior to the formal opening of the Bus Interchange which you suggested would be opening in May 2024. Although it was noted that there would be a ‘soft opening’ for approximately two weeks. Members asked about potential delays in the opening, and you stated that while there were supply chains overseas for some materials that you did not envisage any delays.

It was noted that you are working with four bus operators to deliver service from the bus interchange, namely, Cardiff Bus, Newport Bus, Stagecoach and Adventure Travel and that the interchange would give priority to services that had travelled for 50 minutes – one hour rather than local services. You also confirmed that National Express and other coach services would not be operating from the bus interchange and a separate **Coach Strategy** was being developed with partners. This news was received with disappointment from members as they queried how the interchange could operate effectively as a ‘transport hub’ when intercity coaches were excluded.

Bus Interchange

You reiterated the bus interchange building was constructed by Welsh government and therefore TfW had no input in relation to the potential to include 'green walls', however members asked about the **EPC rating** of the building, which you indicated you would be able to provide to members following the meeting.

The provision of charging points for electric buses was raised by the committee and you stated that while charging points were not currently available, however, the necessary infrastructure was there to enable, to be introduced at a later date.

It was noted that water refill points would be available on the concourse, along with toilets, accessible and Changing Places facilities.

You stated that to support movement in and around the interchange by the public there would be tactile maps and paving to support accessibility.

You also informed the committee that the procurement of retailers to operate from the units at the interchange was ongoing and members asked if preference would be given to local SME's, you clarified that these decisions sit with the Commercial Team at TfW.

It was noted that the residential units at the building were complete and being let that some businesses were now and operating from their new offices.

Constraints for the use of the bus interchange by coaches were noted as they are getting longer and the 'drive-in, reverse-out' nature of the facility makes this difficult to accommodate. All the modelling undertaken in relation to this type of operation and the capacity of the interchange had shown a good flow of vehicles.

Capacity

Members noted that the 14 bays at the interchange would allow for approximately 60 departures an hour and asked if there is the flexibility to accommodate any future growth in service. The 60 departures an hour would be worked towards through discussions with bus operators and the council. You responded that there was a degree of operation resilience in the service,

however you were limited by the physical building, which was constructed by the Welsh Government.

You confirmed that some services would still operate from the on-street bus stops in Wood Street and Westgate Street.

Ambassadors

The committee were informed that ambassadors are central to the operating model of the interchange and key to communication with the public.

Therefore, six ambassadors and four supervisors were to be appointed to support the operation of the bus interchange as they would be on hand to provide up to date information to direct passengers to their onward destinations. The ambassadors will be available at the interchange during its operating hours i.e. 15 minutes before the departure of the first bus until the last bus leaves.

The ambassadors will also be available during events when road closures around the city centre prevent the bus interchange from operating, to assist the public.

The ambassadors will be easy to identify in their TfW uniforms and Hi-Vis jackets.

The committee would also welcome an update in relation to ongoing work to support the **Metro** developments in Cardiff, and believe that Kelsey, prior to going on maternity leave was proposing an update in March, April or May, depending on officer availability.

To confirm a response to the letter which responds to the following points is requested:

- Further information on the development of the Coach Strategy.
- Clarification on the EPC rating of the interchange.
- Further information regarding an update in relation to the Cardiff Metro

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely / Yn gywir

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Owen Jones', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Owen Jones

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

cc: *Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee*