

**P-05-944 Reverse the cuts to commuter train services in North East Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Chair, 27.10.20**

**P-05-944 Pwyllgor Deisebau 3.11.20 / Petitions Committee 3.11.20**

Dear Chair,

We thank the committee for the opportunity to respond to the T4W letter regarding our petition which is currently being considered by the petitions committee. We also thank T4W for taking the time to respond at such a difficult time, and we very much appreciate the effort made by their staff in keeping the train network running here in Wales at this time.

We appreciate the comments in para. 4 of their letter with regard to 17.16 service from Bangor to North East Wales, but would like to point out that this is only the latest of the cuts to rush hour services along the North Wales Coastline, as outlined in our previous communication.

With regard to the comments in para. 5 regarding the train service requirement (TSR), it is clear that the North Wales Coast service is prioritising direct Holyhead – Cardiff rail services over local commuter needs on the instruction of the Assembly Government. In consequence, the Assembly Government policy is having a detrimental effect in forcing commuters from the trains onto the roads, and Welsh domicile students to travel to English Universities instead of Welsh Universities. As such the Welsh Government are in contradiction of their own policy, eg. “*Prosperity for all: A Low Carbon Wales*”. Moreover, this also contradicts the recent “*Manifesto for the future*” released by the Future Generations Commissioner Sophie Howe. Given this position we would request that the minister responsible for transport is answerable for the cuts to commuter services and so should respond.

We note from paras 5–7 that: “*Since taking over the Wales and Borders rail service, TfW have significantly increased the number of cheaper Advance tickets available to purchase, including on all journeys over 50 miles except those wholly within the South Wales Metro area.*” However, most commuter journeys are not over 50 miles, and we are certainly not aware of any reduction in cost in North Wales, especially not to the extent that they are comparable to those charged per mile in South Wales!

With regard to comments re First Class passengers: “*I wish to assure you that first class rail users are not prioritised. The loco hauled stock introduces many benefits to all passengers including greater comfort, more capacity/seating and the option for hot/cold food and beverages. Passengers can take advantage of this regardless of which ticket they have. We are also introducing Mark 4 train carriages this year for services between Cardiff <> North Wales which will operate 3x Holyhead to Cardiff*

*services each way daily.*” These do not reassure us as following complaints to T4W about the cut to the 17:18 service from Bangor we were told that these loco hauled services are apparently not able to stop at ‘short platforms’ like Flint, Rhyl, and Colwyn Bay!

Overall, we find the response to our petition at best misses the point, and at worst reinforces our impression that the Welsh Government is prioritising fast north–south rail services over the needs of local commuters.