

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 5TH DECEMBER, 2024

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 12TH NOVEMBER, 2024

“ 6 MONTH UPDATE REPORT ON LOCAL BUS SERVICES IN THE VALE OF
GLAMORGAN (DEH) –

Following a report presented to this Committee on 16th April, 2024, it was requested that a further update report on bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan be presented in six months' time.

The latest report, presented by the Council's Operational Manager Transport Services, updated the Committee on changes that had been made to the bus network since April 2024.

A presentation outlining the key areas of the report and update was given to the Committee, which included topics such as current, awarded contracts and funding, accessibility of bus timetables, regional partnership working (Cardiff Capital Region City Deal), connections between homes, hospitals, and bus interchanges, the Local Development Plan and future bus routes, through to the reintroduction of Greenlinks G1 service, as well as future funding and commercial services to ensure the sustainability of bus routes and services within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Following the presentation, a number of comments and queries were raised at the committee meeting, including the following.

Councillor Hooper raised a query about the Barry Docks and Cogan interchanges as well as the inability so far to secure adequate provision to support local school bus and transport services and how the Council could help, such as through contact with Welsh Government, as he felt that this was a 'Cinderella service' in terms of funding, resources and support. On Councillor Hooper's point on school bus services, he referred to specifically the route between Barry Island and Whitmore High School. The concern was to see better integration between school and local bus services which would give pupils more options and get them used to travelling on public transport from a young age. Regarding the interchange(s), two bus services were running to the Docks. For Cogan, this was on the 'aspirational' list and the Council was working with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal on a route or transport scheme prioritisation tool, and further progress would be shared with the Committee in due course. On the school bus services, this had been run by a commercial provider and the challenge faced was that this was not a statutory duty for the Council and getting interest from alternative providers had proved difficult. Councillor Hooper urged the Committee to help lobby the Council concerning the importance of school bus services for children's safety and welfare, particularly during the Winter period. The

Operational Manager Transport Services explained that a survey was undertaken with Vale residents on bus services and what they want from these in order to discuss these with service providers. However, any changes would require additional funding in order to realise them, but this was not currently available. Such comments or recommendations from the Committee on this topic would need to go to Cabinet for consideration, particularly around extra funding.

Councillor Ernest raised the need for greater connectivity in terms of bus services between Penarth and Barry Hospital. In response, there were no specific plans around this and other routes at this time. Decision making on such routes would form part of the franchise of bus services when Welsh Government or Transport for Wales would have full control of them. The Operational Manager Transport Services would look into what connections and bus services were available for this route and share with the Councillor.

The Vice-Chair asked if the Council was collating figures concerning the numbers of people using bus services in the Vale in order to get a better sense of their viability in the future (including free services that had been introduced for the summer months). The Chair added to this by asking how such figures were determined and whether it was the Council or the bus service providers who monitored this. It was explained that as part of the agreement with the bus network grant, operators had to provide such data to Welsh Government. The Council was not privy to all of this data due to this being confidential at the moment. However, the idea behind this data collation was finding a point where it could be decided whether a service would be commercially viable or not again because the Council was helping to fund these services that were previously commercial. The Council worked with regional Partners in Southeast Wales to look at cost per head for bus services / use and whether this was going up or going down in rural and urban areas. The cost was usually higher in rural areas, but bus services here formed an essential service for these parts of the Vale. Due to the use of S106 funding, the use of free bus services in the Vale were directly monitored by the Council. The Chair was surprised that despite the Council putting in around £500k into non-commercial bus routes, it did not have access to all the information available in order that the Council understood whether the routes involved had the potential to become commercially viable again so that efforts could be focused in those areas. The Committee therefore asked that Cabinet used its discussions at various levels of Welsh Government in order to highlight greater data sharing and the other comments / issues raised.

Councillor Protheroe supported the Chair and Vice-Chair's comments, adding that it was important to further promote the use of buses as part of sustainable travel and therefore it was essential to have a baseline or benchmark through access to the relevant data in order to quantify the numbers of users for bus services and to build upon this. The Councillor had welcomed the use of the free bus services in the Rural Vale and felt that funding via the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal for a strategy to help rural areas in the region (including the Vale) where buses were the only means of public transport should be used. This could take a similar approach to that taken with the revival of the G1 Greenlinks bus service. The Chair mentioned that the regional group had set up a working group to look at transportation issues, such as the ones the Councillor had raised. The Operational Manager Transport Services stated that ideally the aim would be greater interconnectivity between bus

and train services with shared ticketing as part of franchising and increased public transport links to rural and urban areas.

Councillor Hooper stressed the importance of bus services for both urban and rural areas of the Vale, as in both cases there may not be high car ownership nor access to train stations in some of these areas, as well as the benefits for younger people, including school transport. It was important for the Committee to lobby the Council in helping to boost such services.

Councillor Wiliam welcomed the idea of shared ticketing between bus and train services and the resulting interoperability between these services, as well as applying the practice seen in some Welsh local authorities of bus and train timetables matching each other in the Vale.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood and Building Services referred to the importance of integrating bus and train services, to improve infrastructure and help lower road traffic accidents. He would feed back to the relevant Cabinet Member for public transport the Committee's views, in order to complement the recommendations the Committee would send back to Cabinet.

It was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the following comments be referred to Cabinet:

- The Committee supported and commended the work undertaken by Vale of Glamorgan Council officers in order to address the continuing challenges around the provision of local buses that met residents' needs;
- The Committee was concerned about the inability so far to secure adequate provision to support local school bus and transport services;
- The Committee was also concerned about the discussions that were happening around passenger numbers between bus service providers and Welsh Government which were not being shared with the Council. The Committee therefore asked that Cabinet used its discussions at various levels of Welsh Government in order to highlight greater data sharing and the other comments/issues raised.

(2) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.

(3) T H A T a further report be provided to Committee in December 2024 detailing the reintroduction of the Greenlinks G1 service.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) In order for Cabinet to consider the comments made by the Committee, and to consider discussing these with Welsh Government, particularly around information sharing on passenger numbers on Vale of Glamorgan bus services, given that the

Council was a significant funder of bus services. Therefore, it was a matter of concern because it was important that the Council understood whether the routes involved had the potential to become commercially viable again so that efforts could be focused in those areas, particularly in order to further promote the use of buses.

- (2) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.
- (3) To update Committee on the Greenlinks service.”

Attached as Appendix: Report to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
12th November, 2024 [[View Presentation](#)]

Meeting of:	Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 12 November 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Environment and Regeneration
Report Title:	Local Bus Services in the Vale of Glamorgan
Purpose of Report:	To provide a six month update on bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan
Report Owner:	Miles Punter – Director of Environment and Housing
Responsible Officer:	Kyle Phillips – Operational Manager – Transport Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Committee Reports Finance
Policy Framework:	This matter is within the policy framework and budget.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following a report presented to this Committee on 16th April 2024 it was requested that a further update report on bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan be presented in six months. • This report updates on any changes that have been made to the bus network since April 2024.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee notes the contents of the report.
2. That a further report is provided to Committee in December 2024 detailing the reintroduction of the Greenlinks G1 service.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To update Committee on local bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. To update Committee on the Greenlinks service.

1. Background

- 1.1** A report entitled Past, Present and the Future of Bus Services in the Vale of Glamorgan was presented to committee on 16th April 2024:

[Local Bus Services](#)

- 1.2** A recommendation from the Committee was that a further update report on bus services in the Vale of Glamorgan be presented in six months' time, with additional information provided on:

- Accessibility of Bus Timetables
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and in relation to the regional partnership working across the Local Authorities
- Consideration around ways to connect homes and hospitals, and also to the issue of missing bus stops and bus interchanges / connections for Culverhouse Cross and Sycamore Cross
- Replacement Local Development Plan in terms of bus routes and the Council's plans for significant housing developments
- Reintroduction of Greenlinks G1 service.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** As advised previously, the Vale of Glamorgan Council tendered and has awarded contracts for the following bus services:

- 88 - Waterfront (Morrisons and Barry Dock Interchange), Cadoxton, Bendrick, Sully, Cosmeston, Penarth Esplanade (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- 93 - Barry Waterfront (Morrisons), Cadoxton, Coldbrook, Dinas Powys, Penarth, Cogan, Penarth Road, Grangetown (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- 100 - Coldbrook, Cadoxton, Barry Town Centre, Barry Island, Highlight Park (Port Road East), Cwm Talwg (Sunday only)

- 303 - St Donat's, Marcross, Monknash, Broughton, Wick, St Bride's Major, Southerndown, Ogmored-by-Sea, Ogmored, Ewenny (Mon to Sun)
- 304 - Boverton, Eglwys Brewis, St Athan, East Aberthaw, Rhoose, Cardiff Airport, Barry, Dinas Powys, Llandough Hospital, Cardiff Bay (Mon to Sun)
- 305 - Murch, Eastbrook, Lower Penarth, Penarth Esplanade, Penarth Town Centre, Penarth Marina, Cardiff Bay (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- 320 - Pontyclun, Miskin, Hensol, Clawdd Coch, Pendoylan, Clawdd Coch, Gwerne-y-Steeple, Petereston-Super-Ely, St Bride's-Super-Ely, St Fagans, Fairwater (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- 321 - Pentre Cwrt, Vale Business Park (B4268), Llysworney (Penyrheol Terrace), Cowbridge, Aberthin, Maendy, Ystradowen, Brynsadler, Pontyclun (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- B1 - Highlight Park, Colcot, Gibbonsdown, Barry Town Centre, Barry Waterfront (Morrisons, Asda), Barry Island (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- B2 - Cwm Talwg, Colcot, Gibbonsdown, Barry Town Centre, Barry Waterfront (Morrisons) (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- B3 - Garden Suburb, The Knap (Lakeside), Barry Waterfront (Morrisons and Barry Dock Interchange), Barry Town Centre, Gibbonsdown, Cadoxton (Mon to Sat Daytime)
- X2 - Newton, Laleston, Bridgend, Colwinston (A48), Pentre Meyrick (A48), Cowbridge, St Hilary (A48), Bonvilston (A48), St Nicholas (A48), The Tumble (A48), Culverhouse Cross (A48), Cardiff Bay (Mon to Sun)
- A 'de-minimis' contract for Service 94/96 (evenings)
- Welsh Government supported Service 905 (Cardiff Airport Rail Link).

2.2 Funding for the services listed above is a combination of Council funding (£470,000), Bus Service Support Grant (£380,490) and Bus Network Grant (BNG) (£2,104,245). Funding is awarded on an annual basis and should the funding be reduced it would be necessary to reduce the bus network accordingly.

2.3 Service 7 was tendered by Cardiff Council, but it did not extend provision as it previously was through to the Vale (i.e. Llandough and Penarth).

2.4 Service 93S (Grangetown to St Cyres) was also tendered by Cardiff Council and remains as it was.

2.5 The only commercial services that now operate in the Vale of Glamorgan are:

- 92 - Penarth Town Centre, Cogan, Penarth Road, Grangetown (Daily – daytime and evening)
- 94/94b - Cadoxton, Coldbrook, Bendrick, Sully, Cosmeston, Penarth, Cogan, Penarth Road, Grangetown. 94b: via Bessemer Road, Cardiff (Daily – daytime)
- 96 - Barry Westend, Colcot, Golwg-y-Coed (Crematorium), Wenvoe, Culverhouse Cross (Port Road), Ely, Canton (Daily – daytime).

- 2.6** Since April 2024 there have been a number of changes to the bus network in the Vale of Glamorgan. These are listed by operator below:

Adventure Travel

- 2.7** Service B3: Increased service provision from 5th August 2024 providing additional midday and late afternoon journeys using addition BNG funding allocated for this purpose.
- 2.8** This change was made following a request.

Cardiff Bus

- 2.9** Service 7: From 1st September 2024 route extended from Ferry Road Retail Park to Penarth Town Centre via Ferry Road Interchange, Cogan Spur, Llandough Hospital, Andrew Road, Pill Street, Cowslip Drive, Redlands Road, Hastings Place, Wordsworth Avenue, Grove Terrace Stanwell Road and Rectory Road to Penarth Town Centre (Windsor Terrace). Additional BNG grant funding allocated to Cardiff Council for this purpose.
- 2.10** Service 92: From 1st September 2024, weekdays the 17:25 journey from Cardiff retimed to depart at 17:20 and operate 5 minutes earlier throughout and then the 18:59 from Penarth retimed to operate 15 minutes later throughout.
- 2.11** Service 93: From 1st September 2024 journeys operate via Stanwell Road and Redlands Road, not Grove Terrace, Wordsworth Avenue or Hastings Place. Wordsworth Avenue will instead be served by the revised Service 7.
- 2.12** Service 95: From 1st September 2024 revised timetable and journeys extended to and from Barry Island during the daytime Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays via Ffordd-y Mileniwm (ASDA). The section to Barry Island replaces the current B1 route.
- 2.13** Service 96: From 1st September 2024 revised timetable Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays.
- 2.14** Service 305: From 1st September 2024 journeys start and end at Cardiff Bus Interchange. No change to timetable.
- 2.15** Service B1/B2: From 1st September 2024 journeys on route B1 start and end at Morrisons with Barry Island now served on revised 95 above. Last B1 of the day extends to Highlight Park and then further extends via Pontypridd Road and Severn Avenue to Cwm Talwg. Additional BNG grant funding allocated for this purpose.
- 2.16** These changes were made either by request or to deal with minor reliability issues.

First Cymru

- 2.17** Service 303: Revised timetable to improve reliability with effect from 09-Jun-2024.
- 2.18** Service 304: Revised timetable to improve reliability with effect from 09-Jun-2024.

- 2.19 Service X2: Revised timetable to improve reliability with effect from 09-Jun-2024.
- 2.20 Service 320: Revised timetable to improve reliability from Monday 02-Sep-2024; service reduced in frequency by 1 return journey to improve reliability.
- 2.21 Service 321: Revised timetable to improve reliability with effect from 02-Sep-2024.
- 2.22 All the above changes were put in place following reliability issues with services unable to keep to their timetable. The X2 and 321 services ran pretty well prior to the changes but the 303 and 304 services were timetable compliant around 60% of the time and the 320 around 35% of the time. All services are now between 80% and 85% compliant.
- 2.23 Discussions have recently been held to extend Services 304, 320 and X2 into the new Cardiff Bus Station, which awaits further confirmation by the operator.

Promotion of Bus Services

- 2.24 Free travel on the 303 bus service was offered over the school summer holidays. This was funded by S106 sustainable transport contributions.
- 2.25 My Travel Pass, giving 16 to 21 years olds a 1/3 off bus fares, has been promoted regularly through the Council's social media channels. In addition, Transport for Wales (TfW) has also supplied leaflets and posters which are being distributed and erected at bus stops throughout the Vale of Glamorgan to further promote the scheme.
- 2.26 Printed timetable leaflets have also been requested from the operators Adventure Travel and First Cymru for distribution to Vale of Glamorgan libraries and Council offices. Cardiff Bus have already supplied and distributed its latest timetable booklet.
- 2.27 We continue to work with our e-display supplier Journeo and TfW to get real time information supplied to the Council's estate of e-displays, but first have to wait for the roll out across Cardiff Council's estate as the trial area.

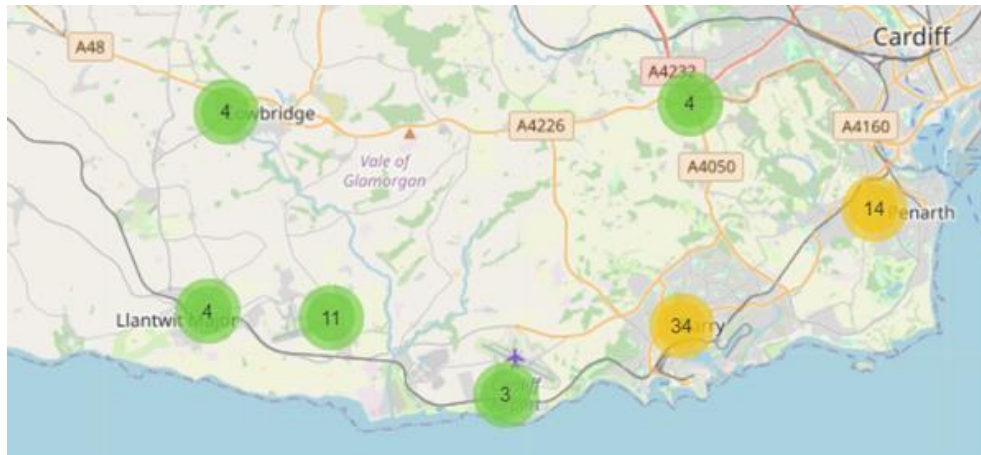
2.28 Accessibility of Bus Timetables

Bus operators generally follow the recommendations from the Department for Transport's Inclusive Transport Strategy, ensuring timetables are accessible, legible, and easy to understand. This includes using clear fonts, high-contrast colour schemes, and larger print where feasible, to help passengers with visual impairments.

To ensure consistency, timetables generally follow a standard format so customers know where to look for information. By default, operators place the timetables along the left edge of the provided cases. However, at stops shared with other operators, placement may vary to accommodate space and layout.

Most timetables will also include key contact details and digital options on each timetable, which can be particularly helpful for those who prefer online access.

In addition to the paper formatted timetables, there are no 74 electronic timetable displays across the Vale of Glamorgan.



Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Regional Partnership Working across the Local Authorities

2.29 The Cardiff Capital City Deal is a mechanism aimed at transforming the economy, business landscape and potential for inclusive prosperity across South-East Wales.

The City Deal part funded the Barry Dock Interchange, with other projects such as Cogan Interchange on the aspirational list.

The creation of Corporate Joint Committees (CJs) now sees a much more joined up approach to transport scheme development across the region. The development of a Regional Transport Plan and scheme prioritisation matrix aspirations aim to create a public transport network that will benefit residents across the ten local authority areas.

Officers always have and continue to work closely with colleagues in neighbouring Local Authorities, Cardiff, Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf, in conjunction with bus operators, to agree how cross boundary services will operate in those areas.

In addition, the South-East Wales Officer Group meets regularly with Welsh Government and TfW officers to take forward the franchising of bus services, which is due to come to fruition in South-East Wales in 2029/30.

Consideration around ways to connect homes and hospitals, and also to the issue of missing bus stops and bus interchanges / connections for Culverhouse Cross and Sycamore Cross

2.30 While consideration can be given to a future bus interchange at Culverhouse Cross, at present First Cymru are working on achieving greater reliability on the X2 service that runs through the A48, as well as their other services than run in the Vale of Glamorgan. The timetable of the service would need to be altered to cater for any movement into and out of Tesco/M&S shopping area.

As it stands passengers can get off the X2 outside Tesco or McDonalds and cross the road into the retail park to get access to the C1 service that runs across Cardiff.

Most Vale of Glamorgan bus services run into and out of Cardiff City centre where people can catch onward services to the University Hospital of Wales as well as Llandough Hospital. It is appreciated that some people will not be able to take the most direct route and catching multiple services can be time consuming.

Accessibility to healthcare, education facilities and places of employment forms part of the Welsh Government Transport strategy and the Council works with operators to provide as much access as possible either by bus or active travel means.

Replacement Local Development Plan in terms of bus routes and the Council's plans for significant housing developments

2.31 The RLDP Preferred Strategy Initial Consultation Report was considered by full Council 11th July 2024:

RLDP Report

Bus services were a matter raised by a number of representors to the plan.

Public transport is a major consideration of the RLDP.

Generally, bus services will look to divert to serve new housing developments or if demand is such increase frequency of services. Operators will be made aware of plans but by the nature of the service, while they will consider future options, changes will only be put in place once residents are residing in the development.

Examples of enhancements to bus services following new developments include:

- Service 88 running via the new development before coming back on itself via Hayes Road
- Service 95 running via Ffordd y Mileniwm (Asda section)
- Service 905 running via Rhoose Point in the one direction on route to the rail interchange.

The future franchising model will make the controlling of the bus network easier for public bodies, as the commercial element of bus services, will no longer be in place.

Funding for any enhancements to bus services changes can be accessed via Section 106 sustainable transport contributions, with an emphasis on “kick starting” the change until the numbers catching the bus from the new areas make it cost beneficial to the operator.

2.32 Reintroduction of the Greenlinks G1 service

Details on the Greenlinks service and the G1 service will be provided in a future report to this Committee.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 Long-term:** The supply of good quality public transport using supported local bus services to help plug gaps in the local commercial network will assist the Council's plans to locally address the Climate Change Emergency and realise a net-zero carbon future.
- 3.2 Integration:** The provision of supported local bus services integrates with the commercial network to help plug gaps in the local public transport network, enabling it to be more holistic for the wider community and its passenger transport requirements for access to services, employment, education, health facilities, shops and social events etc.
- 3.3 Involvement:** The provision of supported local bus services are required by many within the local community and visitors to the area. The timetables and routes of supported service provision is often the outcome of continued consideration of service requests and requirements proposed by users/potential users.
- 3.4 Collaboration:** The provision of supported local bus services is often as a result of collaboration between the Council, Welsh Government and service operators/suppliers, especially when it comes to plugging gaps within commercial networks.
- 3.5 Understanding Root Causes of Issues and Prevention:** Commercial service provision often leave gaps in service provision depending on area, day and or time of day, as the most profitable/viable areas/times are served leaving the non-profitable/non-viable areas/times void of service provision. The Council's ability to intervene and supply supported local bus services in such areas and/or on such days and times, but with regard to budget, prevents the exclusion of many from being connected to the wider community due to lack of service provision.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** None as a direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** None as a direct result of this report.

Employment

- 5.2** None as a direct result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** None as a direct result of this report.

6. Background Papers

None