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Calls for follow up to Welsh Bus Summit

Industry backs a second summit to stimulate

progress

NEXT STEPS

► A second bus summit should be held to stimulate progress on the issues identified at the first Welsh Bus Summit, CPT Cymru leaders said after this week's event.

Justin Davies, chair of CPT Cymru's bus commission, said: “It was overwhelmingly a positive moment. We need to do it again.”

Vice-chair Bev Fowles said: “There needs to be another summit next year. The title ought to be: ‘What Progress?’ That would encourage people to go to that summit and say: ‘We've done this’ or ‘We're in partnership with them now, which we weren't before the 2017 summit’.

“I think people left there {the first summit} with more enthusiasm than they went there with. That's a good starting point.”

If no progress had been made by next year's summit, another should be called in 2019, but

otherwise the event could become biennial, said Fowles.

After lunch, delegates at this week's summit were divided into five workshops to discuss a list of topics. Workshop leaders reported back in the main hall during the closing session. Fowles said the dominant message from all five groups was that congestion was the key issue, and that one of the most effective ways to

stimulate bus growth was to reallocate road space and manage car parking in towns and cities.

During the morning session, Chris Cheek of the TAS Partnership presented analysis which showed the direct impact of slower journey times on the costs of bus operation. Some of the local authority delegates told Davies afterwards that they would like to show the presentation to

their council members.

Rural bus services dominated the question and answer session before lunch. After the summit, Davies told *Passenger Transport* that this was an important topic. “In Wales it always has a resonance. There needs to be an action plan that looks at rural [transport] but it doesn't dominate the conversation. We can spend an awful lot of time and energy talking about running rural buses and demand responsive taxis, when the real problems are in the urban bits. There needs to be a balance in those conversations.” ■



TIME FOR NEW WELSH SURVEY*

Interest in commissioning Transport Focus bus survey

► Bus Users Cymru says that a survey of Welsh bus passenger satisfaction should be undertaken soon, because so much has changed since the last survey was conducted seven years ago.

According to some delegates at the Welsh Bus Summit this week, a survey has been discussed in official

circles but funding for Transport Focus to carry out the work is the stumbling block. Transport Focus routinely surveys bus passengers in England and Scotland but has no comparable remit in Wales.

Bus Users Cymru director Margaret Everson told *Passenger Transport*. “I would be very keen to see another bus passenger satisfaction survey on the same lines as the one carried out in autumn 2010, and I look forward to the time when the finances can be sorted out and we can play our part

in the survey.”

She said the survey should include people who do not use buses. “We need to know why they don't catch the bus.”

Transport Focus passenger executive David Beer said the results of surveys in England and Scotland helped authorities to gauge whether they were getting value for money for their investments, and to spend constrained budgets in the areas which would deliver the biggest benefit. He said the Welsh Government and Welsh bus industry

were interested in commissioning a new survey in Wales.

Wales is no longer included in the National Travel Survey, which has collected statistics since 1965 on people's use of buses, trains and other modes of transport. The Welsh Government withdrew its funding with effect from the 2013 survey.

During his speech at the bus summit, infrastructure secretary Ken Skates looked forward to long-term and “evidence based” planning for the Welsh public transport system. ■