

Buses lose modal share in Cardiff city centre

Operator claims congestion behind fall in modal share

PATRONAGE

▶ Buses are losing market share for commuting and city centre shopping in Cardiff, but have gained market share for trips to out-of-town shops.

Figures from Cardiff Council reveal that travel to work by bus declined from 11% of all commuter trips in 2015 to 10% in 2016. Buses accounted for 27% of city centre shopping trips in 2016, two percentage points lower than in 2015.

However, buses increased their share of trips to out-of-town shopping sites, rising from 8%

to 9%. In this category, rail, walking, cycling and other modes all increased their share slightly, while car's share reduced from 59% to 54%.

Rail's share of the modal split increased in all categories, which also include education and leisure. The proportion of commuter trips made by rail increased from 6% to 8%, despite complaints of peak overcrowding on local trains. The size of Arriva Trains Wales' fleet has been constrained by its "no growth" franchise agreement since 2003.

Buses increased their market share for travel to out-of-town shops in Cardiff followed the introduction, in May 2015, of New Adventure Travel's commercial

X1 service. It operates at a relatively high frequency into the Culverhouse Cross shopping complex on Cardiff's western outskirts and to a large Asda store in the east. NAT also introduced an X11 service in January 2016, giving residents of some eastern suburbs a direct service to out-of-town shops on Newport Road.

Keyvn Jones of NAT said increased traffic congestion was the main reason for the decline in buses' market share for commuting and city centre shopping. "People won't sit on a bus if it's going to take 45 minutes from Junction 32 [of the M4] into town. They would rather be rammed against the door on the train or go by car," he said. ■

UTG FRANCHISING 'MASTERCLASS'

Seminar probed franchising success across the globe.

REGULATION

▶ With new buses legislation now in place, the potential benefits of bus service franchising for local transport authorities were outlined at a conference organised by the Urban Transport Group and industry partners in London last week.

The conference highlighted the experiences of several authorities from around the world, including Jersey, the Netherlands and Australia, who have already successfully implemented a franchising model.

"Given we have few working examples in the UK of bus franchising at present it makes sense to cast the net wider so that UK transport authorities can get it right first time," commented UTG director Jonathan Bray. ■