

Attachment 1

Llangoedmor Community Council Response to the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan (MWRTP) Consultation

To: Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee

From: Llangoedmor Community Council

Date: 24th March 2025

Llangoedmor Community Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the **Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan (MWRTP)**. We support the vision outlined in the plan and appreciate the commitment to improving **accessibility, connectivity, and sustainability** across Mid Wales. In particular, we commend the focus on **active travel, demand-responsive transport (DRT), and bus network improvements** as vital components of a regional transport strategy.

As a rural Community **not immediately served by a railway station**, we feel strongly that the plan **underplays the significance of the first mile challenge**. Regional Transport planning in this area is not about reducing car use going to towns and cities, but ensuring **rural communities themselves have equitable access to public transport in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy**.

The Importance of the First Mile in Rural Communities

The plan rightly emphasises the need for **first and last mile solutions** but tends to frame this primarily in terms of improving urban connectivity. In rural areas like Aberteifi, the **first mile** is often **the decisive factor** in whether residents can access public transport at all. Without **safe, convenient, and sustainable first-mile options**, many rural residents have no choice but to drive for the entirety of their journey, undermining the plan's objectives on modal shift, decarbonisation, and accessibility.

We urge the MWRTP to strengthen its approach to the first mile by:

- **Prioritising active travel infrastructure** outside of town centers, including safe walking and cycling options that may safely connect more farms and settlements to village bus stops and other rural transport hubs. Whilst it is unrealistic to expect bike lanes and pedestrian access to be as widely employed as in towns and cities there is huge scope for stepping up on at least the first mile options so that people can reach their local village safely for onward travel options.
- **Emphasising investment in micro-hubs and small-scale transport interchanges** in rural locations to support multimodal journeys; especially through bike-and-ride schemes. This is the logical next step after having safely connected farms/settlements to villages.
- **Expanding Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) schemes** to better integrate with scheduled bus services and enable residents in dispersed rural areas to reach key transport hubs.
- **Enhancing community transport initiatives** by increasing funding and support for locally managed services that address first-mile needs in remote areas.

Aligning the First Mile with the Transport Hierarchy

The **Welsh Government's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy** prioritises active travel, public transport, and shared mobility over private car use. However, for many rural residents, **the hierarchy is not reflected in practical transport provision**. If walking and cycling to a bus

stop is **unsafe or impractical**, and if key public transport options are inaccessible beyond the main towns, the hierarchy remains only theoretical rather than actionable. This has to change for the plan to have any impact in this geography. A stronger focus on the **first mile** would enable **rural residents to move up the transport hierarchy**, reducing reliance on private cars **not only for travel into urban centers but for all journeys**.