

Agreement to boost transport connectivity in North Wales and North of England

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) broadly sets out the working relationship between the two organisations with the aim of ensuring that each other's work supports and complements transport movements between the North of England and North Wales.

As part of the agreement, a "West and Wales Transport Forum" will be established which will bring together key transport stakeholders on both sides of the border including the Welsh Government, UK Government and Transport for the North to support a co-ordinated approach to the sequencing of strategic transport investments that impact on both regions.

The updated MoU will further cement the current joint working arrangement and drive a shared common vision for a vibrant, sustainable and growing economy.

It also sets out both parties' commitment to engaging and collaborating to ensure that views and objectives are taken into account in the development and delivery of the Welsh Government's Transport Strategy and Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan and Investment Programme – which are set to be considered this week.

The MoU will be vital in helping deliver improved outcomes for passengers, freight and all transport users between the North Wales and the North of England as well as furthering transport improvements which will boost economic growth in both regions.

Welsh Government Minister for Economy and Transport and Minister for North Wales, Ken Skates said:

"The Welsh Government has a clear vision of creating a sustainable, efficient and quality integrated transport network which will connect people, communities and businesses to jobs, facilities and services.

"Each and every day thousands of people cross each side of the border for work and leisure purposes meaning investment in one region can affect economic outcomes on the other. It is therefore vital we continue and strengthen our close working relationship with Transport for the North to realise how strong cross-border transport links can ensure the benefits of improved connectivity are felt jointly in Wales and the North of England.

"The updated Memorandum of Understanding will help us maximise opportunities to provide a boost to the economy and enable both parties to continue a collaborative approach on transport

initiatives that are of mutual interest for the benefit of the travelling public.

“It’s also great news the West and Wales Transport Forum will be established which will be vital in bringing key transport partners together with the aim of securing cross-border transport improvements. I’m pleased the Secretary of State for Wales has agreed for the UK Government to be represented on the forum and potential opportunities for investment in rail infrastructure can be discussed first hand.”

Barry White, chief executive of Transport for the North, said:

“Our partners came together to create Transport for the North in order to better understand where the opportunities are across the region, and how best we can use transport to bring them together.

“We know these opportunities aren’t just confined to the North and that a truly integrated transport system doesn’t recognise borders and the people and business that cross them. We want a transport system that is world-leading, coordinated, and puts people first. This aspiration is an integral part of our Strategic Transport Plan – specifically our West & Wales Corridor – which will look to support growth in the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zones, the Atlantic Gateway, the North Wales Arc, the Port of Liverpool, and the Crewe HS2 Hub among many others.

“That is why I’m delighted to have signed our Memorandum of Understanding with the Welsh Government. The North of England and North Wales in particular have so much potential that we all want to unlock. Doing this will be an integral part of re-balancing the UK’s economy.”

UK Government Minister for Wales Nigel Adams said:

“The UK Government is actively committed to improving cross-border transport services between Wales and England and I look forward to working with this Forum and its members over the coming months. We will engage with all stakeholders and focus on the opportunities and challenges that exist on cross border transport and we will together deliver the maximum impact and benefit for local users and the wider economy.”