

Summit brings bus industry together

Wales' first ever Bus Summit, part of Economy Secretary, Ken Skates' 5 point plan for the industry, will bring all interested parties together to look at how they can work more effectively together to deliver the best, most robust service possible.

Speaking ahead of the summit, the Economy and Infrastructure Secretary Ken Skates said:

"There is no question that 2016 was a mixed year for the bus industry in Wales. Whilst our bus network accounted for some 101 million passenger journeys – with many routes gaining in popularity – the demise of some service providers left certain communities, services and bus users vulnerable.

"The five point plan I announced last September sought to stabilise and support the industry in the short term but we must look for longer term solutions if we are to deliver a quality service that our thousands of passengers across Wales can have confidence in. I'm particularly keen to hear the views of the industry on how we can encourage young people to increase their bus travel. The MyTravel Pass pilot was a useful starting point and given us some valuable insight, we must now build on that and work with partners to develop an all Wales solution.

"This Bus Summit is an opportunity for us to share ideas to solve the difficulties facing the industry, define what we want our bus services to deliver and understand how we can better work together in order to deliver the quality services communities across Wales expect and deserve.

"In my eyes, that means a top quality and sustainable service, one that can drive forward our economy and our communities to greater prosperity. It means a service which works for both rural and urban areas, young and old and promotes and enables independent living, all whilst ensuring value for money for the tax payer.

"It's a tough task but I'm positive we have the expertise and the will in Wales to deliver it.

"In the meantime, of course, we will continue to support local authorities and communities wherever possible, whether it be through taking on new services like the TIC between Aberystwyth and Cardiff or providing further financial support to areas affected by loss of service providers.

"But longer term I want to ensure we establish a better informed, better designed, long term approach to the planning of our transport system. I'm keen, amongst other things, to explore with

others whether new legislation can play a role in this.

“This Summit will be a catalyst for that and I look forward to working with the industry to inform and deliver the best possible system, together.”