

Aberystwyth to Cardiff bus service to continue until at least December

The 6 month extension to the current pilot will allow the Welsh Government to better assess the needs and travel patterns of customers, taking account of the summer tourist season and beyond, before making a long term decision on the service.

Ken Skates said:

“When we introduced the T1C service a little under six months ago, we did so to facilitate direct bus travel between west Wales and Cardiff. We’ve since seen this service used by a variety of groups and individuals, from students to shoppers to holiday goers.

“At the same time, however, we have made no secret that the service is not as popular as we might have expected. This can perhaps be explained by the introduction of a commercial service run by Stagecoach Megabus earlier this year covering largely the same route, albeit with notable exceptions.

“Given this, I think there is great merit in extending the pilot for another 6 months. This will ensure any long term decision on the future of the service is made with a full year of data, whilst allowing us to continue to talk to passenger groups, bus operators, councils and interested parties about the service they would like to see and how best to achieve it.

“I’m delighted that our Traws Cymru service continues to offer regular bus travel to communities across Wales who might otherwise be without the option of public transport. I’m pleased to announce that the T1C will continue to be part of that offering until at least December.”

T1C service stops at all stops between Aberystwyth – Aberearon – Lampeter and Carmarthen and then operates limited stops between Carmarthen and Cardiff via Cross Hands, Swansea Bus Station and Bridgend Outlet Village.

UEFA Women’s Champions League Final

set to inspire women & girls

Hosts Lyon will face Paris Saint-Germain in Cardiff City Stadium at 19:45. The event is taking place in the same city as the men's final, making Cardiff the hub of a real celebration of sport. First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and Public Health Minister, Rebecca Evans, will join the huge numbers of fans expected to attend the match.

First Minister, Carwyn Jones, said:

"Cardiff and the whole of Wales is brimming with excitement as the UEFA Champions League festivities get underway. Fans from across the globe can already be seen throughout the city, with Spanish, Italian and French to be heard spoken in the streets.

"Today's UEFA Women's Champions League Final will put women's football in the global spotlight. This wonderful event has the power to inspire women and girls in Wales and across the world to take up sport, especially football."

Public Health Minister, Rebecca Evans, who has responsibility for grassroots sport, said:

"There are around 40,000 women and girls playing football regularly across Wales. Increasing the number of women and girls taking part in sport remains one of our key priorities, and the FAW Trust's aim is to increase the numbers playing football to 100,000 by 2024. The UEFA Women's Champions League Final is a fantastic showcase for women's football which will help us achieve this ambition."

Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport Vaughan Gething will also cheer on the 1,500 women and girls from across Wales taking part in today's FAW Women's and Girls' National Football Festival at Cardiff University Sports Fields Llanrumney, which forms part of the FAW's UEFA Champions League Community Engagement Programme.

This annual event will see teams from across Wales participate at under 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and senior age groups. All participants will be provided with a pair of free tickets to watch the UEFA Women's Champions League Final.

Welsh teams to compete in Homeless World Cup, thanks to Welsh Government funding

The funding will enable social inclusion charity Street Football Wales (SFW) to send a Welsh women's team and men's team to the event in Oslo this summer

The announcement comes as SFW takes part today in a demonstration match on a floating pitch on Roald Dahl Plass to mark the Champions League Final in Cardiff.

The Homeless World Cup is an annual football tournament organised by the Homeless World Cup organisation which advocates the end of homelessness through football.

The 2017 tournament, which will mark the 15th edition of the HWC, will be held in Oslo, Norway from August 29 until September 5, 2017. About 70 countries and over 750 players are expected to take part.

Street Football Wales, which is hosted by Pobl Group, operate a football league for men and women across Wales and representatives from the league make up the teams who compete for Wales in the HWC.

Michael Sheen OBE, patron of Street Football Wales said:

"It is fantastic that Welsh Government have joined the team at Street Football Wales and along with other partners are backing them to go all the way at the Homeless World Cup in Oslo! The team works incredibly hard to raise the funds to enter the tournament each year and this grant will make a huge difference. I'll be there to cheer them on and I hope this is the beginning of everyone in Wales getting behind their national teams for the Homeless World Cup!"

The Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, said:

"I met Street Football Wales recently and saw the difference their projects can make to people's lives, not only in regards to health and wellbeing, but also in terms of self-confidence and personal development.

"I made a commitment to do all we can to support SFW to send a team to the Homeless World Cup, which is why I am delighted to announce this funding today. I am sure the teams will do a fantastic job of representing Wales on the world stage and I wish them all the very best of luck!"

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant, said:

“I’m delighted that thanks to Welsh Government funding we are able to send a team to the Homeless World Cup. Street Football Wales are doing a great job in improving the lives of people who face social exclusion through homelessness. Having a home gives people a sense of belonging and emotional wellbeing. This is why providing people with a safe, warm and secure home remains a key priority for me. I wish the teams well in their forthcoming games.”

Keri Harris, Project Leader for Street Football Wales said:

“Street Football Wales makes a life changing difference to hundreds of vulnerable people across Wales. Representing Wales at the Homeless World Cup is one of the many ambitions our players share. This grant makes taking a Welsh male and female team to Oslo an exciting reality that will inspire people across Wales.”

[Quantum Advisory expanding and creating 40 jobs with Welsh Government support](#)

The expansion, backed by £200,000 business finance from the Welsh Government, has seen Quantum relocate its Cardiff headquarters to larger premises in St Mellons and will increase the number of employees in the capital city to more than 90 within three years.

The news has been welcomed by Economy Secretary Ken Skates who said:

“Quantum Advisory is an indigenous business working in one of our key economic sectors and I am pleased Welsh Government support helped secure this expansion for Wales.

“The investment supports the Financial and Professional Services sector strategy and will create high value sustainable jobs associated with actuarial science which is a growth market.”

Quantum Advisory – the trading name of Quantum Actuarial LLP – provides pension and employee benefits services to employers, scheme trustees and members. Advising on £3.5 billion of pension fund assets the company has

delivered a pension administration service to clients since its inception as well as investment, actuarial and pensions consultancy services to clients both in the UK and internationally.

Andrew Reid-Jones, Partner at Quantum Advisory, said:

“The Welsh Government has been instrumental in enabling us to realise our strategic growth plans. Our previous office was at full capacity, but as a direct result of the Welsh Government’s support we were able to move into a larger neighbouring premises to accommodate projected future growth and provide further central services to our regional offices.”

Since setting up the company in 2000 with a single office in Cardiff, Quantum now boasts regional offices in Amersham, Birmingham, Bristol and London and last year saw an increase in turnover of 10%.

The employee benefits and pensions consultancy market is dominated by a small number of large corporate entities and Quantum is the only consultancy headquartered in Wales and is a niche player in the market specialising in providing tailor made services and solutions.

The size of the UK pension market is around £3.3 trillion of assets under management and the market continues to grow driven by a number of factors including auto-enrolment and legislative and regulatory change.

[Selling Wales to the world during the Champions League Final](#)

With around 170,000 additional visitors expected in Cardiff and an estimated global TV audience of 200 million across 200 countries and territories, few events can match the Champions League Final for size and scope. With Juventus and Real Madrid taking part in the men’s UEFA Champions League Final and Lyon and Paris Saint-Germain competing in the Women’s Champions League Final, Cardiff is expected to be incredibly busy and alive with not only Spanish and Italian and French voices, but with people and languages from every corner of the globe, including an estimated 2,500 members of the media.

The work of marketing Wales as host nation has been ongoing since the start of 2017. A competition was part of the Visit Wales stand at ITB Berlin, the world’s largest travel market, with a prize to win a week-long holiday in Wales and two tickets for the men’s and women’s champions league final, there were over 16,000 entries. The Champions League Final Trophies also made an

appearance at the stand and proved very popular.

Following the launch of the Iberia Madrid to Cardiff flight, familiarisation visits were hosted for journalists and tour operators from Madrid to experience what Cardiff had to offer – should their team make the final.

Spanish Tour Operators and Iberia Airways are now promoting The Champions League and city breaks to Cardiff through their own channels. Spanish tour operator, Politours are specifically using the Champions League as a way of clients recognising Wales as a city break and holiday destination.

New videos have also been produced including restaurateurs promoting Cardiff filmed and distributed in [Italian – You Tube](#) (external link), [Spanish – You Tube](#) (external link) and [English – You Tube](#) (external link) . A new [video of young Welsh boy dreaming of playing in Champions League final](#) (external link) has been distributed through social media channels.

International pages have been set up on [visitwales.com](#) (external link) in French, Spanish and Catalan, which has further promotion of the Champions League Final and Wales as a holiday destination. A digital destination marketing campaign is also running in Spain and France to promote Wales.

In order to inform those travelling fans, a Cardiff Mini Guide has produced in Spanish, Italian and French and distributed through Visit Wales and VisitBritain channels. Welcome messages from Wales will be placed in Cardiff Airport, Cardiff Central Train Station and Cathedral Road and well as gateway branding in London Paddington and Schiphol Airport Amsterdam. Visit Wales will also have a stand in the Champions Festival Village showcasing what the country has to offer – and should the excitement of the matches not be enough – there will be a 360 virtual reality Zip wire and white water rafting experience.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“The UEFA Champions League Final is a fantastic opportunity for people across the world to see what Wales can deliver, whilst providing hundreds of thousands the opportunity to sample our excellent tourism, produce and business offering. I’m delighted that we’re able to welcome legendary footballers from around the world to Wales during our Year of Legends.

“For the first time in eight years, the numbers of overseas visitors to Wales crossed the 1 million mark in 2016 – and we saw record breaking spend figures from our overseas markets. Hosting this event will give Wales further opportunities to raise awareness of Wales has a holiday destination in key overseas markets.

“For many fans, this will be their first visit to Wales, we hope they have a fantastic time in Wales – enjoy the welcome and the atmosphere and will come back to visit again soon. We will continue to make the most of having the opportunity to host such legendary event long after the final whistle sounds.”