

## **CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE – RESPONSE TO WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE WALES TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) is an independent, representative, national organisation run by Older People for older people in Wales. We are a registered charity created to make sure that Older People across Wales are listened to and their opinions acted on in everything that affects them. Our key purpose is to act as the national voice for 50+ Forums and Groups around Wales

### COPA Policy Position on Transport

Transport is essential to many older people who cannot or no longer drive a car. **An effective, safe, reliable, accessible and integrated transport system is needed across bus and rail services**, especially in rural areas, which allows older people to lead the lives they want to live without restrictions. Community Transport has a vital role to play within a transport system that works well for older people and must be improved and support the role of voluntary drivers. **The Free Bus Pass for over 60s must continue.**

COPA supports the Welsh Government's objective for Accessible and Inclusive Public Transport to develop a 'one stop shop' for the provision of transport planning services so that information should be available to allow passengers to plan their journeys from 'door to door.' **However, any information services should be accessible and not just available "on-line" and must be available in a variety of formats.**

Free Bus Travel for the over 60s and Disabled People has been a successful policy for Wales which has benefitted older people and help address their isolation and loneliness. This should continue but **we oppose any proposals to increase the age of eligibility to Pension Age.**

### **The Draft Transport Strategy – COPA Response**

Cymru Older People's Alliance and 50+ Forums in Wales were consulted about this Strategy at an earlier stage and can give an overall welcome to the concept and the vision and priorities set out. It is ambitious and wide-ranging and a realistic 20-year horizon. Some of the key features we would particularly support are:

- tackles environmental and climate change issues for Transport

Cymru Older People's Alliance c/o Age Cymru Offices, Mariners House, Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff, CF24 5TD

Registered Charity 1174518

- growth of public transport in Wales
- accessible, well-maintained, and managed transport infrastructure
- making sustainable transport choices more attractive and affordable
- improvements to Community Transport as part of the planning process
- addressing Digital Exclusion in information about travel

There is however, much to do make the ambitions in the Strategy a reality and for reliable transport options to be available to older people who rely on it, particularly in rural areas. We would therefore, pose the following questions to Welsh Government in response to the consultation so they can include amended text in the final version of the Strategy:

- What assurance can be given about the future funding of the free bus pass for Over 60s or keeping the same eligibility age?
- Introduction of Road Congestion Charges – will improvements to bus and other public transport be made before charges are introduced (which would mitigate the number of charges levied)?
- How will these measures lead to an increase in accessible bus services and frequency that older people rely on, especially in rural areas?
- How are these plans going to be afforded and resources found post-Covid-19?

COPA and 50+ Forums in Wales would welcome further engagement with Welsh Government on the detailed implementation of this Strategy in due course

S G Milsom

Chair

Cymru Older People's Alliance

<http://www.copacharity.com> 22 January 2021