



Lee Waters AC/AM
Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport

MA-LW-1453-20

Local Authority Leader

7 May 2020

Dear Colleague,

Expressions of Interest for local sustainable transport measures in response to Covid19

We are currently experiencing unprecedented changes that affect all aspects of our lives, and transport, across all modes, is particularly affected. With the restrictions imposed, we have seen large reductions in motorised traffic on all parts of the road network, much reduced patronage of buses and trains, high levels of home working and, so far anecdotally, higher rates of walking and cycling, both for essential journeys and for daily exercise. For the sake of the air we all breathe and the world's climate and public health we need to try and lock in this mode shift to active travel modes and reduction in car use that we are currently experiencing.

You will have seen examples from towns and cities across the globe, such as Milan, Berlin, Paris and Brussels and the action they have taken to achieve this. I am writing to you to seek expressions of interest from local authorities across Wales to introduce similar measures to ensure the safety and reliability of sustainable transport modes during and following the Covid 19 crisis. These should not be limited to larger urban areas, as the same principles apply in smaller towns in rural areas. We are looking for low cost high impact imaginative measures that can be introduced rapidly as well as schemes that will promote sustainable forms of travel. They can be experimental and can be tweaked if they are not quite right from the start. In situations like these, it is important not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

There are two main reasons why we want you to seriously consider which measures could be taken in your areas to benefit public transport and active travel modes.

Firstly, we want to protect public health and safety. There is an expectation i social distancing will need to be observed for many months to come. The space available on footways and shared use paths is often wholly insufficient to allow safe passing distances, with additional pressure on the available space from queues outside shops and at bus stops. As a result, pedestrians and cyclists are frequently forced to step or ride into the

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

carriageway to avoid close passing. Whilst this is largely possible with current traffic volumes, it is already problematic for many. For example, it will become extremely unsafe when traffic volumes increase for those with reduced mobility or young children.

Secondly, we want to address potential increases in car use. There is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the public's willingness to use public transport modes once restrictions are eased. There is already evidence from China which showed much reduced public transport use and significant increases in car use. There is therefore a high risk that, if no action is taken, we will see even greater percentages of journeys being undertaken by car in Wales in the future. This would clearly go against the policy direction we want to achieve across Government and lead to negative impacts for people, society and the environment. We therefore need to use the current reduction in volumes proactively to create conditions that make non-car modes safe and convenient.

The Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, and I therefore invite initial expressions of interest for funding for 'pop-up' measures in your area. In the first instance this will include temporary low-cost solutions to reallocate road space in favour of sustainable forms of transport. These can include, but are not limited to initially temporary measures such as the following:

- Footway widening, by using carriageway width
- Road closures, with modal filters for cyclists
- Lane closures, or one-way systems with counter flow for cyclists
- Temporary parking removal or restrictions, including loading bays
- Cycle lanes and tracks - using segregation or soft segregation
- Decluttering of footways, e.g. by consolidating signs; removal of guard rails.
- Temporary new crossing facilities
- Bus lanes, bus gates and bus only roads
- Bus based Park and Ride facilities, as well as Park & Share and car sharing lanes (with car sharing to be used once social distancing measures allow)
- Enhanced waiting facilities at key stops and bus stations, including facilitation of social distancing
- Real time information systems, including occupancy levels
- Infrastructure to enable enhanced cleaning regimes on public transport
- Parking enforcement, in particular on active travel routes
- Measures to reduce traffic speeds,
- 20mph limits, trialling the exception methodology for the planned introduction of default 20mph speed limits

For measures aimed at improving walking and cycling, you should prioritise routes that are part of your existing or planned active travel route network, in particular routes to schools. We envisage that a package approach combining different measures is likely to be most effective. Whilst we expect many measures to be temporary or experimental initially, the expectation is that where they are effective, these will be introduced on a permanent basis.

A template for the initial expressions of interest with anticipated costings is attached to this letter and needs to be returned to transportplanning@gov.wales by 21 May 2020 to allow us to gauge the overall funding requirement. We are not expecting detailed proposals about schemes at this stage but will require an explanation on the type of interventions to be introduced. We will then seek additional information as required before considering the proposals further. We are aiming for a swift turnaround with confirming if funding is available and envisage measures to be introduced from early summer.

I appreciate that you are still awaiting the outcome of some of the regular local transport grant funding rounds for 2020/21, which have been held up due to the Covid emergency response. We will inform you of the outcome as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', positioned below the closing 'Yours sincerely,'.

Lee Waters AM

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Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport