

[National Assembly for Wales](#)

[Enterprise and Business Committee](#)

[Inquiry into the future of the Wales and Borders Rail](#)

Evidence from Siôn Meredith – WBF 23

Dear Sir / Madam

I understand that the Welsh Government is currently undertaking a consultation on railway services in mid-Wales.

I would strongly argue that the service between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury needs to be improved substantially: chiefly by ensuring that trains run on an hourly basis. I speak from personal experience, as someone who lives and works in Aberystwyth, and regularly travels around mid-Wales and beyond. The train journey to Cardiff or Bangor takes about twice as long as the same journey by car. If I have a meeting in Newtown, it is often too inconvenient to take the train because they only run every two hours, which usually means arriving or leaving too early or too late.

I like to travel by train for two main reasons – it is better for the environment and I can make better use of my working hours by working on the train. By doing so, I can be far more productive. However, due to the infrequency of rail services at present, I often cannot take full advantage of current provision.

This is not only my own personal desire, but I am certain that improving rail services would benefit mid-Wales in all sorts of ways, from the point of view of business and tourism, alongside social and community interests.

I work at Aberystwyth University, the main employer in Aberystwyth, and I can see that improving rail services would promote the University as an accessible place. That would provide the whole region with all kinds of advantages.

I have experience of rail travel in many parts of Britain, and I can attest from my own experience that the Aberystwyth–Shrewsbury line is the weakest line in the whole of Britain. It is hard to imagine another of comparable size and importance to Aberystwyth having such poor rail services. Compare Aberystwyth and Bangor. You can travel by train from Bangor to London in a little over 3 hours. The journey from Aberystwyth, which is about the same distance, if not shorter, takes about 5 hours.

A more frequent service, and possibly a quicker service, between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury is certainly the priority. However, serious consideration should also be given to reopening the line from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen. It is ridiculous to have to travel through Shrewsbury when travelling by train from Aberystwyth to our capital city, Cardiff – a four-hour journey for a journey of about 110 miles by road.

I hope that you will consider these issues.

Many thanks,

Yours faithfully

Siôn Meredith