

Agenda – Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel
and video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 26 June 2024

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

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Hybrid

At its meeting on 13 June 2024, the Committee agreed a motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to exclude the public from the start of today's meeting.

Private meeting (09.15–10.00)

1 Consideration of the Committee's forward work programme – Autumn 2024

(Pages 1 – 8)

Attached Documents:

Forward work programme

2 Consideration of draft letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs in relation to Wales' progress towards emissions reduction

(Pages 9 – 13)

Attached Documents:

Draft letter



Public meeting (10.00–13.00)

3 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

(10.00)

4 General scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

(10.00–11.30)

(Pages 14 – 49)

Huw Irranca–Davies MS, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Gian Marco Currado, Director Rural Affairs – Welsh Government

Claire Bennett, Director Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability – Welsh Government

Attached Documents:

Research brief – General scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Paper – Welsh Government

Break (11.30–11.40)

5 General scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport

(11.40–13.00)

(Pages 50 – 75)

Ken Skates MS, Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport

Peter McDonald, Director of Transport and Digital Connectivity – Welsh Government

Steven McGregor, Deputy Director, North Wales – Welsh Government

Attached Documents:

Research brief – General scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport

Paper – Welsh Government

6 Papers to note (13.00)

6.1 Decarbonisation of housing

(Pages 76 – 81)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair to the Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS2023)

Letter from the Chair to the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs and the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning in relation to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS2023)

Response from the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning to the Chair in relation to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS2023)

6.2 Report on rail services and Transport for Wales' performance 2023–24

(Pages 82 – 106)

Attached Documents:

Interim response – Transport for Wales

Response – Transport for Wales

Response – Welsh Government

Letter from the Chair to the Auditor General for Wales and CEO of Audit Wales in relation to the scrutiny of Transport for Wales

Letter from the Chair to the Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee in relation to the scrutiny of Transport for Wales

6.3 International agreements

(Page 107)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to the Chair in relation to the UK/European Forest Institute: Host Country Agreement

6.4 Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25

(Pages 108 – 109)

Attached Documents:

Response from the Chair to the Chair of the Finance Committee in relation to the scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25

6.5 Performance of Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

(Pages 110 – 119)

Attached Documents:

Additional response from Natural Resources Wales to the Committee's report: Report on performance of Dŵr Cymru – Recommendation 11

6.6 Climate emissions in Wales

(Pages 120 – 122)

Attached Documents:

Letter from Friends of the Earth Cymru to the Chair in relation to climate emissions in Wales

7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the start of the meeting on 18 July

(13.00)

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Agenda Item 4

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted



Evidence paper for Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs for General Scrutiny at CCEI Committee

26/06/24

Information provided to aid the Committee in advance of the Minister's attendance for General Scrutiny on 26 June.

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1. Tree Planting

Background

1. We recognise a step change in woodland creation is needed to help mitigate climate change. We want farmers to remain central to tree planting plans by integrating woodland as part of their farms businesses while continuing to produce high quality food.
2. Forestry Research statistics on tree planting published in September 2023 show our tree planting for 2022/23 was 1,190 hectares, twice that of the year before (620 hectares). Statistics are being compiled for this year, but we expect them to show around 600 hectares of woodland creation for 2023/24. A rapid increase is required to meet the Climate Change Committee's recommendation of 43,000 hectares of new woodland by 2030.

Current Position

3. There is no reason for anyone who wants to plant woodlands to delay, and we will continue to encourage farmers and land managers to apply for funding through our Woodland Planning and Creation Schemes.
4. We have committed funding to support farmers and landowners to create woodland through our new woodland creation schemes. These include a new Small Grants scheme which provides a simpler route for farmers to plant small areas of trees. Following a review and in response to feedback from the sector, the rates for planting trees, and for fencing and gates were increased in line with 2023 costs, which is a substantial uplift on the previous rates. Maintenance payments were also increased and front loaded in recognition of the higher costs in the early years after planting. We will continue to look for ways to make our application processes easier.
5. Our woodlands and forest products store 1.49 million tonnes of CO₂. Together they account for 84% of carbon sinks from land use. Planting trees can also have a range of other benefits, enhancing biodiversity, providing shelter for livestock in hot weather, helping prevent flooding or providing a source of timber for local markets and offering a diversified income stream for farm businesses.

Next Steps

6. Responses to the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) consultation are currently being analysed and we are aware there was a particular focus on the tree planting proposals. We are continuing to look at options within the SFS to integrate tree planting on farms. We will also work with a wide range of landowners to create woodlands.
7. We are creating a National Forest for Wales which will both include areas of new woodland and help to restore and maintain some of Wales's irreplaceable ancient woodlands. In time it will form a connected network of high-quality woodlands running throughout Wales.

2. Marine

Marine Conservation Zones

1. The enhancement of our Marine Protected Area (MPA) network remains a commitment as part of the MPA Network Completion Programme. Marine Conservation Zones are a significant element of this, by addressing the shortfalls in protected features which have been identified. At present, Welsh Government are working with our Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies to develop proposed sites and as part of this process and it is critical these sites are rigorously assessed for their potential socio-economic impacts, as expected in the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009). Welsh Government have sought to appoint a contractor to undertake this as part of a Regulatory Impact Assessment, however, at present a contractor has not been appointed.

Welsh Seabird Conservation Strategy

2. The Welsh Seabird Conservation Strategy is currently being developed with support from key stakeholders and our Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies and is expected to be published in the second half of 2024. The Strategy will cover 28 key species of seabirds in Wales and will be underpinned by individual seabird ecological assessments and sensitivity assessments, to assist with identifying recommendations. The sensitivity assessments will be based on perceived vulnerability to identified pressures. Stakeholders will be invited to identify actions to deliver the recommendations.

Marine Protected Areas Management

3. Welsh Government continue support actions to improve management of the Welsh MPA network, through the MPA Management Grant Scheme. To date, close to £1million has been awarded in grant funding to support actions across Wales since 2018. Previous actions have ranged from improving our understanding of climatic pressures to the network, the introduction of the bilingual Wales Coast Explorer app and more recently the establishment of a surveillance programme on Grassholm island to identify any introduction of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

4. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) remains an ever present pressure to seabird colonies across Wales and beyond. Last year, figures published show some seabird species in Wales have suffered significant declines in population, including gannet colonies (50% reduction), with further declines noted across gull and tern species. Welsh Government remain on alert and in close coordination with key stakeholders as migratory seabirds begin to return to their respective colonies across Wales. Presently, it is not clear whether species have been further impacted over winter months or if HPAI has returned.

Restoration Scheme for Saltmarsh and Seagrass

5. The restoration scheme for saltmarsh and seagrass habitats remains a key priority within the Programme for Government. I recognise the key benefits these habitats provide ranging from natural coastal protections, to increased biodiversity and

their ability to absorb and store carbon. At present, the Welsh Seagrass Network has been tasked with identifying a range of short/long term actions to present to Welsh Government as part of the scheme development.

MARINE PLANNING

Current Position

6. We have recently consulted on potential Strategic Resource Areas, or SRAs, for tidal stream energy. SRAs aim to identify and safeguard the availability of areas with potential to support future sustainable use by the sector. We are carefully considering responses received and we will publish a Summary of Responses in due course.

Next Steps

7. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, officials will work with stakeholders to develop proposals for SRAs for other sectors, including floating offshore wind.
8. Officials are working with UK Government and the Crown Estate, through its Whole of Seabed Programme, to support the development of offshore wind in appropriate locations.
9. Officials are working with stakeholders and NRW to develop marine planning guidance on opportunities for ecosystem enhancement and restoration.
10. We intend to commission independent review of marine planning. This review will consider how we can further develop our marine planning framework to provide greater spatial direction, balancing support for renewable energy with protecting the marine environment.
11. We are working with public authorities and others to understand and promote good practice in plan implementation.

Marine Licensing

12. The marine licensing process is a key tool for the sustainable management of Welsh seas, particularly the management of the marine protected area network in Wales.
13. In 2013, the Welsh Ministers delegated certain marine licensing functions to Natural Resources Wales, namely the administration and determination of marine licence applications whilst the Welsh Ministers retains functions relating to appeals and enforcement.
14. An independent review of marine licensing has been undertaken to consider where improvements could be made to the process. The review found no fundamental issue with the licensing process but concluded with a suite of recommendations aimed at delivery improvements.

15. Officials are working in partnership with NRW to develop and deliver a series of priority actions. These actions will result in overall improvements to the marine licensing process for all users.
16. NRW are hosting a 'meet the regulator' marine licencing event in June to help break down barriers and connect interested parties with the marine licensing team and Welsh Government policy officials.
17. Welsh Government are reviewing marine licencing exemptions to ensure the list of activities which are exempt from a marine licence is up to date.

Offshore wind

18. The Welsh Ministers have new powers under the Energy Act (2023) to introduce regulations for the environmental assessment of offshore wind. We are working with UK Government to understand how they intend to use powers granted the Secretary of State in relation to Welsh waters and how the Welsh Ministers may wish to use their powers alongside this.

Marine resilience and climate change

19. **Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership (CaSP Cymru).** We will continue to work with and support the Partnership to deliver on three focussed outcomes to support wider delivery for a resilient marine environment: improving ocean literacy; blue investment; and building capacity in the sectors. 2024 - 25 planned work includes:
 - Launching the Marine Resilience and Improvement of Natural Ecosystems (MARINE) Fund Cymru - a voluntary fund to support enhancement of the marine environment in Wales.
 - Publishing the Ocean Literacy Strategy for Wales, launching a Welsh network and online platform and delivering actions such as a pilot Festival of the Sea.
 - Increasing involvement of local communities in marine issues to identify solutions and projects, through actions including improved governance, increased diversity of representation for coastal and marine action, and skills and training development.
20. **Climate Change and Blue Carbon Policy.** Understanding the impacts of climate change on our marine and coastal habitats and the opportunities to increase their resilience is key to adapting to changes to our coasts and seas. Funding has been allocated to support the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership and the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership, and a blue carbon forum for Wales will be established later this year to share information and knowledge, and to accelerate the already growing body of expertise and experience we have in Wales, to support future policy intervention and decision making.

3.Waste

Progress in Delivering the Circular Economy Strategy, Beyond Recycling

1. Our circular economy strategy, Beyond Recycling, outlines our we commitment to transition to a circular economy in delivering our aim to become a zero waste and net zero nation by 2050. The strategy was published in 2021, at an unprecedented time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite that context, as this evidence paper shows, considerable progress has been made. This includes recycling rates having continued to increase despite the challenges faced during the pandemic, the development of the underpinning infrastructure having continued with the roll-out of re-use and repair facilities building on the continued progress on recycling, and the development and implementation of the new Workplace Recycling Regulations. Work has also continued on the areas being delivered in partnership across the four UK nations, including on the delivery of an Extended Responsibility Scheme for packaging and Deposit Return Scheme. In addition, in recognition of the progress during this period and leadership in the transition to the circular economy, Wales has been chosen this year to host the International Circular Economy Hotspot.

Circular Economy targets

2. In relation to the target of 70% recycling for waste from households, commercial and industrial businesses by 2025, the latest data held in each area is as follows:
 - Local Authority collected municipal waste 2022-23 – 65.7%¹
 - Waste-from-households 2022 – 56.7%²
 - Industrial waste 2018 – 69%³
 - Commercial waste 2018 – 64%⁴
 - Construction and demolition waste 2019 – 93%⁵
3. In terms of Local Authority collected municipal waste, 2022/23 figures show four Local Authorities already at or achieving the 2024/25 target of 70%, 13 Local Authorities having exceeded the 64% minimum target, with only five having failed to reach the target.
4. A range of actions are being taken to further increase recycling rates and work towards the target. This includes continuing the successful model of support to Local Authorities to help them to improve their performance, consisting of the

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/local-authority-municipal-waste-management-april-2022-march-2023>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-waste-data/uk-statistics-on-waste>

³ <https://naturalresources.wales/media/693534/survey-of-commerical-and-industrial-waste-generated-in-wales-2018.pdf>

⁴ <https://naturalresources.wales/media/693534/survey-of-commerical-and-industrial-waste-generated-in-wales-2018.pdf>

⁵ [2019 Wales construction and demolition waste arising survey \(naturalresources.wales\)](https://naturalresources.wales/media/693534/survey-of-commerical-and-industrial-waste-generated-in-wales-2018.pdf)

Sustainable Waste Management Grant, targeted capital funding, advice on performance improvement, and the delivery of the Be Mighty public awareness campaign. Most recently we have implemented the new Workplace Recycling Regulations⁶ requiring workplaces to keep their key recyclable materials separate and for those to be collected separately, to improve the quantity and quality of recycling from non-domestic premises. In addition, we have rolled out the provision of advice and support to businesses by Business Wales.

5. For the 26% overall reduction in waste target, current data estimates show total waste at 7,552,000 tonnes compared to the 2006-7 baseline of 10,553,261 tonnes, a 28.4% reduction. There is also positive progress in respect of the objective of zero waste to landfill and the 2024-25 target of landfilling less than 5% of waste produced in Wales. The latest published landfill rates being:
 - Local Authority collected municipal waste – 1.6% in 2022-23⁷
 - Industrial and commercial waste – 11% in 2018⁸
 - Construction and demolition waste – 6% in 2019⁹
6. For our municipal waste it means that since devolution, the landfill rate has decreased from 95% in 1998 to 1.6%. With the Workplace Recycling Regulations now in place, it will further ensure that recyclable material is better captured for re-processing, thereby preventing that material from being landfilled. In addition, as part of the workplace recycling reforms, it includes a ban on all wood waste going to landfill which will further contribute to delivery against this target.
7. In relation to our target to reduce avoidable food waste there are several interventions being delivered to tackle food waste in Wales, including:
 - Separate household food waste collection having been successfully rolled out by all local authorities in Wales;
 - Workplaces now being required to separate food waste for collection as part of the Workplace Recycling reforms;
 - Funding FareShare Cymru to expand the redistribution of surplus food to community organisations;
 - Sustainability Food Clusters focus on resource efficiency and waste prevention in food and drink businesses;
 - Welsh Government's Climate Action Wales campaign including tips about reducing food waste and making sustainable food choices;
 - The Welsh Government funded Be Mighty¹⁰ campaign focused on food waste prevention and a Welsh Government contribution to WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste campaign; and,
 - Welsh Government support for the Courtauld 2030 voluntary agreement which brings together major retailers to help consumers reduce food waste.

⁶ [Workplace recycling | GOV.WALES](#)

⁷ <https://www.gov.wales/local-authority-municipal-waste-management-april-2022-march-2023>

⁸ <https://naturalresources.wales/media/693534/survey-of-commercial-and-industrial-waste-generated-in-wales-2018.pdf>

⁹ [2019 Wales construction and demolition waste arising survey \(naturalresources.wales\)](#)

¹⁰ [Save money and create Welsh power | Wales Recycles](#)

8. In addition, we are currently working with WRAP to develop the methodology to analyse and estimate food waste levels and compare them to the 2007 baseline.

Overview of Actions to Deliver Beyond Recycling

9. To support the delivery of our policies, funding has been put in place through the Circular Economy Fund for Business to help businesses adapt their processes to utilise recycled material and improve their resource efficiency and specialist support is provided by WRAP. In 2023-24, 19 businesses across Wales received funding from the CEF for business.
10. The Circular Economy Innovation Communities (CEIC)¹¹ programme and Applied Research for Circular Solutions¹² programme run by Cardiff Met University and Swansea University also offer funding for SMEs in Wales to innovate and adopt circular business solutions.
11. The transition to a circular economy also brings opportunities for digital innovation, as demonstrated by the delivery of the world's first full-town Digital Deposit Return Scheme trial in Brecon. The Scan|Recycle|Reward trial tested new technology which allows householders to scan drinks containers, with the trial delivering high levels of engagement with 18,794 rewards being claimed.
12. The development and implementation of the Workplace Recycling Regulations is another significant step forward which will further reduce the amount of waste sent to incineration and landfill, whilst crucially increasing the capture of high quality, source separated materials which can then be fed back into the Welsh economy. The Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging and Deposit Return Scheme for Drinks containers being developed will further drive progress whilst also delivering wider benefits such as tackling litter.
13. Our partnership working with Local Authorities, which has been so pivotal to Wales becoming a recycling nation, also continues with the continuation of the range of support alongside joint working on the reforms being developed. This includes the update of the Blueprint¹³ best practice to support Local Authorities in delivering beyond 70% recycling.
14. A key element within the circular economy strategy is the commitment to repair and reuse, recognising that it is essential to go Beyond Recycling if we are to become a zero waste and net zero nation. By working with Repair Café Wales to expand the network of repair cafes to 137 communities across Wales, over 17,000 items having now been diverted from waste through their repairs. Investment into Bentyg Cymru has also supported the expansion of their network of 'Libraries of Things' to 20 sites across Wales, which has seen them lease their items 12,000 times.

¹¹ [Circular Economy | UK \(ceicwales.org.uk\)](https://ceicwales.org.uk)

¹² [Applied Research for Circular Solutions | Business Wales \(gov.wales\)](https://business.wales.gov.uk)

¹³ [Overview | Collection Blueprint \(collectionsblueprint.wales\)](https://collectionsblueprint.wales)

15. We have also invested over £4million in repair and re-use projects across Wales through the Circular Economy Fund. In collaboration with local authorities and third sector partners this has supported the creation of over 50 hubs. It also means that 18 of our 22 local authorities now have at least one re-use facility located at a Recycling Centre and we are working with the remaining four to ensure full coverage.
16. As the infrastructure expands, we are also raising awareness via public campaigns to support behaviour change, for example through the Climate Action Wales¹⁴ digital hub which provides advice and signposts citizens in Wales to information about sustainable daily choices.
17. Legislation is also being developed to introduce a mandatory digital waste tracking service to track the movement and destination of wastes. This will provide a comprehensive way to track what is happening to waste produced in the UK, which in turn will help regulation and compliance with the duty of care for waste and help tackle waste crime.
18. On 30 October 2023, the first phase of bans came into force under The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.
19. Regulations introducing civil sanctions for the bans took effect on 1 December 2023 and we are currently working on the next phases of bans, with the aim being to introduce Phase 2 by spring 2026. This will include bans on Single-use Plastic carrier bags, with exemptions including carrier bags for raw fish, meat or poultry and unpackaged food and the ban of Polystyrene lids for cups and takeaway food containers.
20. Following a recent four-nation consultation which closed on 25 November 2023, we are also prioritising bans for wet wipes containing plastic. A Government Response to the consultation and an accompanying Written Statement was published on 22 April 2024. This outlined the next steps and confirmed there would be an 18-month transition period across the UK to allow businesses to transition to plastic free wipes and minimise waste.

¹⁴ [Climate Action Wales \(gov.wales\)](https://climateaction.wales.gov.wales)

4.Environmental Governance

Interim Environmental Protection Assessor Wales

Background

1. In March 2021, Dr Nerys Llewelyn Jones was appointed as the Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW). Her role is to review concerns raised by the public about the functioning of environmental law and, where she considers the law is not functioning as it should, she may draft reports for Welsh Ministers setting out her recommendations.

Current position

2. The Interim Assessor's appointment has been extended by another year until 28 February 2025 and work is underway to recruit a successor.
3. Two Deputy IEPAW have been appointed, with the roles commenced 1 May 2024, this was a recommendation by the CCEI committee in their 2022 report.
4. The Interim Assessor is due to attend the CCEI committee meeting on the 11 July 2024.

Next steps

5. Consideration is being given for the IEPAW to establish a formal process to monitor the impact of its recommendations on Welsh Government decisions and environmental outcomes, another recommendation of the CCEI committee report in September 2023.
6. The third annual report is currently being finalised covering the period March 2023 – February 2024. The Forestry report and Hedgerow report are also in its final stages of preparation.

Environmental Governance, Principles and Biodiversity Targets Bill

7. A White Paper Consultation launched on 30th January setting out proposals to introduce a Bill into the Senedd to embed environmental principles into Welsh law, establish a new governance body to ensure robust oversight of environmental law by Welsh public authorities, as well as introduce a strategic nature recovery framework, which will include biodiversity targets.
8. The proposals reflect the ongoing need for sustained and long-term action to deliver the transformative change needed to address the Climate and Nature emergencies. In doing so, the White Paper reflects our commitment towards “a greener Wales to tackle climate change and the nature emergency” as set out in our Programme for Government. It will provide a key step in ensuring there is no drop in environmental quality or standards following our departure from the EU.

9. This approach is not simply an exercise in replacing structures and legislation which were in place whilst the UK was a member of the European Union. Our approach is tailored to the Welsh context to ensure we can secure the wide range of reforms we have prioritised to best support the environment.

Current Position

10. The Whitepaper consultation closed on 30th April. Analysis of the consultation responses is underway. A consultation report and a policy response to the consultation which will be published before summer recess.
11. Engagement with stakeholders continues, building on the extensive engagement during the consultation process.

Next Steps

12. Publication of the consultation analysis and policy response before the summer recess.
13. Work on the supporting Bill documentation including the Regulatory Impact Assessment.

5. Biodiversity

International

1. Wales along with the rest of the world is facing a nature emergency with the loss of biodiversity accelerating globally at unprecedented rates. In Wales one in six species is at risk of extinction. Welsh Government welcomed the ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) agreed at COP15, implementation is key though if these targets are to achieve their purpose.
2. 30x30 is part of the GBF, work is ongoing to implement the recommendations and action to deliver our 30x30 commitments resulting from the biodiversity deep dive. This includes work to develop our monitoring framework and exploring opportunities to ensure our protected sites are bigger, better and more connected.
3. In January we published a White Paper which sets out proposals to introduce a Bill into the Senedd that will embed environmental principles into Welsh law. This includes establishing a new governance body as well as biodiversity targets to complement those which we already have in place in Wales.
4. Alongside the Bill we will also be revising the Nature Recovery Action Plan, which will outline Wales' approach to delivering the new GBF targets, clarifies governance arrangements and establishes progress reporting requirements to ensure transparent and effective action plan delivery.

Investment

5. Our Nature Networks Programme (NNP) is central to this, which aims to improve the condition and connectivity of our terrestrial, freshwater and marine protected sites network. Whilst we will be investing over £17m in the NNP in 24/25 we are also increasing the delivery capacity of the National Peatland Action Programme so that we can restore more peatland across Wales. We are also continuing to support initiatives such as the LIFE projects, Natur am Byth, Local Places for Nature and Local Nature Partnerships.
6. The budget allocation for biodiversity in 2024-25 will allow the Welsh Government to continue to support the delivery of key actions against agreed international targets. I am pleased that despite financial pressures, we have been able to maintain the same overall level of funding as in 23/24. This will enable us to secure and build on that investment, ensuring continuity and delivery of projects aimed at protecting biodiversity, whilst also building additional capacity to develop future projects.

Sustainable Delivery Model for Biodiversity

7. Scaling up action to tackle biodiversity loss will require increased capacity and capability by our delivery partners alongside additional sources of funding.

8. We must ensure that any additional investment is high integrity and benefits local communities, supporting the delivery of our well-being goals.

Wider work

9. In addition to the above is the wider work Welsh Government does to address the pressures that continue to drive biodiversity loss such as improving water quality, reducing agricultural pollution and tackling the spread of invasive non-native species.
10. The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) will be key in delivering our ambitions in relation to the 30x30 target and the nature emergency as well as delivering a key Sustainable Land Management objective under the Agriculture Act of increasing ecosystem resilience.
11. We have strongly mainstreamed biodiversity into Planning Policy Wales (PPW) which was recently updated to clarify our approach to achieving a net benefit for biodiversity by emphasising the importance of ecosystem resilience and the need to both avoid damage to biodiversity and ecosystems and secure enhancement following the stepwise approach. The update to chapter 6 of PPW also includes stronger protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
12. In addition, Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 introduces Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure which highlights the importance of embedding biodiversity and ecosystem resilience into the planning process. We are currently using taskforce funding to employ a Senior Planning Project Manager to pilot the application of this policy on the Gwent Levels.

6. Countryside Access/Access to Green Spaces

Current Position

1. The Access Reform Programme (ARP) is seeking to improve access for outdoor recreation, using the public rights of way network and open access land in order to support the Welsh Government's policies in areas such as public health and tourism – it was originally announced in 2019.
2. The reforms are intended to give greater access to the outdoors for a wider range of activities, improve the processes that are currently associated with administering and managing public rights of way and access land whilst ensuring responsible recreation.
3. Implementation of the ARP has been impacted by the need to prioritise other areas, including for legislation. The main short-term focus is currently on secondary legislation and non-legislative measures delivering progress on the ground. These include input into the development of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, the delivery of the Access Improvement Grant (AIG), planning of recreational opportunities for the National Forest and the development and implementation of updated regulations for Local Access Forums. During 2022-25, the AIG will provide £5.6 million to Local and National Park Authorities that have public rights of way responsibilities.
4. During 2022-23, Welsh Government funded Natural Resources Wales to; refresh and update the Countryside Code, create a toolkit of resources that other organisations can use and create a film on the Dog Walking Code - this explains what dog owners need to do to have a safe and happy walk that doesn't harm wildlife, livestock or others.
5. During 2022-24, Welsh Government funded Natural Resources Wales to undertake a Behavioural Insights led review to understand and support the promotion of responsible recreation with dogs in the countryside and in particular reducing incidences of livestock worrying. The findings were then applied to the design, implementation and evaluation of a range of interventions targeting specific behaviours which can lead to incidents of livestock worrying. Three trial sites across North Wales were identified to test the interventions, with the final report expected by the end of June 24.

7. Air Quality

Delivery to date

1. A key Programme for Government commitment was to introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales, consistent with World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance and to extend the provision of air quality monitoring.
2. This has been delivered through the introduction of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 (the Act), which gained Royal Assent on 14 February 2024.
3. Work is underway to implement the Act's new responsibilities alongside broader commitments under the National Air Quality Strategy for Wales (Clean Air Plan for Wales). The Strategy sets out actions we will take to improve air quality and reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health, biodiversity, the natural environment, and our economy.
4. The Strategy is regularly monitored, with progress updates published annually (the next one is due to be published in June).

Actions

National Air Quality Targets

5. The Act contains two duties on Welsh Ministers to set targets for pollutants:
 - a target for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) by February 2027; and
 - a target by February 2030 for one of the following: ammonia; particulate matter (PM₁₀); ground level ozone; nitrogen dioxide; carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide.
6. We are building an evidence base to support the development of these new targets taking account of World Health Organisation air quality guidelines.

Promoting Awareness of Air Pollution

7. We are developing a delivery plan setting out how we will promote awareness of the risks to human health and the natural environment associated with air pollution, alongside ways of reducing and limiting air pollution. We plan to consult in autumn 2024 and publish the plan in spring 2025 in line with commitments made during scrutiny of the Act.

Vehicle Idling

8. We are developing regulations to set a penalty range for the offence of stationary vehicle idling. These regulations will be accompanied by guidance for local authorities and a broader awareness raising campaign for vehicle drivers. Consultation is proposed for autumn 2024, with publication of the guidance in spring alongside the coming into force of the regulations.

Smoke Control and Local Air Quality Management

9. We are producing guidance for local authorities regarding legislative changes to the existing smoke control and local air quality management regimes. These will be made by the Act when the relevant sections are brought into force. We plan to consult on these in autumn 2024 and publish the guidance in spring 2025 in line with commitments made during Senedd scrutiny of the Act.

Local Air Quality Management grant

10. The Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) grant scheme launched in March 2023 following two successful pilot rounds. The grant supports local authorities in undertaking a wide range of projects to improve local air quality and to engage communities in such delivery.
11. The funding round for the 2024/25 grant period opened in early May 2024, with applications due to be submitted by 04 June 2024. A total fund of £1,000,000 has been allocated, comprising of £750,000 revenue and £250,000 capital funding. Local authorities are expected to submit bids for projects that meet one or more of the following criteria: Prevention, Mitigation, Innovation.
12. During the 2024 grant year a review will be undertaken to ensure the grant successfully delivers against these criteria

Clean Air Advisory Panel for Wales

13. The Clean Air Advisory Panel provides independent and expert advice on air quality matters in Wales. This supports the development of evidence-based policy and legislation to deliver improved air quality for the benefit of human health and the natural environment.
14. The Panel is a multi-disciplinary group populated by experts in the fields of air quality, public health and the environment. It collectively provides advice and scientific evidence to support the development of the Clean Air Strategy, working collaboratively with officials, Welsh Ministers, other technical expert groups, public bodies and other key stakeholders. It is currently supporting the development of air quality targets for the reduction of air pollutant emissions. The Panel also advises the Welsh Government on future evidence needs and how these can be delivered.

Additional Priorities regarding improving Air Quality

Tackling roadside NO₂ exceedances in Wales

15. In November 2018 we published our Welsh Government supplemental plan to the UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations (2017), which set out a range of actions required to reduce concentrations of NO₂ around roads where levels are above legal limits. The Plan covers NO₂ exceedances in two specific roadside locations which are the responsibilities of Cardiff Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council respectively.

16. Officials continue to work closely with Cardiff Council to ensure it is taking all necessary steps to deliver requirements set out in a Ministerial legal direction, which required it to draft a plan to tackle NO₂ exceedances at A4161 Castle Street.
17. Caerphilly County Borough Council received funding of over £6 million to deliver the demolition of houses and relocation of a footpath at A472 Hafodyrynys. This course of action was identified by the evidence models which demonstrated improved dispersion of pollutants by removing the 'street canyon' effect. Caerphilly's plan to improve air quality in this area was completed in October 2023. The actions taken have resulted in compliance with legal limits for NO₂.

Reducing emissions from domestic burning of solid fuels

18. The National Air Quality Strategy set out actions to reduce emissions from domestic burning of solid fuels, including a commitment to consult on the prohibition of wet wood and bituminous house coal. The Welsh Government consulted on proposals to reduce emissions from the burning of solid fuels in 2021. The summary of responses to the consultation was published in October 2023.
19. We are further developing our research and evidence base regarding the contribution domestic burning makes to emissions' levels. This will inform the development of legislation to restrict the sale of bituminous house coal, wet wood and manufactured solid fuels. We intend to consult on draft regulations in early 2025 with a view to laying regulations in autumn 2025.

Investments

20. In terms of enhancing air quality monitoring in February 2023 the Welsh Government invested just over £1 million for an air quality incident management service across a three-year period. In addition, we are developing proposals for further enhancements to our national air quality monitoring networks and assessment capabilities. The associated scope, scale and timing of the proposals are subject to the specific national air quality targets to be introduced in due course.
21. The Cabinet Secretary for CCRA has agreed to allocate funding for Clean Air Day 2024. This is an annual, UK-wide air quality awareness day run by the charity Global Action Plan, held in June. Global Action Plan is an environmental charity focused on issues where the connection between the health of people and our planet is most tangible. The Welsh Government's Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales (August 2020) includes commitments to raise awareness about air pollution impacts, sources and mitigating actions. Supporting Clean Air Day has to date played a key part in helping deliver this commitment.

8. Sustainable Development/WFG Act

Sustainable Development

1. Wales' experience and leadership on sustainable development and the well-being of future generations agenda is distinctive and is held up as an example of how a small nation can re-wire how it works for a more sustainable future.
2. The Sustainable Development responsibility has existed since the foundations of the Welsh Government (National Assembly for Wales) as it derives from the original s.121 duty in the Government of Wales Act 1998, which became the s.79 duty in the Government of Wales Act 2006. This long-standing duty was strengthened and widened significantly through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

3. The Well-being of Future Generations Act gives a legally-binding common purpose – the seven well-being goals – for national government, local government, local health boards and other specified public bodies. The Act describes and defines seven well-being goals for Wales which specified public authorities are to seek to maximise their contribution to in order to improve the well-being of Wales both now and in the future. Public bodies are required to carry out sustainable development, and act in accordance with the sustainable development principle affecting what they do and how they work in order to advance Wales towards the seven well-being goals. The Well-being of Future Generation Act provides for better decision-making by ensuring that those public bodies take account of the long-term, help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse, take an integrated and collaborative approach, and considers and involves people of all ages.
4. Through the Act we have 50 national well-being of Wales indicators, and 17 national milestones for Wales with progress reported annually through a Well-being of Wales Report. This ensures that the difference being made to the well-being of Wales will be analysed and measured on an ongoing basis.
5. The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice, who has responsibility for the implementation of the WFGA and relationship with the Future Generations Commissioner made a statement on 23 May providing an update on current action to deepen the understanding and application of the sustainable development in how the Welsh Government works. Welsh Ministers are subject to the requirements of the WFGA to carry out sustainable development and act in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

Extending the Well-being of Future Generations Act to a further eight public bodies

6. In May, the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice laid regulations to extend the well-being duty in the Act to the eight additional public bodies. These include Qualifications Wales, Social Care Wales, Health Education and Improvement Wales, the Welsh Revenue Authority, Transport for Wales, Centre for

Digital Public Services Ltd, Digital Health and Care Wales, and the Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust. Subject to the approval of the Senedd, these public bodies will be subject to the well-being duty from 30 June 2024.

Sustainable Development Goals

7. The Sustainable Development Goals were agreed in the same year that the then National Assembly for Wales passed the WFGA. Agreed by all 193 UN member states in 2015, there are 17 goals, and 169 targets intended to be met by 2030, including ending poverty in all its forms everywhere; achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, climate action and biodiversity. It provides a development framework for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.
8. In July 2023, the UN issued a progress report on the SDGs. It warned that progress on most goals has stalled, and, in some cases, gone into reverse. The UN General Assembly adopted the summit declaration to accelerate global progress on the SDGs in September 2023.
9. The UK Government published its international development white paper which set out the actions of the UKG under the Sustainable Development Goals.

Wales and the Sustainable Development Goals

10. We are the only country that has responded to the Sustainable Development Goals agenda by using legislation to drive the necessary action across Government and public institutions. The Well-being of Future Generations Act was developed against the backdrop of the development of, and negotiation for the SDGs, and our well-being goals are a translation of these goals by the people of Wales. The Well-being of Future Generation Act also established a legal link to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the globally responsible Wales well-being goal seeks to address the impact of actions taken within Wales, outside of Wales.
11. In 2019 the Welsh Government prepared a supplementary report to the UK Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals. This supplementary report showed how Wales was making its contribution to the global goals agenda, drawn heavily on our action under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

United Nations Futures Summit

12. In 2024 there is a global conversation led by the UN Secretary General on future generations. This will involve the first Declaration on Future Generations, a Future Generations Pact and Summit of the Future in New York in September at the same time as the United Nations General Assembly.
13. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and their office are actively involved in showcasing Wales' experience of legislating for future generations and establishing an independent Commissioner. The Commissioner is provided with additional funding for international work as part of the delivery of the globally responsible nation aim within the International Strategy. In March 2024 the Commissioner convened stakeholders from across Wales to feed into the efforts

underway to develop the Future Generations Pact and Declaration on Future Generations. A further session is scheduled for June 2024.

14. The Future Generations Forum, held in Cardiff on 30 April was hosted by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Derek Walker and in partnership with the Welsh Government, brought together international experts on futures and sustainable development to Wales. The First Minister gave an opening address, and the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs recorded a video address for the High Level Roundtable event in the afternoon with representatives from UN Member States.
15. The event was also used to co-produce the Wales Protocol for Future Generations—a blueprint that will support and guide countries ahead of the UN’s Summit of the Future in New York this autumn. This Protocol has been developed by the Office of the Commissioner for Future Generations of Wales with the support of a high-level coalition of global early adopters. The substance of the protocol was informed by a community of over 150 policy leaders, activists and practitioners from more than 60 countries in a consultation process that explored pioneering experiences from all over the world. The Protocol was developed across three iterations of global consultation undertaken by the School of International Futures, culminating at the Future Generations Forum, taking place in Cardiff (Wales) from 29th April to 1st May 2024, where the final text was agreed.
16. The launch of the Wales Protocol for Future Generations (8th May 2024) came at a pivotal moment as the civil society leaders and UN Member States gather in Nairobi, Kenya for the UN Civil Society Conference ahead of the UN Summit of the Future in New York later this year.

Regions4

17. The Welsh Government are longstanding members of Regions4, a global network of subnational and regional governments in the fields of sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity. Regions4 are the global voice of regional governments (states, regions and provinces) before United Nations negotiations, European Union initiatives and global discussions in the fields of sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity. Regions4 represents 41 regional governments from 21 countries in 4 continents.
18. The Welsh Government continues to engage with Regions4 activities to ensure Wales’ experience is shared, and we can learn from other governments across the world.

9. Sustainable Farming Scheme

1. On 14 May I announced the introduction of a Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) Preparatory Phase of activity in 2025 with the proposed SFS Transition Period starting from 2026.
2. We intend to use this Preparatory Phase wisely. It is an opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of the Scheme Actions. This will help everyone to enter the scheme as easily as possible and ensure the scheme provides maximum benefits for Welsh farmers.
3. This new timeframe will allow me to have the conversations and discussions we need to have with the members of the Ministerial Roundtable. I intend to work at pace to identify areas of agreement and place the emphasis on matters where more work is required.
4. Carbon sequestration actions in the Scheme is an example of an area which will receive further consideration. I expect the group of partners undertaking this work with us to focus on the evidence associated with actions to support additional carbon sequestration and the scale of opportunity in Wales.
5. We will also use this time to undertake a data confirmation exercise which, with feedback from farmers, will provide an accurate picture of the habitat and tree cover across all farms. Under the Habitat Wales Scheme, we saw an increase in the area of habitat land under management this year. I want to build on this success and so I am exploring giving more farmers the opportunity to access support in 2025.
6. During the preparatory phase, we will work with stakeholders to identify and develop a set of proposals for further Optional and Collaborative Actions, with the aim of introducing these as soon as possible.
7. The analysis of the consultation responses is still ongoing. I will not make any decisions on the scheme until we have carefully considered all the responses. However, it is clear from feedback, to date, that some changes to the proposal are needed. I will be publishing the consultation analysis along with a government response in due course.
8. Introducing the Scheme in 2026, following a Preparatory Phase, is not a lowering of ambition on climate or nature commitments. There are challenges to resolve before farmers feel confident in the scheme. There are no benefits from introducing a scheme too soon if farmers are unwilling to join.
9. To make the transition easier for farmers, we had already proposed a phased introduction by focusing on the Universal Actions when the scheme starts; this preparatory phase is designed as an additional step to enable that smooth transition.
10. Our ambition for the Sustainable Farming Scheme to support a sustainable, productive agricultural industry in Wales has not changed. Our future farm support

needs to deliver multiple outcomes for all of Wales but must have farmers at the heart of it.

11. This has food production and continued high standards of animal health and welfare as the cornerstone, along with improving environmental performance, responding to the climate emergency and enhancing on-farm biodiversity. These cannot be tackled in isolation. I am committed to keep listening to and working with farmers, as well as all stakeholders to develop a Scheme that will help deliver against our ambition for Wales to be a world leader in sustainable farming.

Agenda Item 5

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Evidence paper for the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport for General Scrutiny at the CCEI Committee

Information provided to aid the Committee in advance of the Cabinet Secretary's attendance for General Scrutiny on 26 June, 2024.

Rail

Transport for Wales (TfW) faced a number of challenges in 2023 in operating high quality rail services as they dealt with the peak disruption of replacing old trains with new. Following a poor Spring and Summer period, TfW's rail service performance improved, including on the key North-South route. This was largely due to the increased use right across Wales of more reliable brand-new trains. Performance has continued to improve with TfW recording the greatest improvement in punctuality across every single Great British franchise in the first 3 months of 2024, compared to the first 3 months of 2023.

New Trains

TfW have now accepted 51 of the new CAF trains, with the most recent deliveries being 3 carriage trains, helping to boost capacity on busy services. These trains are in daily use right across Wales, meaning it is possible to travel from Milford Haven to Holyhead on entirely new trains. In South Wales, TfW are using 11 new Stadler 4-carriage trains on services between Rhymney and Barry Island.

When all the brand-new fleet is delivered, TfW will have 484 carriages available compared to the 270 inherited in 2018. TfW are confident that performance of services will continue to improve as more new trains are delivered.

Rail Services

TfW are one of the few operators across the UK who have returned to a full timetable of services following the Covid pandemic. TfW increased the number of services they operate with the introduction of a new service between Ebbw Vale and Newport in January 2024. A more reliable service between Wrexham and Bidston and hourly services between Chester and Liverpool were delivered in December 2023. From this June TfW are delivering a turn-up-&-go service on the Core Valley Lines, with 8 trains per hour from Pontypridd and 6 trains per hour from Caerphilly to and from Cardiff. This represents an important step on the journey to deliver the South Wales Metro.

Core Valley Lines Transformation

The Core Valley Lines (CVL) transformation is an over £1bn investment which is improving the lines to Treherbert, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhymney and Coryton. The transformation includes electrification, enabling new electric trains to replace the inherited diesel-powered fleet.

Works to upgrade the largely Victorian infrastructure has caused disruption for people who live along the routes, but it is essential to achieve our vision for a high-

quality network fit for future generations. The transformation will reduce journey times and enable more services every hour operated by new trains.

CVL Progress

The CVL transformation works were originally planned to be completed by the end of 2023. However, this has been delayed due to the impact Covid has had on the programme, which alongside the high levels of inflation, has also increased the cost of delivery.

So far, TfW have electrified the lines from Cardiff to Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr. Six stations on the CVL are being significantly upgraded to ensure they are ready for the new trains. 'Access for All' facilities are also being installed to make the Welsh Government's infrastructure as accessible as possible.

Work to transform the Treherbert Line necessitated the full closure of this route for almost 10 months. The transformation work on this line included electrification and the replacement of mid-19th Century signalling technology.

The new fleet of electric trains which will operate services on the transformed CVL is currently being tested. The first of these electric trains is planned to enter service on the CVL in Autumn 2024.

Transport for Wales

Transport for Wales (TfW) was established in 2015 to procure and manage the Wales and Borders rail franchise and support transport projects in Wales. Significant changes have taken place since, not least as a result of the need to bring rail operations in-house during the pandemic, the transfer of the management of active travel grant programmes, and to support the franchising approach of the forthcoming Bus Bill.

As a result of these additional responsibilities, and to better align with shared objectives, TfW has implemented a new operating model to improve integration and promote a multi-modal approach. We have also enhanced the governance approaches between TfW and the Welsh Government partnership including the inclusion of a Welsh Government and local government observer (Cllr Andrew Morgan) on TfW's Board.

We have developed a suite of multi-modal performance and corporate indicators that monitor progress against agreed targets to provide an objective measure of how efficiently and effectively TfW is meeting its business plan, five-year corporate strategy, and broader objectives. These new indicators will soon be published for the first time to allow further scrutiny of their performance.

Achieving our ambitions to decarbonise the network, reduce inequalities, and support rural communities will require working with other partners, in particular local authorities, transport operators, and unions. While there has been significant progress in developing a 'one team' approach and collaborative culture across organisations, there is still significant work to do in this area. Further evolution of the

organisation's culture and practices will be required to embed a truly multi-modal mindset and put integrated networks at the front and centre of decision-making.

TfW remit was updated last year to reflect evolving priorities and new objectives to embed a multi-modal culture across the organisation and to develop commercial behaviours to maximise revenue, minimise costs, mitigate risks, and exploit opportunities. The new remit letter strengthens the alignment of the organisations' objectives with Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy and other Welsh Government policies by encouraging modal shift through delivering an accessible, sustainable, and efficient transport system that better integrates rail, bus and active travel.

During the pandemic, every part of the public transit system required additional financial support to maintain essential services. The combination of existing budgets and Covid funding was able to cover costs of operating services during the pandemic. However, as demand has not returned in full in all areas, a significant gap arose once the pandemic funding came to an end and additional funding of £125m had to be allocated to TfW in 23-24.

The cost is especially high at the present time because we are replacing nearly every piece of rolling stock in Wales, enhancing infrastructure, preparing for new services but not receiving fare revenue. Furthermore, when the franchise was agreed in 2018, significant farebox growth was predicted. This was ambitious but plausible based on the planned uplifts in services. Covid caused very significant disruption to that planned growth and has changed travel patterns permanently. Despite this, the farebox is close to recovering to past levels, but we have 'lost' three years of expected growth.

Bus Franchising – The Buses (Wales) Bill (*working title*)

White Paper

The White Paper "One Network, One Timetable, One ticket: planning buses as a public service for Wales" was published in March 2022. It outlined the proposals to reform public bus services in Wales. Bringing local bus services back under public control. The current bus network is privatised but heavily subsidised in range of different ways.

Around three quarters of journeys by public transport in Wales are made by bus. Decisions about bus services disproportionately affect women; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people; disabled people; older and younger people; and those with low paid or insecure work. Many of these people rely on using buses.

Bus reliance is often not down to choice, but necessity. 19.4% of households in Wales do not own a car. Those living in rural areas in Wales, where bus services are poor, often don't have options when it comes to public transport. Our Bus Reform legislation looks to change this; by seeing busses for what they really are – a public service. 739 people responded to the White Paper. 96.1% of responders agreed that change is required. 76.3% of responders agreed that franchising was the right way to deliver our intentions.

Roadmap

The [Roadmap to Bus Reform](#) was launched on 5 March 2024. It was produced jointly by the Welsh Government and TfW.

It was primarily aimed at the bus industry to clarify the steps to franchising but is also used as a communication tool for all stakeholders such as local authorities and the public. Ultimately, it reiterates the importance of working with the industry, bus operators, trade unions and other partners to deliver a franchising system which works for Wales. It sets out how improvements to bus services in Wales will be achieved, with an indicative timeline.

The roadmap is not intended to give all the answers, but to set out our current thinking and to prompt a conversation with our partners about how best to deliver franchising in Wales. As highlighted in the Roadmap, future funding will be challenging meaning improvements to the network and to services we deliver will be done incrementally. We will, of course, have ongoing discussions as part of the budgeting process about how best to invest in buses and other public services.

Next steps

TfW have established various workstreams to manage the implementation of franchising. These workstreams are engaging with stakeholders to establish meaningful and continued conversations, ensuring we are taking people with us on the journey and making sure this is done right from the outset.

In line with zonal roll out plans, work is being done through regional scrums to start looking at various items such as network design. Work is building with the South West Wales zones – which is likely to be the first zone to be franchised.

TfW are working with Operators and their representatives towards testing and refining procurement strategies that will lead to effective competition for contracts. Ensuring that all operators are given fair chance at contract packages, recognising the impact of the SME market. Work is also ongoing to improve representation and strengthen the voice for those with protected characteristics.

Timing of the Bill

The current legislative framework has been in place for 40 years, and it's been built on through various enactments over that period. Re-structuring this framework in a way that best delivers according to the proposals set out in our White Paper is a complex undertaking, and it is important that we take the time to get it right and put buses on a stable footing.

I want to ensure we get this important statutory base for bus reform absolutely right. The First Minister will be providing further clarity on timings as part of the legislative statement in July. In the meantime, we will continue to work with industry and local authority partners to have a clear shared understanding of how the rollout of franchising will look so we can all plan accordingly.

Funding

Given the current financial challenges, the introduction of bus franchising does not assume any uplift in total funding to bus. Franchising will provide Welsh Government

with more control over financial risk and the power to control the significant funding we invest in bus services, making sure it is spent where it can have the greatest impact, reducing inefficiency and improving integration of services to make that funding go as far as possible.

Funding is always likely to be a limiting factor across both urban and rural settings but the opportunity to be creative around making sure community transport, taxi, demand responsive services and other “community led” approaches – such as active travel and car clubs – are part of the “one network” will be key to our approach.

Future funding will be challenging meaning improvements to the network and to services we deliver will be done incrementally. We will of course have ongoing discussions as part of the budgeting process about how best to invest in buses and other public services.

Public subsidy is also only part of the revenue in the bus system. We are working with TfW, local authorities and operators to look at how we can grow patronage to help generate a sustainable farebox for bus and supported a ‘back to bus’ campaign last year as part of this work.

Franchising will give us further opportunities to do this, with an attractive and integrated fare offer, a strong unified brand and better passenger information as well as the opportunity to consider improvements to the network.

Renewal/decarbonisation of fleet

The buses running in Wales are the oldest in the UK, and consequently the most polluting and costly to maintain. This is partly due to operators not investing in new fleet pending long-standing anticipated legislative changes to franchise the bus sector. As these old vehicles reach their end of life they will need to be replaced.

Upcoming bus reform gives TfW the opportunity to specify, purchase and own buses and then lease them to operators who are responsible for operating and maintaining them. This allows TfW to make an upfront capital cost expenditure on fleet and infrastructure to reduce the annual revenue payment made to operators.

Historically there have been very few zero emission buses in Wales. However, we are investing and supporting moves to new green zero emission vehicles for use on the local bus services across Wales. Fully electric buses are now in daily service in Cardiff and Newport and we have grant funded fleets of new electric buses in West and North Wales for use on the Welsh Government funded TrawsCymru network.

Active Travel

Our investment in active travel has grown significantly since we made the Active Travel Act and our delivery mechanisms have matured both at national and local level. We now need to focus on getting the best value from this investment and ensuring that the improvements we see bring benefits to all users.

The [Active Travel Delivery Plan](#) which was published in March this year sets out key steps we and our partners are taking to strengthen the delivery framework for active travel investment, and support more people to use of walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys and in combination with public transport.

We have allocated over £50m to local authorities for 2024-25 from our Active Travel Fund and over £6m for Safe Routes in Communities to create schemes that make a real difference to people's journeys. £15m of the Active Travel Fund is awarded as a core allocation. This enables all local authorities to prioritise the immediate improvements they want to make each year and to begin work on more complex projects.

Roads

The Welsh Government is responsible for the Strategic Road Network in Wales, which is about 1,516km of major A roads (trunk roads) and 178km of motorway. It accounts for only 5% of the total Welsh road network but carries more than one third of all traffic and as such it is one of country's most important and valuable national assets.

In July 2023, we published our response to the Lugg Review [Welsh Government Response to the Lugg Review \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#) confirming how we will adapt to the effects of the changing climate, ensuring that our transport infrastructure is safe, accessible, well-maintained and future-proofed.

We have now developed a new approach to road maintenance including a Major Asset Renewal Programme. This programme incorporates mainly large structure refurbishments using a bespoke Prioritisation Tool. The process has been robustly and independently challenged, ensuring it aligns with the Wales Transport Strategy and the HM Treasury Green Book.

We will continue to build new roads and actively maintain our existing ones. That may be to improve safety, adapt to the effects of climate change or to service new developments. Our [National Transport Delivery Plan](#) sets out the programmes, projects and policies that we will be delivering up until 2027.

In February 2023, we published our response to the roads review. The review played a valuable role in shifting behaviours and encouraging innovative solutions. We will assess our future road building tests and how they have been applied to ensure that they are achieving their intended effect. We want to ensure that they raise the bar and enable us to build better roads in a way which is consistent with the climate and nature emergencies.

With regards to road safety, the principal objective of our 20mph policy is to save lives and reduce casualties on our roads. I want to build from the consensus that 20mph is right around schools, hospitals and in built up residential areas. What I am doing now is listening to what people want for the roads in their communities, and pressing ahead with refining the policy and getting the right speed on the right roads.

Through the drumbeat of regional meetings, we are putting in place with the support of TFW and with the help of the County Surveyors' Society Wales, we want to co-create a framework that supports highway authorities to make the right decisions for local roads – particularly when those calls are finely balanced.

That framework will be published before summer recess. After the summer break, we will continue to support highway authorities in the implementation phase of assessing roads, making of traffic regulation orders and finally in the implementation of changes on the ground. We acknowledge that it may take several months from September onwards before we see any changes on the ground.

We are also updating the [Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales guidance](#) to reflect current Welsh Government policy. Priority is being given to guidance for speed limits on roads where people live, with guidance for other roads to follow. It is expected that the guidance for roads where people live, will be published towards the latter end of the 2024/25 financial year. Following its release, Welsh Government will review the speed limits across our Trunk Road Network. Until then, we are not making any changes to individual speed limits so we can ensure consistency with the new guidance.

Regional transport

In total we have awarded more than £100 million to local authorities in 2024-25 to improve transport across Wales. This includes funding for active travel and safe routes, road safety, EV charging facilities, road resilience, local transport and unadopted roads.

We are pleased with the progress the Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) are making towards their Regional Transport Plans. Transport for Wales and Welsh Government officials are working closely with the CJCs to provide technical advice and support in developing these plans. We have provided a further £100,000 funding to each CJC this financial year towards their development.

Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Licensing

We remain committed to legislating to modernise taxi and PHV licensing to address long-standing concerns about public safety and fairness. The First Minister will make a statement about the legislative programme on 9 July. Ahead of legislation, we will begin to take forward some reforms by non-legislative means. These will include updating non-statutory guidance for licensing authorities and working in partnership to introduce standardised training for taxi and private hire drivers.

EV Charging

Welsh Government has already delivered projects to ensure that a basic level of charging facilities are in place across Wales. To address the coverage issue at this stage of EV adoption, we have delivered 17 rapid charging sites, located approximately every 25 miles on the Strategic Road Network across Wales.

Welsh Government has invested over £6 million this year to help local authorities increase the number of publicly available electric vehicle charging points across the country. Wales compares well with most areas of the UK in terms of charge points per head of population. The number of publicly available chargepoints in Wales has grown 55% over the year, with a total of 2,542 as at April 2024. This means that there are 82 publicly available EV charging devices per 100,000 population, which is higher than all the regions in the UK, except London (221) and Scotland (93).

We expect the majority of EV charging infrastructure in Wales to be delivered by the private sector and we are actively working with chargepoint operators to accelerate the stream of private investment. Together with TfW, we have engaged with over fifty companies delivering charging infrastructure and work closely across industry, local authorities and utilities providers to ensure close collaboration in targeting the barriers and opportunities for delivery.

We have developed [national standards](#) for EV charging infrastructure, setting best practice recommendations for safe, accessible and reliable public EV charging in Wales. The standards are for use by public sector organisations, community enterprises and delivery partners involved in the deployment of EV charging infrastructure in Wales. They form an informative best practice guide to support Wales towards its net zero carbon targets.

Armed Forces and Veterans

The 2021 Census tells us we have 115,000 people living in Wales who have previously served in the Armed Forces, around 1 in 20 people and 1 in 12 households. Wales contributes approximately 7% of the Armed Forces strength from 5% of the population. The great majority of these serve outside Wales. The Armed Forces Community – Service People, veterans and their families are supported by the Armed Forces Covenant in relation to identifying and reducing potential disadvantage caused by service life and in some cases, such as death and bereavement, enabling prioritisation to be considered. The Covenant covers devolved areas including health, housing, education and employment. Support for the Covenant comes from across Government and my role has a cross-cutting element. My own portfolio includes grant support for Armed Forces Liaison Officers and for Armed Forces Day in Wales.

I maintain regular contact with the heads of the three Armed Services in Wales, in relation to the Services' presence in Wales. The Armed Forces footprint includes bases such as RAF Valley on Anglesey and the School of Infantry in Brecon and training areas such as Sennybridge in Powys and Castlemartin in Pembrokeshire. Basing and infrastructure policy and decisions are MOD-led but we can engage where we have an interest.

North Wales

One of my main priorities, working with my Cabinet colleagues, is to develop and devolve an enhanced package of powers to the North. I also intend to ensure that the circumstances and needs of our communities in North Wales are reflected across the breadth of current and future government policies and decisions. I will be

chairing the Cabinet Sub-committee for North Wales and intend to sharpen its focus by moving to a thematic approach for each meeting.

I have met a range of stakeholders from across the region and I intend to continue my programme of regular engagement with public authorities, businesses and community organisations. It does not replace engagement by my Cabinet colleagues, many of whom have already undertaken visits to the North but complements it.

I am also committed to building on our existing cross-border co-operation with our neighbours in the north-west of England and Ireland and have recently been nominated by the First Minister as the Welsh Government representative on the Mersey-Dee Alliance.

Agenda Item 6.1

**Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd,
yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith**

**Climate Change, Environment,
and Infrastructure Committee**

Councillor Joanna Protheroe

Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate
Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee

8 May 2024

Dear Councillor Protheroe,

Impact of the WHQS2023 on local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the impact of the WHQS23 on local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030. The Committee noted your correspondence at its meeting on 24 April 2024 and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, and the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Housing, Julie James MS, to seek clarification on the matters you raise. A copy of the letter is attached.

I will ask the Cabinet Secretaries to copy you into their response.

Kind regards,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

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Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Julie James MS

Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

8 May 2024

Dear Huw and Julie,

Impact of the WHQS2023 on local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030

At its meeting on 24 April 2024, the Committee noted correspondence from Councillor Joanna Protheroe, Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee (the Scrutiny Committee) relating to the impact of the WHQS23 on local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030.

The correspondence suggests there is a lack of clarity around when the social housing sector is expected to meet EPC A, about the Welsh Government's ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030, and how these align for local authorities with housing stock.

The Committee agreed I should write to you to seek clarification on these matters.

In its letter, the Scrutiny Committee refers to "a change in the target date from **2030 to 2034** for public sector homes to reach net zero" arising from "the pushing back of the latest Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) four years from 2030 to 2034 to reach the latest Energy Efficiency EPC level for all public sector homes".

It is our understanding that the Welsh Government's original proposal was for all social housing to achieve EPC A by 2033. The WHQS23 sets out that all homes must meet a minimum standard of EPC C by 2030 and that EPC A must be achieved, although it does not specify when.

1. Can you clarify whether and, if so when, the Welsh Government has committed to a target for all social housing to reach EPC A by 2030? If a 2030 target was set, and has since been revised, can you explain the reasons for this?
2. Can you clarify by when you expect all social homes to achieve EPC A?

3. What assessment has been made of the impact of the standard for energy efficiency on the ability of local authorities with housing stock to meet the Welsh Government's ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030?

I would like to raise another issue, which came to light during initial consideration of this matter. The introductory chapter of the WHQS23 states:

"The Senedd Cymru/ Welsh Parliament is committed to bringing all existing social housing up to this new Standard by 2034 (elements in Part 3 may be reached at different times)."

The reference to Senedd Cymru in the WHQS23 is clearly an error, given the Senedd has no role in setting standards. This could cause confusion. It would be helpful if this could be rectified as soon as possible.

I should be grateful for a response to the above as soon as possible, and by **6 June** at the latest.

I am copying this letter to Councillor Protheroe and to John Griffiths MS, Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee, for information. I should be grateful if you would do the same when responding.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Julie James AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Llyr Gruffydd MS
Member of the Senedd for North Wales
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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10 June 2024

Dear Llyr

Thank you for your letter of 8 May noting the correspondence the Committee had received from Councillor Joanna Protheroe in relation to the impact of the WHQS23 of local authorities' ability to reach net zero by 2030.

Please find below the clarification you have requested.

1. Can you clarify whether and, if so when, the Welsh Government has committed to a target for all social housing to reach EPC A by 2030? If a 2030 target was set, and has since been revised, can you explain the reasons for this?

The Welsh Government has never set a target for all social housing to reach EPC A by 2030. The previous standard was for all social housing to reach an EPC D (SAP 65), which has been achieved. WHQS23 replaced the previous standard as of 1 April 2024. The new target is for all social housing to reach an EPC A (SAP 92) in future and brings the existing social homes standard in line with the new build social housing standard, published in July 2021.

During the consultation process, the original proposal was for all social housing to achieve EPC A (SAP 92) by 2033. However, this was met by strong opposition due to concerns around practicality, cost, supply chains and skills, and the finalised standard took account of the strong feeling from across the housing sector. A summary of the consultation response can be found here:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-01/summary-responses.pdf>

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Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

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.

The standard requires all social landlords to fully understand their homes and the steps required to meet EPC A. This evidence must be gathered by undertaking a whole stock assessment and producing individual targeted energy pathways (TEP) for each home by 31 March 2027. These individual TEPs will include the programme of improvements that will be required to ensure home reaches EPC A (SAP 92) in future. These requirements are informed by the early lessons learnt from the Optimised Retrofit Programme (ORP).

2. Can you clarify by when you expect all social homes to achieve EPC A?

Timescales will be informed by the outputs from the whole stock assessment and individual targeted energy pathways (TEP) which social landlords must produce for each home by 31 March 2027. These individual TEPs will include the programme of improvements that will be required to make that home reach EPC A (SAP 92) in future. It is only once these actions have been undertaken, will we be able to clarify when all social homes will achieve EPC A (SAP 92).

Given the need to drive investment and monitor progress towards our long-term target we have introduced an interim target for all social homes to have achieved an EPC C (SAP 75) by the 31 March 2030.

Neither the standard nor the requirement for social landlords to produce TEPs preclude any social landlord from early achievement of EPC A or similar across its housing stock.

All new build social homes being funded under Social Housing Grant are already achieving the energy performance certification of EPC A (SAP 92 or higher) or similar, such as the Passivhaus standard.

3. What assessment has been made of the impact of the standard for energy efficiency on the ability of local authorities with housing stock to meet the Welsh Government's ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030?

The standard requires all social landlords, including local authorities with housing stock to achieve EPC A (SAP 92). However, EPC A (SAP 92) does not automatically equate to a net zero carbon home. Homes that currently achieve EPC A are likely to become net zero operationally in future as electricity supply continues to decarbonise.

The Innovative Housing Programme (2017-21) has been providing valuable insight into tenants' behaviours in low and zero carbon homes and has proved that homes can be designed and built to achieve net zero carbon operationally.

However, the tenant's uses the home, specifically their energy use, has a significant impact on whether that home achieves net zero operationally. In a recent example at a new build development in North Wales which was built to EPC A, two identical homes heating bills were £50 per month and £300 per month. Based on the monitoring sensors installed in both homes, the social landlords could attribute the variation to the tenant's behaviours. After the social landlord engaged with the tenant and with assistance from other tenants in the same development, the tenant was able to greatly reduce their energy consumption, their bills and the carbon emissions from the home.

Energy use by residents in council rented housing and social housing is out of scope of the reporting against the ambition of being a net zero public sector by 2030. The Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide is available here: [Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/guides/welsh-public-sector-net-zero-carbon-reporting-guide)

In relation to the error noted in the introductory chapter of the WHQS23, a correction has been made to the published document. I hope the above information provides the necessary clarification the committee required.

I am copying this letter to John Griffiths MS, Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee and to Councillor Joanna Protheroe, Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Performance and Resource Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Julie James AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

Llyr Gruffydd MS
Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

22 May 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

In advance of us providing our full response to your recommendations, I wanted to write to in the interim in regard to **Recommendation 14**; TfW must improve its service provision around major events. It should report back to the Committee within the next six months on the steps it has taken in this regard from the Committee's report on rail services and Transport for Wales' performance 2023-24.

I would like to assure you that we will be responding in full to each of the recommendations, but as we are in the Summer concert season I thought helpful to invite you and the Committee Members to come to Cardiff Central Station to see firsthand all the hard work, and months of planning that goes into delivering rail transport for a major event at the Principality Stadium.

If you or any of the Committee Members would like to take us up on this offer, we would be delighted to host you and the Committee at one of the upcoming major events at the Principality Stadium which are;

- Tuesday 11th June - Pink
- Tuesday 18th June - Taylor Swift
- Saturday 25th June - Foo Fighters
- Friday 9th August - Billy Joel

This opportunity will give you the chance to see the control room, gate lines, crowd management systems and how we move people around the station to quickly and safely get them home. It will also provide an opportunity to ask direct questions to our senior team and see our front-line colleagues and planners in action.

I am sure you recognise that major events at a 74,000 capacity stadium in the heart of the city centre are a significant challenge for all public transport and public service providers but, along with our rail industry partners, an incredible amount of planning and hard work goes in to making sure we get tens of thousands of people in and out of Cardiff during each event. Events are planned and are worked through months in advance, and we work closely with all partners, from industry, Local Authorities, emergency services and Stadium staff to ensure safe travel for people who want to enjoy the event.



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Whilst we believe that there will always be room for improvement, we believe that recent criticism of rail transport for major events is not reflective of the significant improvements which have been made in the last 12 months. As more and more of our brand new £800m fleet of trains have come into service we have been able to add more capacity and additional services for events and rail services. This includes for this year's Six Nations fixtures, Euro 2024 qualifiers and this month's Bruce Springsteen concert, which have all been successfully delivered.

Bruce Springsteen performed to a 60,000 crowd in which I can confirm we provided very significant capacity in and out of Cardiff Central Station alone. We ran 11 additional services pre-event, 15 additional services ran post event and we strengthened 19 existing services, with a further support of 10 standby coaches. We also strengthened key services to North Wales the following morning (Monday 6th May) for any concert goers who stayed overnight.

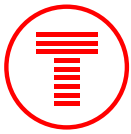
We recognise that there is still more improvement needed in terms of overall capacity, which will be delivered in line with our existing plans, but we are keen to highlight that with all major events across the world, public transport will always be busy and all responsible public transport providers rely on crowd management to help the safe movement of people.

We want Wales to continue to be a global success when it comes to hosting major events and we recognise not just its importance to the economy but also its social value. We know lots of people save and spend their hard earned money on events, and eagerly await seeing their favourite artists and sports teams at their nation's Capital. We are keenly aware of our role in making this a success and always endeavour to make their experience as comfortable and as safe as possible. Although we are employees, we know that the passengers we carry are our friends, our family, our communities. As a result, our colleagues are committed to working diligently to making major events happen seamlessly. As part of these events and as part of their every day work, our colleagues often have to deal with threatening, aggressive and anti-social behaviours from individuals and groups, but always remain committed to supporting our passengers to and from home safely. We are keen to ensure the people of Wales are as proud as our colleagues in the services we provide and this is one area we are keen to show the progress we have made, to ensure there is full consideration of the story that is told around this area of our operation.

If you would like to take us up, we will be happy to arrange such a visit.

Yours sincerely,

James Price
Chief Executive, Transport for Wales.



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Llyr Gruffydd MS
Chair of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

17 June 2024

Dear Llyr Gruffydd MS

I am writing in response to the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee's report on rail services and TfW's performance in 2023-24. On behalf of TfW, I welcome the Committee's robust scrutiny of our performance to ensure the best rail services TfW can offer for the people of Wales and its border regions, and the integrity of the processes in place when spending taxpayer money to transform the railway. I recognise that 2023 was a challenging period for TfW operationally as a result of fleet shortages and reliability issues, while delivery of the CVL was impacted by cost pressures as a result of the war in Ukraine.

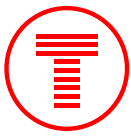
I am grateful for the patience of our customers, lineside neighbours and stakeholders as we worked through this difficult period, and while the Committee's report is a snapshot of that moment in time, I am pleased to confirm that in 2024, performance has improved following the introduction of our new trains into service, with over 80% of TfW trains arriving on time or within 3 minutes of their scheduled arrival since January, and the most recent statistics for March indicating that this has risen to 85%. Cancellations across the network for 2024 have also stayed below the annual average 5% target. The Treherbert line has now reopened having undergone significant transformation (alongside the Aberdare and Merthyr lines), while new trains have been introduced to the North Wales, Maesteg, Ebbw Vale, Marches and South Wales lines, including to the most south-westerly reaches of our network to Fishguard Harbour and Pembroke Dock.

I look forward to sharing continued improvements with the Committee and will now respond to each of the reports 21 recommendations.



Cwmni Cyfyngedig drwy Warrant. Cofrestrwyd yng Nghymru. Rhif Cwmni 09476013. Cyfeiriad Swyddfa Gofrestredig: 3 Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH

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Recommendation 1: TfW must ensure that its business and financial plans are published in advance of the 2025-26 financial year.

Response: Accept

Since the TfW's appearance before the Committee in November 2023, we have published our 2024/25 business and financial plans, which were made publicly available on 26th March 2024. The Welsh Government issued its funding letter to TfW on 15th March 2024, outlining its financial support for TfW for 2024/25 (found here: [Welsh Government Financial Support for Transport for Wales \(TfW\) 2024-25](#)). In turn, TfW's Business Plan was published in response to that letter and can be found here, with financial information on pages 11-12: [Business Plan, 2024/25 \(tfw.wales\)](#). We will publish the 2025/26 business plan prior to the financial year as required (and as we have done this year); this is subject to approval from the Welsh Government.

Recommendation 2: TfW and the Welsh Government must ensure that TfW's full budget is available for scrutiny at the same time as the Welsh Government's draft budget.

Response: Accept

We will share our first outline budget with the Welsh Government at the end of July. We will then continue working with Welsh Government colleagues over the summer and into the autumn, providing insight and challenge as agreed. Publication of TfW's full budget is subject to approval from the Welsh Government.

Recommendation 3: The Welsh Government and TfW must continue to streamline the budget setting process to minimise the number of bilateral agreements that are required.

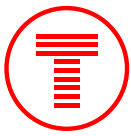
Response: Accept

Welsh Government and TfW continually work to streamline and improve the budget setting process and will implement the learning taken away from the current year's process.

Recommendation 4: TfW must set out how it plans to manage potential shortfalls in farebox revenue over the next three years.

Response: Accept in Principle

The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on rail passenger revenue and prolonged delivery of the CVL transformation. As a result, several years of accelerated passenger revenue growth have been delayed. The impact of COVID-19 on rail passenger revenue was felt across the UK, and TfW's services have recovered marginally better than other train operating companies in England, while at the same time delivering significant transformational change on the CVL.



TfW updates its 5-year forecasts of passenger revenue and other forms of income annually, with risks/opportunities identified as part of this process. Processes are in place to mitigate against any material risks to delivery of targets via governance structures in place. In addition, passenger revenue and other forms of income are closely monitored both weekly and periodically, while results (including performance against targets set) are scrutinised on an ongoing basis.

A key focus on value for money and ensuring the requirements of Welsh Government can be delivered in a cost-effective way is evidenced in our budget-setting process for 2024/25; while TfW is also committed to optimising commercial opportunities by way of marketing campaigns and the leasing of prime retail spaces (for example, at the new Cardiff Bus Interchange), as well as leveraging value from our supply chain.

Recommendation 5: TfW should publish its corporate KPIs immediately and provide regular updates.

Response: Accept

TfW committed to releasing quarterly KPI reports for 2024/25. TfW also committed to publishing KPIs for Q4 of 2023/24; naturally, this must be after the 2023/24 financial year has ended. As we have now entered a pre-election period following the announcement of a general election on the 4th July by UK Government, we are currently unable to release this information due to pre-election restrictions. However, this information has been shared with the Welsh Government and is ready to release as soon as these restrictions are lifted after the election. We will share this information with the Committee as soon as it is published.

Recommendation 6: TfW should update the Committee within the next 6 months on progress in further reducing the gender pay gap and improving workforce diversity.

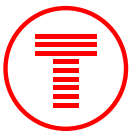
Response: Accept

TfW will write to the Committee regarding an update in November 2024.

Recommendation 7: TfW must set out a clear plan to address its poor performance in key areas as set out in Chapter 3 of this report. In particular, it should explain the steps it will take to improve passenger communication.

Response: Accept in principle

TfW has developed joint performance plans with infrastructure providers Network Rail and Amey Infrastructure Wales; and a refreshed tripartite strategy for performance improvement between TfW and these infrastructure providers was launched in April 2024. Additionally, TfW Rail Board has established a sub-committee focussed on driving up operational performance.



Improving the reliability and availability of rolling stock is a key priority for TfW as a train operator. While rolling stock shortages caused problems during the latter half of 2023, the situation improved significantly with the introduction of new trains and transformation of the network. Delivery of a large driver and conductor recruitment and training programme, along with three-year pay and productivity deals with these staff groups, also means that poor performance due to traincrew shortages is rare.

We are developing a plan to improve the transparency and effectiveness of our overall performance communications, including enabling customers to understand how their services are performing. We're continually improving the delivery of our customer information provision through digital capability and by working with our front-line teams to equip them with better information.

Recommendation 8: TfW should publish weekly performance data for each service on the rail network in a way that is accessible to passengers. This information should be circulated regularly to relevant constituency and regional Senedd members.

Response: Accept in principle.

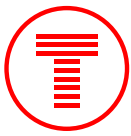
TfW is developing a plan to improve the transparency and effectiveness of our overall performance communications, including enabling customers to understand how their services are performing. Once the approach has been agreed, performance data will be available online for all to see.

Recommendation 9: TfW should ensure that, where a service has been terminated early, it provides alternative transport to each passenger. If TfW cannot provide an alternative mode of transport, such as a rail replacement, passengers should be given the necessary funds to pay for an alternative.

Response: Accept in Principle

TfW does everything within its power to avoid terminating services short of their end destination. When this is unavoidable, TfW controllers follow a guidance framework to recover services from disruption as quickly as possible and prevent a knock-on effect causing the next services to be delayed. In many cases, the next service is not far behind, minimising delays to affected passengers. Controllers communicate with onboard conductors and monitor CCTV both at the station and on the train to determine whether the decisions taken in these circumstances will lead to excessive crowding or passengers being left behind, unable to board.

Sometimes, a train will be instructed to call at unscheduled stations to offer resilience in these circumstances and provide a service to affected passengers.



In other situations, emergency rail replacement buses, coaches and taxis are mobilised to keep passengers moving. The controllers responsible for organising rail replacement transport have recently relocated to our control centre in Cardiff, enabling easier communication with controllers responding to service disruption on the railway, ensuring more joined-up decision making when a service needs to be altered and rail replacement transport needs to be mobilised. TfW has strong relationships with a range of local and regional private-hire bus and taxi companies, with the ability to transport passengers with mobility/accessibility requirements, and the success rate for mobilising rail replacement transport at short notice is high. It is important to note that we may face difficulty sourcing this transport when private hire companies are committed with existing school bus contracts during term time.

Compensation requests for taxi journeys made during disruption are treated fairly and consistently, with consideration given to whether any TfW rail replacement transport was provided and whether passengers had time-sensitive onward connections, along with strict limits on driver hours and rest days as set out in law.

Recommendation 10: TfW must adapt its processes for managing situations where services are terminated early to take account of the different impact winter weather may have on passengers. As part of this work, TfW should also consider the location of the station where the service is terminated and its proximity to alternative transport services and facilities.

Response: Accept in Principle

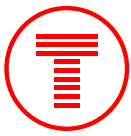
As outlined in recommendation 9, terminating services short of their destination is a last resort to help recover the service during or after a disruption to the network. The guidance framework used by controllers to make these decisions is under constant review and in applying the framework, whenever there are options, controllers will take account of remoteness, winter weather conditions, last train times and the likely time it will take for any rail replacement transport to reach that station.

A recent example of reviewing the guidance framework is the preference for using Llandrindod rather than Llanwrtyd if a service termination is required on the Heart of Wales line. Llandrindod has part-time station staffing, town centre amenities nearby and other transport connections, so is more suitable than Llanwrtyd.

Recommendation 11: TfW should provide the Committee with an update within the next 6 months on progress towards the target of 95% of journeys being on new trains by the end of 2024.

Response: Accept

TfW will write to the Committee with this update in November 2024.



Recommendation 12: Tfw should report back to this Committee on the outcome of its review into rail services and timetables within the next six months.

Response: Accept

Tfw will write to the Committee with this update in November 2024.

Recommendation 13: Tfw should work with rail passenger groups to communicate the outcomes of the review of rail services with passengers.

Response: Accept

We have undertaken a series of technical briefings with our passenger representative groups ahead of the publication of our strategic timetable review. We are reviewing the responses to the stakeholder engagement exercise and will follow up with all the groups on changes we may be able to make resulting from their feedback.

Recommendation 14: Tfw must improve its service provision around major events. It should report back to the Committee within the next six months on the steps it has taken in this regard.

Response: Accept in principle

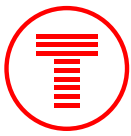
While Tfw recognised that there was room for improvement during its appearance before the Committee in November 2023, Tfw has since implemented a number of enhancements to its service provision for major events.

Since our November appearance, operational staff have worked tirelessly to successfully deliver enhanced service provision during major events, going above and beyond to transport event goers safely and successfully in and out of the capital during the Six Nations Championship, two Euro qualification games at Cardiff City Stadium and more recently, the Bruce Springsteen Concert at the Principality Stadium.

We know there will inevitably be queues, especially as the Principality Stadium is less than 200m away from Cardiff Central Station; fans and event goers move out of the stadium straight into the Station. However, please be assured that our senior and frontline colleagues take this very seriously and a considerable amount of planning, sometimes taking over a year, goes into making these events happen.

I am conscious that the operational staff who work so very hard to deliver these arrangements often face considerable criticism despite delivering largely successful operations, as well as abuse from the public on the day. It is important to recognise the impact this has on staff wellbeing, and I am keen to ensure these members of staff know that they are valued, even where improvements were needed as a result of factors beyond their control (such as mechanical issues experienced coupling together trains, as happened on one occasion).

Tfw is committed to transparency around this process and will write to the Committee with a further update on this matter in November 2024.



Recommendation 15: The Welsh Government and TfW should keep the Delay Repay scheme under review to ensure it is striking the right balance between fairness for passengers and the realities of operating a rail transport network.

Response: Accept

TfW will keep the existing 'Delay Repay 15' scheme under review, including monitoring of associated costs. In this context, it should be noted that the move from 'Delay Repay 30' to 'Delay Repay 15' was a grant agreement commitment.

Recommendation 16: The Welsh Government should provide further detail of the infrastructure enhancement projects that are being considered with the UK Government as part of the “pipeline” of projects to be brought forward if funding becomes available.

Response: Welsh Government to provide this detail.

Recommendation 17: The Welsh Government and TfW should set out their position on the proposals in the recently published UK Government draft Bill on rail reform.

Response: Accept

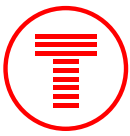
TfW and the Welsh Government have compiled their formal responses to the UK Transport Select Committee. These have been published as part of the UK Parliaments Transport Select Committee publications and can be found here: [Scrutiny of the draft Rail Reform Bill - Committees - UK Parliament](#).

The Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport also attended the Transport Select Committee on 21st May 2024.

Recommendation 18: TfW should explain what actions it is taking to realise the savings from the South Wales metro project and how these savings were identified.

Response: Accept

TfW has reviewed the delivery phasing, required scope of works, procurement strategy, and engineering and supply chain management approach for completion of the CVL Transformation Programme, to ensure that the minimum viable infrastructure is completed to achieve the introduction of new fleets and required rail service enhancements. The review of the infrastructure requirements, delivery timings and the interaction with our new fleets is naturally complex and there is a need for continued review and challenge to ensure we deliver the programme. As part of this ongoing review across multiple disciplines within TfW and its supply chain, we will identify any savings that can be achieved which assist with the overall programme delivery and mitigating cost pressures.



Recommendation 19: Tfw should provide an update within the next six months on the development of the national delivery plan for active travel.

Response: Accept

The Active Travel Delivery Plan was published by the Welsh Government on 14th March 2024 and can be found here: [Active travel delivery plan 2024 to 2027 | GOV.WALES](#)

Recommendation 20: Tfw should provide an update within six months on progress in relation to its work with Corporate Joint Committees and the Active Travel Fund.

Response: Accept

Tfw will write to the Committee with an update in November 2024.

Tfw is working closely with the CJCs to develop their regional transport plans. The regional active travel leads continue to provide advice and guidance to the regional Strategic Development Programme Managers (SDPMs) to support that engagement and their wider activities. In addition, the regional active travel leads are working closely with local authority colleagues to support them in the development and delivery of their active travel programmes, in particularly those funded through the Active Travel Fund Programme.

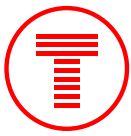
The support programme will be of equal value to the CJCs in respect of providing good practice advice and guidance, whilst also strengthening the engagement, monitoring and evaluation associated with active travel projects within the RTP programme. Furthermore, the Head of Active Travel and Placemaking, along with senior officers in the active travel team, are involved in discussions with the SDPMs and Welsh Government colleagues regarding the future relationship between the ATF programme, the CJCs and RTPs in relation to future funding delivery models.

Recommendation 21: Tfw should set out how it is planning to ensure it has sufficient capacity and expertise to take a leading role in the transition to the bus franchising model.

Response: Accept

Over the last two years Tfw has recruited into several key areas to help support the transition to franchising. These include:

- Employees who have established careers in bus operators and have firsthand knowledge of this market
- Employees who have worked within local authorities as transport specialists and have a good understanding of local authority planning and governance, alongside expertise in bus



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- Employees who have a wider skill base around transport and transport planning, such as geographic information systems (GIS), transport planning, programme and project management, as well as change management.

In addition, TfW already employs people with the broader skills necessary to support the transition to franchising, such as procurement, market engagement, contract management, performance management, revenue management, communications, marketing, branding, data analysis, financial management, financial modelling, ticketing, revenue protection and training (etc).

We will continue to monitor this area and build and develop the team as required – including through external challenge from industry experts.

I trust the Committee finds the detail provided in this response useful and commit to writing in follow-up to recommendations 6, 11, 12, 14 and 20 in November 2024. In the meantime, if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

James Price
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee entitled Report on Rail Services and Transport for Wales' Performance 2023-24.

Detailed Responses to the report's recommendations are set out below:

Recommendation 1.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must ensure that its business and financial plans are published in advance of the 2025-26 financial year.

Response – Accept

Welsh Government officials work closely with TfW to continuously improve our planning processes based on lessons learnt from previous years to ensure that business and financial plans are published in advance of the new financial year, as has been the case in recent years.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 2.

The Committee recommends that

TfW and the Welsh Government must ensure that TfW's full budget is available for scrutiny at the same time as the Welsh Government's draft budget.

Response – Accept

The timeline for the development of TfW's full budget and alignment with Welsh Government's draft budget has been agreed with TfW and begins with the first TfW outline budget being provided to Welsh Government in July 2024. Further development and consideration of the budget will be undertaken through the summer and into the autumn ahead of publication. It is intended that both budgets will be available for scrutiny at the same time.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 3.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government and TfW must continue to streamline the budget setting process to minimise the number of bilateral agreements that are required.

Response – Accept

Following each budget setting process Welsh Government and TfW officials jointly identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of the budget setting process. A future comprehensive spending review by the UK Government will offer the opportunity to consider the structure and duration of the budgets to further streamline the process.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 4.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must set out how it plans to manage potential shortfalls in farebox revenue over the next three years.

Response – Accept

Welsh Government has asked TfW to continue to seek opportunities to grow its farebox revenue by increasing passenger numbers and improving the efficiency of their rail services. Additionally, we are working closely with TfW to maximise commercial opportunities to raise revenue and reduce the required operating subsidy. We have asked TfW to directly respond to the committee on the specific steps taken to achieve this.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 5.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should publish its corporate KPIs immediately and provide regular updates.

Response – Accept

TfW's KPIs will be published in the summer and will be shared with the committee as soon as they are published.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 6.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should update the Committee within the next 6 months on progress in further reducing the gender pay gap and improving workforce diversity.

Response – Accept

This is an area that the Welsh Government asked TfW to focus on in the remit letter issued last year. We expect TfW to be an exemplary employer and to be reflective of the diversity of the Welsh population and the communities we serve. We look forward to seeing progress in this area.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 7.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must set out a clear plan to address its poor performance in key areas as set out in Chapter 3 of this report. In particular, it should explain the steps it will take to improve passenger communication.

Response – Accept

TfW have made significant improvements in their rail performance during 2024, demonstrating that their plans are working. We recognise that the passenger experience of rail performance 2023 fell short of expectations, however TFW faced huge challenges with delivering their day-to-day service whilst replacing an entire fleet and delivering the largest ever infrastructure investment in Wales. Whilst there remains room for further improvement it is important to recognise the progress that has been made since the publication of this report.

We agree that passenger communication is incredibly important, especially during times of disruption to services, and we are working with TfW to ensure improvements. I have asked TfW to set out their specific plans to address this within their own response to the committee.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 8.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should publish weekly performance data for each service on the rail network in a way that is accessible to passengers. This information should be circulated regularly to relevant constituency and regional Senedd members.

Response – Accept in principle

As this is an operational issue, it is for TfW to accept this recommendation and I invite them to do so.

Accessible and easily to understand performance data is important for passengers, and I have already asked TfW to consider how they can provide additional relevant information for passengers. The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with TfW as this is developed, and we will ensure that Senedd members are kept informed of progress.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 9.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should ensure that, where a service has been terminated early, it provides alternative transport to each passenger. If TfW cannot provide an alternative mode of transport, such as a rail replacement, passengers should be given the necessary funds to pay for an alternative.

Response – Accept in principle

As this is an operational issue, it is for TfW to accept this recommendation and I invite them to do so.

The Welsh Government agrees that ensuring alternative transport can be provided in these circumstances, when possible, is extremely important to passengers. This is primarily an operational issue, and I have therefore asked TfW to respond directly to the committee with additional information on their plans.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 10.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must adapt its processes for managing situations where services are terminated early to take account of the different impact winter weather may have on passengers. As part of this work, TfW should also consider the location of the station where the service is terminated and its proximity to alternative transport services and facilities.

Response – Accept in principle

As this is an operational issue, it is for TfW to accept this recommendation and I invite them to do so.

The Welsh Government agrees that plans for managing early termination of services must take account of a wide variety of factors, including the availability of alternative services and facilities. However, this is primarily an operational issue, and I have therefore asked TfW to respond directly to the committee with additional information on their plans.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 11.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should provide the Committee with an update within the next 6 months on progress towards the target of 95% of journeys being on new trains by the end of 2024.

Response – Accept

TfW have already received around 70% of the new fleet, with more trains being delivered all the time. Some of these are in daily service and some are being used for driver training. The table below sets out the current position, and I will ask TfW to write to the Committee with a further update within the next 6 months.

Current Position (11 June 2024)	Class of Train	Delivered	Awaiting	Total	Total delivered	In service
	230	5	0	5	100%	2
	231	11	0	11	100%	8
	756	24	0	24	100%	0
	398	14	22	36	39%	0
	197	51	26	77	66%	43
	Mark 4	7	0	7	100%	4
Total new to Wales		112	49	160	70%	57

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 12.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should report back to this Committee on the outcome of its review into rail services and timetables within the next six months.

Response – Accept

TfW are currently considering the feedback received on their review of timetables. I will ensure that the committee, as well as Senedd members, are informed of any changes made to the current plans.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 13.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should work with rail passenger groups to communicate the outcomes of the review of rail services with passengers.

Response – Accept

TfW have worked closely with a range of stakeholders, including passenger rail groups, to communicate the planned changes from the Timetable Review and to gather valuable feedback. This feedback is currently being considered, and I have asked TfW to ensure passenger groups are fully informed of the final decisions once taken.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 14.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must improve its service provision around major events. It should report back to the Committee within the next six months on the steps it has taken in this regard.

Response – Accept

Transport for Wales, working with other key stakeholders and transport providers, have significantly improved planning and service provision for major events. There are now clear, agreed plans for major events, which include increased capacity, additional services, and better communications with customers. The impact of these improvements has been seen in recent successful events in the capital city including the Six Nations, European Qualifiers sporting fixtures and the Bruce Springsteen concert.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 15.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government and TfW should keep the Delay Repay scheme under review to ensure it is striking the right balance between fairness for passengers and the realities of operating a rail transport network.

Response – Accept

The Welsh Government will work closely with TfW to keep all passenger compensation mechanisms under review to ensure they are appropriate and strike the right balance between fairness for passengers and the challenges of operating a busy rail network.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 16.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government should provide further detail of the infrastructure enhancement projects that are being considered with the UK Government as part of the “pipeline“ of projects to be brought forward if funding becomes available.

Response - Accept

The Welsh Government would be pleased to provide the committee with further detail about its priorities for rail infrastructure enhancements in Wales and will write to the committee providing a copy of the Joint Wales Rail Board Infrastructure Priorities Pipeline as soon as possible, but within the next six months.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 17.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government and TfW should set out their position on the proposals in the recently published UK Government draft Bill on rail reform.

Response – Accept

I recently provided oral and written evidence to the Transport Select Committee as part of their pre-legislative scrutiny. Both sets of evidence have been published as part of the UK Parliaments Transport Select Committee here: [Scrutiny of the draft Rail Reform Bill - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 18.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should explain what actions it is taking to realise the savings from the South Wales metro project and how these savings were identified.

Response – Accept

Our investment in the Core Valley Lines is transforming the way people travel, improving connectivity and creating opportunity for people across the region. The programme is in its final stages and is starting to deliver a world-class turn up and go metro style service. As the programme draws to a close, we will continue to work closely with TfW to identify and secure any cost reduction, and that the cost to tax-payers and passengers is kept to a minimum. Transport for Wales will respond directly to the committee in relation to measures taken to minimise costs.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 19.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should provide an update within the next six months on the development of the national delivery plan for active travel.

Response – Accept

The Active Travel Delivery Plan was published on 14 March and we will report annually to the Active Travel Board on progress against the actions and this information will be published. This will include the actions in the Active Travel Delivery Plan for which TfW is the lead partner.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 20.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should provide an update within six months on progress in relation to its work with Corporate Joint Committees and the Active Travel Fund.

Response – Accept

The Welsh Government is currently carrying out a transport grants modernisation exercise, which is developing options for the future allocation of transport funding to local authorities and CJsCs. This work includes the Active Travel Fund.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 21.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should set out how it is planning to ensure it has sufficient capacity and expertise to take a leading role in the transition to the bus franchising model.

Response – Accept

We included a specific annex on the role of TfW in delivering bus franchising in their last remit letter ([Remit for TfW 2.0 - Developing a multi-modal culture and supporting the development and delivery of an integrated transport network \(gov.wales\)](#)), which stressed the importance of making sure TfW has the right resources, skills and capability to deliver bus franchising and making sure TfW is able to work in a truly multi-modal way to bring skills and expertise to bear across a whole integrated transport system.

Financial Implications - None

**Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd,
yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith**

—
**Climate Change, Environment,
and Infrastructure Committee**

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Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales and CEO of Audit Wales

19 June 2024

Dear Adrian,

Request for further scrutiny of Transport for Wales (TfW) and Core Valley Lines Modernisation Project

You will be aware that the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee published its most recent [report on TfW and rail services](#) in May 2024. In its report, the Committee concluded that the Senedd's Public Accounts and Administration Committee and Audit Wales should consider whether the delivery of rail services and the CVL modernisation project merits further scrutiny by the Auditor General for Wales in a value-for-money study.

Estimated initially at £738 million in 2018, the project's costs have increased significantly by £306 million. The Committee recognised the severe challenges presented by inflation and unforeseeable events such as the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the scale of the increase was of particular concern.

Our discussions with Transport for Wales (TfW) revealed that approximately one-third of this cost increase could be attributed to 'infrastructure constraints'. We were surprised that constraints on such a scale were not anticipated or identified earlier in the project planning phase. Additionally, TfW has asserted that the budget for the South Wales metro could be reduced by £20-30 million without

compromising safety or service provision. We have sought further information on this matter from TfW.

TfW faced considerable financial challenges in the last year, including a £100 million funding gap arising from a shortfall in projected revenue growth from rail services. Although the additional funding for 2024-25 has been "baselined" in TfW's budget for future years, we continue to be concerned that TfW and, by extension, the Welsh Government will remain financially exposed if farebox revenue fails to materialise at expected levels.

Given the significant investment and associated risks and the fact that Senedd Committees are unable to access the internal TfW information essential to understanding the issues involved, we believe that the Auditor General for Wales should consider a review of the delivery of rail services and a value-for-money review of the CVL modernisation project. I would be grateful if you would consider this matter and share your views with the Committee in due course.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Senedd's Public Accounts and Administration Committee for information.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

**Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd,
yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith**

—
**Climate Change, Environment,
and Infrastructure Committee**

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Mark Isherwood MS
Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration
Committee

19 June 2024

Dear Mark,

I enclose a copy of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee's most recent [report on TfW and rail services](#), which was published in May 2024.

You will be aware that, in its report, the Committee concluded that the Senedd's Public Accounts and Administration Committee and Audit Wales should consider whether the delivery of rail services and the CVL modernisation project merit further scrutiny by the Auditor General for Wales in a value-for-money study.

Estimated initially at £738 million in 2018, the project's costs have increased significantly by £306 million. The Committee recognised the severe challenges presented by inflation and unforeseeable events such as the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the scale of the increase was of particular concern.

Our discussions with Transport for Wales (TfW) revealed that approximately one-third of this cost increase could be attributed to 'infrastructure constraints'. We were surprised that constraints on such a scale were not anticipated or identified earlier in the project planning phase. Additionally, TfW has asserted that the budget for the South Wales metro could be reduced by £20-30 million without

compromising safety or service provision. We have sought further information on this matter from TfW.

TfW faced considerable financial challenges in the last year, including a £100 million funding gap arising from a shortfall in projected revenue growth from rail services. Although the additional funding for 2024-25 has been "baselined" in TfW's budget for future years, we continue to be concerned that TfW and, by extension, the Welsh Government will remain financially exposed if farebox revenue fails to materialise at expected levels.

Given the significant investment and associated risks and the fact that Senedd Committees are unable to access the internal TfW information essential to understanding the issues involved, we believe that the Auditor General for Wales should consider a review of the delivery of rail services and a value-for-money review of the CVL modernisation project. I have written to the Auditor General with this request and will update you on his conclusions in due course.

I would be happy for you to discuss this issue directly with Audit Wales and for your Committee to highlight any other matters that should inform the Auditor General's consideration.

Kind regards,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Llyr Gruffydd MS

Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

10 June 2024

Dear Llyr,

UK/European Forest Institute: Host Country Agreement

As you are aware, the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of non-trade international agreements in the Sixth Senedd.

During our meeting on 7 May 2024, we considered the host country agreement between the UK Government and the European Forest Institute (EFI). This agreement provides the EFI with the privileges and immunities necessary for it to function effectively within the UK.

Although the matters covered by the agreement – namely the membership of international organisations and the conferral of privileges and immunities under international law – are reserved matters, we agreed to bring this agreement to the attention of your Committee given its interest in forestry as a devolved matter.

Our latest report, which was laid on 6 June 2024, is available [here](#).

Yours sincerely,



Mike Hedges

Chair

Agenda Item 6.4

**Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd,
yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith**

—
**Climate Change, Environment,
and Infrastructure Committee**

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Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair of the Finance Committee

18 June 2024

Dear Peredur,

Scrutiny of the draft budget

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on behalf of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee on the scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024-25. I have considered the matters raised in your letter and would like to make the following observations.

The quality of the documents accompanying the draft Budget this year was not satisfactory. Key information requested by the Committee was missing without acknowledgement or explanation, and several other elements were inaccurate or incomplete.

We believe evidence papers supporting the process must be made available to committees earlier and that efforts must be made to enhance their accuracy. However, we acknowledge that the Welsh Government is working under considerable constraints in this regard, given its reliance on the timing of the UK Government's budget process. Too often, the Senedd is subject to a severely curtailed timescale for scrutiny.



You may also be aware that the recent changes to cabinet responsibilities resulted in a significant redistribution of responsibilities, particularly those of the former Minister for Climate Change. The Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee's remit now covers the portfolios of four cabinet secretaries, encompassing diverse and substantial policy areas. I have written to the Business Committee to express my concern that scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget, in particular, will prove difficult for the Committee, especially considering the time constraints under which committees already operate. I hope that the Business Committee will consider this matter.

I would also like to suggest that the Senedd explore more flexible scheduling options within the window available for scrutiny. This could include all-day Plenary sessions, increasing the number of committee meeting slots or extending the time available for meetings, and increasing the overall number of days dedicated to Senedd business during the draft Budget scrutiny period.

We welcome the Finance Committee's ongoing engagement on the effectiveness of the budget scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Recommendation #11: NRW Internal Review Findings

Classification: Official

Report Date: May 2024

1. Report Purpose

The review has been conducted to discharge the following recommendation from the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee.

Recommendation 11: NRW should review its regulatory and environment response to the issues at Cardigan Wastewater Treatment works with the aim of learning lessons. It should report back to the Committee on the findings of the review.

The recommendation is from the CCEI Committee's report on the performance of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW). The report, published in February 2024, outlines a series of recommendations aimed at DCWW and its regulators to aid improving the company's performance and ensuring better accountability¹.

2. Summary

This report covers the review undertaken by NRW following the publication of the Recommendation noted above. The review was focused on evaluating the regulatory and environmental response from NRW as a consequence to the issues seen at the Cardigan Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW), which is operated by DCWW. As part of the review, NRW staff who currently have or have previously had an input into the regulation of the site were interviewed. In addition, relevant documentation was reviewed.

This has been a complex and long-term issue that centres around the intrusion of seawater into the wastewater network and the resultant negative impacts on the equipment used to treat the wastewater. This leads to untreated wastewater being

¹ Welsh Parliament Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee "[Report on performance of Dŵr Cymru](#)" February 2024

released into the local water course (River Teifi). Following regulatory intervention, which remains live, the operator has since announced a full replacement of the treatment works.

The review of NRW's regulatory and environmental response has highlighted a number of findings. These range from elements of best practice to the continuing option for relevant & proportionate enforcement action. Improvements have also been identified, in particular related to the timeliness of NRW's response. Regardless of the low environmental impact seen as a result of the issues at the treatment works, the ultimate solution of significant capital expenditure by DCWW may have been identified and actioned sooner.

Enforcement Action: It is important to note that at the time of this review, the regulatory activity associated with Cardigan WwTW is still ongoing and enforcement action remains open & available to NRW. Therefore, the review will not comment / assess the enforcement action taken to date or suggest, via findings / recommendations, what future action should be taken. This is in order not to prejudice any future legal action associated with the regulation of the Cardigan WwTW.

3. Interviews

Alongside a review of the existing documents and evidence, a number of NRW employees were informally interviewed to support the review. They all either have had or play a current role in the regulation of the site or are a subject specialist, relevant to the recommendation.

4. Background

Cardigan Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) is located in Cardigan, Ceredigion and is owned and operated by DCWW. Wastewater treatment works are designed to take significant volumes of wastewater² from the surrounding area and to treat & clean that water prior to discharge into the local environment.

² Urban wastewater' is defined in the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive as the mixture of domestic wastewater from kitchens, bathrooms and toilets, the wastewater from industries discharging to sewers, and rainwater run-off from roads and other impermeable surfaces such as roofs, pavements and roads draining to sewers. Urban wastewater is often referred to as 'sewage.'

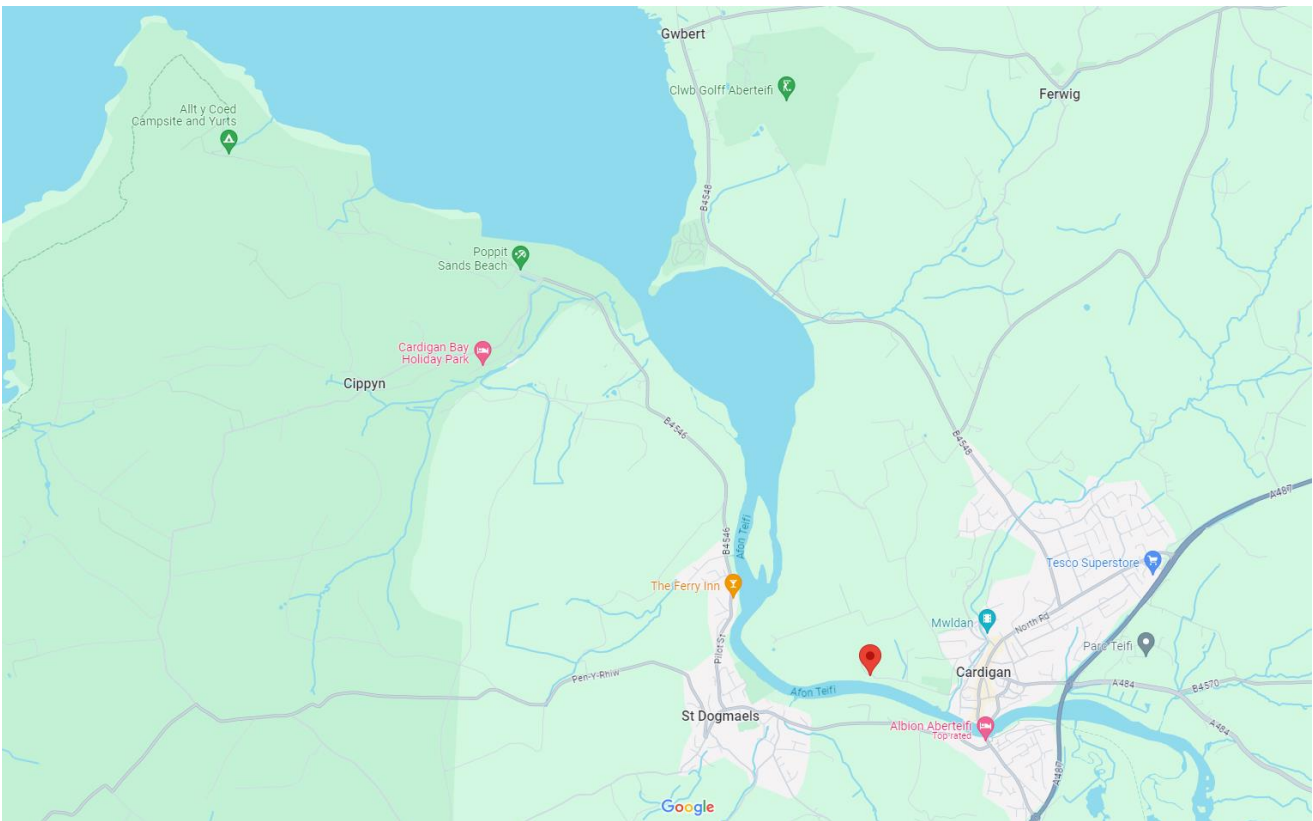


Figure 1 & 2 – Location of Cardigan WwTW (red dot) by the River Teifi and surrounding area

Natural Resources Wales' regulatory role covers continuous discharges from the water industry, as well as intermittent discharges, such as those from combined sewer overflows or emergency overflows. Typically, any discharge to controlled waters requires a discharge authorisation (environmental permit), which sets out standards for the monitoring of effluent from treatment plants. The Cardigan WwTW is permitted by NRW (permit reference numbers are BH0074101 and BP0275401) and falls under the regulation of NRW's Ceredigion Environment Team within Mid-Wales Operations.

The site discharges into the Teifi estuary and has been subject to regulatory scrutiny since 2015 due to the saline (seawater) intrusion into the WwTW. This overwhelms the works causing a reduction in treatment capacity. The saline intrusion is due to the location of the WwTW on an estuary (tidal river) and seawater can regularly enter the works along the wastewater & sewage network.

The regulatory issues currently present at the site are;

- The WwTW being unable to adequately deal with the volume of sewage entering the site whilst saline intrusion is present, which causes a consequential reduction in treatment flow to protect the treatment equipment and results in discharges to the River Teifi. This is contrary to;
 - Condition 1 of discharge permit (BH0074101): "*the discharge shall consist solely of secondary treated sewage effluent, which has been disinfected at all times by passage through membrane filters*" (Membrane filters are also known as Membrane Bioreactors, or MBR)
 - and condition 2.3.1(a) of storm permit (BP0275401): "*the discharge shall only occur when and only for as long as either (i) the flow passed forward is equal to or greater than the overflow setting indicated (88l/s) due to rainfall and/or snow melt or (ii) the hydraulic capacity of the sewer network downstream of the combined sewer overflow is reached due to rainfall and/or snow melt and the level of storm sewage in the sewer at the combined sewer overflow is greater than the weir level of the overflow structure which is specified as an overflow setting (88l/s)*"
- DCWW by-passing the MBR at a rate greater than expected and spilling sewage into the Teifi.
 - To mitigate the effect of the saline intrusion, at a specific conductivity rate DCWW will divert incoming sewage to storm storage tanks. This is undertaken by DCWW to protect the MBR, as the treatment process here is directly affected by the salt water. However, investigations are ongoing to assess permit compliance as this appears to be linked to exceptionally high spill figures.

5. Investigation Overview

5.1 Timeline

During the investigation, the regulatory timeline was discussed, and this captured the period from when the issue was first found through to recent activity by the local environment team.

An abridged timeline of events is outlined below, with a review of the regulatory and environmental response.

- 1) In July 2015, NRW became aware of an issue at the Cardigan WwTW during an audit of the OSM (Operator Self-Monitoring)³ that took place at the site. It was found that there was significant saline ingress into the network / WwTW that significantly affects the operation of membrane bioreactors (MBR). DCWW stated that incoming sewage was diverted to storm overflow tanks for storage prior to being returned back into the system for processing, which is contrary to the site permit. The permit breaches identified were communicated to DCWW during the site visit.
 - The visit, with associated actions, was recorded via the Compliance Assessment Report (CAR) A/150709/BH0074101.
 - In October 2015, a Warning Letter was issued to DCWW failing to comply with an environmental permit condition.
- 2) In March 2016, a follow-up site visit was conducted at the site.
 - The visit, with associated actions, was recorded via the CAR I/160315/BH0074101
- 3) In August 2019, an OSM audit was undertaken at the WwTW. This visit identified that (a) there was no system in place for Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) that met the required standards and (b) DCWW had conducted work to reduce saline intrusion within the network.
 - The visit, with associated actions, was recorded via CAR_NRW0035767 and the associated enforcement action was initiated in COLINS 9852. (COLINS is the NRW system for recording and managing enforcement investigations)

³ **Operator Self-Monitoring:** To show compliance against specific numerical conditions within an environmental permit, the operator has to collect and analyse samples of their permitted discharges. To ensure the operator is undertaking the monitoring correctly and effectively, the regulator will undertake periodic focussed audits on the operator's processes and management systems to ensure self-monitoring is performed correctly to an acceptable standard. Environmental regulators use Operator Monitoring Assessment (OMA) to provide a consistent and transparent approach to this assessment and further detail can be found in NRW's "[Technical Guidance Note M18 \(Monitoring\): Monitoring of discharges to water and sewer](#)"

- 4) Between December 2019 through to 2022 there were a number of interactions with DCWW and site visits by NRW staff to Cardigan WwTW site. There were also several regulatory engagements as noted in the table below.

Notice	Requirement	Timescales	Outcome	COLINS #
Legal notice pursuant to Regulation 36 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016	DCWW to provide NRW with a plan outlining proposed monitoring and/or investigations to identify a solution to either reduce salinity in the Cardigan WwTW network or enable the works to adequately treat sewage during periods of high salinity	Issued: 23/01/2020 Deadline: 01/06/2020	Complied with – DCWW outlined works to be undertaken on the network and investigations into alternative treatments	10181
Legal notice pursuant to Regulation 36 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.	DCWW to provide a report to NRW detailing the outcomes/results of the Cardigan sewer network investigations and of the pilot plant works at Cardigan WwTW. The report would have to identify solutions and give timescales for completion of works which would either reduce salinity in the Cardigan WwTW network to a treatable level or enable the works to adequately treat sewage during periods of high salinity	Issued: 01/10/2020 Deadline: 14/01/2022	Complied with – DCWW findings proposed a feasibility study to install updated technology / treatment process	

- 5) In September 2022, DCWW submitted a feasibility study to NRW that outlined the preferred option, which would be subject to outline design.
- 6) During 2023, NRW Officers visited the WwTW to review the operation and to view the cleaning operations DCWW regularly undertake to manage the effect of saline intrusion and the consequences on the MBR. In addition, another notice was issued to DCWW following the submission and review of the feasibility study.

Notice	Requirement	Timescales	Outcome	COLINS #
Legal notice pursuant to Regulation 36 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016	DCWW to complete and provide NRW with a copy of the outline design for the new works; to confirm that funding has been acquired in DCWW's AMP 8 business plan; and to confirm the date within the AMP 8 period when the full solution will be operational at Cardigan enabling the works to adequately treat sewage during periods of high salinity	Issued: 23/10/2023 Deadline: 31/03/2025	Being complied with – DCWW have submitted a planning application to Ceredigion County Council	12898

- 7) In 2024 (to date), NRW has reviewed the WwTW flow data from the 01/01/2022 through to 23/08/2023 and is currently assessing the results.

The review, with associated actions, is recorded via CAR_NRW0044090

Compliance and enforcement documents referred to are available on NRW's Public Register: [Natural Resources Wales / Public register: environmental permitting, water resources and marine licensing information](#)

6. Regulatory Review, findings, and ongoing actions

Compliance Assessment

The timeline above outlines the key regulatory activities undertaken by NRW since the issue of saline intrusion and the consequential permit breaches by DCWW were first noted.

It is clear from discussions with staff that the issues seen at the Cardigan WwTW are complex and not easily rectifiable. Regulatory engagement with DCWW has followed our regulatory and enforcement processes with operational staff using judgement in deciding a course of action on resolving the operational difficulties at the site. Staff also correctly recorded the details of visits and action via Compliance Assessment Reports (CARs) as required with further discussions also taking place via other forums e.g. peer groups and Place-based DCWW engagement meetings.

Finding: *The environment teams assessing permit compliance for WwTW, and other sources of water discharges do not have up to date and current guidance to aid comprehensive and consistent assessment.*

Action: The development of the regulatory handbook and Annex 10 of OGN116 has supported the regulatory staff in their duties since their publication. NRW is continuing to review and update legacy Environment Agency guidance in line with NRW's OGN process and staff feedback.

Finding: *Environmental impact was based on bathing waters and visual assessment primarily. The former is seasonal, and the latter cannot accurately ascertain the water chemistry. With ever-changing capacity and skill/experience levels within the Environment Teams, the lack of guidance or other support on how and when to assess water quality breaches may lead to under/over categorisation of permit breaches and incorrect assessment of the environmental impact.*

The environmental impact of the discharges may have been reduced due to the significant volume of saline water ingress at the WwTW. However, the compliance scoring has been correctly scored on the potential environmental impact. More investigation and assessment could have been undertaken on the discharge from the site, however, to confirm the actual impact.

Action: NRW has taken the learning from Cardigan and will review its current guidance to officers in how to assess environmental compliance under such circumstances

Finding: *Regulatory activity is still ongoing regarding the issue on the by-passing rates / low flow rates seen. The review of EDM data and wider flow/dry weather flow for permit compliance assessments should be championed and supported to ensure staff are able to accurately assess the full compliance performance of relevant DCWW assets. An initial enforcement response was made and there is ongoing consideration of the need for any further enforcement action.*

Action: Support is being provided to the Ceredigion Environment Team via seconded staff within the Regulatory Approaches team to audit and assess DCWW data. Continued support from NRW Legal team in relation to further enforcement work is ongoing.

Finding: *Timeline: Since the issue was first raised in 2015, NRW has had prolonged engagement with DCWW to address the saline ingress. This timeline reflects the complexity of the network, the cause of the saline ingress and consequential effect on the treatment process and the investigations needed to assess suitable alternatives. Through the review, it is apparent that regulatory staff have followed the regulatory principles to move through to the provision of a suitable sustainable solution by DCWW. However, the abridged timeline highlights there was period between 2016 – 2019 where there is little recorded regulatory activity, although engagement was reported to be continuing between DCWW and NRW.*

Action: While NRW can point to a number of conflicting priorities that may explain the lack of regulatory assessment from 2016-19 highlighted in the review, we have since acted through the introduction of a Regulatory Service Plan, which directs teams to conduct compliance activity on a set schedule based on site risk and compliance. For Cardigan WWTW, the expectation from this point is that it would have a minimum of one inspection per annum if it were a high performing site with no regulatory concern. Sites with compliance issues would have increased compliance assessment.

Enforcement Action

It is important to note that at the time of this review, the regulatory activity associated with Cardigan WwTW is still ongoing and enforcement action remains open & available to NRW. Therefore the review has not assessed the enforcement action taken to date nor does it suggest, via findings/recommendations, what future action should be taken. This is in order not to prejudice any future legal action associated with the regulation of the Cardigan WwTW.

The NRW Enforcement and Sanctions Policy⁴ outlines the principles that the organisation follows for enforcement activities. It is a publicly available document, which is routinely referenced when engaging with customers. NRW has a clear governance approach to decision making for enforcement activity to ensure a consistent approach is applied.

Use of enforcement options: the Enforcement and Sanctions Policy outlines the enforcement options available to NRW. It has been evidenced that enforcement actions (warnings and notices) have been deployed throughout the course of the engagement with DCWW on the consequences of saline intrusion and associated permit breaches. This has been recorded via COLINS (Contravention, Offence, Legal, Information and Notification System) as outlined in OGN 007 (OGN 007: National Investigation Manual).

The investigation is complex and it is not uncommon for final enforcement responses to occur much later than the original offending.

Finding: *Enforcement action has taken place and has been recorded via COLINS. This has been undertaken with engagement with NRW's Legal team.*

Action: NRW continues to have the ability to progress with further enforcement action. The site remains under investigation and any breaches will continue to be dealt with in line with the Policy.

Review, conclusions, and actions

The regulatory and environmental response to the Cardigan WwTW and the ongoing non-compliance with permit conditions is live and ongoing by NRW, primarily led by the Ceredigion Environment Team. The timeline for the implementation of a technical solution to saline ingress (£20m investment to replace the WwTW) is known and in the public domain, with work on site expected to commence in 2025. Regulatory activities have been documented and enforcement action has been regularly assessed, issued where identified and the ability for NRW to take further enforcement action is open and available.

The review of the regulatory and environmental response has identified a number of findings; both where there has been good practice/guidance followed and where improvements can be made. Overall, the regulatory response has been reasonably proportionate to the complexity of the technical issues identified, the environmental impact and the delivery of a sustainable outcome to address the issues. However, the timeliness

⁴ [Natural Resources Wales / Enforcement and sanctions policy](#)

of the response overall by NRW may have been more prompt, if resourcing and wider draws on the regulatory team's time allowed.

The actions highlighted above are ongoing, further guidance, training and discussion is required to fully implement the regulatory requirements.

Correspondence from Friends of the Earth Cymru to the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee - 11 June 2024

Dear Llyr Gruffydd MS and members of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee,

We hope you are well.

We would like to highlight a possible issue you might be interested in at some point.

At a time when the need to reduce climate emissions is more pressing than ever, with 2023 being the hottest year on record by some margin (<https://wmo.int/news/media-centre/climate-change-indicators-reached-record-levels-2023-wmo>), there is an even greater urgency needed if we are to play our part in helping stop the worst effects of climate change.

There are of course many, many different things we can and must do right across society from governments at all levels to businesses, communities and individuals. Some of these things receive a lot of political attention and some, despite being large emitters, receive little attention.

One of these things, and something that continually slips under the radar, is supermarket chiller units (fridges). They use up to 1% of the UK's electricity. That may not seem like much but it is the equivalent of the electricity usage of over 730,000 homes (<https://foe.cymru/why-supermarkets-should-put-doors-their-fridges>) and (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-59141894>).

Stores such as the Co-op (<https://www.eco-business.com/news/co-op-supermarkets-extend-fridge-door-scheme/>) and Aldi (<https://www.aldipresscentre.co.uk/business-news/aldi-introduces-fridge-doors-to-reduce-energy-consumption/>) have been leading the way in fitting doors to their fridges but others are lagging behind. In France, many years ago, supermarkets signed up to a voluntary agreement to put doors on 75% of the fridges by 2020, so this isn't even a new idea.

It's a relatively niche thing to do in terms of reducing our climate emissions but it is actually disproportionately large in terms of actual emissions. Studies also suggest that putting doors on fridges helps regulate fridge temperatures which then means less food spoilage and therefore less food waste. Plus, it helps reduce, in a small way, the amount of plastic used (that which covers the food which currently goes to waste).

Friends of the Earth Cymru have been campaigning on this over the last few years. We have presented our ideas to Welsh Government and the Wales Retail Forum, with the Retail Forum mentioning it in their Delivery Plan as an idea for retailers to reduce their climate emissions.

Unfortunately, we have yet to see any action or progress.

In terms of all the challenges we face in trying to reduce our emissions and out of all the things that need to be done, simply fitting doors on supermarket fridges is such an easy one and is a relatively quick win. We therefore feel that there is a big win-win here for Wales if we could make progress on this issue.

We were wondering if the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee might be interested in having a look at this issue to see what could be done to move things forward in Wales?

Separately, we were wondering if the committee might be interested in another idea. It's sort of related to the fridge door idea in that there are a lot of climate emission reduction ideas that are simply never talked about or addressed at Welsh Government level, even some relatively important ones. If they were acted on and addressed, they would help to reduce Wales's emissions.

We know from the UK's Climate Change Committee report 2023 (<https://www.gov.wales/reducing-emissions-wales-progress-report-2023-welsh-government-response#:~:text=The%20CCC's%20report%20makes%2058,as%20low%2C%20medium%20or%20high.>) that we need to be scaling up efforts in Wales right across the board.

Some issues and topics tend to be focussed on and mentioned again and again but there are still a lot of other things which are hardly ever mentioned or acted on. Some of these are actually very important in climate terms. Fridge doors is just one example, two other relevant examples of what we are talking about would be:

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1. Methane – a hugely important and potent greenhouse gas (<https://foe.cymru/methane-its-role-averting-climate-catastrophe>). We should really have a national Methane Action Plan here in Wales.
 2. Water use – the water industry is a heavy energy user and is responsible for around 1% of all UK climate emissions (<https://foe.cymru/80-litres-person-day#:~:text=As%20we%20struggle%20with%20the.could%20have%20man>

[y%20positive%20benefits.&text=80%20litres%20per%20person%20per%20Oday%E2%80%A6..\)](#) . Climate science tells us our summers are likely to become longer, hotter and drier more often than not so using less water would be beneficial. Water poverty affects thousands of homes in Wales. If we had ambitious water use targets in Wales then we could reduce the amount of water we use, save people money, make it less likely we enter drought conditions so quickly in dry summers and above all, save a chunk of climate emissions. Current Welsh Government plans on water use are simply nowhere near ambitious enough.

Would a special 'innovation session' of the committee be a good idea where alternative ideas could be brought to the fore and discussed and form the basis for recommendations of what more WG could do here in Wales? It would be a different sort of session but very useful and interesting. We could see what other solutions and ideas there are out there in Wales and what issues or sectors aren't being addressed in enough detail.

Many thanks for your time.

Bleddyn Lake and Joe Cooke

Friends of the Earth Cymru

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Nid yw'r farn bersonol yma o reidrwydd yn adlewyrchu polisi Cyfeillion y Ddaear.

These personal opinions do not necessarily reflect the policy of Friends of the Earth.