

# Agenda – Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee

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Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee Room 5 Tŷ Hywel and video conference via Zoom	Fay Bowen Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 5 June 2025	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 09.15	<a href="mailto:SeneddPAPA@senedd.wales">SeneddPAPA@senedd.wales</a>

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## Private pre-meeting (09.00 – 09.15)

## Public meeting (09.15 – 11.40)

### 1 Introductions, apologies and declarations of interest

(09.15)

### 2 Paper(s) to note

(09.15 – 09.30)

#### 2.1 Letter from the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership to Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee regarding the review of the Welsh Government's Culture Division

(Page 1)

#### 2.2 Letter from Dave Lees, CEO, Bristol Airport Limited to Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy, and Planning regarding Cardiff Airport

(Pages 2 – 3)

#### 2.3 Letter from Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Energy and Transport – Welsh Government to the Chair regarding the Committee's Active Travel in Wales inquiry

(Pages 4 – 6)



**Break (09.30 – 09.35)**

**3 Active Travel in Wales: evidence session with the Welsh Government**

(09.35 – 11.40)

(Pages 7 – 61)

Andrew Slade, Director General Economy, Energy and Transport

Peter McDonald, Director Economic Infrastructure

Natalie Grohmann – Head of Active Travel Policy

Research brief

**4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of this meeting**

(11.40)

**Private meeting (11.40 – 12.30)**

**5 Active Travel in Wales: consideration of evidence**

(11.40 – 11.50)

**6 Scrutiny of Accounts – Welsh Government 2023 – 24: consideration of draft report**

(11.50 – 12.10)

(Pages 62 – 117)

Draft report

**7 Gilestone Farm: consideration of draft report**

(12.10 – 12.30)

(Pages 118 – 162)

Draft report

Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations  
Committee  
[SeneddCulture@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddCulture@senedd.wales)

21 March 2025

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your letter of 4 March regarding the review of the Welsh Government's Culture Division.

A response has been issued by the Permanent Secretary on this matter.

The Welsh Government may undertake neutral assessments with external experts to build an objective view of staffing issues identified. To create a safe space for staff to share their experiences, their contributions are strictly confidential. The Welsh Government will not publish confidential information on staffing matters.

Whilst the Welsh Government does not comment on leaks, feedback from staff is taken incredibly seriously and all staff are actively encouraged to raise concerns and issues anonymously and in confidence. All responses to internal surveys are reviewed and action is taken as needed to fully resolve concerns raised.

This year's People Survey results from across the Civil Service were published recently and can be found on the Gov.uk website: [Civil Service People Survey: 2024 results - GOV.UK](#)

The 2024 results show improvements for the Welsh Government's Culture Division, especially in areas such as learning and development, which the Division had agreed to prioritise in 2023 and 2024.

Yours sincerely,



**Jack Sargeant AS/MS**  
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership  
Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Sgiliau a Phartneriaeth Gymdeithasol

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Jack.Sargeant@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Jack.Sargeant@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Jack.Sargeant@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Jack.Sargeant@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.

Rebecca Evans MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy, and Planning  
Welsh Government  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1SN

Sent via email: [Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales)

29 April 2025

## **Open letter on the Unprecedented £205m subsidy to Cardiff Airport**

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

I am writing an open letter to raise serious concerns following the publication of the Written Statement published on 3 April 2025 – just before the Senedd Easter recess – on the proposed investment package for Cardiff Airport.

The statement sets out how the Welsh Government will proceed with a first investment of £20 million. At the same time, we noted on the following day that on the UK Subsidy Transparency Database, that the Welsh Government in fact plans to spend an unprecedented **£205.2 million** of taxpayers' money, which was omitted from the Written Statement. This brings the total state funding being awarded to Cardiff Airport since it was nationalised to £286 for every household in Wales<sup>1</sup>.

The proposed subsidy would exceed Cardiff Airport's current annual turnover, in each year of the planned 10-year duration. No other airport in the UK has ever received anything close to this level of public subsidy, and as such it is unprecedented, and comes on top of the nearly £200m of taxpayers' money already provided to Cardiff Airport.

Bristol Airport welcomes competition, but this must be on a level playing field to avoid market distortions. This subsidy could move activity between locations at huge cost to the taxpayer but without any net economic benefit. Distorting competition between airports and airlines will lead to higher prices for consumers and unbalanced public subsidies will have a chilling-effect on future private sector investment.

Bristol Airport is proud to be the primary airport for the whole South West quarter of the UK, providing connectivity to more than 115 destinations. One in five of our passengers are travelling to or from South Wales. Our role includes supporting the Welsh visitor economy as well as sports fixtures held in the region. We are currently investing £400m of private capital to improve the customer experience, at no cost to the taxpayer.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) sharply criticised the Welsh Government for the "unevidenced assumptions" made about Bristol Airport's future growth plans. In your most recent Written Statement, you explain that '*consideration has been given to the Competition and Markets Authority's assessment*' – yet you have failed to sufficiently engage with Bristol Airport to understand the potential impact this would have on competition for the aviation sector.

It is deeply concerning that major announcements on the proposed subsidy have all taken place immediately prior to holidays and there was again no attempt to re-engage with Bristol Airport,

despite repeated requests. Furthermore, repeated attempts by Members of the Senedd and others to seek further detail on how Welsh Government intends to respond to the concerns raised in the CMA assessment has also been unsuccessful, resulting in a serious lack of transparency around this unprecedented subsidy in UK aviation, which is being funded at great expense by the taxpayer.

Our concerns remain as follows:

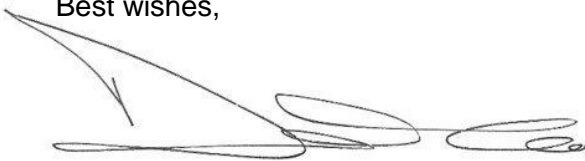
- **Unprecedented subsidy** - The proposed size and duration of the £205.2m subsidy to Cardiff Airport is unprecedented in the UK airport sector.
- **Lack of Transparency** – No detailed information has been made publicly available on the largest public subsidy to a UK Airport.
- **Hindering economic growth** - The decision to grant such a large subsidy and over a long period of 10 years means that distortions to ongoing competition will be more severe, therefore reducing competition and choice for customers including those living in South Wales.
- **Disrupting the level playing field for airports and airlines** - State subsidy will mean there is no longer a level playing field for competition between airports and airlines operating within the UK. This proposal will undermine the confidence on future private sector investment in UK transport infrastructure.

We are publicly calling for details to be urgently made available on the proposed subsidy including the benefits it will deliver, what alternatives have been considered, how the impacts have been assessed, in the context of the significant additional cost burden to the taxpayer in Wales.

In addition to this letter, Bristol Airport will be making a separate, formal pre-application request for more detailed information on the proposed subsidy, as there has been insufficient detail published or shared to date to fully understand what is being proposed.

As previously highlighted, Bristol Airport remains open to dialogue on a range of issues including to help address some of the serious concerns that the CMA report highlighted. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,



**Dave Lees**  
**CEO, Bristol Airport Limited**

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<sup>i</sup> £181m provided by Welsh Government up to and including 2024. [Source](#).  
£205m subsidy announced by Welsh Government. [Source](#)  
Number of households in Wales – 2021 Census. [Source](#).

Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol - Director General



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Mark Isherwood MS  
Chair  
Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

20 May 2025

Dear Chair

## ACTIVE TRAVEL

In advance of the evidence session with the Committee on 5 June about Active Travel in Wales, I thought it would be useful to provide some context and briefly set out how we have responded to the recommendations in the Auditor General's report on the subject.

When we refer to active travel, we mean walking, wheeling and cycling as modes of transport. Together with public transport, these modes are fundamental building blocks of our transport system that help make it equitable, healthy and environmentally sustainable. This is reflected in 'Llywbr Newydd' and many other government policies and strategies. Whilst walking is the oldest transport mode, and cycling for transport used to be commonplace, both modes had for decades been largely disregarded in transport policy, whilst our towns and cities were comprehensively shaped by the expansion of car use. As a result, even where we have existing infrastructure such as our footways, these are disjointed, and too often not accessible or obstructed. Against this backdrop, it is unsurprising that the investment in improving active travel infrastructure over the last six years to start to redress this imbalance has not yet had a transformative impact.

Public investment in Active Travel was stepped up with the introduction of the Active Travel Fund in 2018, and in recent years the amount allocated to active modes represents around 5% of the transport budget. The £218 million expenditure over the last six years represents around £70 per head of population. Whilst current levels of investment are significant, they

are still small in view of the scale of investment needed to realise local authorities' network plans and create coherent improvements that enable safe and convenient end-to-end journeys.

Aside from the available budget, local capacity to deliver schemes is another important factor in respect of making faster progress. Few local authorities have the capacity to deliver ambitious programmes, consisting of quick, small improvements as well as major schemes. Much of our focus has been on building capacity and capability within Transport for Wales to help address this and to support local authorities and develop resources, training and tools, to avoid duplication and effort.

The Auditor General's report notes a lack of available data but suggests that active travel usage data from the National Survey for Wales indicates there has not been an increase and that the latest walking rates from 2022-23 were lower than before the pandemic. The backdrop to this is a change in travel and working patterns because of the Covid emergency, which has affected all transport modes. Bus patronage and weekday rail use were hugely impacted and have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. We recognise however that a lack of reliable, high quality national data on transport use in Wales has been limiting our ability to set realistic targets, track progress and evaluate, not just on active travel but for all modes. This is now changing – with the roll-out of our first Wales National Travel Survey, we will start to build up a picture of travel use patterns and over time be able to measure change and see trends.

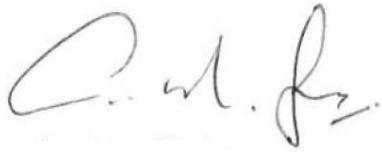
I would also like to use this opportunity to provide you with an update on the Welsh Government's response to the ten recommendations made by Audit Wales ahead of the meeting.

We have taken action in response to all the recommendations and made significant progress relating to data collection and monitoring. In addition to the roll-out of the Wales National Travel Survey, which paves the way for progress on Recommendations 1, 2 and 3, in February this year Transport for Wales published data against the national Active Travel Monitoring Framework indicators. In relation to Recommendation 4, the local Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit was issued this month after feedback from local authorities and consideration of current reporting practices. We will publish an annual report shortly and our review of the Active Travel Act during the summer, which relates to Recommendations 5 and 10 respectively. Our approach to the Auditor's recommendations about the longer-term allocation and administration of grant funding (Recommendations 6 and 8) is impacted by wider work we are undertaking to move away from a large number of single purpose grants for local authorities to a unified regional grant funding model. Finally, we have already completed work on Recommendations 7 and 9 which cover more immediate changes to grant processes.

As I have already indicated, for logistical reasons, colleagues and I are unable to join the session in person next month, but we look forward to joining a hybrid meeting of the Committee online.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Slade', written in a cursive style.

**Andrew Slade**  
Director General  
Economy, Energy and Transport

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# Agenda Item 6

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

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# Agenda Item 7

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

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