



19.03.20

**TRAFNIDIAETH
CYMRU
TRANSPORT
FOR WALES**

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Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

19 March 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the petition of public transport in Blaenau Gwent.

Regarding services on the Ebbw Vale Line, we're committed to increasing train services and working with stakeholders to see the rail link between Ebbw Vale and Newport restored. Installing this link requires infrastructure improvements to allow more trains to travel in both directions on the line. Securing 2 services an hour on the length of the Ebbw Line will require infrastructure improvements and re-signalling work to be undertaken by Network Rail to allow more trains to run back and for along the line. We are engaging closely with all parties on these aspects.

Under instruction from Welsh Government, we're currently undertaking a study focusing on these commitments, which aims to understand the opportunities and barriers to run up to four trains per hour on this line, and who can unlock them. This initial study recently concluded and is with Welsh Government and its partners for review.

All of the services from Ebbw Vale to Cardiff Central have been provided with newer refurbished trains with electronic information and will be provided with power sockets by 2020. New DEMU Vehicles will be introduced during 2022 with total capacity of 425. These brand new trains will also feature level boarding, air conditioning and more space for bicycles.

There will be an increase in capacity between Ebbw Vale and Cardiff Central with an increase of 180 in total capacity towards Cardiff in the morning peak in December 2022.



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There will be an increase in capacity between Ebbw Vale and Newport, with 150 more seats towards Newport in the morning peak in December 2022, and 300 more seats from Newport in the evening peak in December 2022.

Stations will undergo a refresh and clean, and there will be free Wi-Fi by December 2020 and improved CCTV by December 2022.

Welsh Government and TfW have been working with colleagues in Blaenau Gwent to establish an Integrated Responsive Transport service pilot. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is working with community organisations, commercial and community transport operators to assess how demand responsive transport could help address social isolation and help get people to get to employment cost effectively. Although there is a good bus service along key routes during core hours, a demand responsive service could help connect people in estates out of easy reach of bus services, and those that need transport outside core hours, for instance to work an early or late shift. The council has had a great response from the community, and we hope to be able to start consulting on proposals for services shortly for live operation in late 2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Price," with a comma at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

James Price
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive