



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE UK Railways Bill

DATE 05 November 2025

BY Ken Skates, Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales

Today, we welcome the laying of the UK Railways Bill which will enable the biggest transformation of the rail sector in a generation, modernising and improving rail services and delivering a more integrated, accountable, and passenger-focused railway.

Since the announcement that a Railways Bill would be included in the UK Government's Legislative programme, we have been working closely with the UK Government to deliver a number of outcomes to ensure the bill achieves the best deal for Wales.

As a result of this collaborative working we have been able to agree to the inclusion of a specific clause in the Bill, which provides for the development of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the Secretary of State for Transport and Welsh Ministers.

This clause recognises the shared ambition to codify devolved responsibilities, funding arrangements, and joint governance mechanisms, thereby strengthening accountability in the delivery of rail services across the Wales and Borders area. In parallel, UK and Welsh Government officials have jointly undertaken the drafting of a **Heads of Terms for this Memorandum**, which has been a positive and collaborative process.

The MOU which is currently expected to be published in Spring 2026 will be supported by a partnership agreement between the new organisation created through the Bill, Great British Railways (GBR), and TfW. This will ensure we are working towards jointly agreed shared objectives for Wales and Borders rail services and UK services serving destinations in the Wales and Borders geography.

The Heads of Terms includes our shared ministerial intention for:

1. Shared objectives and control period / funding period planning for the Wales and Borders area - An outline of jointly agreed and published objectives and business plans that are shaped by both governments.

2. Track and Train Integration - Agreed principles to deliver a more responsive and resilient railway by delivering a simpler, better, integrated railway for the users of the Wales and Borders network.
3. A GBR Wales and Borders Business Unit - To provide Wales and Borders area with a dedicated, empowered Business Unit within GBR that will deliver against the shared objectives set by both governments.
4. England & Wales Cross-Border services - An aligned framework between Welsh Ministers and the Secretary of State for joint governance and transparent funding arrangements concerning cross-border rail services, reflecting the vital importance these services have on the connectivity, wellbeing and economic development of communities in both Wales and England.
5. Access and Use - Principles to enable GBR and TfW to work together to simplify access contracts and charging framework and ensure GBR's capacity allocation decisions and Infrastructure Capacity Plan development are consistent with the joint objectives established for the Wales and Borders area.
6. Core Valley Lines (CVL) - To support TfW to integrate track and train, reduce internal regulatory complexity, and jointly develop an interface framework with GBR for service continuity across both networks.
7. Wales Rail Board and Enhancements - A formally recognised and renewed Wales Rail Board as a strategic body within the governance framework. The evolved Wales Rail Board will review funding allocations, business plans, and performance of enhancement schemes across the Wales and Borders area.
8. Governance - Governance principles to ensure adequate accountability channels to UK and Welsh Ministers by GBR and TfW.
9. Appointments and Representation - Welsh Ministers role in shaping the overall recruitment strategy for the GBR Board, and consultation from the GBR CEO during the recruitment of senior executives within the Wales and Borders Business Unit.
10. The publication, review and amendment process for the MoU.

The ambition of the Welsh Government remains the full devolution of rail services and infrastructure, to enable us to deliver an improved and better integrated transport system for Wales. This statement marks a significant step forward in our collaborative approach to rail reform, and I am confident that our continued joint working with the UK Government will ensure the delivery of a modern, integrated railway that works for passengers across the United Kingdom.