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

12 January 2026

Dear Llyr Gruffydd MS

As requested by the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, I am writing to provide detail on the committee's areas of the interest, ahead of the Transport for Wales (TfW) annual scrutiny session later this month.

On behalf of TfW, I would like to thank you for the Committee's scrutiny of our performance over the last five years, during the Senedd's sixth parliamentary term. The challenge we have received from the Committee has played a pivotal role in ensuring we are delivering the best possible services for the people of Wales. As TfW's remit and responsibilities have significantly evolved during this Senedd, your scrutiny has made a real difference - supporting us to deliver more effectively and efficiently.

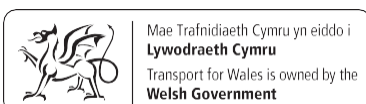
I would also like to thank the Committee for their endorsement of our new TfW Chair, Vernon Everitt, following the pre-appointment scrutiny session last June. Vernon's leadership and strategic guidance is having a positive impact on our work at TfW, and Vernon will be joining me on the annual scrutiny panel in January.

Core rail performance and new services

Although not without challenge, 2025 was a year of significant progress. While we are always challenging ourselves to do better, we have seen considerable improvement in terms of our rail performance for customers this year. In December, the Office for Road and Rail (ORR) published their quarterly figures for July to September which identified TfW, for the second consecutive quarter, as having the most improved punctuality of all UK train operators. We achieved 84.1% of services on time to three minutes, which is a 4.9% increase from the same period last year.

This improvement is driven by an unwavering management and Board focus on the delivery of our core transport services, us acting on the feedback we receive from customers and stakeholders and the TfW team's continuous work to build a better railway for the people, communities and businesses we serve. It also follows the continued roll out of our brand-new Class 756 trains on the Core Valley Lines (CVL) earlier this year - demonstrating the positive impact these new trains have had on performance and customer experience.

In September, we introduced the final Class 756 train onto the Coryton Line, which means the full fleet of 24 trains have now entered service on the CVL. Earlier this year we also began daytime testing of our new Class 398 tram-trains and we hope to introduce the first tram-train into service on the CVL in Spring 2026.



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These milestones are important for our customers, who can now see the South Wales Metro nearing completion, but are also significant engineering events. Experience from around the world shows us that we can expect some potential reliability issues as we bed in the new fleet. We have, of course, significant experience with introducing new fleets at TfW at this stage in our history and have a comprehensive plan in place, both before and post introduction, to mitigate these issues as far as possible. The feedback I receive from passengers and colleagues, shows just how much this transformation matters to their daily lives and I look forward to this continuing.

On 14 December 2025, we also delivered a considerable rail timetable change, introducing more services across the Wales and Borders network, including:

- The introduction of a new hourly service between Chester and Wrexham, doubling the frequency to two trains per hour
- A new midday train in each direction on the Heart of the Wales line between Shrewsbury and Swansea via Llandrindod Wells, meaning five trains a day on the line
- A brand-new hourly Sunday service between Coryton and Penarth (an extension of the existing Cardiff-Penarth services)
- Three later trains from Cardiff (after midnight) on Fridays to each of Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil, including a connection from Cardiff Bay
- Retained late evening services on the Cambrian Line, between Pwllheli-Machynlleth, following engagement with local communities
- A number of other service changes and alterations to improve connectivity for people across our network

This timetable change will provide a boost for the night-time economy in communities benefitting from later services, provide more travel options for our customers and continue to meet the growing demand we have seen following the introduction of new trains onto the network. Additionally, we ran New Year's Day services on local Cardiff and Valleys lines for the first time to give customers more reliable travel options at a time when public transport has previously been limited. These changes mark another step towards a more modern, integrated transport network – a network that's reliable, sustainable and designed to meet the needs of the people and businesses of Wales.

Bus services

I am also pleased that the Bus Services (Wales) Bill was passed by the Senedd in December 2025. This represents a significant milestone so that we can plan and deliver a better bus network for communities across the whole of Wales.

This year, we have been working more closely than ever with partners, including the Welsh Government, local authorities, Corporate Joint Committee's (CJCs), bus operators, unions and other industry experts, to ensure that our preparation for the roll out of bus franchising is robust and centred on delivering a network that is integrated, reliable and passenger focused.



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TfW's Development During the Sixth Senedd

As you will recognise, TfW's role and operating model have significantly evolved since the start of the sixth Senedd. In 2021, at the beginning of this parliamentary term, we were still emerging from the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In common with operators across Britain, rail passenger numbers had been severely reduced and pandemic restrictions made it much more difficult to plan and deliver services. Ultimately, TfW were forced to step in as the Operator of Last Resort which led to the creation of TfW Rail Ltd as a subsidiary.

On the South Wales Metro, we faced delays and complications in progressing construction and operational activities due to supply chain issues and social distancing rules. This placed us in an extremely difficult position, with pressure to overcome these challenges, minimise the impact on customers and uphold our responsibility to invest public funds in an efficient and transparent way. Five years later, we are nearing the completion of the CVL transformation which, under our direct ownership, has more frequent and later services, and we have introduced the first pay as you go (PAYG) scheme for rail travel outside London, which offers customers the best value fares on the South Wales Metro.

The revenue generated from ticket sales across the whole of our rail network in the 12 months up to December 2025 is a 24% increase on the revenue generated during the 2018/19 financial year, the last full year before the pandemic. This not only reflects the steady return to public transport post-pandemic, but also the significant investment that has been made in new trains and the delivery of a more integrated, modern transport network for Wales and the border regions.

We are also seeing significantly more journeys being taken on the TrawsCymru bus routes that we manage. In the 12 months up to 30 November 2025, passengers made 1.4 million journeys on our TrawsCymru services, which is a 12.9% increase from the previous year. We have also recently supported Welsh Government on the introduction of their children and young person's £1 fare scheme, which saw almost 1.5 million discounted bus journeys in the first three months following its launch.

We have also invested significantly in active travel delivery through our administration of the Active Travel Fund in Wales. We supported Local Authorities to deliver 25 major active travel projects and 30 minor works projects during that period. 2024/25 was the highest year of investment so far at £50.7 million, which includes active travel grants and other active travel capital scheme expenditure, including as part of the CVL programme.

While there remains much work to do, these results demonstrate the significant impact over the course of this Senedd of TfW's growing responsibilities and delivery on the ground. With the passing of the Bus Bill, rail reform across Great Britain and the pace of technological change, the next five years promise to be just as exciting and productive. We are ready to continue our work with our many partners to deliver a truly integrated, modern and sustainable transport network.



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As well as expanding further on the themes above, I will now provide an update on the specific areas the committee have expressed interest in ahead of the annual scrutiny session. I hope this provides you with a clear overview of TfW's latest position and the progress we have made over the course of this Senedd. I look forward to going into further detail with you, in-person at the end of January.

Preparing our organisation for the future

TfW's ambition for the future of transport is to create a network that is affordable, accessible and connects people to where they need or want to go through an integrated and well-planned system of trains, buses, walking, wheeling and cycling. Our guiding principle is to deliver transport solutions through a fully integrated, multimodal approach - One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket, One Team.

This brings with it major changes for our people and the way in which we organise ourselves to deliver. We launched an internal cultural change programme to bring teams together and build a shared sense of purpose that goes beyond any single mode of transport and which places customers at the heart of what we do. As part of this, the TfW team has developed and introduced ways of working which set the tone for how we want to act and be seen to act by our customers, colleagues and partners: we are one, we do the right thing and we challenge ourselves.

Embodying these values is crucial to meet the needs of future developments, such as bus and rail reform. By adopting this approach, we can be flexible to accommodate change and become more ambitious in our long-term goals. For example, while bus reform brings new challenges and opportunities, we do not see a need to create a new organisational structure specifically for bus delivery. Instead, we are evolving our current structure to deliver as one unified organisation, striving to be as integrated as possible to deliver efficiently, while also carefully bolstering our expertise in this new area. In doing so, we are also learning from other transport organisations such as Transport for London and Transport for Greater Manchester.

A dedicated team in TfW, under the leadership of Lee Robinson, is leading the planning and mobilisation of bus franchising. In parallel we are evolving our current structures and approaches across the business – for example on passenger and colleague safety – to accommodate live bus operations. As a further example, when bus franchising comes into effect, procurement will be managed through our existing procurement team function, who already possess the capability and experience to handle complex contracts. This approach ensures consistency, avoids duplication and keeps costs down while maintaining the flexibility to draw on specialist expertise where required. We are, for example, in the process of appointing an experienced and senior bus industry professional to support us with the granular transition into live operations.

Our approach to bus franchising is in full partnership with CJsCs and local authorities, working together as a team to deliver for their communities. We greatly rely on the knowledge and expertise of these partners, particularly in terms of network design, and it is essential that these relationships continue and are deepened once bus franchising has been delivered.



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This collaborative way of working is reflected in our T-Network approach: embedding a multimodal mindset across TfW and ensuring that integration is not just internal but extends to the partnerships that are essential to shaping the transport network in all parts of Wales.

That same principle of partnership and collaboration underpins our work on GB rail reform (GBRR). We have been working very closely and strengthening our relationships with Network Rail in Wales to support the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UK and Welsh Government on the future rail operating model for Wales and Borders. This way, we are ready to leverage any potential opportunities to deliver a better railway for customers through an empowered GBR Cymru a'r Gororau business unit.

We fully recognise that there are ways in which we must develop as an organisation more generally to ensure we are strengthening our organisational resilience and operating model. For example, we are continuing to embed our approach to succession planning, with a specific focus on the leadership, skills and capabilities we need given TfW's evolving remit. This will help us identify skills gaps and allow us to focus on providing the right training, so our teams are stronger and better prepared for the future. We are also continuing the development of our line managers to raise standards across the business and create a greater consistency of knowledge and approach.

Ultimately, this is about preparing TfW for what's next and specifically anticipating what we need well in advance of bus franchising becoming a reality. We are strengthening our foundations and building resilience so that we can adapt and deliver better outcomes for customers and communities. Through the T-Network approach and our partnerships with stakeholders, we will ensure that TfW has the skills and leadership to meet future challenges.

Corporate Performance and KPIs

As part of the scrutiny undertaken by the CCEI Committee over the past five years, we have consistently recognised and supported the Committee's emphasis on transparency in TfW's performance management. Transparency is key to earning the trust and confidence of the people Wales, and it underpins everything we do. We greatly appreciate previous recommendations the Committee has made to improve our delivery on this commitment, and the way we report on our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has evolved to reflect this.

We see the publication of our KPIs as a part of the public transparency required given TfW's role as an operator, innovator, advisor, project manager and enabler of economic growth and wider opportunity for all communities. Over the past two years, we have sought to make our KPIs more accessible to the public and stakeholders, by publishing them on our [website](#) and providing commentary that explains our performance in plain language.

We report on a range of multi-modal KPIs to both the Welsh Government and the public, which cover:

- Finance
- Health, safety & sustainability
- Customer satisfaction & complaints
- Passenger journey & service performance
- Business plan deliverables



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- Major projects deliverables
- Procurement & stakeholder engagement
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Our team & people
- Welsh Language

Most of these KPIs are reported quarterly, excluding our rail performance, which is reviewed by the TfW Rail Board every 4 weeks and published for each rail period on our website: [Train performance | TfW](#).

We are currently reviewing our KPIs to ensure we are effectively demonstrating to our Board, Welsh Government, and to our customers and stakeholders how TfW is achieving its key business objectives across the full breadth of our remit. Our current KPIs have a heavy focus on rail performance and we are working to better reflect our widening scope, particularly in relation to our growing role in bus operations.

We are currently reviewing the best way to present KPIs that demonstrate revenue generation, service performance and customer and colleague safety for each mode of transport, while also considering how we measure the effectiveness of the whole network. This review process is still ongoing, but our aim is to transition to this updated set of KPIs in 2026/27 covering operational performance, customer experience, financial performance and organisational development. The revised KPIs will provide greater transparency and ensure that stakeholders can clearly see how TfW is delivering against its multimodal objectives.

I would like to provide an update on the recommendation made in the Committee's report on TfW's performance in 2024-25 regarding regular publication of route-level rail performance data.

We fully understand the reasons for this recommendation and remain committed to publishing performance data aligned with the ORR's reporting cycle. We are actively exploring the most effective process and format to achieve this. We intend to introduce a quarterly bulletin from the summer that provides clear, jargon-free context for our performance figures. While this work continues, we are already taking steps to strengthen transparency, such as sharing proactive updates with stakeholders and the media, including a recent update aligned with the ORR's July-September 2025 report. Building trust in this area remains a key priority, and I am confident that these initiatives will greatly improve the transparency and understanding of our performance for customers and stakeholders. We will continue to develop our briefings linked to ORR data publications including providing more detailed regional data.

Gender Balance and Gender Pay Gap

Our teams have worked extremely hard to build on the foundations we have laid, with a clear focus on reducing the gender pay gap and improving representation across all levels of the organisation. Earlier last year we welcomed our People and Culture Director, Elle Elliott, who has brought significant experience and leadership to TfW within this space, and under her guidance, we are making progress.



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As I explained in last year's annual scrutiny, we continue to report externally through our two biggest legal entities, TfW Rail Limited and TfW Group, and provide a combined view to reflect our overall position. The deadline for publishing our Gender Pay Gap figures for 2024/25 is the end of March 2026 and we're working to publish our report ahead of this date, which will include a full breakdown of these figures.

I am pleased to share that TfW Group has reversed last year's median pay gap increase and better gender representation can be seen in the higher pay quartiles. This has been driven by focused actions, including our Apprenticeship Academy, Graduate Schemes and other early careers programmes. These efforts have helped us to target known underrepresented pathways in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields.

We do, however, recognise that there is still work to be done. Whilst there is positive ongoing work being delivered through our Strategic Equality Plan, our gender pay gap position for TfW Rail has widened from 2023/24 and, therefore, TfW overall because of the size of TfW Rail. The initiatives introduced to date and ongoing plans will realise benefits but naturally with the headcount and historical mix of male / female will reflect a marginal improvement overall given low attrition levels of current headcount.

As with last year's update, TfW Rail has a much higher proportion of male employees than TfW Group, which results in more men occupying the top pay quartiles because roles like conductors and drivers in Rail are among the highest paid. These roles have traditionally been male dominated in the rail industry, which makes it challenging to attract more women and address the gender imbalance. This is especially the case given the time it takes to achieve change with our current retention rates.

However, we remain committed to narrowing our gender pay gap and advancing our position as an inclusive employer. Our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 sets out how we will do this and in December 2025 we concluded its first review, with an update set to be published in due course. As part of this review, we consulted with colleagues from across the business on the delivery of the first year of this plan to ensure its relevant to our people.

Further work in this area, such as target recruitment campaigns, targeted advertising on diverse job boards and partnership working with organisations such as Women in Rail and Women in Transport, have resulted in achieving our first 50/50 split driver cohort. In January 2025, we also welcomed an all-female apprentice cohort, with candidates joining roles in Customer Operations, EV Charging and Learning and Development, sectors where women remain underrepresented across the wider industry.

We have also expanded our collaboration with women in STEM, supporting targeted careers events designed specifically for STEM students and recent graduates who identify as women or non-binary. These events play a key role in improving access to opportunities within industries where gender imbalance persists. For example, this year we launched our first school valued partnership programme with three schools in Wales and delivered outreach initiatives such as our first Talent Foundry in conjunction with Aberdare Community School to build employability skills.



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Our focus this year has also been on the retention and development of those who have recently started with us or those who might consider returning to TfW. Our first returners programme offered support and experience for women who have been out of employment for over 18 months, and we look to continue this work by encouraging broader representation through other pathways programmes.

To continue our work to reduce our gender pay gap, we are taking targeted steps to strengthen inclusive recruitment, enhance early talent pathways, and embed equality considerations into pay practices to drive meaningful progress. Looking ahead, we are determined to build on this momentum and create a truly diverse workplace that is representative of the communities we serve.

Budget Setting for 2026/27 and Future Years

We have continued to work closely with Welsh Government colleagues to create certainty for our budget requirements for subsequent years.

Whilst we work to clear budgeting timelines, this is always an iterative process and must be aligned to priorities for delivery and associated costs. TfW first presented the projected funding requirements for 26/27 in July 2025, which have since undergone several scrutiny sessions with the Welsh Government budget owners, concluding in early December 2025. At this stage, some gaps remain for both revenue and capital expenditure, which is typical at this point in the cycle. Both parties are actively working to close these gaps and ensure spending priorities are aligned. TfW then reports, within the business plan, the funding requirement against deliverables by the end of March 2026. In addition, TfW will share a multi-year view with Welsh Government colleagues.

While some future costs are fixed, others are subject to external factors of change and are more likely to fluctuate. If this is the case, then these variations will be clearly explained. The multi-year view will assist the new government in terms of planning and prioritisation.

UK Government Rail Reform

We are, of course, aware of the recent Ministerial statements from UK and Welsh Governments on GB rail reform and Wales, following the bill's formal introduction in the UK Parliament on 5 November 2025. Over the past year, we have provided technical support to Welsh Government to inform its discussions with the UK Government on rail reform, including the development of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two governments which will formally set out key arrangements for how rail services in Wales & the Borders will be planned, managed, governed and funded. The MoU, which is expected to be published in Spring 2026, is referenced in the Railways Bill itself and we will continue to support Welsh Government during this process.



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While the discussions have been led by Welsh Government officials and Ministers, we are determined to take advantage of any potential opportunities that emerge from GB rail reform which will aid us in the delivery of better outcomes for the people, communities and businesses we serve. Although we already work closely with the Network Rail Wales & Western team, our partnership has strengthened considerably during our preparations for GB rail reform. For example, Network Rail's Route Director for Wales and Borders, Nick Millington, has joined the TfW operational board, to enhance joint decision-making and delivery of rail priorities across Wales and the Borders.

Rail reform clearly brings greater opportunities to work more closely with Network Rail in Wales and, in time, with GBR Cymru a'r Gororau to deliver better performance and improved services for passengers. To support this, and as Welsh Government has made it clear that the GBR Cymru a'r Gororau unit needs to be empowered to make decisions quickly and effectively, we are keen to make progress now rather than wait for GBR to be formed. I recently met with Jeremy Westlake, NR's new Chief Executive, to discuss opportunities for collaboration and mutual challenges, and I look forward to strengthening this relationship as the Railways Bill is enacted.

Meanwhile, the recently reinvigorated Wales Rail Board (WRB) met for the first time in December, with Vernon Everitt taking the Chair. The focus of the WRB will be on the efficient and effective delivery of projects funded by the Spending Review and prioritising a pipeline of future enhancements so we can make the strongest possible case for the next Comprehensive Spending Review. To support this, in February 2026, TfW will be publishing a document that sets out our vision for a transformative pipeline of rail enhancements beyond the current spending review period.

Delivery of Bus Franchising

As noted previously, I was pleased to see the passage of the Bus Bill through the Senedd as it means we are another step closer to achieving our vision of a fully integrated transport system.

To support the mobilisation of bus franchising, we are mainstreaming bus in TfW as part of our multimodal operating model, with our initial focus on preparing for delivery of franchising in South West Wales. We have made significant progress in agreeing a base network for the region through our engagement with individual Local Authorities and the South West CJC, with all four local authorities in the region endorsing the new proposed network. In Summer 2025, we also undertook a major public engagement exercise in South West Wales to gather feedback on our network proposals and have published our final report which is available here: [Our commitment to community engagement | Transport for Wales](#). I look forward to discussing the findings with the Committee in the scrutiny session.

We are now preparing to begin procurement for the franchise packages in the South West region, following a successful round of market engagement. At the same time, we have developed our fleet and depot strategy, which has been modelled alongside the planned base network to determine operational requirements, costs, and the net subsidy needed to deliver franchising in South West Wales. This work gives us a clear view of the network, and the fleet and depot infrastructure required to support its successful implementation.



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Recognising that this marks a significant step forward for bus franchising, we are also reviewing how best to maintain and strengthen engagement with the industry and key stakeholders. While our industry engagement meetings and panel have provided valuable insight, we acknowledge the need for faster and more detailed information sharing, within the boundaries of public sector procurement rules. In addition, we are working to deepen collaboration with local government through the creation of a national advisory panel and a series of regional forums aligned to the CJC footprints.

Ultimately, our approach is designed to deliver a reliable and efficient bus service for passengers in South West Wales, and as this is the first area to receive bus franchising, we will use our learning to in our approach to the future franchising rollouts across other regions.

As part of our plans for bus we have also developed a multi-year view for future capital requirements for fleet and depots across Wales. We recognise the constraints on Welsh Government budgets, and this may have an impact on the speed of investment into new EV buses. However, we believe there are significant opportunities in terms of repowering buses locally that merit further exploration, this would lead to both greater number of improved and greener buses but also the creation jobs here in Wales.

To support the speed of decision making that will be necessary as we move into operational bus franchising at scale, we are currently developing a delegation framework from Welsh Government and delivery plan which will support us to make decisions in a timely manner.

We know that bus franchising is being delivered at a time of significant pressure on public finances, and this reality is being factored into our planning as we move closer to rollout. As I outlined in my update on future organisational development, our aim is to implement franchising with the absolute minimum additional cost through our 'one team', T-Network approach, ensuring efficiency from an internal delivery and governance perspective.

Rail Service Performance and Delivery

As I have already noted, TfW has delivered significant improvements in reliability and customer experience over the past year. The ORR's December report shows TfW achieved the largest punctuality improvement of any UK operator, moving to 12th out of 24 train operators which is very positive progress. The report also showed we had a 1.4% reduction in cancellations, the fourth biggest improvement nationally.

These results demonstrate clear progress and growing confidence in our services. It is also worth noting that this positive performance improvement was achieved during a busy summer of major events, including two highly anticipated Oasis reunion gigs. It was also delivered despite some significant operational challenges including a series of cable thefts on the Rhymney line. This is thanks to the dedication of TfW colleagues, who are committed to ensuring our customers receive a rail service they can truly rely on.



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Seasonal challenges remain, as with the wider UK rail industry, but targeted investments are helping us respond more effectively. A major milestone was the opening of a multi-million-pound wheel lathe facility at Holyhead Depot in October, which repairs wheel damage caused by poor rail adhesion. This investment will improve train availability and keep services running during the challenging autumn period, in addition to Network Rail's vegetation clearance and railhead treatment programme and our new high-definition railhead cameras that proactively identify when prevention treatment is required.

I have also cautiously welcomed the rise in customer satisfaction over the last few months. We have previously shared our concerns with Transport Focus regarding their sample size of TfW users, which we did not believe provided a true representation of our customers. However, their latest survey report, published in December, was based on a larger sample size, making the data more comparable across regions and routes, and appears to be more reflective of the people we serve. We will want to continue to monitor the effectiveness of different ways of gauging customer satisfaction given its importance in everything we do.

These improvements in customer satisfaction are also supported by the rollout of our new trains as part of our rolling stock strategy. This includes the entry into service of all 24 of our brand-new to Wales Class 756 trains on the CVL, and the continued acceptance and roll out of our brand-new to Wales Class 197 trains on the wider network. Whilst delays to rolling stock delivery continue, we have now accepted 70 of 77 Class 197s from the manufacturer, CAF. We continue to both work in close partnership with CAF, holding them to account for the delivery of the remaining fleet, and the consistent throughput of trains through their train maintenance facility in Chester.

In 2026, our Class 756s are scheduled for introduction on the Rhymney line as they themselves are moved from the Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr lines and replaced with tram trains. In addition, the Class 197e trains are planned for entry into service on the Cambrian line in Autumn 2026. In 2025, we also launched six refurbished cycle travel trains on the Heart of Wales line, accommodating up to 12 bicycles per service.

To maintain a thriving network and address future capacity challenges as passenger numbers grow, we must continue making strategic decisions about our fleet requirements. In order to ensure we have the fleet required to deliver a range of services, a number of options are being considered as part of our rolling stock strategy. These include procuring additional tram-trains and multiple diesel units, extending the Mark IV fleet, and exploring opportunities to introduce hybrid conversions of our existing Class 230s. We are working closely with Welsh Government to consider these options.

As we move into 2026/27, our focus remains on sustaining performance improvement and introducing new trains, to further support our delivery of a modern and reliable railway network for communities across Wales and the Borders.



Delivery of the South Wales Metro

In 2025/26, we have achieved major milestones in delivering the South Wales Metro, bringing the transformation closer to completion and turning our ambition of an innovative, turn-up-and-go metro system into a reality. Following the successful completion of electrification, signalling, track and station enhancements on the Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr lines, the CVL transformation programme transitioned to delivering infrastructure upgrades on the Rhymney line.

During the year, all routes from Cardiff to Rhymney were successfully energised, with the final section from Caerphilly to Rhymney completed in late 2025. This milestone marks the electrification of nearly all of the CVL, with the Cardiff Bay line due to go live in early 2026. In total, the programme has installed over 280 miles of overhead line wire supported by more than 4,000 masts and foundations, representing one of the most significant infrastructure upgrades in Wales' rail history.

Looking ahead, 2026 will see the introduction of the Class 398 tram-trains. At the same time, our infrastructure work will focus on completing station and track upgrades on the Rhymney routes and preparing for major enhancements at Cardiff Queen Street, including important signalling work scheduled for early 2027. These enhancements will be rolled out gradually, ensuring a phased approach that minimises disruption to service performance but moves us closer to delivering increased services for passengers on the Valleys lines.

In addition to this work, we are currently undergoing a toilet installation programme. The Metro has been designed to deliver high frequency, high capacity, turn-up-and-go services, with better connections between Cardiff and the Valleys. The fast acceleration speeds of the fully electric tram-trains are key to achieving the Metro timetable on the Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr lines. To prepare for their introduction, we've been installing new fully accessible toilets at ten stations, and upgrading three existing toilets, so that customers are never more than 20 minutes away from a toilet when travelling.

We know this will be a big change for customers, especially those reliant on toilet facilities when travelling and we've been working with accessibility and inclusion groups in the community, as well as TfW's Accessibility & Inclusion Panel, to ensure customer feedback is incorporated into our plans. We will be opening these new toilets before the tram-trains enter service in Spring 2026.

As the South Wales Metro approaches its final delivery stages, we are starting to see real progress and benefits for passengers. The CVL, when considered independently of the broader Wales and Border network, consistently ranks as one of the UK's top-performing local rail networks. In October, 91.2% of CVL services arrived within three minutes of their scheduled time. Despite the challenges caused by autumn conditions, performance remained strong and above target at 88.8% in November. We are also now seeing strong double digit percentage growth in the ridership of CVL. This performance is a welcome improvement from the position we were in at the start of this Senedd term and demonstrates the CVL's strong operational performance, which has been made possible through the completion of major electrification, infrastructure upgrades and the rollout of our brand-new trains. It will be an important challenge for the CVL to deliver continued good performance as we both decrease journey times, increase frequencies and introduce trams to the network. This might lead to a minor dip in performance figures.



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Additionally, the number of rail journeys made using pay as you go tap on, tap off technology across the South East Wales region has now exceeded two million. I am very pleased that more and more passengers are opting to use PAYG on the South Wales Metro, which provides a huge improvement in the customer experience. PAYG is making rail travel simpler and more accessible which is driving both customer satisfaction and revenue growth for the network. We look forward to extending this scheme beyond the South Wales Metro in the future, in particular, welcoming PAYG to North Wales next year as part of the Network North Wales vision.

Delivery of Regional Transport Planning

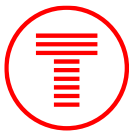
TfW has been strengthening the capacity and capability of our regional transport teams over the course of 2025/26. Each team consists of Strategic Development Programme Managers and Senior Transport Planners, whose focus over the past year has been to support their respective CJC to develop and finalise their Regional Transport Plans (RTPs).

As part of this support for CJCs, we developed a prioritisation methodology to assist each region in their plans. Where possible, we sought to give greater priority to those measures which deliver against the goal of transport integration and our mission to deliver One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket, One Team. Following the publication of the draft Regional Transport Plans and Regional Transport Delivery Plans, which accompany to the RTPs, TfW has shifted its emphasis to providing impartial advice to Welsh Government regarding the proposed programmes for investment, making best use of the national transport data and analysis held by TfW.

During 2025/26, we worked closely with Welsh Government and the CJCs to navigate the transition to the new grants modernisation framework which represents a significant shift in how transport funding is allocated and managed. This change has required detailed discussions to ensure a smooth transition from the previous system to the new approach, aligning regional priorities with national objectives.

A key aspect of this evolution relates to active travel. Under the modernised grants system, the role of TfW's Active Travel team is moving away from a primarily administrative and monitoring function towards a more strategic, guidance-based role. This means the team will focus on supporting local authorities and CJCs to design and deliver high-quality active travel schemes, providing technical expertise and best-practice advice rather than just overseeing compliance.

In mid-2025, we began to develop methodologies to support the development and delivery of the T-Network on a regional level and have started to collate data and build performance dashboards to support this work, making the most of the rail and bus operations and programmes delivered by TfW. As part of this process, our relationships with CJCs have strengthened and by streamlining our decision-making processes, we are ensuring a more cohesive approach to transport integration from across the public sector.



In particular, in North Wales, the regional team has played a pivotal role in advancing the Network North Wales (NNW) programme and delivering the region's transport priorities. Their work has been fundamental to shaping and implementing the RTP. With the bus network forming the backbone of NNW, the team has worked closely with local authorities, CJsCs, and Welsh Government to ensure that proposals align with the wider T-Network vision.

Whilst the CJsCs are at different stages of development, we recognise the importance of adapting the way that we work to best support them to improve transport in their areas. We will continue this collaborative approach to ensure transport schemes are designed to create seamless, multimodal transport systems that meet the needs of communities across all four CJC regions.

Monitoring 20mph

We are continuing to collect and collate data linked to the key performance indicators set out in the published [20mph monitoring framework](#). The data includes traffic speeds at approximately 40 sites across Wales (mean speeds, 85th percentile speeds, speed distributions); peak period journey times on 15 routes using in-vehicle telematics data sourced from INRIX; and pedestrian-vehicle interaction at six crossing locations using video camera footage.

During 2025, we published the following on our website:

- April 2025: traffic speed data and summary statistics up to January 2025.
- July 2025: national monitoring report summarising data covering the first 18 months since the default speed limit changed.

Our latest publication in Summer 2025, showed 51.5% travelling at or below 24mph, the weighted 85th percentile speed as 30pmh and the weighted mean speed at 25.2 mph. This demonstrates that vehicle speeds have increased slightly since winter 2024/25 but remain below pre-implementation speeds. More detail on the speed monitoring data can be found here: [Default 20mph Speed Limit on Restricted Roads | Transport for Wales](#).

The data collated and reports produced are available for use by Alma Economics, the organisation undertaking the full 20mph evaluation on behalf of Welsh Government. We are also working with air quality specialists from Jacobs Engineering Group to analyse independent data sourced from Wales Air Quality Network monitoring sites to understand the impact that the speed limit change has had on roadside nitrogen dioxide levels. Outputs from this work will be published in 2026.

Burns Programme and Network North Wales Vision

In June, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) set out at least £90 million to be invested in future rail stations between Cardiff Central and Severn Tunnel Junction over the next four years. This marks a significant step forward in the 'Burns' programme delivery after a number of years of hiatus due to lack of funding.



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Now, our focus is on working in partnership with Network Rail to agree the overall approach to the development and delivery of the rail elements of the programme. In particular, how we ensure that the upgrade of the relief lines is delivered in close alignment with requirements for the new stations that have been committed to. It is clear that the level of funding allocated in the CSR will not allow us to develop and deliver all of the Burns stations. Hence, it is important that the decision of which location is delivered first is based on balancing operational requirements and deliverability with the desire to deliver the biggest socio-economic impact.

Our overall programme management and governance structure for Burns will be developed based on lessons learnt from the delivery of Network North Wales (NNW) so far. This approach will ensure that we apply the same level of stakeholder engagement, governance and delivery oversight that creates an efficient and transparent framework, capable of managing this complex programme. We also recognise that Burns proposes a multimodal set of interventions which means that TfW are ideally placed to play a leading role in its overall delivery.

NNW has also strengthened the collaboration between TfW and Network Rail, supported by a governance structure that enables meaningful input from stakeholders, including cross-border partners. As a long-term plan with turn up and go services at its core, the ambition is for electrification of the North Wales Main Line, more frequent services and better connectivity between North Wales and London, Merseyside, Cheshire and North of England. Since its launch in May 2025, around £16 million has been invested in early improvements and development work, including:

- Doubling Wrexham-Chester rail frequency with a new shuttle service.
- Introducing the T51 bus route between Rhyl and Wrexham, with new vehicles expected in 2026.
- Installing new passenger shelters at seven stations on the Wrexham-Liverpool line.
- Launching a new train livery on our Class 230 trains, informed by public engagement.
- Work is also progressing on pay-as-you-go rail services due to start in May 2026.

Following the CSR's allocation for Welsh rail, development has advanced on level crossing upgrades to support more frequent services and on freight connectivity improvements at Padeswood Cement Works. This funding has been key to advancing these schemes, which are critical to delivering the long-term NNW vision.

Climate Adaptation Strategy

In 2023, we published our Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP) which covers the parts of the network under our ownership in South East Wales and complements the Network Rail Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Wales and borders assets owned by Network Rail.



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To help us prioritise our climate adaptation planning going forward, the plan assesses our current vulnerability to extreme or adverse weather and provides an understanding of how our network and services may be impacted during these events. Our work focuses on embedding climate resilience into everyday operations by integrating risk awareness into asset management, station operations, and network performance, supported by governance frameworks that guide readiness and adoption of resilience principles.

To understand and manage future risks, we carry out site-specific Climate Change Risk Assessments (CCRAs) using UK Met Office projects and local data. These assessments help us evaluate potential impacts on asset health, passenger safety and service quality. Building on this, adaptive capacity assessments and Rapid Adaptation Pathway Assessments (RAPAs) inform flexible, iterative approaches for key stations and routes. Our collaboration with Network Rail strengthens regional adaptation strategies and ensures alignment across the wider network.

Recent extreme weather events, including storms and flash flooding in Cardiff Central and Canton Depot, have provided valuable lessons that shape our contingency planning and future CCRAs for affected sites. In addition, recovery planning is now a core part of our approach to ensure timely responses to adverse conditions.

External collaboration remains central to our strategy. We actively engage with industry working groups, and national committees to share best practice and contribute to initiatives such as the Rail Safety and Standards Board's climate guidance. A forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding with Natural Resources Wales will further enhance resilience by supporting access to flood defences and infrastructure.

I hope this information gives you an initial overview of the work TfW have carried out this year and the progress we have made over the course of this Senedd. I look forward to our annual session on Thursday 29 January to further delve into the detail

Kind regards,

James Price
Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive