



Assembly Members

02 December 2014

Dear Assembly Member

I am writing to inform Members about work that has been undertaken to assess capacity on the Welsh rail network, following a query raised with me during my Ministerial questions on 19 November.

Firstly, this is a matter I take very seriously and therefore my officials regularly monitor capacity and crowding issues across the Arriva Trains Wales network to inform both short and longer term planning. As part of this work, passenger count data is reviewed for every ATW service several times a year. In addition, a detailed analysis of crowding and capacity issues across the network was commissioned at the end of 2012. The analysis showed that 7% of services required standing and 1% were assessed as reaching loads in excess of capacity. There were very few incidents of passengers standing for longer than twenty minutes.

While such analyses show that the majority of services across the network do not experience crowding issues on a regular basis, this monitoring does identify a number of services with capacity issues, particularly at peak commuter times.

In response to such issues, we currently provide £4.4m to ATW for additional carriages to provide extra capacity on a minimum of seven Valley Lines services during each morning and evening peak. We also provide further funding for additional trains that are used to provide additional services, as well as to provide additional capacity on busy services, for example to strengthen Ebbw Vale services.

With regards to current capacity challenges, we continue to discuss potential options with ATW, recognising that under the terms of the franchise the company has a duty to manage capacity issues. As part of these discussions, ATW has identified that there is currently a lack of suitable additional rolling stock available, which provides some difficulties in addressing these issues in the short term. However, I have stressed to ATW that this is a serious matter and I have asked my officials to continue to work with them to try and find solutions wherever possible.

Edwina Hunt