

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee entitled Report on Rail Services and Transport for Wales' Performance 2023-24.

Detailed Responses to the report's recommendations are set out below:

Recommendation 1.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must ensure that its business and financial plans are published in advance of the 2025-26 financial year.

Response – Accept

Welsh Government officials work closely with TfW to continuously improve our planning processes based on lessons learnt from previous years to ensure that business and financial plans are published in advance of the new financial year, as has been the case in recent years.

Financial Implications – None

Recommendation 2.

The Committee recommends that

TfW and the Welsh Government must ensure that TfW's full budget is available for scrutiny at the same time as the Welsh Government's draft budget.

Response – Accept

The timeline for the development of TfW's full budget and alignment with Welsh Government's draft budget has been agreed with TfW and begins with the first TfW outline budget being provided to Welsh Government in July 2024. Further development and consideration of the budget will be undertaken through the summer and into the autumn ahead of publication. It is intended that both budgets will be available for scrutiny at the same time.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 3.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government and TfW must continue to streamline the budget setting process to minimise the number of bilateral agreements that are required.

Response – Accept

Following each budget setting process Welsh Government and TfW officials jointly identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of the budget setting process. A future comprehensive spending review by the UK Government will offer the opportunity to consider the structure and duration of the budgets to further streamline the process.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 4.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must set out how it plans to manage potential shortfalls in farebox revenue over the next three years.

Response – Accept

Welsh Government has asked TfW to continue to seek opportunities to grow its farebox revenue by increasing passenger numbers and improving the efficiency of their rail services. Additionally, we are working closely with TfW to maximise commercial opportunities to raise revenue and reduce the required operating subsidy. We have asked TfW to directly respond to the committee on the specific steps taken to achieve this.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 5.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should publish its corporate KPIs immediately and provide regular updates.

Response – Accept

TfW's KPIs will be published in the summer and will be shared with the committee as soon as they are published.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 6.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should update the Committee within the next 6 months on progress in further reducing the gender pay gap and improving workforce diversity.

Response – Accept

This is an area that the Welsh Government asked TfW to focus on in the remit letter issued last year. We expect TfW to be an exemplary employer and to be reflective of the diversity of the Welsh population and the communities we serve. We look forward to seeing progress in this area.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 7.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must set out a clear plan to address its poor performance in key areas as set out in Chapter 3 of this report. In particular, it should explain the steps it will take to improve passenger communication.

Response – Accept

TfW have made significant improvements in their rail performance during 2024, demonstrating that their plans are working. We recognise that the passenger experience of rail performance 2023 fell short of expectations, however TFW faced huge challenges with delivering their day-to-day service whilst replacing an entire fleet and delivering the largest ever infrastructure investment in Wales. Whilst there remains room for further improvement it is important to recognise the progress that has been made since the publication of this report.

We agree that passenger communication is incredibly important, especially during times of disruption to services, and we are working with TfW to ensure improvements. I have asked TfW to set out their specific plans to address this within their own response to the committee.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 8.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should publish weekly performance data for each service on the rail network in a way that is accessible to passengers. This information should be circulated regularly to relevant constituency and regional Senedd members.

Response – Accept in principle

As this is an operational issue, it is for TfW to accept this recommendation and I invite them to do so.

Accessible and easily to understand performance data is important for passengers, and I have already asked TfW to consider how they can provide additional relevant information for passengers. The Welsh Government will continue to work closely with TfW as this is developed, and we will ensure that Senedd members are kept informed of progress.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 9.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should ensure that, where a service has been terminated early, it provides alternative transport to each passenger. If TfW cannot provide an alternative mode of transport, such as a rail replacement, passengers should be given the necessary funds to pay for an alternative.

Response – Accept in principle

As this is an operational issue, it is for TfW to accept this recommendation and I invite them to do so.

The Welsh Government agrees that ensuring alternative transport can be provided in these circumstances, when possible, is extremely important to passengers. This is primarily an operational issue, and I have therefore asked TfW to respond directly to the committee with additional information on their plans.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 10.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must adapt its processes for managing situations where services are terminated early to take account of the different impact winter weather may have on passengers. As part of this work, TfW should also consider the location of the station where the service is terminated and its proximity to alternative transport services and facilities.

Response – Accept in principle

As this is an operational issue, it is for TfW to accept this recommendation and I invite them to do so.

The Welsh Government agrees that plans for managing early termination of services must take account of a wide variety of factors, including the availability of alternative services and facilities. However, this is primarily an operational issue, and I have therefore asked TfW to respond directly to the committee with additional information on their plans.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 11.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should provide the Committee with an update within the next 6 months on progress towards the target of 95% of journeys being on new trains by the end of 2024.

Response – Accept

TfW have already received around 70% of the new fleet, with more trains being delivered all the time. Some of these are in daily service and some are being used for driver training. The table below sets out the current position, and I will ask TfW to write to the Committee with a further update within the next 6 months.

Current Position (11 June 2024)	Class of Train	Delivered	Awaiting	Total	Total delivered	In service
	230	5	0	5	100%	2
	231	11	0	11	100%	8
	756	24	0	24	100%	0
	398	14	22	36	39%	0
	197	51	26	77	66%	43
	Mark 4	7	0	7	100%	4
Total new to Wales		112	49	160	70%	57

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 12.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should report back to this Committee on the outcome of its review into rail services and timetables within the next six months.

Response – Accept

TfW are currently considering the feedback received on their review of timetables. I will ensure that the committee, as well as Senedd members, are informed of any changes made to the current plans.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 13.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should work with rail passenger groups to communicate the outcomes of the review of rail services with passengers.

Response – Accept

TfW have worked closely with a range of stakeholders, including passenger rail groups, to communicate the planned changes from the Timetable Review and to gather valuable feedback. This feedback is currently being considered, and I have asked TfW to ensure passenger groups are fully informed of the final decisions once taken.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 14.

The Committee recommends that

TfW must improve its service provision around major events. It should report back to the Committee within the next six months on the steps it has taken in this regard.

Response – Accept

Transport for Wales, working with other key stakeholders and transport providers, have significantly improved planning and service provision for major events. There are now clear, agreed plans for major events, which include increased capacity, additional services, and better communications with customers. The impact of these improvements has been seen in recent successful events in the capital city including the Six Nations, European Qualifiers sporting fixtures and the Bruce Springsteen concert.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 15.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government and TfW should keep the Delay Repay scheme under review to ensure it is striking the right balance between fairness for passengers and the realities of operating a rail transport network.

Response – Accept

The Welsh Government will work closely with TfW to keep all passenger compensation mechanisms under review to ensure they are appropriate and strike the right balance between fairness for passengers and the challenges of operating a busy rail network.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 16.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government should provide further detail of the infrastructure enhancement projects that are being considered with the UK Government as part of the “pipeline“ of projects to be brought forward if funding becomes available.

Response - Accept

The Welsh Government would be pleased to provide the committee with further detail about its priorities for rail infrastructure enhancements in Wales and will write to the committee providing a copy of the Joint Wales Rail Board Infrastructure Priorities Pipeline as soon as possible, but within the next six months.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 17.

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government and TfW should set out their position on the proposals in the recently published UK Government draft Bill on rail reform.

Response – Accept

I recently provided oral and written evidence to the Transport Select Committee as part of their pre-legislative scrutiny. Both sets of evidence have been published as part of the UK Parliaments Transport Select Committee here: [Scrutiny of the draft Rail Reform Bill - Committees - UK Parliament](#)

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 18.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should explain what actions it is taking to realise the savings from the South Wales metro project and how these savings were identified.

Response – Accept

Our investment in the Core Valley Lines is transforming the way people travel, improving connectivity and creating opportunity for people across the region. The programme is in its final stages and is starting to deliver a world-class turn up and go metro style service. As the programme draws to a close, we will continue to work closely with TfW to identify and secure any cost reduction, and that the cost to tax-payers and passengers is kept to a minimum. Transport for Wales will respond directly to the committee in relation to measures taken to minimise costs.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 19.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should provide an update within the next six months on the development of the national delivery plan for active travel.

Response – Accept

The Active Travel Delivery Plan was published on 14 March and we will report annually to the Active Travel Board on progress against the actions and this information will be published. This will include the actions in the Active Travel Delivery Plan for which TfW is the lead partner.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 20.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should provide an update within six months on progress in relation to its work with Corporate Joint Committees and the Active Travel Fund.

Response – Accept

The Welsh Government is currently carrying out a transport grants modernisation exercise, which is developing options for the future allocation of transport funding to local authorities and CJsCs. This work includes the Active Travel Fund.

Financial Implications - None

Recommendation 21.

The Committee recommends that

TfW should set out how it is planning to ensure it has sufficient capacity and expertise to take a leading role in the transition to the bus franchising model.

Response – Accept

We included a specific annex on the role of TfW in delivering bus franchising in their last remit letter ([Remit for TfW 2.0 - Developing a multi-modal culture and supporting the development and delivery of an integrated transport network \(gov.wales\)](#)), which stressed the importance of making sure TfW has the right resources, skills and capability to deliver bus franchising and making sure TfW is able to work in a truly multi-modal way to bring skills and expertise to bear across a whole integrated transport system.

Financial Implications - None