

Pre-appointment questionnaire – responses from Vernon Everitt

Your response to this questionnaire will be used to inform the pre-appointment hearing with the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

Personal background

1. Do you have any business or financial connections, or other commitments, which might give rise to a conflict of interest in carrying out your duties, or impact on the time you are able to commit to the role?

I am Transport Commissioner for Greater Manchester and Chair of the Executive Board of Transport for Greater Manchester. I also provide periodic strategic-level transport advice to a consultancy company called Teneo. I do not envisage that any of these positions will give rise to conflict of interest and none have arisen during my near 6 year service as a non-executive director of Transport for Wales. In keeping with TfW's established policies and procedures around effective corporate governance, should any actual or perceived conflict of interest arise then I would declare it and appropriate mitigation would be put in place, including recusal from any involvement in that particular matter.

Having spent time working in Wales over the past six years, I have developed a strong understanding of the country's transport network. I believe there to be a clear convergence of interest between all parts of Wales and the North of England as we all work to grow the size of our economies, increase productivity and better support opportunity and prosperity for our urban and rural communities. In addition to a focus on improving local transport in every part of Wales, there is in my view enormous scope for Wales and the 'Northern Arc' regions of England to work together cross-border to optimise our local plans and connectivity and win the case being made to the UK Government for greater investment in transport infrastructure and services in Wales. Reform of the UK rail industry and bus franchising in Wales provide the platform to advance this case.

I can guarantee that none of my other roles will affect my ability to dedicate all the time necessary to discharging my obligations and responsibilities as Chair of Transport for Wales.

2. Have you ever held any post or undertaken any activity that might cast doubt on your political impartiality?

No.

3. How were you recruited: were you encouraged to apply, and if so, by whom?

I was approached by a recruitment agency acting on behalf of the Welsh Government as part of the open recruitment process.

4. Please explain how your experience to date has equipped you to fulfil your new responsibilities.

My experience has led to a deep understanding of how better transport improves the ability of people to live better lives. Transport is not an end in itself. It is about people, places and prosperity and my job would be to ensure that Transport for Wales listens and continues to face outwards to deliver for the people, communities and businesses of every part of the country. Safe, frequent, reliable and affordable transport is a core enabler of sustainable economic growth, higher productivity, access to homes, jobs and education, better health

outcomes, tackling inequality and greater opportunity for all families. We must never lose sight of that.

This understanding has been formed from extensive leadership-level experience in running and shaping integrated transport networks, and in particular changing organisational cultures to make them customer focused. This experience has embraced bus (where in Greater Manchester we have recently successfully completed franchising as part of building the integrated Bee Network), tram, train, active travel and roads, delivering positive results for the communities we serve. A central element of this has been my executive and Board level roles in motivating, supporting and constructively challenging the performance of executive teams. My experience of this in transport has been derived from my time working at:

- Transport for London (2007-2022)
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority & Transport for Greater Manchester (2022-date)
- and as a non-executive director of Transport for Wales (2019-date)

This experience has taught me the vital importance of proactive and inclusive chairing, listening carefully to staff and stakeholders and actively drawing on the diverse perspectives and talents of executives, non-executives, local authorities and community groups, businesses, the third sector and many others. A chair must first and foremost listen to those the organisation serves and then ensure that the organisation delivers for them.

My experience has also taught me how to lead an organisation by example, being visible, proactive and working alongside people at all levels – from front line staff, teams working on major projects to the Executive Team. I also have deep personal commitment to delivering Welsh Government's ambitious plans for transport encapsulated by the vision of 'one network, one timetable, one ticket, one team' and have spent my time as a non-executive director at TfW helping to shape this. This vision is inspiring and my track record in this industry demonstrates how I can help lead TfW to make these plans a practical reality.

5. What will be your key priorities in your new role?

The role profile for the Chair of Transport for Wales sets out Welsh Government's requirements and expectations of the Chair in leading TfW's Board to shape the strategy, vision, purpose, delivery capability and culture of the organisation. I will go about discharging those responsibilities in a prioritised way by setting a clear agenda for the Board. This will include the successful delivery of mission critical work, on time and to budget, on bus franchising and completion of major projects and programmes such as the South Wales Metro and Network North Wales (including North Wales Metro), all supported by ensuring TfW's financial stability and sustainability and leading the further development and strengthening of its organisational capability. This extensive and exciting agenda will draw on the many talents of the Board and build on the success delivered under the leadership of the existing Chair.

A key priority for me will be to engage with TfW's stakeholders to listen and deepen my understanding of what they need from transport and to communicate the benefits being delivered by TfW to the people, communities and businesses of Wales. Under my leadership, the Board will be proactive in offering frank professional advice to Ministers on the development and delivery of better transport in every part of Wales and shaping/making

the case to UK Government for greater investment in the country's transport services and infrastructure. There is a huge amount of work to be delivered immediately on all this given bus franchising, rail reform and the need to engage with stakeholders cross-border as well as those in Wales itself to secure the necessary resources to enable economic growth and greater prosperity.

6. What criteria should be used to judge your performance over your term of office?

- Have I delivered against the promises and strategic plans of Welsh Government for transport across the country and has this been recognised and felt by people in every part of Wales?
- Have I been able to help Welsh Ministers secure greater investment in our transport infrastructure and services from UK Government?
- Do we have an increasingly highly capable, responsive and effective TfW executive team with strength in depth and clear succession plans for the future development of the organisation?

7. What criteria should be used to judge the performance of TfW as a whole?

Transport for Wales is measured on a range of published service delivery, financial and customer service measures agreed with Welsh Government and we should be measured on the overall performance against these.

Furthermore, Transport for Wales should be judged on its delivery of its business plan – to time and budget – driven from its remit from the Welsh Government. This plan sets out the key future deliverables including the completion of the South Wales Metro, Network North Wales (including North Wales Metro), bus reform, rail reform and the practical delivery of the T Network – ‘one network, one timetable, one ticket, one team’. These improvements will deliver a step change in transport connectivity between all parts of Wales.

Performance should also be judged against delivery of other vital ‘in flight’ work, including:

- New trains entering service: 77% of Transport for Wales' fleet now consists of new trains and this will materially increase over time
- Simpler and more integrated fares and ticketing to improve customer experience, including further delivery of more convenient ‘pay as you go’ travel and integrating payment across different forms of transport

8. What do you see as the key risks to delivering TfW's objectives?

- Continuing to evolve TfW's culture and capability to approach transport in a truly integrated and multi-modal way, putting the people of every part of Wales at the heart of its work
- A lack of adequate resources to deliver the ambitious plan for transport in Wales
- Making TfW services genuinely resilient to major threats such as climate change and cyber attack
- Not taking sufficient advantage of advances in technology – eg AI as a network planning tool – to help drive rapid change for an affordable price

- Not delivering on our ambitious ridership and revenue growth targets which are our key means by which we decrease net-subsidy for Welsh Government
- A further major shock such as that imposed by Covid

Transport for Wales' T Network vision is ambitious and requires continued culture change to ensure the delivery of a truly integrated and multi-modal network. This has already begun and a relentless focus on continuing this shift is key to delivery.

As well as an internal cultural change, we need to take the public with us as we encourage more people to use public transport and active travel such as walking, cycling and wheeling. We will win further public support for this by improving the transport options available to people, keeping fares as low as possible, investing in providing good travel information and improving the accessibility of transport at stations and stops across the country.

9. What do you consider to have been the main successes and failures of TfW? What lessons can be learned from the failures?

Successes

- Public Service Ethos: as an innovative, publicly-owned and accountable not-for-profit organisation, TfW operates with a clear public service mandate with an emphasis on reducing transport poverty and improving mobility for all. While operating efficiently, its focus is on people rather than profit
- Better and increasingly more reliable services: leading to strong revenue growth on rail and bus (eg Traws Cymru) – TfW has seen recovery and growth in passenger numbers, with growth faster than the UK rail industry average. During 2024/25, TfW achieved £175 million in rail passenger revenue, a 17.5% increase on the previous year, with train journeys up by one-fifth to over 30 million
- Better experience for customers: more frequent services, new trains and buses, better accessibility, simplified ticketing and better travel information, contributing to increased ridership and revenue
- Lower cost base: since taking ownership of rail, TfW has operated with a lower cost base due to tighter financial controls, direct control over procurement and operations and retaining all revenues to reinvest in running and further improving services
- South Wales Metro/Core Valley Lines: tackling the impact on the CVL project of COVID and resultant external price inflation to re-set the programme and now be on the cusp of delivering transformational change for the people of the region
- Network North Wales: delivery of an ambitious vision and plan to rapidly improve transport throughout the region. TfW has established strong cross-border and cross-agency partnerships with Network Rail, UK Government, local authorities and English transport bodies to deliver a metro-style service across North Wales
- Innovation: TfW is pioneering the deployment of tri-mode Class 756 trains on the South Wales Metro which switch between electric, battery, and diesel power and

Wales is the first part of the UK outside London to introduce convenient 'tap and go' ticketing for customers. Wales is also blazing a trail with the work to franchise bus services as a way of integrating all forms of transport for the convenience of passengers.

- Industrial Relations: TfW has engaged constructively with trade unions through transparent communication and a shared commitment to public service delivery. Social partnership continues to be a key priority for TfW.

Failures

- Delivery of new train fleet into service: There has been an underestimation of the difficulties of introducing new fleet. Lessons can be learned on the contracting model, inherited from the former operator, which has made change and negotiation incredibly difficult and complex.
- Improvements across every part of Wales: while ambitious plans are in place bringing benefits to the whole country, more can be done to ensure improvements are delivered and felt across all parts of Wales. It is vital that all communities within North, South, East and West Wales feel the benefits of investment in transport improvements.
- Organisational development: this is not a 'failure' but an 'opportunity' – we need a renewed focus on continuing to build TfW's organisational capability as it takes accountability for more things – eg bus franchising. TfW's CEO is an exceptionally talented leader with deep personal commitment and strong delivery. There is a highly capable senior team. Naturally, there are opportunities to further build capability at all levels to reflect the evolution of TfW's role and responsibilities.
- Reflecting the communities TfW serves: progress has been made in improving the representation of the communities and people of Wales in TfW and this needs to continue to be an area of focus.
- Major events: significant improvements have been made in supporting and delivering major events, including those held at the Principality Stadium, international football and Eisteddfod. Again, there needs to be continued focus on delivery of transport provision for events of National and regional importance given their central place in the economy and culture of Wales.

The key lessons are:

1. Set realistic and transparent targets: taking into account the complexity of the supply chain and challenging funding and financing environment.
2. Enhance transparency and accountability: by continuing to develop regularly published performance data and improving stakeholder engagement to listen and communicate what is being delivered to the benefit of people, communities and businesses in every part of Wales.

3. Strengthen cross-Government collaboration: forge closer alignment and engagement between TfW, the Welsh Government and UK authorities such as Shadow Great British Railways given the critical importance of these relationships to securing additional investment and funding in transport in Wales.

10. What is your assessment of the public profile and reputation of the organisation?

TfW is increasingly recognised for its ambitious vision to create a sustainable, integrated transport network across Wales. This includes rail, bus and active travel and aligns with broader Welsh Government goals. While there is much more to do, TfW has improved transparency around its business plan and performance. TfW has also engaged in public summits and stakeholder events, such as the fantastic 2025 Public Transport Summit in Wrexham to foster broader dialogue and collaboration. TfW has also taken steps to improve gender and ethnic diversity in its workforce to make further progress towards better reflecting the communities it serves.

TfW's strategic vision and social values are generally respected, but inherited infrastructure and historic under investment—especially in rail services—have been detrimental to public perception. This is changing, and is likely to continue to improve further as more new trains and the benefits of the North and South Wales Metros are felt by communities and businesses across the country.

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