Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith
—
Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN
SeneddHinsawdd@senedd.cymru
senedd.cymru/SeneddHinsawdd
0300 200 6565
—
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN
SeneddClimate@senedd.wales
senedd.wales/SeneddClimate
0300 200 6565

Ken Skates MS,
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales,
Welsh Government

XX March 2026

Dear Ken,

Follow-up from general scrutiny session on 25 February 2026

Thank you for attending the Committee's 25 February meeting for your final general scrutiny session of this Senedd term. Following the session, the Committee agreed I should write to you to outline its high-level views on the areas raised, and to ask for clarification and/or further information on certain matters. These are attached as an Annex.

I should be grateful to receive a response by 6 April 2026.

Yours sincerely,

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

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Annex: Views on areas raised and additional questions/requests for information

20mph speed limits on restricted roads

We discussed the impact of default 20mph speed limits on the number of collisions and casualties. We appreciate that further time and data is required to fully assess the policy's impact. You explained that an independent review is underway, "which is going to provide and initial assessment early in 2027, and a final assessment that will include value for money in 2029".

We note that progress is finally being made in updating the Settling Local Speed Limits in Wales guidance. However, we are disappointed that the updated guidance will not be published before the end of this Senedd term. We will be suggesting that our successor committee may wish to follow-up on the publication of revised guidance and scrutinise the impact of the 20mph policy as evaluation reports emerge.

Active travel

We discussed progress on delivery of active travel, following reports by Audit Wales and the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee, which found that the Welsh Government should be doing more to achieve the goals intended by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, particularly around behaviour change. We are concerned that behaviour change has been so difficult to achieve, despite significant investment in active travel.

We note that the publication of the review of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 coincided with your appearance before us on 25 February 2026, which is unfortunate as we were unable to take account of it in our questioning. You told us that "the review concludes that the law itself is sound…The focus is on delivery, it's on better data, it's about strengthening guidance and continued capacity building". We will be recommending that our successor committee undertakes scrutiny of progress in this area, particularly given concerns that monitoring and evaluation were insufficient to track progress or assess value for money. You acknowledged that the "data is pretty patchy". We therefore welcome the commissioning of the National Travel Survey, and we hope this will provide a clearer picture of the value for money of active travel interventions.

Pavement parking

You indicated that your favoured approach to addressing pavement parking aligns with that of the UK Government, which is to empower local authorities to enforce against 'unnecessary obstruction' of the pavement. However we are unclear how the UK Government approach balances the interests of residents with limited parking options outside their homes with the importance of keeping pavements accessible.

We believe that there is a need for a clearer plan in relation to pavement parking. Strengthening enforcement is critical. We note that you said that you are "going to be ensuring that the enforcement regime is toughened up". We would be grateful for further detail on the UK Government's approach, including timescales, why you believe this is appropriate for Wales and how you anticipate it will be rolled out across Welsh local authorities. We see this as an urgent issue, and monitoring of a policy change should be a priority for our successor committee.

Railways Bill

We are grateful for your evidence on the Railways Bill, which will inform our report on the Legislative Consent Memoranda for the Bill. Although we will be reporting on the LCM imminently, we understand that the Legislative Consent Motion will not be debated until the Seventh Senedd. We will therefore be suggesting that our successor committee may wish to follow-up on engagement with the UK Government and progress made on developing and implementing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), as well as its statutory status. You said that a full draft of the MoU will be available in March. We would be grateful if it could be shared with the Committee.

We also discussed that your ambition remains full devolution of rail. We will be recommending that our successor committee keeps a watching brief over emerging developments in this area.

Investment in rail infrastructure

We discussed Transport for Wales' (TfW) vision for rail infrastructure across Wales and Borders, which includes 43 schemes. You explained:

> *"we've got basically the commitment to deliver the most advanced schemes, those 43, which add up to around £4 billion to £4.5 billion, and a commitment to provide us with the development funding to work up the rest of the projects, and we've got the commitment to deliver the full package of £14 billion of rail projects. That is something that is exceptional. We've never been in this position before. And it's on top of the circa £0.5 billion that's been allocated already for rail upgrades that are taking place now."*

We welcome that this rail infrastructure pipeline has "the UK Government commitment, support and the promise of funding". However, we appreciate that governments can change. We will therefore be recommending that our successor committee monitors how the UK Government's Spending Review commitments on rail infrastructure are being delivered, including how they integrate with Welsh Government investment to ensure value for money,

TfWRail performance and subsidy levels

We discussed the high passenger growth rates on TfW Rail services and that as a result of high demand TfW may not have enough rolling stock in five years. You told us that TfW has "a long-term

rolling stock plan". We have requested more detail from TfW on this plan, and will recommend that our successor committee scrutinises progress towards acquisition of new rolling stock.

We discussed how you performance mange TfW on subsidy levels for rail and value for money. You told us that a sub-group of TfW's Board is being established and could look at the issue. However you said: "I would urge any future Government not to do is to place too fine a focus on the subsidy alone".

In response to whether options to freeze some or all TfW rail fares are currently under consideration, you said that you will "be announcing imminently what we're going to do with fares". We noted the announcement on 27 February 2026 that "all fares on TfW services will be frozen for a year". We would be grateful if you could provide us with details of the revenue implications of this decision. We will also recommend that our successor committee continues scrutinising the Welsh Government on how the long-term revenue implications and affordability of future service levels are assessed when planning future rail service level increases.

Bus reform

You told us that you would "urge any future Government to prioritise capital investment in bus-related services", adding that Wales has "the oldest fleet of buses in Britain" and "we need to do with buses what we did with rail: take one of the oldest fleets and make it one of the newest", which will "require heavy investment". TfW told us it is assuming additional capital funding of around £60 million a year, which you said "sounds reasonable". We reiterate concern that the funding levels for bus services are a risk to the delivery of franchising. We will recommend that our successor committee scrutinises the level of funding for bus reform in future Welsh Government budgets.

At Stage 3 of the Bus Servies (Wales) Bill you supported an amendment adding an objective to remove barriers that disincentivise bus use, and said you would look to align Regional Transport Plan delivery and funding with the Bus Network Plan and support delivery of bus priority measures. You said that corporate joint committees have been "directed that their regional transport plans be improved and strengthened in regards to the bus network" and that "they've all identified projects that directly support better bus services". You offered to provide the Committee with a briefing note on some specific examples, which we look forward to receiving.

We heard that you have established a task and finish group to examine the most effective and appropriate mechanism for funding community transport, but that it will be a decision for the next Government as to the amount of money that is provided to community transport. Our successor committee may wish to keep a watching brief over progress in this area.

You also said that the work has commenced on a TfW app that will provide real-time data on rail and bus services. We welcome this work and we will be suggesting that our successor committee may wish to keep a watching brief on the development of this app.

Taxi and private hire reform

We are disappointed that plans for a Bill on taxi and private hire vehicle reform were removed from the legislative programme, and that no draft Bill was published before the end of this Senedd, despite commitments. You explained that "it was overly optimistic to believe that we could take forward the taxi and private hire Bill as well as the bus Bill". We appreciate that you faced capacity issues in relation to primary legislation but laws governing taxis and private hire vehicles are widely seen as outdated. New laws are needed to ensure that disabled people in Wales receive the assistance they need when using taxis and private hire vehicles, and to ensure effective regulation and enforcement. We will therefore be recommending that our successor committee continues to press the next government on the need for reform in this policy area. In the meantime, we would welcome further details on the "non-legislative taxi measures" that you have been working on.

Ports and freight policy

We are disappointed that your National Transport Delivery Plan commitments on a Welsh Port and Maritime Strategy and a separate National Freight and Logistics Plan have been missed, given that you committed to publishing these by 2024. The Irish Sea taskforce recommended publishing a joint maritime, ports and freight strategy. We are pleased that this will be "published before the end of this term so that it's there ready for consideration by future Governments" and we ask that a copy is shared with the Committee.

Transport decarbonisation

You said that progress against decarbonisation targets "has been patchy in some areas". We will be recommending that our successor undertakes robust scrutiny of progress towards net zero.

You said that "a key component of the drive towards net zero will be the cascading of electric vehicles". We discussed the need for electric charging points. You explained that the strategy for 30,000 fast charge-points by 2030 is "now redundant" due to advances in technology, including rapid public charging devices and increased vehicle range. You stated that due to these developments, EV users are more likely to charge at home and the key point is "ensuring that those properties that have traditionally not been suitable for charging points can have charging points installed", including in terraced streets. We welcome the work you are doing with industry, corporate joint committees and local authorities on charging infrastructure including interventions such as trialling cross-pavement charging. We would recommend that our successor committee monitors progress in this area, particularly as we are concerned that Wales is falling behind in comparison to England, where they have already introduced changes to building regulations on EV charging, and appear further advanced in areas such as removing regulatory barriers to cross-pavement charging solutions.

We note your official's comments that the National Travel Survey will provide "a much richer picture…to set out a new strategy for electric vehicle charging infrastructure" and trust that our successor committee will take a keen interest in any future work on this.

Climate adaptation

We heard that you have allocated £3.5 million to deliver projects on the ground relating to biodiversity and restoring nature along the Strategic Road Network and the wider road network. We welcome your commitment to considering whether "at least part of" the £3.5 million "should be used to promote biodiversity on local roads".