



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-627  
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/02083/15

William Powell AM

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Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 23 April enclosing further comments from the petitioner regarding improved commuter train services for North Wales residents.

The pattern of commuting services for North Wales, including Bangor, is oriented towards travel eastwards in the morning and westwards in the evening reflecting passenger demand. That said, there are commuting options available for passengers travelling in both directions.

Morning commuting services into Bangor from the west include arrivals at 0705, 0721, 0752, 0842, 0921 and 1000, while arrivals from the east include 0749, 0837 and 1007. Evening commuter services from Bangor heading west include departures at 1643, 1737 and 1845, while departures towards the east include the 1623, 1718 and 1809.

My officials have examined the latest passenger count information on the these routes and there is no evidence of regular overcrowding on the Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) services, although there may be instances where this occurs, such as incidents of service disruption.

We continue to invest in additional services and capacity for North Wales, which include benefits for commuters. The original franchise let by the Strategic Rail Authority in 2003 specified sixteen services in each direction on weekdays between Bangor and Llandudno Junction, ATW currently provides nineteen.

As I previously outlined, there have been a number of timetable enhancements in recent years that have also improved the overall provision of train capacity in North Wales. In relation to the additional capacity provided by the recent introduction of the loco-hauled services, this is not limited to those services alone but has also enabled longer trains to be deployed on fourteen further services by a related cascade of other rolling stock.

I understand that stakeholders will have aspirations for further enhancements to services. I will continue to consider these, but will of course have to be mindful of budgetary consideration and, increasingly, the shortage of suitable available trains currently available.

We are engaging with rail user groups about their views on further enhancements, particularly with relation to specifying the next Wales and Borders franchise and modernisation of the North Wales network.

Network Rail's Welsh Route Study was published for consultation in April. This identifies potential improvements to infrastructure in North Wales during Control Period 6 (2019-2024) including modernisation of the North Wales Coast mainline and journey time improvements. The consultation closes on 9 June. We are working with Network Rail and the Department for Transport to develop the case for these schemes.

*Edwina Hart*