

TfW Board minutes

16 December 2021

09:00 – 16:30

Venue – online

Attendees

Scott Waddington (Chair); Alun Bowen; Heather Clash; Vernon Everitt; Sarah Howells; Nicola Kemmery; Alison Noon-Jones; and James Price.

In attendance: Natalie Feeley (items 1 & 2); Leyton Powell (item 2d); Marie Daly (item 4) and Jeremy Morgan.

Operational update session (Part B): Lewis Brencher (item 15); Alexia Course (items 13 & 14) Karl Gilmore (items 7 & 8); Richard Marwood; (item 7); Geoff Ogden; David O’Leary; Leyton Powell (item 12); Lee Robinson (item 6); Dave Williams; and Lisa Yates.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Part A – Full Board Meeting

1a. Apologies for Absence

None.

1b. Notice of Quorum

A quorum being present, the Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and declared the meeting open.

1c. Declarations of Interest

Sarah Howells declared an interest in relation to items 2a and 10 as an employee of Jurassic Fibre.

1d. Minutes & Actions of Previous Meeting

Subject to minor amendments, the minutes of the TfW Board meeting 18 November 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

The actions log was noted.

1e. Safety Moment

A road-rail excavator tipped over at Market Harborough station which resulted in Amey being fined £600,000. The accident occurred as a result of changing the size of equipment from what was originally planned. The Board were reminded of the need to be cognisant of change and the impacts it can have.

1f. Customer moment

A recent stay in hotel with a group of noisy and raucous clientele resulted in having negative impressions of the hotel chain even though this was largely out of their control. This could apply the provision of TfW services where passenger behaviours could impact TfW’s brand even if not directly responsible.

2a. CEO Report

The impact of COVID remains across teams, affecting individuals, service and project delivery. In general, rail travel is increasing, and ticketless travel has decreased. However, passenger numbers are likely to reduce again with the onset of the Omicron variant, which will also result in a reduced train timetable.

Network performance has been less good than reported in the last period owing to a range of issues. These include extreme weather events, which have impacted rolling stock availability due to tree-strikes; as well as issues around uncovered guard and driver shifts partly due to sickness, COVID, [REDACTED]

Discussions on train maintenance continue with both CAF and Stadler with one of the key issues under consideration has been around setting up and running the Taffs Well depot. The computerised nature of the depot will result in new ways of working and will require an investment in the right skills and experience to ensure success.

[REDACTED]

The Welsh Government advised TFW it intends to move ahead with the CVL Fibre network opportunity presented in July 2020. This is to be considered under a later agenda item, but it was agreed that Alun Bowen would review the finances presented in the paper **[Action: Alun Bowen]**.

The Board considered headcount figures and requested a more detailed breakdown of overhead and frontline staff **[Action: James Price to speak to Lisa Yates]**.

The Board agreed to discuss at the next meeting the strategic rationale for accepting Strategic Road Network responsibilities from the Welsh Government **[Action: James Price]**.

The Board were also briefed on matters around the Metro Door Protocol, engaging with GB Rail, bus franchising, land management and transactions.

The Board noted the content of the CEO report.

2b. Update on subsidiary boards

December's TFW Rail Board meeting focused on network performance, class 230s rolling stock, Wrexham to Bidston line access rights, MKIV timetable options, the pay brief for train drivers, and the Taff's Well depot.

2c. Finance and governance

The Board were updated on variances to expenditure compared to previous forecasts. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Board were informed that rail passenger levels are at 79% of pre-COVID levels.

The Board approved changes to the Delegated Authority Matrix.

2d. Safety

Leyton Powell joined the meeting. Further communications have been issued around the need for staff to work from home. Work is progressing in a number of areas including establishing a Visible Felt Leadership programme, a new AIW/TfW health, safety, sustainability, and security governance framework, and responding to safety assurance inspection findings. An assurance review is also being developed to review AIW staff behaviours and its contractor workforce to either give assurance that the culture is driving safety first behaviours, or that the AIW management team are identifying risks for further action regarding safe line side working.

Regarding rail, the fatality weighted index has seen a slight increase due to passenger slip, trip and fall incidents. There was one RIDDOR Specified injury in the period due to a CVL conductor suffering an ankle fracture after tripping and losing footing on platform steps. There were two recorded SPADS and one dispatch irregularity incident reported. There was also one train struck person fatality reported during the period. The incident occurred at Ludlow which is the second incident in three months. As a result, the location has moved into tier one escalation with partner agencies working together to look at mitigations.

Operation Genesis has commenced. The operation takes a zero tolerance approach to intoxicated individuals, who will not be allowed to enter station premises or travel on services. More BTP and Security staff will be stationed at Hub locations in the run-up to the New Year in order to deal with face-covering compliance, anti-social behaviour and crime. The development of a health and safety improvement plan for Pullman Rail continues.

Natalie Feeley left the meeting.

3. Change programme

Marie Daly joined the meeting to provide an overview of and assurance concerning TfW's review of the current operating model and plans for developing a future target operating model. The Board agreed a set of guiding principles and discussed its responsibilities in developing the target operating model. The Board agreed it would:

- provide a guiding mind to SLT on the strategic direction of TOM, reviewing key outputs on an ongoing basis;
- hold the SLT to account to ensure the change programme delivers against its remit, with a clear endpoint in mind;
- question on an ongoing basis if we have the internal skills, resources, and capacity to deliver the change programme; and
- provide oversight on the engagement of the Welsh Government and Ministers in developing the TOM.

4a. Update on sub-committees

The Board noted updates from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee, and noted the minutes from the Customer and Communications Committee.

[REDACTED]

4b. TfW Steering Board

The previous meeting of the TfW Steering Board centred on strategic road network responsibilities, CVL transformation, ERDF funding, demand recovery, PTI, KPIs, bus, TfW's Articles of Association, budget and the Board's terms of reference.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Part B – Operational update session

6. Bus update

Bus reforms have taken a passenger focus, guided by the emerging principle of 'one network, one timetable, one ticket', which would apply to whole public transport network. There is consensus across most local authorities that the current deregulated system is fractured and complex and that roles and responsibilities need reconsidering.

[REDACTED]

The Board were keen to ensure that TfW is not held accountable for decisions made by others and for which TfW has no control over.

Lee Robinson left the meeting.

[REDACTED]

A detailed discussion with the Welsh Government on the latest programme position is scheduled for next week.

8. CVL six month lookahead

The Board noted the content of the CVL six month lookahead report.

9. Corporate Strategy

The Board noted progress made on the development of the Corporate Strategy and made some minor suggestions for amends.

10. CVL fibre commercialisation

Sarah Howells declared a conflict of interest and temporarily left the meeting.

The Board were updated on the Business Case it approved in Q3 of 2020 to commercialise the spare capacity on CVL 432 fibre cabling. Whilst the business case was approved by Board, the Welsh Government deferred the project.

The Welsh Government has recently re-engaged with the project and have asked for a re-submission of the business case which has been updated and revised.

The Board noted the update and requested that the Major Projects Committee provides some oversight and scrutiny.

11. Fare increases

Sarah Howells rejoined the meeting. The Board were briefed on the process and approach for determining fare increases. It was agreed to hold to a further discussion in mid-2022 for the whole Board or a sub-group.

12. Strategic risk register and threat level report

There are currently four open risks on the SLT / Board risk register. Three additional were added to the report as new and emerging risks and issues for information. The Board noted some minor changes in risk scores.

13. OLR Grant Agreement strategic review

Alexia Course joined the meeting.

The Board were reminded that the OLR Grant Agreement (OLRGA) between the Welsh Ministers and TfW Rail Ltd is a requirement under the Railways Act. The OLRGA, which became effective from 7 February 2021, makes explicit provision for a strategic review of certain obligations contained within it. The Board were briefed on the details and outcome of that review. The Board approved the amendments to the OLRGA and publication of the amended document.

14. OLR Grant Agreement variation process

The Board approved the process that TfW and TfW Rail Ltd will follow in agreeing and formalising variations to the OLRGA.

15. Communications

Lewis Brencher joined the meeting. The Board were briefed on key themes relating to communications and engagement over the last month including extreme weather events, launching new trains, an increasing number of media inquiries, changes to travel safer campaign, the need for longer term planning around strategic campaigns, regional stakeholder panels, marketing, and enquiries from Members of the Senedd and MPs. The ITV weather sponsorship has been used to promote face covering messages.

The Chair thanked all who contributed for their input and wished everyone a good Christmas and New Year with family and friends.