

TfW Board minutes

15 April 2021

10:00 – 16:30

Attendees

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

In attendance: Natalie Feeley (items 1-3); Leyton Powell (item 2c); Jan Chaudhry (item 5); Chris Williams (item 6a) and Jeremy Morgan. Operational update session (Part B): Geoff Ogden; David O’Leary; Lewis Brencher; Lisa Yates; Lee Robinson; Alexia Course; Karl Gilmore; and Dave Williams.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Part A – Full Board Meeting

1a. Apologies for Absence

Alun Bowen.

1b. Notice of Quorum

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

1c. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

1d. Minutes & Actions of Previous Meeting

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

The actions log was noted.

2a. Safety Moment

Whilst some aspects of life are returning to normal, social distancing and good hand hygiene should be maintained.

2b. Customer moment

The rules on wearing face masks are different across the UK. We need to be mindful of customers using our services crossing borders where the rules may differ; and where they are different, they should be signposted.

2c. Safety performance

Leyton Powell joined the meeting. KPI reviews have commenced and will be evolved over the coming months. A research paper is in production looking at the long-term effect of COVID-19 on TfW employees and will be presented to the SLT's Corporate Services Committee based on risk assessments for staff [Action LP to share with NF].

Continued support is being provided to the cleaning operations with a review of risk assessments in progress.

There were no RIDDOR specified injuries during rail period 12, resulting in a reduction in the Fatality Weighted Index. Customers are returning to services and there has been an accompanying increase in facemask compliance and a reduction in anti-social behaviour. During rail period 12 there was one non-suspicious incident of a train striking a person at a level crossing, 14 workforce incidents, four non-workforce accidents, five physical assaults and one SPAD during a shunt operation. A presentation on the SPAD strategy was given at the recent Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meeting.

There were 57 close calls across infrastructure. A good culture of reporting incidents has developed, but work is required to identify what lies behind the upward trend and whether reported issues are significant enough to warrant further action. Leyton Powell left the meeting

3a. CEO report

Last month provided the first opportunity in some time for the Executive to strategically reflect and begin the process of resetting plans and consolidating different areas of the new business into a coherent whole. In particular, detailed work has been carried out around rolling stock, depots and stabling and the link with CVL transformation.

The latest information is showing a more positive costs and timetable position. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A programme of challenge sessions with the Amey team is in place, with the output of these meetings increasing confidence of delivery against the plan with a series of plausible ways to deliver the programme on time. The Board agreed that those involved in the programme should be held to account for delivery against time and budget and to look for ways to further accelerate and to value engineer the programme. These challenge sessions are also looking at the risks of being too specification driven rather than being focused on outputs and budgets.

[REDACTED]

The Board were updated on other key challenges including TfW's strategic approach to ensure all activities add up to a planned and integrated transport network; taking advantage of opportunities to build an organisation that is as efficient as possible through breaking down silos and managing out unnecessary duplication; determining TfW's commercial and customer strategy; and influencing Government policy, particularly in the field of integrated transport and land use planning.

The Board noted the report.

3b. Finance

The Board noted the finance report. Management accounts for March 2021 were unavailable due to year-end closure activities. Draft 2020-21 accounts will be shared with the Welsh Government this week. However, the Board were updated on the current operational and capital expenditure positions against outturn, which are subject to change to reflect the final year-end position.

The Board were updated on the priority finance activities over the last month including final sign off for the net assets statement and the EMA audit report; year-end closure; CVL asset valuation and external audit; additional services including cleaning, active travel grants, bus initiatives, TfW Innovation Services and other new initiatives for the new financial year; and the new financial year remit for 2021/22 along with accompanying budget provision and business plan.

[REDACTED]

The Board requested gathering evidence to support TfW's response to COVID-19 in relation to where future liabilities may lie, particularly what can be evidenced and documented to show how TfW has supported and protected people. The Board welcomed the inclusion in the finance report of TfW Rail Ltd's profit and loss statement for rail period 12 which provides an indication of the work needed to increase revenue coming out of lockdown. The Board requested commentary and insight on how revenue is being tracked against plans [Action Heather Clash].

Natalie Feeley left the meeting.

3c. Update on sub-committees

The Board were updated on the work of the Audit and Risk, Customer and Communications, Health, Safety and Wellbeing and People committees.

The Customer and Communications Committee discussed ongoing personas work [Action – Jeremy Morgan to circulate] and the need to review TfW's values to ensure they align with what customers think and feel.

3d. TfW Steering Board

March's TfW Steering Board included discussions on governance structures; key performance indicators, senior personnel changes, challenges around social distancing, and TfW's remit letter and progress with the 2021-22 Business Plan.

4. Confidential HR session

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. Any other business

Jan Chaudhry joined the meeting to introduce himself to the Board as TfW Rail Limited's new Managing Director.

Part B – Operational update session

LB, LR, AC, KG, DOL and GO joined the meeting.

6a. Rail Passenger Revenue

Chris Williams joined the meeting to give a presentation on passenger revenue, setting out what passenger revenue is; fare types and Lead Operator/Secondary Operator responsibilities; issues around regulation and the fare setting process; historical trends; cost of sale; forecasts and key issues likely to impact customer demand and revenue over the next five years. The Board discussed and noted content of the presentation.

6b. Ticketing

The Board received a presentation on pay as you go ticketing, setting out the benefits based on the experiences of other providers which provide benefits for customers around convenience, fitting around modern travel patterns, giving passengers greater confidence that they are paying the right price for their journey; allowing more unplanned travel; and automatic fare capping. The Board discussed and noted the presentation, emphasising the importance of ensuring an appropriate back-office support function in place as well as a method for apportioning fares.

6c. Risk register

The Board noted the Strategic Risk Register with six risks escalated to the Board for attention, namely: reclaiming ERDF funding from the CVL Transformation programme, availability of funding, rail liabilities, Delayed delivery of CVL Transformation as a consequence of COVID-19, poor public perception of TfW and failure to optimize rail transformation. The Board discussed the risks and were content with the mitigations in place.

6d. Communications

The Board noted the content of the Communications report. Overall brand impression was +17.0 for March, a reduction from +20.5 in February. This still represented a year-on-year net improvement of +9.2.

Guidance has been published for the pre-election period for all areas of the business in the run up to the Senedd, Local Government, and Police & Crime Commissioner elections on 6 May 2021. Board, SLT and union representatives were engaged during the production and an internal comms plan executed to support the rollout.

March saw social media engagement stay stable, with a slight dip towards the end of the month due to the beginning of the pre-election period and resulting reduction in the amount of proactive social media content.

6e. Bus update

76 operators (93%) have signed up to BES 2 leaving only a small number of, primarily community, operators to remaining.

The Board inquired how the Network Design will be concluded and how the ultimate decision on design would be agreed. Local level delivery plans will be developed which will feed into regional plans, with the ultimate sign-off process to be determined.

6f. Infrastructure projects – six month lookahead and CVL dashboard

The Board noted the content of the Infrastructure projects – six month lookahead report and the CVL dashboard It was noted that there had been some slippage in the CVL transformation milestone 9 and that escalation issues were being mitigated.

6g. Progress against milestones

The Board noted progress against corporate milestones.

6h. Business Plan update

The draft Business Plan has been shared with the Welsh Government with the next iteration to be shared with the Board for approval after the Senedd elections.

6i. Board strategy day

The Board agreed the draft agenda for the next Strategy Day.

AOB

The Board had approved by correspondence a Single Tender Action Request for a Spring Tensioning System for Overhead Lines on Electric Railways to the value of £2.6 million.