**Fforwm Rhanbarthol TrC – Rhanddeiliaid De Ddwyrain Cymru**

**TfW Regional Forum – South-East Wales**

**29th March 2022**



**Adroddiad o’r cyfarfod**

**Meeting report**

South-East Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum

The forum met on the 29th of March 2022, 10:00 – 12:00

**Attendees**

**Forum Members**

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| Adrian Field | Executive Director, FOR Cardiff |
| Clive Campbell | Transportation Engineering Manager, Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| David Dawkins | Transport Policy Planner, The Community Transport Association Wales |
| Enfys A Griffiths  | Transport Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council |
| Gwyn Smith | Welsh Government Active Travel Advisor and Network Development Manager, Sustrans |
| Jason Dixon | Team Leader for Transport Policy, Cardiff City Council |
| Jayne Cornelius | Swansea University |
| Jonathan Parsons | Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Jules Twells | Samaritans |
| Kwaku Opoku-Addo | Transportation department, Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Leanne Waring  | Business Development Manager, Cardiff and Vale College |
| Marcus Lloyd | Head of Infrastructure, Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| Owen Williams  | First Bus |
| Rebecca Smith | Transport Planner, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council |
| Richard Davies  | Adventure Travel |
| Stephen Williams | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council |

**Transport for Wales -** Members of the TfW team that were present to facilitate

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Helen Dale (chair) | Regional Stakeholder Manager, Transport for Wales | 10:00 – 12:00 |
| Jessica Clement | Community Engagement Officer, Transport for Wales | 10:00 – 12:00 |
| James Price  | Chief Executive Officer, Transport for Wales | 10.05 - 10.20 |
| Lewis Brencher | Communications Director, Transport for Wales | 10.20 - 10.40 |
| Matthew Breese | Brand Manager, Transport for Wales | 10:20 – 10:40 |
| Kelsey Barcenilla | Stakeholder Manager, Transport for Wales | 11.00 - 11.30 |
| Elise Jackson | Community Engagement Officer, Transport for Wales | 11.00 - 11.30 |
| Alexia Course | Transport Operations Director, Transport for Wales | 11.30 - 11:45 |

**Apologies**

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| --- | --- |
| Abryantevans | abryantevans@googlemail.com  |
| Adam Keen | NAT Travel |
| Alex Clarke | Passenger Transport Information Officer, Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| Alun Evans | Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Alyn Owen | Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council |
| Andy Johns | Vice Principal, Coleg Y Cymoedd |
| Carol Willgoose | Welsh Government  |
| Ceri Stephens  | South Wales Chamber of Commerce |
| Charlie E Nelson | Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council |
| Christian Schmidt | Transport Projects & Programmes Manager, Monmouthshire County Council |
| Clare Cameron | Cardiff City Council |
| Corinna James | Welsh Government  |
| Daniel Bowden | Stagecoach |
| David Beer | Senior Manager for Wales, Transport Focus |
| Debbie Hudd | Welsh Government |
| Derek Jones | Welsh Government  |
| Emma Bingham | The Community Transport Association |
| Gemma Hayne | Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Gemma Lelliott | The Community Transport Association |
| Geraint Roberts  | Caerphilly County Borough Council |
| Heather Anstey-Myers | South Wales Chamber of Commerce |
| Helen Boyle | First Bus |
| Jane Reakes Davies | First Cymru |
| Jason Coleman | Welsh Government |
| John Gibson | Project Development Officer, Cardiff City Council |
| Kevin Mulcahy | Group Manager, Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Kevin Sales | Public Transport Officer, Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Kyle Phillips | Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council |
| Michele Mitchell | Torfaen County Borough Council |
| Michelle Roles | Stakeholder Manager Wales, Transport Focus |
| Morgan Stevens  | Newport Transport  |
| Natalie Curtis | Bridgend County Borough Council |
| Nicola Somerville | Valleys Taskforce |
| Nigel winter | Managing Director for South Wales, Stagecoach |
| Nina Slevin | South Wales Chamber of Commerce |
| Paul Carter | Cardiff City Council |
| Paul Jones | Newport City Council |
| Paul Selvin | South Wales Chamber of Commerce |
| pdyer@cardiffbus.com  | Cardiff Bus |
| Phil Anslow  | Phil Anslow Coaches  |
| Richard Cope | Passenger Transport Manager, Monmouthshire County Council & Newport City Council |
| roberrh@cymoedd.ac.uk  | Cymoedd |
| Roger Waters | Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council |
| Russell Owens | Welsh Government |
| Sam Palmer | NAT Travel |
| Samuel Hadley | Network Rail |
| Scott Pearson | Newport Transport  |
| Sharon Adams | South Wales Chamber of Commerce |
| Sian Rees | Cardiff Metropolitan University |
| Simon Livsey | British Transport Police |
| Simon Nicholls | Bus Coordinator at Newport Council |

**Note from the Chair, Helen Dale, Stakeholder Manager, TfW**

1. “I would like to thank all of our members for attending our seventh South East Wales regional Forum. Within today’s forum, I’d like to give thanks to our presenters who provided updates on TfW’s recovery campaign, the development of our talking transport toolkit and our corporate strategy. I also provided attendees with an update on the South Wales Metro project, on behalf of the projects team who were unable to attend. Alongside these presentations from our partners, members had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with James Price, Chief Executive Officer at Transport for Wales. I would like to give thanks to members who further contributed to this Q&A session. Thank you for your time and invaluable contributions to our forum.”

**Agenda**

1. **Introduction & Apologies**

Helen Dale, Stakeholder Manager TfW, welcomed the forum members to the seventh meeting of the South-East Wales regional Forum. Helen introduced the agenda for the session and thanked attendees for joining. Helen presented the latest travel safer messaging, which included information on the requirement for face coverings on public transport in Wales being removed from the 28th March 2022.

1. **Transport for Wales update and Q&A session James Price, Chief Executive Officer, TfW**

Helen Dale introduced James Price, Chief Executive Officer at Transport for Wales (TfW), who provided an update on TfW’s recent rail performance, the upcoming timetable restoration, ongoing South Wales Metro transformation work and wider development opportunities within South-East Wales.

Firstly, James Price provided an update on rail performance in the most recent period, with figures suggesting that performance is not ideal, however considering the multiple significant storms that have impacted infrastructure, the performance from the rail team is on an upwards trajectory. James continued that there are ongoing discussions with Network Rail to ensure that future storms do not have such a significant impact on the network, which requires it to be closed multiple times per year, impacting on passengers.

James then discussed the upcoming timetable restoration, where TfW are ‘slowly and sensibly’ returning all services and introducing new services over the coming years. James stated that all services should be running anytime now, with a small number of boarder services being up and running by May 2022.

James then provided an update on the ongoing transformation work to deliver the South Wales Metro project. There is a large amount of work ongoing on the Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr lines. This ongoing work may cause disruption to lineside neighbours, especially those residing near depots and railway access points, however the teams are aware of this and are working to minimise noise wherever possible. James also touched on wider development work across the network, including working on the Burns delivery unit recommendations, the next phase of Metro in North and West Wales, as well as bus and active travel programmes.

**Questions from forum members**

Helen Dale introduced the Q&A session by asking a question that had been emailed to the team prior to the forum. The question asked how have TfW managed to increased passenger demand for significant events in Cardiff? James responded that TfW have tried to plan as early as possible for large events, for example by moving capacity, rolling stock, bus and coach services around the network, and working closely with their partners to manage this. In most instances this has been successful. James mentioned that when there is a significant number of people travelling in a short time, the network simply does not allow us to move those people instantly, and there is always a need for a queuing system. Due to the issues around capacity, the travel safer messaging around keeping a safe distance is increasing difficult to adhere to. James questioned whether it would be best to remove this messaging, as it is not possible to keep a distance on a full capacity train.

Lewis Brencher, Communications Director at Transport for Wales, added that it has been interesting to see the large recovery in leisure travel on weekends, and that this is challenging as we need to respond to the increased demand. James Price added to this that over the previous three weekends, demand is around 75-97.5% of pre-covid levels, and predicts that we will soon be running at around 110% pre-covid levels on weekends, therefore social distancing is not possible.

David Dawkins, Transport Policy Planner for the Community Transport Association Wales, asked where TfW are with the Bus Cymru document, as the Community Transport Association are actively bringing forward a draft policy for TfW’s consideration. David mentioned that there is a demand for community transport and this demand is growing exponentially, and they are working to gather data to inform this. David added that they are seeing the ability of community transport in its varied forms, particularly around dial-and-ride functions that are a good alternative for areas where conventional public transport is not working. Demand responsive transport (DRT) is an area of strong growth and if TfW were able to work with Bus Cymru to create this type of community transport, it would help to consult and inform their membership.

James responded that this should be welcomed and fits with what TfW are trying to achieve. There are some products in place that are similar to this, such as the Flexi services. James mentioned that he has only heard positives from TfW and the Welsh Government around community transport, therefore there is a way to work together on this. James agreed that he will contact the lead of Bus Cymru and present this to Welsh Government.

Adrian Field, Executive Director of FOR Cardiff, mentioned that there are several stadium events upcoming in Cardiff, including several on weekdays, and asked will the capacity be available to ensure that new visitors to Cardiff, and regular customers, have a good travel experience. James replied that TfW are taking this very seriously and are doing everything they can. Currently, TfW are working closely with Great Western Railway (GWR) and Cardiff Council to manage upcoming events. There is always a director on the ground and James added that he takes a personal interest in this. TfW are putting all the capacity they can on to support these events.

James also mentioned systems that can be introduced in the future that TfW are exploring. Firstly, putting on a coach provision in parallel with bus and rail provision, such as a park and ride services, which would be deployed in areas where it is difficult to move high volumes of people quickly. Moving passengers East to West is easy, however moving passengers up the valleys is more difficult.

Secondly, allowing passengers to book timeslots for their return journey, however this may only work for events that finish in the early evening or for those who may wish to stay out in Cardiff following the event. Rather than queueing at the station, passengers could book a timeslot and then receive a text when it is their turn to join the queue. This may allow passengers to spend more time in Cardiff, benefiting local businesses and the night-time economy.

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager for Caerphilly County Borough Council, asked what TfW’s short term priorities are over the next 5 years to deliver the transport strategy.

James Price listed his top short-term priorities, which included the following:

1. To deliver the new rail services that have been promised, including the new rolling stock across the Wales and Boarders network and timetable uplift.
2. To deliver the current phase of the South Wales Metro and ensure it is implemented and operational.
3. Work with Bus Cymru to prepare the franchising system for bus, working with CJC’s and local authorities.
4. Implement a tap-in-tap-out fare system on bus and rail in South Wales.
5. Programme of active travel which sees it’s budget increasing with local authorities where we would like to see a more active and a joined-up approach.
6. Continuing to bring into planning the North and West Wales Metro programmes.

James added that the Welsh Government is interested in doing more work around influencing the way in which people choose to carry out their lives through a series of positive nudges. Lewis Brencher added that his priorities are to deliver everything TfW has promised whilst also having long term ambitious plans in the pipeline that can be developed with partners. Lewis also added that behavioural change is critical to climate change and changing travel habits.

Clive Campbell responded with three further questions. Firstly, Clive asked what TfW’s role is in the growing area of electrical vehicle charging infrastructure? Secondly, was there anything to add around integrated ticketing? Lastly, whether TfW are looking at fare structure in the South Wales Valleys, particularly around modal shift and behavioural change?

James responded that there is an electric vehicle charging programme that TfW are rolling out, however there is a challenge around whether the government’s ambition is high enough and what their responsibility is, as well as the responsibility of private sector organisations. TfW’s programme can be scaled out at a high level, and it is in the pilot phase currently where TfW is installing EV charging points in all areas we have access to and control, however we need to go further than this.

On integrated ticketing, there is a large amount of work being done. In South-East Wales, a pilot for a rail tap-in-tap-out will take place this year, with a pilot for bus in Cardiff and Newport also this year. It is hoped that there will be a pilot to link the two together with a capped day rate across South-East Wales Metro area in the next calendar year.

Finally, on fare structure, James stated that TfW have already reduced the cost of fares relative to other fares for the Heads of the Valleys area and the North Wales coast, as both areas had historically high fares. TfW are moving towards a zonal fare system, however this requires consultation and working with different governments.

1. **Recovery Campaign**

**Lewis Brencher, Communications Director, Transport for Wales and Matthew Breese, Brand Manager, Transport for Wales**

Matthew gave the forum an overview of the recovery campaign, TfW’s response to covid and work to encourage people to use public transport. This is TfW’s first multimodal marketing campaign, covering rail, bus, and active travel. The ‘Real Social Network’ campaign has just been launched across all media channels.

The hope is to build TfW’s brand and encourage behaviour change, getting people to consider using public transport. To encourage people to embrace sustainable transport post pandemic when returning to work, rediscovering places, and reconnecting with people. By using the pandemic as an opportunity to reshape a positive image of public transport in Wales for the future.

Matthew showed a short film that summed up the campaign, followed by the 60 second TV ad. The ad aims to position public transport as a facilitator of reconnecting in real life, as opposed to the digital world we have endured throughout covid.

Matthew showed the forum members the rail specific marketing film and some imagery that encourages real life interactions over online. Messaging for active travel focusing on the mental and physical wellbeing that can result from traveling more actively.

We have created a stakeholder toolkit which we will share with our stakeholders to enable them to support the campaign. This includes bilingual assets and collateral that can be used, partners can add their logos and branding to these.

1. **South Wales Metro: Progress to date**

**Helen Dale, Stakeholder Manager, Transport for Wales**

Helen Dale, Stakeholder Manager at Transport for Wales, provided an update on recent transformation works across South-East Wales, including work completed during the Christmas blockade works and recent milestones.

Helen introduced the South Wales Metro programme, which is the biggest upgrade to public transport in South-East Wales for a generation, with a significant amount of construction and engineering work required to upgrade the network. This work is ongoing and will be intermittent between now and 2023. Helen explained that each piece of work needed to deliver the Metro programme are split into ‘packages’, with Helen providing an update on the work delivered for each package during the Christmas blockade works.

Package 1 encompasses the work needed to install the Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) which will be used to power the new fully electric rolling stock across the Core Valley Lines (CVL) network. During the recent blockade, 26 foundations for OLE posts were installed, 9 miles of signalling fibre cable was tested, 1400 tonnes of new and 800 tonnes of recycled ballast was used to stabilise the tracks and there were 100m of line speed improvements.

Packages 4/5 cover the signalling works, with over 63,000m of new signalling cabling installed over the Christmas blockade, as well as installing and upgrading the existing principal supply point at Abercynon. Package 6 is for track works, with 150m of track installed and 1 track turnout installed for the new Cwmbach to Aberdare loop. Package 7 refers to civils work, with Devils footbridge being demolished and preparatory work started at Cwmcynnon in readiness for its demolition.

Helen then covered the key milestones in the South Wales Metro delivery for each package of work to date. For package 1 (OLE), 16 masts were installed during a blockade in August on the Aberdare line, with ongoing foundation installation taking place across the line. There is also ongoing enabling works across the CVL network, including undertaking trial holes, mining surveys and utility surveys.

As part of the South Wales Metro programme, we are upgrading and improving the signalling system throughout the CVL network to ensure it meets modern standards. Key milestones for signalling works (packages 4/5) included the installation of new equipment including signals, location cases to house equipment, track and lineside equipment, train protection and automatic warning systems, new track circuits and power supplies.

For package 6, which includes track works, track lowers have been completed at Pontcynon, Old Colliery Bridge and Ynysgau. There have also been new loop installations at Aberdare and Fernhill, and level boarding works at Aberdare Station.

Key civils work (package 7) includes new waiting shelters and station designs across the network, a platform demolition and temporary extension at Taff’s Well Station and improvements to Mountain Ash Station, including new signage and a paint refresh.

Packages 8 and 9 refer to work to upgrade and build depots across the CVL network, with package 8 referring to the new £100-million maintenance facility in Taff’s Well, and package 9 referring to improvements to the Canton depot. At Taff’s Well, external cladding has been installed on the CVL Integrated Control Centre, alongside work to the access road and substation base. Ground remediation work is ongoing for the maintenance shed, and foundations for the shed have been poured, with the steel framework being erected. Work is also ongoing to Ffordd Bleddyn road, which has been closed to all vehicles. Piling works are underway to create an access point under Ffordd Bleddyn road, as well as work to improve the Taff Trail diversion route which will come into effect when Ffordd Bleddyn road is fully closed to vehicles and pedestrians in Summer 2022.

Work is underway to improve and increase the capacity at the existing depot in Canton. This work includes the installation of temporary stores and a new access road to divert traffic away from the main shed to enhance accessibility for the improvement works. The Pullmans workshops have been purchased by TfW, allowing for the new FLIRT vehicles to be maintained whilst the maintenance shed is being upgraded. Temporary Stadler offices have also been installed to allow staff to oversee the commissioning of the new FLIRT vehicles.

Package 10 refers to vegetation clearance works. Vegetation clearance has been ongoing throughout the network from Cardiff Bay to Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr. This work is essential to provide safe clearance for the OLE, track, station and signalling works. There are also upcoming clearance works along the City and Rhymney Valley lines, alongside a programme of fencing renewals to prevent against tresspass and to ensure the railway is secure.

Helen also discussed the recent award achieved by the Craidd Alliance, which is a rail alliance formed to deliver the South Wales Metro project. This award, known as ISO44001, is a collaborative business relationship management award and the Craidd Alliance is the first railway alliance in the world to achieve this status. TfW are extremely proud of this achievement and of their effective collaborative working on the South Wales Metro project.

Helen then provided an overview of the upcoming railway blockade during the Easter period, where the railway will close between Radyr and Pontypridd between the 14th to 19th August 2022, and between Abercynon and Aberdare between the 17th April to 13th May. During this time, bus replacement services will be in operation and passengers are advised to check before they travel. The blockade provides the opportunity to carry out significant transformational engineering work, including the demolition of the footbridge at Cwmcynon and work to prepare for its future replacement, track enhancements at Fernhill, level boarding works at Cwmbach and enabling works to prepare for a platform extension at Aberdare Station. A letter has been distributed to lineside neighbours and stakeholders to inform them of this upcoming works.

1. **Talking Transport (breakout discussion)**

**Kelsey Barcenilla, stakeholder manager, Transport for Wales and Elise Jackson, Community Engagement Officer, Transport for Wales.**

Kelsey Barcenilla and Elise Jackson gave a presentation about the ‘Talking Transport’ toolkit which is currently being developed by the stakeholder and engagement team at TfW.

Elise told forum members about the ‘Talking Transport’ workbook. The toolkit is a ‘listen, learn and loop back’ tool to engage with public groups, to effectively collate user’s thoughts, impressions, and ideas to support us in creating visible change within the transport sector. The toolkit will be used to facilitate conversations at a local level. Providing members of our communities with a complete blueprint for running transport related workshops. The subsequent feedback will then help us at TFW to inform decisions based on the views of our stakeholders.

We will aim to target a range of stakeholders and community groups. This wide target audience will enable us to ensure that peoples voices are heard across different demographics.  We are striving to make this toolkit as accessible as possible and will be running pilots’ schemes with our architecture at TFW.

We’ve developed an accessible workbook which has been designed for external facilitators to follow and deliver with ease. The project works by providing in-person and pre-recorded training to facilitators who’d like to deliver sessions on transport related topics to their participants groups. During the training, a demonstration of the workbook will be provided which outlines the three key steps for success. By providing these three steps we’re enabling the facilitators and participants to choose a topic which has the most relevance to them, whilst the activities can be used to encourage in-depth conversation. The evaluation is then key to complete for Transport for Wales to gather the best insight into public and stakeholder wants and needs.

Kelsey explained that an online platform will be used to gather legitimate data which can be used for three different pathways. These three pathways include: Community take on solutions themselves as an external project, secondly data feeding into existing project or plan in TfW and thirdly, data which will be kept on file for future projects.

Once we’ve gathered the data and insight, we will then use this information to hopefully create change within TfW and the transport sector, whilst also providing an opportunity to ‘loop back’. Looping can be provided to the facilitators, or it can also be presented in more public spaces, such as on our website.

Elise talked the forum members through the process of using the toolkit and pointed out the coding system that will hopefully support the facilitator in selecting the most suitable activities. This considers age, resources, and accessibility requirements. The activities have been designed to be as interactive, inclusive, and as fun as possible. The aim is to ensure that those taking part feel relaxed and confident in sharing their views and opinions about transport. We want to know what matters to them, and we hope these activities will enable this.

Kelsey explained that within the toolkit some digital tools are suggested that groups might use to enhance their session.  But to avoid digital exclusion we have opted to make a workbook that will be delivered in person.  But there is no reason why these digital tools could not be used, in place of pen and paper should that be the preference of the group taking part.

Elise summed up the toolkit by telling forum members that ccommunity engagement leads to improved outcomes. Establishing long standing, effective partnerships between our organisation and the communities we serve. We hope that the Talking Transport toolkit will result in a greater sense of community ownership and an improved uptake of services as they are tailored to the unique aspirations of each community.

As this workbook is in development, Elise and Kelsey asked forum members to join them in breakout sessions to discuss the toolkit and give their feedback.

1. **Transport for Wales corporate strategy**

**Alexia Course, Transport Operations Director, Transport for Wales**

Alexia Course, Transport Operations Director for TfW, delivered a presentation which provided an overview of TfW’s Corporate Strategy. Alexia noted that our Corporate Strategy is a hugely important as it sets out how TfW will deliver our vision over the next five years. It's our plan for delivering on creating customer-focused services through a safe transport network of which Wales is proud.

Alexia discussed the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the transport industry. Over the past two years, there have been enormous challenges posed to public transport services and infrastructure delivery, by the Covid-19 pandemic. Public transport is operating in a changed world post Covid and it’s a real opportunity to change behaviors and encourage people to think about travelling in an environmentally sustainable way. Climate change and transport decarbonization are the challenge of our times. Obviously, this a threat, but also a huge opportunity for TfW.

It’s encouraging that many people are returning to using public transport more widely for work and leisure, however there’s still work to do in our recovery campaign, welcoming our customers back whilst reassuring them that we’ll continue to take measures to keep them safe.

As well as the huge impact on public transport, Covid also made staff adapt their working arrangements.  Although we recognize that not all our colleagues can work remotely, we’ve proven we can adapt to change and be flexible in how we work and manage our work-life balances and that’s something that we’re committed to continuing with. This is also something in line with the vision of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales for work and transport and how this will change in the coming years.

There are many other opportunities for us outlined in the Strategy. Including building new funding streams to reinvest into Wales’ transport network. Using technology to help our customers plan their journeys, making it easier to use the transport network, while also enhancing people’s experience when they use public transport. Rolling out the Metro programs and transforming Wales’s transport infrastructure so it's fit for future generations. Continuing our multimodal focus on bus and rail for longer journeys, active travel for shorter journeys and encouraging people to make complete journeys by public transport and leave their cars at home.

In short, we have a lot to do over the next four years, there are many challenges we face but also many opportunities for us to make a real difference to people’s lives.

Our advisory, planning and development strategies focus on how we’ll plan and develop our buildings, infrastructure, and services to create a better transport network for the people of Wales and the borders.

Transport analyticsaddresses how we’ll use data and insight to support our decision-making, help us better understand the network we operate and support the Welsh Government with clear information as its expert adviser on transport.

Planning and network development focuses on how we’ll work with the Welsh Government, local authorities, and our partners to design and develop a network Wales can be proud of. Core to this is our work to support and deliver Llwybr Newydd: the Welsh Transport Strategy 2021 and the forthcoming National Transport Delivery Plan.

Transport de-carbonization addresses how we’ll work with the Welsh Government, local authorities, and national delivery bodies such as Network Rail to deliver a de-carbonized transport network in Wales.

Social and commercial development sets out our objectives to develop our assets for the benefit of the people of Wales and the borders, including providing space and opportunity to communities, as well as how we’ll create new income streams to fund further reinvestment in Wales’ public transport network.

Network Development focuses on how our customers experience and interact with our services – aiming for increased customer satisfaction and growth of our network.

Digital technology addresses how we’ll invest in our digital assets and services to make it easier for our customers to plan and complete their journeys across Wales and the borders, while ensuring our digital systems meet our needs.

Customer experience focuses on how we’ll develop a customer-centric culture in all we do, engaging effectively with our customers, using insights to identify needs and opportunities, create clear plans to address them and use innovative methods to solve problems.

Network growth addresses how we’ll work to make it simpler and easier to use the network and ultimately increase its use. It sets out our objectives for ticketing and fares, how we’ll engage people better in our communications and encourage the use of public transport.

Integrated transport sets out how we’ll bring our activities together to create an integrated proposition for the people of Wales and the borders, including how we plan and deliver our networks, provide integrated information and multimodal facilities.

Our infrastructure and innovation strategies focus on how we’ll build and improve our infrastructure across Wales, whilst developing innovative solutions to create a better experience for our customers.

Innovation focuses on how we’ll identify barriers within TfW to providing the best customer experience and engage with businesses to identify potential solutions. We’ll also work with our partners in our innovation services subsidiary to create and deliver viable solutions.

Infrastructure development focuses on how we’ll develop our infrastructure, creating a safe, accessible, and user-friendly network across Wales and the borders. Transforming the Core Valleys Lines network is a central to our work over the next five years.

Infrastructure management sets out how we’ll manage the existing Core Valleys Lines network, ensuring that we develop and deliver a safe and reliable network infrastructure which enables our railway operation to work effectively.

Our service delivery strategies focus on how we’ll deliver transport services across Wales and the borders.

Active travel focuses on how we’ll work with the Welsh Government and Welsh local authorities to improve and develop active travel routes and information across Wales. We’ll work with cycle hire groups to increase scheme availability and promote walking and cycling as sustainable forms of transport

Bus focuses on how we’ll work with the Welsh Government, Welsh local authorities, and bus operators to reform bus services in Wales. We’ll continue to develop and invest in services to benefit bus users, while delivering the Traws Cymru and fflecsi services across Wales

Railway sets out how we’ll continue to develop, invest in and manage railway services across the Wales and Borders network – transforming the service we provide. Our three-part strategy covers:

* Strategic development - sets out how we’ll work with the rail industry as a whole to develop rail in Wales and the borders
* Enablement – sets out how we’ll work with Welsh local authorities and our suppliers to build a better railway
* Operational delivery - sets out how we’ll focus on delivering railway operations

**Questions from forum members**

Kwaku Opoku-Addo, from the Transportation department at Bridgend County Borough Council, asked what TfW’s plans are for extending the network and its density, as there are sparse parts of the network. Alexia responded that this is a challenge however TfW are working on increasing timetables. On the CVL network, there will be an increase in services, from 1-2 an hour up to 4 services per hour, which will provide customers will more opportunity to travel and to spread the capacity and density throughout services. The new rolling stock coming to the network will also increase capacity.

Alexia added that they are also looking to improve track quality, making journey times quicker. TfW are also looking into what additional fleet can be brought into the network, alongside the existing committed fleet that they have already purchased for the Wales and Boarders network. They are also bolstering the existing fleet, such as acquiring Class 153 trains that can be moved around parts of the network and acquiring more long-distance Mark 4’s, which will help to provide more resilience across the network.

Alongside this, TfW are also undertaking a review of the entire fleet strategy following the CVL transformation work to investigate what is needed to meet net zero and modal shift challenges. For example, does TfW have the right mix of fleet as well as the correct capacity and timetable? Importantly, are we serving the demand of customers in the right way? This work will continue over the following years to help inform what is best to do with the train fleet post 2025 and beyond.

Kwaku Opoku-Addo added that the strategy addresses upgrading existing infrastructure but not expanding the network. He added that Transport for London are expanding their network by building heavy and light rail, and bus networks, which expands the network into new developing areas.

Alexia responded that TfW are remitted to build the infrastructure that is funded, however, they are undertaking work to look at the demand across the whole of the Wales and Boarders network by working with funders such as local authorities, the Welsh and UK government. Projects such as the North Wales Coast Metro project and the Burns commission report for South-East Wales provide insight into what needs to be done to improve transport in these areas. TfW are also working with Network Rail on the South Wales main line to improve the relief lines. In doing this, the relief lines and main lines can be interchangeable with the trains that operate along them. They are also looking into whether more stations need to be built along the main line to support those communities that reside alongside it.

Alongside this, the Swansea and West Wales Metro is also under development. TfW are also looking into work along the Marches line, which connects Abergavenny and Hereford up to Shrewsbury, to work with Network Rail and see what can be done to improve journey times. This scheme is currently unfunded; therefore, they are working on a businesses case which will hopefully get remitted through government funding to ensure the public transport system supports demand.

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager at Caerphilly County Borough Council, asked with all of the new and additional infrastructure, how is TfW addressing the revenue funding implications? Alexia answered that demographic and GDP analysis is incorporated into businesses cases alongside ticket revenue and commercial revenue. The fare box is the largest revenue driver, however there are also retail sites at stations and commercial revenue. Alexia added that TfW have one of the lowest fare structures of all rail companies across the UK, as part of supporting and encouraging people to switch to using public transport. The focus is on making the switch from car to public transport and modal shift as easy as possible, which is a big focus of TfW, alongside making public transport competitive and easy for the customer.

Alexia continued that making the numbers balance is a challenge, however public transport is a service and is not all about making it ‘break even’. We want to do as much as we can to be a service that pays for itself.

Kwaku Opoku-Addo asked can subsidy be addressed, as the fare box cannot deliver the projects that are needed in Wales or elsewhere. There are some routes on the network where the fare box along cannot sustain it.

Alexia responded that this is the case for the majority of routes. TfW’s challenge is to increase demand to such an extent that we can reduce the draw on government subsidy. We are currently seeing this on weekends, with over 100% of pre-covid levels, however Monday to Friday the demand is much more reduced, to around 65% pre-covid levels. It is TfW’s challenge to do more to encourage people to buy tickets and to reduce ticketless travel as it helps with subsidy.

Jonathan Parsons from Bridgend County Borough Council asked are there any aspirations to look at acquiring land to improve transport facilities or to work in partnership with local authorities to acquire land? Alternatively, does TfW have land acquisition powers similar to other public sector organisations? Jonathan also asked what is the aspiration to improve the facilities that TfW already has and to add new ones, for example stations along the main line, and how can this be achieved?

Alexia responded that TfW does have a small property team who are tasted with supporting land acquisitions and working with local authorities. We are doing this a lot on the South Wales Metro project. We are also working with the Welsh Government to gain powers to acquire and dispose of lands in our own right. Currently, Welsh Government consent is required to acquire or dispose of land, and those powers have not been divested down to us.

In terms of specifics around new stations and rail lines, Alexia stated that TfW would certainly work in partnership with whatever local authority the scheme is in, and we would work with Network Rail, Welsh Government, and landowners for land outside of the CVL network.

Jonathan asked where does the spark to acquire land come from, is it TfW or a combination? Alexia responded that it is a combination. Some schemes are initiated by TfW based on data around demand and growth, whilst others are initiated by local authorities and their priorities in local areas, which we would work with to deliver those.

1. **AOB**

Helen Dale, Stakeholder Manager at Transport for Wales, highlighted various Transport for Wales updates, consultations and campaigns to close the regional forum.

Helen reminded forum members of the current travel safer guidance. The latest travel safer guidance and messaging can be found here - [Travel Safer | TfW](https://tfw.wales/info-for/passengers/travel-safer)

Helen also announced the launch of the magnificent train journey educational resources for schools and children. A link to the online resources can be found here – [For teachers | TfW](https://tfw.wales/info-for/kids-and-schools/magnificent-train-journey/teachers-guide)

TfW have also launched its Children and Young People’s Charter, which aims to make children and young people feel safe when using our services and to build their confidence when using public transport. Further information about the launch of our children and young people’s charter can be found here - [Children's Commissioner launches TfW's Children and Young People's Charter](https://news.tfw.wales/news/childrens-commissioner-launches-tfws-children-and-young-peoples-charter)

## Next Regional Stakeholder Forum

The next South-East Wales Regional Stakeholder Forum is scheduled for 29th June 2022. The meeting will be held virtually over the Microsoft Teams platform between 10:00 – 12:00.