



Transport for Wales Board

Minutes of the meeting 18 September 2025

Held in TfW offices, Wrexham and Teams

Members:

Vernon Everitt	Non-Executive member and Chair
Alun Bowen	Non-Executive member
Louise Cheeseman	Non-Executive member
Heather Clash	Chief Finance, Governance & Corporate Services Officer
Vinay Parmar	Non-Executive member
James Price	Chief Executive Officer
Peter Strachan	Non-Executive member

In attendance:

Sam Hadley	Policy Director
Ian Lucas	Associate Non-Executive member
Peter McDonald	Observer (Welsh Government)
Andrew Morgan	Observer (Welsh Local Government Association)
Jeremy Morgan	Board Secretary & Head of Corporate Governance
Katie Timmins	Observer (TfW Interim Customer Experience Director)
Seamus Scallon	Safety & Risk Director (item 2)
Ken Skates MS	Cabinet Secretary for North Wales & Transport (item 5)
Richard Marwood	Bus Programme Director (item 7)
Lee Robinson	Executive Director for Regional Transport & Integration (item 7)
Geoff Ogden	Chief Transport Planning & Development Officer (item 8)

Part A – Standing items

1a. Chair’s welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Board for their participation in the previous day’s Development Day to discuss how they will work together as a team to support and scrutinise the work of TfW.

Apologies were received from Rhian Langham.

1b. Notice of Quorum

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

1c. Declarations of Interest

Louise Cheesman is a non-executive director of the Go-Ahead Group.

1d. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the TfW Board meeting 17 July 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record. The actions log was noted.

1e. Safety moment

The Board were reminded of the constant need for attention to detail regarding safety. Electric rolling stock poses a greater risk than diesel trains when items might be left on the roof following maintenance. Cameras could be used to monitor electric rolling stock entering and exit depots.

1f. T Network moment

The Board reviewed a recent recording of a customer service call when a customer complained about booking First Class seats which were not available, along with no seats in standard class and had to stand for the duration of the journey from Crewe to Cwmbran. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Board asked for the rolling stock issue to come back to the Board as part of the strategic session on fleet scheduled for October's meeting. The Board also discussed the role of the train manager, improvements needed to the App, a policy position on reserving seats and the need to capture data on such incidents and using it to improve services. It was agreed to follow-up at a future meeting and for the Chief Executive to decide which forum should examine the issue in more detail [**Action James Price**].

2. Safety performance

Seamus Scallan joined the meeting.

The Board noted the content of the safety performance report. The Board were updated on:

- Slip, trip and fall incidents are currently the highest contributor to non-workforce physical harm. Collaborative work continues with the Communications team to develop an innovate safety campaign directed to customers to promote the importance of safety.
- Two Signals Passed at Danger (SPaD) were recorded in the period which was a reduction in the corresponding period in 2024/25. The SPaD working group continues to review actions, recommendations and trends.
- The Summer Safer Operation has now concluded which was aimed at keeping colleagues and customers safe across the network. The operation saw 33 arrests and 200 people were refused travel due to poor behaviour. An ELT session has been held on business continuity.

Updates were also provided on the use of Driver Telematics for TrawsCymru services, Pullman, Ffeibr and CVL Transformation.

The Board noted that this was Seamus Scallan's last meeting. He was thanked for his time as Interim Safety & Risk Director. The Board wished him all the best for the future.

3. Subsidiary companies

The recent meeting of the TfW Rail Board focussed on operational performance, a detailed review of South Wales Metro and Autumn seasonal preparedness. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board noted that the Nominations Committee approved the Chief Executives objectives and the re-appointment of Dave Happy as TfW Ffeibr Chair.

4. Sub-committees

The recent meeting of the Customer Experience & Growth Committee discussed fares, retailing and ticketing strategy, a high-level review of performance and customer contact, a review of events handling, and the Marketing Ambition and Challenge plan where the committee noted that the power of social media had not been sufficiently grasped. The committee also discussed issues with CVL toilets. It was agreed to brief the chair **[Action James Price]** with more consideration to be given at a future Board.

September's meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee covered standing agenda items with an additional focus on the findings of an internal report on mandatory training, new counter-fraud legislation and the New Data and Use Bill.

The recent Health, Safety & Sustainability meeting focussed on the use of body worn cameras, KPIs, issues around the interface with utilities on infrastructure projects, Pullman, the employee assistance programme, and business continuity.

5. Cabinet Secretary

Ken Skates MS (the Cabinet Secretary) joined the meeting. The Cabinet Secretary welcomed the 'phenomenal performance of TfW' over the last few years in the context of covid and the recovery from the pandemic, Brexit, changes in government, and the stark contrast of where TfW is today and to where it was in 2018. The Cabinet Secretary congratulated TfW on everything that has been achieved.

The Cabinet Secretary outlined TfW's priorities for the remainder of the government term, particularly around bus franchising, regionalism, the on-going development of the South Wales Metro, and Network North Wales. The Chair confirmed that the Cabinet Secretary's letter to him has been reflected in the Chief Executive's objectives; and that board meetings in all CJsCs are planned. The Board was optimistic that TfW has the resources and strategic focus to continue on a positive trajectory.

The Cabinet Secretary and the Board discussed several items in more detail including the need for an ambitious approach to bus and ensuring the people of Wales see the advantages of bus franchising. The Board discussed the benefits of breaking the cycle of the annual funding regime with a focus on multi-year capital and funding settlements for TfW and having a single funding line. It was agreed that TfW would develop a proposal to present to the Welsh Government **[Action Heather Clash]**. The Board also discussed the benefits of having a regional focus with the customer at the heart; and links to wider policy issues such as social inclusion and economic enhancements.

The Cabinet Secretary thanked TfW for being 'exemplar in terms of delivery and services in Wales' and left the meeting.

6. CEO report

The Board received an overview of the Chief Executive Officers report:

- There is currently a shortfall challenge of around £5 million year to date for rail income against the target of £202 million, partly due to infrastructure availability and partly due to capacity being below

planned. The Board recognised there were still several months to correct the shortfall and discussed mitigating measures including reenergising marketing activity through more effective use of data, utilisation of potential staff cost underspend and further improvements to operational performance. A paper on marketing effectiveness will be shared with the Board [**Action James Price**].

[REDACTED]

- Work has been done to manage an IRS accounting consequence for more than £350 million as a result of converting 231 units and extending the leases on other units. The Board noted that Welsh Government had signed-off the leases several years ago.
- The Board discussed the need for increased commerciality for IT projects. The Board agreed that Vinay Parmar will lead a session to understand the root causes, priorities and mission critical items that drive revenue [**Action Vinay Parmar and Heather Clash**].

7. Strategic session - bus

The Board had asked to use this meeting to take a strategic focus on bus franchising as part of its new ways of working where the Board would be seeking assurance from the Executive on the biggest strategic issues. It was agreed that October's meeting will focus on TfW's train fleet.

7a. Operating model

The Board discussed a proposed 'end state' as to how TfW will operate as One Team to deliver its bus remit. The Board recognised the need for operational expertise and to understand the role and responsibilities of the franchised operators.

The Board was assured around the desired end-of-state, but work is required around out how to get there. The CEO gave assurance that bus franchising and operations were being fully integrated into how TfW is structured and operates.

7b. Bus franchising funding

The Board discussed a paper on bus franchising funding. The Board had requested this paper given the highly complex nature of how bus services are funded in Wales and with a view to identifying at an early stage all the outstanding issues around funding that need to be settled between TfW, Welsh Government and local authorities. It was agreed that the status of these outstanding issues should be captured with a plan in place to resolve them [**Action Heather Clash**].

The Board discussed:

[REDACTED]

- Risks around fleet ownership and TfW owning the current fleet through a 'buy back scheme. It was agreed that this requires further investigation [**Action Lee Robinson**]. The Board noted that buses will

only be purchased if the residual value mechanism comes into place when they are transferred from one operator to another through independent valuation. The Board were informed that a paper on options for the residual value mechanism will be shared at a future Board meeting **[Action Lee Robinson]**.

- Powers to offer concessions. The Board noted that the power to offer concessions lies with local authorities and not the Welsh Government and that to change would require local authority delegation or instruction. It was agreed to investigate in more detail, to seek legal advice if necessary and investigate potential issues around cross-region subsidies **[Action Lee Robinson]**.
- The importance of taking a tri-partite approach in the run-up to bus franchising involving the Welsh Government, local government and Transport for Wales.
- The need for local network review mechanisms that allow networks to grow organically and flexibly.
- Fare box and reinvestment of over recovery by local authorities whilst TfW will manage the overall budget.
- Cost of back-office function costs, where further work is needed to understand the potential costs **[Action Lee Robinson]**.

It was noted that a key consideration is providing funding certainty over current local authorities bus service investment.

The Board agreed that an updated version of the paper be tabled before the end of the year **[Action Lee Robinson]**. The Board expressed the need to be as certain as it can be to on these issues prior to the award of any franchise agreements.

7c. Outstanding bus policy questions

The Board considered a paper summarising how TfW will carry its bus remit functions including overall approach, rollout, safety, contracts, fares, network development, depots, fleet, public engagement, infrastructure, funding, municipals and operator of last resort. The Board asked for all outstanding policy items to be captured and for a path to be set out to assure the Board that they are being worked through in a timely way to ensure clarity **[Action Lee Robinson]**.

The Board discussed the approach regarding municipals and were updated on the due diligence work which has started with Newport Bus. A paper providing more detail will be brought back to the Board **[Action Lee Robinson]**. The Board also discussed integration and on-going engagement with local authorities.

8. TfW Innovation Services business plan

The Board approved the TfW Innovation Services business plan for 2025/26. A discussion took place on the future of the joint venture with several options under consideration including options that do not require a corporate structure. Proposals will be presented to the Board prior to a decision being required in November **[Action Geoff Ogden]**.

The Chair thanked all attendees for their contributions and closed the meeting.