

Transport for Wales Board

Minutes of the meeting 16 October 2025

Held in the offices of Carmarthenshire County Council 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
Rhian Langham	Non-Executive member
Vinay Parmar	Non-Executive member
James Price	Chief Executive Officer
Peter Strachan	Non-Executive member

In attendance:

	Non-Executive member
Sam Hadley	Policy Director
Peter McDonald	Observer (Welsh Government)
Jeremy Morgan	Board Secretary & Head of Corporate Governance
Alexia Course	Chief Commercial Officer (Item 4)
Marie Daly	Chief Operations Officer (Item 4)
Alan McCarthy	Trade unions observer (Items 1-3)
Darren Price	Leader, Carmarthenshire County Council (Item 8)
Daniel John	Head of Environmental Infrastructure, Carmarthenshire County Council (Item 8)
Simon Charles	Strategic Integrated Transport Services Manager, Carmarthenshire County Council (Item 8)

Part A – Standing items

1a. Chair’s welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Ian Lucas and Andrew Morgan.

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.

1d. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the TfW Board meeting 18 September 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record. The actions log was noted.

1e. Safety and T Network moment

A Board Member shared a very recent experience of being stranded on a non-TfW service for more than two hours north of Birmingham. The train was full of passengers, and no water was offered. The Board agreed that this industry-wide issue needs dealing with and that the findings and recommendations from Transport Focus' report on 'Improving the passenger experience when trains become stranded' requires a focus through a TfW lens.

2. Safety performance

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

- Progress with the Signals Passed at Danger (SPaD) external review. The Board welcomed the reduction in occurrences compared to the previous year.
- The 'Use your head before feet' campaign around behaviour on trains.
- A discussion at the recent Customer Experience & Growth sub-committee meeting on violence against women and girls. The Board discussed the need for innovation, and the on-going development of a strategic approach and action plan. The Board warned against virtue signalling and the need to promote the rail and bus networks as places of safety and security.
- Level crossing risks. The Board requested a focus on unprotected potential collision sites on the network and to report to the Rail Board [**Action Lorenzo Visentin**].
- Bus safety metrics will need to be tested through a set of numbers that can be trialled through existing services and rolled into franchising, taking into consideration data used by other operators to improve accountability. The Board encouraged the executive to encourage colleagues that have the insight to data to also find the solutions and test it with colleagues and passengers.
- Issues remain at Pullman around equipment and lifting.

3. CEO report

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

- Rail reform activity continues with the need to further step-up progress to ensure TfW and the Welsh Government achieves the maximum benefit. The Board discussed the need to come together with other devolved functions and taking issues to those drafting the legislation and developing a strategy for enhanced engagement with Network Rail [**Action James Price**].
- Activities undertaken to navigate through the challenging Autumn season.
- Rail operational performance. The Board discussed recent media coverage around train cancellations in Wales and were informed that the most recent disruption was the result of a small number of high impact incidents. The Board noted that no trains were cancelled in the last two and half years because of train crew shortages but wants TfW to be in shape to provide clear communications around the reasons for cancellations [**Action Lewis Brencher**] and to learn lessons in readiness for bus franchising [**Action Lee Robinson**].
- Rail income continues to fluctuate month by month. The Welsh Government is kept up-to-date and whilst progress compared to the rest of the industry is good, achieving the stretch target is proving challenging.

- Bus continues to be mainstreamed more each week with progress reported on the operating model, P&L, and policy decisions. The Board expressed its support in finding a deputy to the CEO to drive this forward on bus franchising.
- An interim MD has been appointed to Pullman with various cost controls in place, but income remains below target, A financial plan is to be developed. An all-staff session was recently held with good engagement.
- The Board noted the financial report including the outturn and funding position for 2025/26.

4. Strategic session – rolling stock.

The Board discussed TfW’s rollingstock strategy with an emphasis on fleet resilience in the context of a changing timetable to enable growth and reduce government subsidy. The Board noted that over the next three years the timetable and associated fleet requirements were sufficient to deliver the advertised service, but there is an element of risk when bringing in new fleet. Whilst resilience and contingency are required, a balance needs to be achieved and any contingency will come at a cost which is unlikely to pay for itself.

The Board approved the following subject to solutioning the funding profile both internally and with the Welsh Government:

- 20 Class 153 Units are brought into operation (17 leased through Porterbrook and three TfW owned) as quickly as possible to provide risk mitigation between now and May 2027.
- [REDACTED]
- Proceed with all the reliability improvements necessary for the MKIV fleet including:
 - Progressing the staffing/technical/night shift requirements for day-to-day resilience/reliability [Action Marie Daly].
 - [REDACTED]
 - Informing customers in advance when the service has been cancelled or affected [Action Alexia Course].
- [REDACTED] The Board noted the potential capacity issues in the early 2030s and particular issues around requirements for the latter phases of Crossrail. It was agreed to draft a letter to local authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region setting out the regional benefits and to discuss rolling stock strategy.
- A medium-term funding profile for the entire rolling stock strategy [Action Alexia Course].

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Board recognised that as TfW transitions into running a multi-modal public transport system, there is need for a medium-term funding strategy which requires discussion with the Welsh Government on the financial impact and potential trade-offs. The Board emphasised that if the rolling stock strategy is unaffordable, the consequences and potential mitigations need to be understood.

5. Bus actions

The Board noted an update on progress against the action from September’s discussion on bus franchising.

6. Economic Crime and Transparency

The Board were joined by some of the statutory directors from TfW subsidiaries and members of the Executive Leadership Team to receive training and a presentation on the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 with particular emphasis on changes to establishing corporate criminal liability and the new “failure to prevent fraud” offence.

The Board noted and discussed the content of the presentation and emphasised its commitment to fraud prevention across TfW through the Counter Fraud Strategy and the on-going fraud risk assessment exercises.

7. Governance

7a. The Board were updated on the recent Steering Board which included discussions on budget, rail reform CEO report, finance, and CVL.

7b. The recent Rail Board focussed on performance; class 398s entry into service; commercial update; finance; 197s entry into service; and a deep dive on bus. The Board discussed the potential for changing the name of TfW Rail Ltd [**Action Jeremy Morgan**].

7c. The recent Remuneration Committee meeting reviewed the committee’s terms of reference, and the reward landscape.

7d. The People Committee focussed on succession planning and mandatory training.

7e. The recent Customer Experience and Growth Committee considered customer data and insight, marketing strategy update, violence against women and girls and customer experience for bus.

8. CJC session

Darren Price, Simon Charles and Daniel John (all Carmarthenshire County Council) joined the meeting.

The Board welcomed the Leader and officers from Carmarthenshire County Council who outlined some of the public transport issues common to the local area. The discussion covered a number of local and regional areas including the urban / rural split where some parts of the community feel left behind in terms of provision and the challenge at all levels of government that there is a desire for people to live rurally and so travel by car will dominate.

The Board were informed that discussions to date have predominantly been on rail, the South West Wales Metro and the particular needs around improving east to west links. Discussions also took place on the benefits and shortcomings of demand responsive travel, the need for modelling to capture social and economic value benefit of transport investments, and the need for long-term funding which is key for the public to have confidence and certainty of services. It was agreed to meet with Carmarthenshire Country Council to examine what can be done to improved bus services on transition to bus franchising in 2027.

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