

Transport for Wales Board

Minutes of the meeting 18 December 2025

Held TfW Head Office, Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd

Members:

Vernon Everitt	Non-Executive member and Chair
Alun Bowen	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:

Sam Hadley	Policy Director
Peter McDonald	Observer (Welsh Government)
Jeremy Morgan	Head of Corporate Governance and Compliance
Ian Lucas	Associate Non-Executive Director
Ceri Taylor	Corporate Support Manager
Lorenzo Visentin	Safety & Risk Director (Item 3)
Zoe Smith-Doe	Head of Corporate Reporting (Item 5)

Part A – Standing items

1a. Chair’s welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Board noted that this was Alun Bowen’s last meeting. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked him for his enormous contribution to TfW over the last seven years and wished him all the best for the future.

The Chair thanked both the non-executives and executive members for their work throughout 2025 and the energy, creativity and insight they have brought to the Board.

Apologies were received from Alan McCarthy and Andrew Morgan.

1b. Notice of Quorum

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

1c. Declarations of Interest

None.

1d. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the TfW Board meeting 13 November 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record. The actions log was noted.

1e. Safety and T Network moment

The Board reviewed a recent incident at Llandaf station involving the painting over of a safety sign and discussed lessons learned.

3. Safety Performance

Lorenzo Visentin joined the meeting.

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

- Workforce physical harm has seen an increase in Rail Period 08 compared to other periods. These events appear to be sporadic and do not form a consistent theme or developing trend.
- Progress continues to be made in acting upon telematics scores across TfW contracted Traws Cymru routes. The Board emphasized the need for detailed analysis of safety data for bus operations and proposed further scrutiny to be guided by a proposal from the Safety Director. The Board were informed that additional telematics data on bus will be provided at the next meeting [**Action Lorenzo Visentin**].
- Automated customer announcements were discussed, with caution advised to avoid excessive noise and the need for consideration to be given to both rail and bus communications.
- Additional topics discussed included Signals Passed at Danger (SPaDs) and ongoing actions to enhance safety performance.

4. CEO Report

The Board received an overview of the Chief Executive Officer's report:

- The recent Wales Rail Board (WRB) took place on the same day as funding was confirmed for Cardiff Central Enhancements by the Secretary of State for Transport. The Board were informed that the core purpose of the WRB is to ensure that money allocated to rail enhancements is used to deliver benefits as quickly as possible. The template for the Newtork North Wales project will be adopted for Burns schemes in the south and will be scrutinised by TfW's Major Projects Committee. The Board discussed the need for Spending Review funding to be devolved to the WRB, noting several benefits including simplifying the flow of money and pace of delivery. The Board requested some additional detail on the role of the WRB [**Action Sam Hadley**]. The Board noted that the 'Today, Tomorrow, Together – A vision for rail across Wales and Borders' document will be launched in the new year.
- TfW's Trustpilot scores have increased to 3.4, with continued efforts to improve customer satisfaction. The Board thanked Vinay Prmar for his ideas around increasing the score. The Board welcomed the recent positive ORR quarterly figures for July to September 2025, showing that TfW had the biggest improvement in punctuality of all UK train operators, with a 4.9 percentage point increase to 84.1%. The cancellations metric was also much improved.
- Recent meetings have taken place with senior Network Rail executives around the Rail Reform operating model, which have been useful. The Executive were reminded, that in the context of recent positive discussions, the need to hold Network Rail to account for day-to-day performance. The Board were reminded of the importance of the heads of terms for the Memorandum of Understanding

between Great British Railways (GBR) and Transport for Wales for the Wales and Borders and the evidence given at the Transport Select Committee on 17 December which talked about TfW as an institution in the context of Great British Railways. The Board agreed to write to Network Rail with reflections on the recent conversation [**Action James Price and Sam Hadley**].

- A recent meeting between TfW, CAF and CAF rolling stock owners which has led to five further units being planned for acceptance before Christmas and a full repair of recent issues which will see six additional units back in service by the end of January 2026.
- The Board discussed a paper outlining considerations for TfW moving towards multi-year funding regime for discussion with the Welsh Government. The Board were reminded of the benefits around greater control and certainty, and the need for single budget lines for capital and revenue expenditure, built around further enhancing TfW's budgeting and forecasting capability. The Board will be presented with a draft multi-year view in March 2026.

5. Business plan 2206/27

Zoe Smith-Doe joined the meeting.

The Board were updated on the outline process for developing the 2026/27 business plan and discussed the need for the document to be used to hold the business to account. The Board were also informed that the Corporate Strategy will be written next year and agreed that it should be more concise than the previous version and that the Business Plan is published earlier than previous years.

6. Governance

The recent meeting of the TfW Advisory Panel attended by the TfW Chair and Chief Executive provided good challenge from stakeholders. Action will be taken to engage with the Advisory Panel Chair on TfW's strategy. The Board discussed the need for engagement with customers travelling in and out of Wales.

November's Steering Board covered bus franchising, rail performance, rolling stock, finance, TfW letter of comfort [REDACTED]

The recent Ffeibr Board was a positive meeting which considered on-going discussions around partnership working with both the public and private sector. The Welsh Government will be asked to reduce the interest level for the loan from the current 7% [**Action Heather Clash**].

The December meeting of the TfW Rail Ltd Board focussed on rail performance issues, finance, infrastructure, and CVL marketing. The Board noted and welcomed the positive 19% year-on-year growth on CVL which is significantly larger than anything comparable across the UK.

The latest Customer Experience and Communications sub-committee meeting considered customer contact use of AI to support staff and customers, use of econometrics data in marketing, the Traws app and use of data. The Board discussed the need for data to underpin the business plan and the corporate strategy [**Action Vinay Parmar and Heather Clash**]. It was agreed that Vinay Parmar would sponsor a Board paper on use of customer data [**Action**].

Last week's Audit & Risk Committee focussed on the recent [REDACTED], the draft external audit plan, business continuity and resilience, the safeguarding internal audit report and plans for the annual report.

7. Communications & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The Board discussed the development of the refreshed Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. The Board discussed building trust and advocacy in Wales, demonstrating benefits for communities stimulating demand for sustainable public transport and recognising the need for a stronger cross border narrative and more confident, delivery led positioning. The Board noted the importance of integrating corporate communications, marketing, brand and colleague engagement, humanising messages, and ensuring that operational reliability remains core to TfW communications. The strategy also needed to plan for the effective entry into service of the Class 398 units on the Core Valley Lines. Risks and complexities were explored around bus industrial relations, crisis communications, and the impending GBR branding landscape, with a need for clear policy positions and proactive ground level signage strategy in Wales to differentiate between TfW and GBR. Examples such as Cardiff Central Enhancements and Taff's Well were used to test proposed principles, and the Board advised more customer centricity and forward looking "what's next" framing. The Board requested an update on public transport branding at February's Board meeting [**Action Lewis Brencher**]

8. Confidential Session

The Board entered a confidential session.

9. Network North Wales Future Delivery Plan

The Board received an update on the Network North Wales (NNW) Delivery Plan, noting strong progress since the programme's inception and its rapid transition into a structured, multimodal initiative focused on unlocking regional prosperity, improving cross border connectivity, and addressing historic underinvestment. The Board discussed early delivery achievements including progress on level crossing closures, accessibility improvements, new bus shelters, enhancements to the Wrexham–Chester shuttle, bus service upgrades, and operational improvements in Holyhead. The programme is developing partnership with the Liverpool City Region, particularly the joint funded approach to progressing the Wrexham–Liverpool rail corridor. Communications activity was noted, with proposals for more coordinated joint communications. Looking ahead, priorities include customer focused improvements at key stations, extending services to Crewe, expanding regional bus provision, implementing Pay As You Go ticketing, clarifying the NNW brand within the wider T Network, and strengthening the strategic case needed to unlock future funding streams.

10. Newport Bus Due Diligence

The Board received an update on Newport Bus due diligence, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Chair ended the meeting and wished everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.