

Transport for Wales Board

Minutes of the meeting 19 February 2025

Held at Shrewsbury Railway Station and online

Members:

Vernon Everitt	Non-Executive member and Chair
Heather Clash	Chief Finance, Governance & Corporate Services Officer
Rhian Langham	Non-Executive member
Vinay Parmar	Non-Executive member
James Price	Chief Executive Officer
Marcia Sinfield	Non-Executive member
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
Lorenzo Visentin	Safety & Risk Director (items 5 and 6)
Alan McCarthy	Trade Unions observer (items 4 and 5)
Dan Tipper	Chief Infrastructure Officer (item 9)
Lee Robinson	Executive Director for Regional Transport (items 2, 3 and 8)
Julia Buckey MP	Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury (item 3)
Amanda Spencer	Office Manager for Julia Buckey MP (item 3)
Tim Pritchard	Programme Manager, Shropshire County Council (item 8)
Cllr Rob Wilson	Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth (item 8)

Part A – Standing items

1a. Chair’s welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair opened the meeting welcoming all attendees to TfW’s station in Shrewsbury. There were no apologies.

1b. Notice of quorum

A quorum being present, the Chair declared the meeting open.

1c. Declarations of interest

None.

1d. Minutes & actions of previous meeting

The minutes of the TfW Board meeting held on 15 January 2026 were approved as an accurate record. The actions log was noted.

1e. Safety and customer moment

The Board expressed their thanks for the previous day's event at Taffs Well when the Prime Minister, First Minister, Secretary of State for Wales, Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport, Secretary of State for Transport, other senior politicians, senior Welsh and UK government officials and TfW staff gathered for the launch of *Today, Tomorrow, Together – A vision for rail across Wales and Borders*.

The Board also reflected on a recent experience which demonstrated the positive and encouraging culture of TfW's front-line teams in dealing with difficult operational issues affecting customers and the benefits of being a public provider of services. The Board agreed the need for further insight on customer stories [**Action James Price**].

2. Briefing on Shropshire public transport

Lee Robinson joined the meeting to brief the Board on issues affecting the Shropshire area. The Board were informed that Shrewsbury Station is the fourth busiest railway station on the TfW network, with more than 2.3 million passengers entering and exiting the station each year and is an important confluence for rail journeys on the Welsh Marches, Heart of Wales, and Cambrian and Shrewsbury-Chester lines. The Board noted that whilst Shrewsbury Station lies outside of Wales, there is a need to foster good cross border links with all the English border authorities to ensure good connectivity and integration of TfW rail services and nascent franchised bus networks as part of growing the Welsh economy.

3. Stakeholder session - Julia Buckley MP – part 1

Julia Buckley MP joined the meeting with Amanda Spencer (Office Manager for Julia Buckley). Julia Buckley welcomed the Board to Shrewsbury describing the station as a well-maintained civic asset but emphasised the need to maximise its commercial usage. She commented on the potential revenue benefits of increasing service levels. A discussion took place on car parking and better bus links given the current location of the local bus station.

The discussion widened to Shrewsbury's Big Town Plan, with Julia Buckley advocating for a combined station masterplan offering a clear project pipeline. She also raised the importance of developing commercial amenities, noting that no retail offer currently exists at the station.

Julia Buckley briefed the Board on the work of the Shropshire Transport Integration Group. She described successful trials of a night bus service and the strong community benefits arising from them, and the ambition to reinstate Sunday bus services.

In response, the Board supported these aspirations whilst also recognising that decisions must be framed in terms of benefits for Wales and in the context of Network Rail owning the station infrastructure. Discussions highlighted opportunities to unlock the potential of the station building, integrate transport services more effectively, and connect the work to broader regional economic planning. The Board also discussed challenges relating to access to hospitals, particularly where cross-border bus services affected Welsh residents.

The Board considered the value of securing a longer lease on Shrewsbury Station from Network Rail, as the current 10-year arrangement restricts TfW's ability to commit to long term improvements. Julia Buckley supported using Shrewsbury as a test case for innovative partnership models, including obtaining cross party-political support. The Board agreed to write to Julia Buckley to outline the next steps, including the support necessary to secure a longer lease and initial priorities such as the car park **[Action James Price]**. Julia Buckley also offered to raise the need for a longer lease with Network Rail to support TfW.

Julia Buckley and Amanda Spencer left the meeting.

4. CEO Report

The Board were informed that the last period had seen a focus on operational delivery and safety alongside a push to maximise customer satisfaction to drive ticket sales and passenger income as high as possible. The Board noted the current estimated year-end range rail income. Rail performance has again on aggregate been good on both CVL and on WCB for period 11 and period 12 to date.

The TfW team had recently appeared at the Senedd's Climate Change Environment and Infrastructure Committee for its annual scrutiny session where members expressed positive sentiment about TfW's performance. The Board also reflected on the successful launch of the organisation's new rail vision document the previous day, which had attracted substantive ministerial engagement.

The Board discussed Great British Railways (GBR) developments, noting constructive engagement with Network Rail on TfW's aspirations for a more effective and reliable Wales & Cross Borders network and for an empowered GBR Cymru business unit.

The Board emphasised the need to articulate a compelling case for increased rolling stock given increasing passenger numbers, Cardiff Crossrail and implementing the Burns programme. The Board requested circulation of the paper previously presented to the Rail Board **[Action Jeremy Morgan]**.

The Board received an update on the Class 398 fleet [REDACTED]

The Board were informed of an incident involving a T51 service in North Wales [REDACTED]

On finance, rail passenger revenue was lower than forecast during the last period, with adverse weather likely to have been a factor. Discussions covered funding levels for the coming year and multi-year funding arrangements with the Welsh Government.

5. Safety Performance

Lorenzo Visentin joined the meeting and presented the safety performance report. The report covered recent incident numbers and increased reporting from the British Transport Police. The Board considered body worn camera usage, noting the need for discussions with union colleagues. A new assaults dashboard was presented, offering improved insight and highlighting stations requiring greater support. The Board emphasised

the need to strengthen near-miss reporting and welcomed updates on wider industry engagement, including an approach from Transport for London to support future benchmarking between the two organisations. It was also noted that the University of Cambridge and the Rail Delivery Group have approached TfW to join an anti-social behaviour comparative study targeting efficiency of a range of interventions to reduce incidents. The Board noted a presentation demonstrating the use of bus telematics and how granular data could support improved performance.

6. Risk appetite

The Board emphasised the importance of aligning risk appetite with strategic objectives and the use of clear, unambiguous language. The Board reflected on the need for consistency in decision making processes, the value of cognitive diversity, and the distinction between compliance and other forms of risk. Members also stressed the need to consider both impact and positive benefits when assessing risk and recognised that the organisation must be prepared to take well-considered risks to improve delivery. The Board also discussed cultural aspects of cascading risk appetite throughout the organisation. It was agreed that the follow-up discussion should include practical examples to help set risk appetite.

Lorenzo Visentin left the meeting.

7. Governance

The Board noted recent updates from the Steering Board; the Operational Board (incorporating Rail Ltd board) and Pullman; and the Health and Safety, Remuneration and Customer Experience & Growth sub-committees. Specific matters included finance and quality performance, CVL, sustainability, Project Uno, and the need for greater clarity on the organisation's AI ambitions. A customer focused paper was planned for April or May's Board meeting, and the April Board would dedicate time to people and culture matters.

8. Stakeholder session – part 2.

Cllr Rob Wilson and Tim Pritchard (both from Shropshire County Council) joined the meeting to outline the town centre programme 'Shrewsbury Moves.' A discussion took place on ambitions to create a parkway station to improve eastern access and addressed the wider need for better cross-border ticketing and concessionary arrangements. The Board explored the potential for a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise cooperation on ticketing and bus integration. The Board then returned focus to an extended station lease, identifying it as an area where progress could be achieved relatively quickly [**Action James Price**].

Rob Wilson, Tim Pritchard and Peter McDonald left the meeting.

9. Infrastructure Management – Future Operating Model

Dan Tipper joined the meeting.

The Board discussed a paper detailing the Future Operating Model change programme which aims to provide TfW with the ability to maximise the return on investment through direct control of the Core Valley Lines (CVL) infrastructure assets. The Board were reminded that the programme will transition infrastructure management responsibilities from Amey Infrastructure Wales to TfW, granting TfW direct control of CVL assets and with the aim of creating a more integrated, efficient and customer-focused operation.

The Board discussed operational complexity, access rights and governance implications. Members sought clear timelines for decision-making and emphasised the need for defined roles and responsibilities for day-one operations. The importance of business readiness was reinforced. Further discussions covered the safe operation of systems, accountabilities between Rail Operations and Infrastructure Management teams, inheriting maintenance programmes and the need to identify critical operational roles.

The Board endorsed the direction and phased approach being taken and looked forward receiving updates on progress at future meetings.

10. Confidential session

A report was considered on Board effectiveness, and a non-executive director skills audit including the role of sub-committees. Members noted the need to confirm the purpose of these committees to ensure they are focussed on assurance and avoid duplication or gaps in coverage [**Action Jeremy Morgan**].

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