

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a
Sgiliau
Datblygu Trafnidiaeth Cymru yn y
dyfodol
EIS(5) FDTfW03
Ymateb gan ICE Cymru

National Assembly for Wales
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
Committee
The future development of Transport
for Wales
Evidence from ICE Wales

On behalf of the Institution of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru we greatly appreciate this opportunity to give input to the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee inquiry into the future development of Transport for Wales.

We understand that Transport for Wales (TfW) was established as a wholly owned Welsh Government subsidiary; a company limited by guarantee and that its initial purpose was to procure and develop/operate the new Welsh rail franchise and Metro services on the valleys' lines. Also, that a contract was subsequently awarded to KeolisAmey in June 2018 and that "TfWRail" services became operational on 14 October 2018.

We understand the EIS Committee is seeking stakeholder's views on the following (three) points:

- Whether the current governance, structure and funding of Transport for Wales are effective and transparent.
- What action should be taken to develop these aspects of the organisation? And what other governance models and good practice are available?
- The future role of Transport for Wales in delivering transport policy. What additional responsibilities should it take on and how should these integrate with the role of the Welsh Government, local government and emerging regional transport authorities?

We know (from the TfW website) that TfW has a Board of Directors (executive and nonexecutive), a Chief Executive Officer and an Executive Team. Also, that the minutes of Board meetings and a register of interests are published and that stakeholders can freely access the TfW Business Plan, annual report(s) and financial statement(s).

We know, from the latter, that TfW is currently funded exclusively by the Welsh Government with funds agreed on an annual basis. The TfW Board has identified and would appear to be managing its key business risks and has set key performance indicators. All this appears appropriate for a newly-formed, government-owned company. Time will tell whether or not these arrangements are effective but there is clearly a good measure of transparency.

TfW has said that it will over the next 15 years transform the network across Wales and the Borders, with new services and rolling stock, innovative

solutions, and a massive programme of station investment. Public expectations have been raised and, given the scale of the task and the age and the condition of the inherited rolling stock and stations, difficult times may lie ahead. A bedding in period may be needed to allow the TfW board time to prove itself and for standards, targets and operational procedures to bed in and be developed. Clarity of purpose, the provision of smart infrastructure (and services) good staff and customer relations, the delivery of value for money for the taxpayer and for the traveller and effective risk management and innovation are likely to be definitive.

It is our view that travellers should have confidence in the service provided; they do not see the service provider, just the service provided – whether on rail, road – trunk road, motorway or local roads. The service must be transparently provided. There must be certainty of funding – both capital and revenue – with long term investment in delivery. Efficiencies must be sought to enable both the short term and long-term delivery to be successful. Long term funds will give a confidence not just to the service providers (and users) but to enable the necessary skill sets to be developed; this might include working with the colleges and Universities across Wales.

Transport policy is in a state of flux. The case and need for integrated transport has been recognised (but perhaps not so well delivered) for some time. Stakeholders increasingly recognise the importance of planning for the future (rather than simply trying to meet demand); there is an increasing emphasis today on sustainable transport. This has been given further weight in Wales by the recent passing of new legislation; that is by the passing of the Active Travel Act and the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

We would suggest that there is a strong argument for broadening the remit of TfW to include all forms of transport (not just strategic transport) in Wales by air, land and sea. It is recognised that there are no current powers of direction over local transport issues to Welsh Unitary Councils. This should be considered whilst recognising the considerations of local devolution. There are ongoing issues in Scotland with the thirty-two Councils retaining responsibilities for local roads.

Rather than modelling on Transport Scotland, which is the national transport agency for Scotland, delivering the Scottish Government's vision for transport, TfW could be an umbrella body (government owned company) sitting between Wales' Government and the various providers of air, land and sea transport services. Transport for Wales' remit would cover roads, buses, ferries, rail and air transport.

The aim would be to make Wales more connected, to stimulate economic growth across the whole country and to make travelling in Wales a smooth and enjoyable experience.

TfW would within the limits of its delegated authority, guide, manage and direct the transport activities of local government, regional transport bodies and privately-owned public transport services. Responsibilities and delegations would need to be defined, managed and controlled. TfW would, within the limits of its delegated authority, assume responsibility for the delivery of national transport planning and active travel.

As an alternative, the very well-developed Transport for London offers another model – whereby all transport services are contained under one single body. Whilst this is very successful, it does of course have the benefit of large income streams. London Boroughs do retain the responsibility for the maintenance of local roads, but whilst this model is successful in London, perhaps it is because of the large-scale finance involved. In London, bus travel is not deregulated so TfL has the direction powers that are important – and so vital in Wales with large rural areas.

As another alternative, Transport for Wales could be [just] the delivery arm for all or some of the transport services – e.g. train service, metro etc. However, as above, it is my considered view that transport in Wales is so important and affecting all other sectors it should be a ‘free standing service, reporting to the Welsh Ministers.

These are our initial views and we would, of course, welcome the opportunity to be further involved as your inquiry proceeds. I hope they are helpful.