



House of Commons
Welsh Affairs Committee

Wales and Borders rail franchise

Third Report of Session 2016–17

*Report, together with formal minutes
relating to the report*

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Welsh Affairs Committee

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Summary

In 2018, the current Wales and Borders rail franchise will expire, which will bring to an end a 15 year agreement which had no allowance for growth in passenger numbers and no provision for extra train capacity. Since that franchise was first let in 2003, passenger numbers have increased by approximately 75%. Over the years, effort and investment by Arriva Trains Wales and the Welsh Government have sought to cope with the increase in demand. However, this has come at a higher cost than would have been expected at the outset of the franchise. The result is that the people of Wales and Borders have been deprived of many improvements to the rail network that could have been expected, and this is a huge failure.

The end of the current franchise brings some hope that, from 2018, rail services for passengers might improve. The Welsh Government view the next franchise as presenting the opportunity to bring about transformational change. However, this will only be possible if a number of infrastructural improvements are made. There is also an urgent need to acquire more trains, with modern facilities. The rolling stock used on the franchise has an average age of 27 years, with the oldest being 40 years old. Arriva's engineers have done a fine job to keep the aged fleet going, but the age of the trains has been a key factor in the recent decline in passenger satisfaction. Furthermore, new rolling stock will be required for the franchise route to comply with the introduction of improved accessibility requirements by 2020. We recommend that the UK and Welsh Governments identify current orders on to which the procurement of trains for Wales can be tagged, and where existing rolling stock is made available due to the completion of infrastructure projects, we recommend that Wales be given first refusal on these trains.

The letting of the next franchise will also follow a major change in the responsibility for franchising in Wales. Discussions are ongoing to devolve this function, and to transfer the associated funding, from the UK Government to the Welsh Government. This will require secondary legislation, through a Transfer of Functions Order, which we recommend should be subject to scrutiny and debate prior to its approval. Once this process has completed, it is essential that the respective Governments continue to work together and share experience and expertise so that the best service for passengers is provided. This will include holding Network Rail to account for their performance in delivering on the infrastructure priorities on the Wales route. We welcome the support for the current Wales and Border rail franchise map, given that it is intrinsic to the viability of the franchise.

The transfer of functions to the Welsh Government will also mean that oversight will switch to the National Assembly for Wales, and Members of Parliament will not have a direct scrutiny role. This will create a situation whereby Welsh residents and users can raise concerns through their Assembly Member, but English residents and those who use the parts of the franchise that are solely in England, will have no such representation. To overcome this, we recommend that a protocol be established whereby Members of Parliament for English constituencies can write to the Cabinet Secretary on behalf of constituents using the Wales and Border rail franchise services in England, with an expectation that they will receive a substantive response within a reasonable period of time, such as 15 working days.

1 Introduction

Rail services in Wales

1. The system of rail services in Wales was described to us by Paul Maynard MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport (DfT), as being almost a microcosm of rail services in the UK, in that it comprises long distance rural, short distance commuter and key intercity routes.¹ There are four franchises which have routes in Wales, and are each operated by different Train Operating Companies (TOCs):

- Great Western Railway—services from south Wales to London and the south coast of England;
- Virgin Trains—services from Holyhead to Birmingham or London;
- CrossCountry Trains—services from Cardiff to the English Midlands; and
- Arriva Trains Wales—operate the Wales and Borders rail franchise (WBRF). This franchise, which is the subject of this report, comprises the majority of rail services within Wales.

2. The Railways Act 1993 led to the privatisation of passenger rail services in the UK. Since then passenger services have been divided into a number of franchises and awarded to TOCs. The WBRF was first let in 2003, under a 15 year term. This was awarded by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), who then held the responsibility for franchising. At that time, our predecessor Committee expressed its concern at the delay in awarding the new WBRF, but the view of DfT was that “it was preferable to get it right rather than “get it quick”.”²

3. Additionally, over the 15 year period many powers once held by the UK Government have been devolved to the Welsh Government. Through the Railways Act 2005, the SRA was abolished, and franchising powers were transferred to DfT. The Act also set out the role of the Welsh Government in rail franchising, and gave it the power to provide financial support to operators to develop Welsh services.³ In April 2006, the Welsh Government and the Secretary of State for Transport also entered into a Joint Parties’ Agreement under which the Welsh Government was given the responsibility for management of the franchise, including day to day relationships, communication and performance management.⁴ It is now intended that the Welsh Government also take on the responsibility for specification and procurement of the 2018 rail franchise.

1 Q132

2 Welsh Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2003–04, [The Provision of Rail Services in Wales](#), HC 458-I, para 61

3 [Railways Act 2005](#)

4 Department for Transport and National Assembly for Wales, [Joint Parties’ Agreement describing division of responsibilities pursuant to a transfer scheme dated 14 October 2005 in respect of the rights and liabilities of the Strategic Rail Authority in relation to the Arriva Trains Wales franchise](#), March 2006

Our inquiry

4. We launched our inquiry into the Wales and Borders rail franchise on 20 July 2016,⁵ inviting evidence on the following topics:

- What standard of performance has been experienced under the current franchise?
- What lessons can be learnt from the current franchise?
- What improvements to rail passenger services should be expected under the next franchise?
- How do the Welsh and UK Governments co-operate in deciding how rail passenger services in Wales should be run?

5. During the course of the inquiry, we held four oral evidence sessions, hearing from 11 witnesses. Three sessions took place at Westminster, and included taking evidence via video link from Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Welsh Government. A further session was held at the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff, and was conducted in Welsh with simultaneous translation. Whilst in Cardiff we also visited the offices of Arriva Trains Wales (ATW), within Cardiff Central Railway Station. During that visit we met Ian Bullock, Managing Director, ATW, and his team, who explained how the franchise was run, and what challenges it faced. We are grateful to all those who have assisted the Committee and who have contributed to this inquiry.

6. Given the background to the franchise as described above, and on the basis of the evidence received, we have decided to focus our findings on the following issues, as set out in each chapter:

- The 2003 franchise;
- Transfer of rail franchising responsibility to the Welsh Government; and
- The improvements required in the 2018 franchise.
- Our objective is for this report to inform debate about the factors to be taken into account in the awarding of the next franchise.

5 Welsh Affairs Committee, [Wales and Borders rail franchise inquiry launched](#)

2 The 2003 franchise

7. The WBRF was first let in 2003, under a 15 year term by the SRA. In this chapter we examine how the specification of that franchise was determined, and what limitations this put on rail services in Wales. We also assess the performance of the franchisee, ATW, over the franchise period, in terms of how they have sought to improve the experience for rail passengers.

The specification of the 2003 franchise

Basis of a zero growth franchise

8. The North Wales Economic Ambition Board told us succinctly that “the root of any shortcomings in the operation of the current franchise was the contract that the Strategic Rail Authority awarded to Arriva in 2003”.⁶ Professor Stuart Cole, Emeritus Professor of Transport, University of South Wales, explained that the franchise was let with a low level specification including no allowance for growth in passenger numbers and no extra train capacity. He asserts that “one of the competitors pulled out of the bidding process because of what it saw as running down the railway in Wales by the Strategic Rail Authority”.⁷ Furthermore, in oral evidence he told us that the SRA “put in a franchise that was almost doomed to run into nothing, because that investment was not there”.⁸

9. During our inquiry, we took evidence from Roger Cobbe, Policy Director, Arriva Trains,⁹ who was involved in bidding for the franchise at the time. He told us that during the period that the franchise was being let, the SRA was “wrestling with the tremendously difficult problem of the West Coast modernisation” and that “essentially I think the SRA found itself with the most colossal budget crisis and at the same time it had franchises that needed re-letting, one of which was Wales and Borders”. Therefore, the general approach taken was to let a minimally specified franchise to preserve continuity of the services at the time.¹⁰ By way of comparison, Paul Maynard MP gave the example of the franchise in his local area, Northern Rail, which “also had a no-growth franchise that had a particularly damaging impact on the ability of the network to cope with passenger growth”.¹¹

10. Roger Cobbe further explained that once the process had concluded, and ATW emerged as that bidder, they were told by the SRA “we do not have sufficient budget cover for even you, and you were the cheapest bidder”. There then followed a period of several weeks where the SRA looked for “anything that could be done to reduce the support cost to the franchise”. This meant that some things were omitted from the franchise, with capacity for growth being the most significant, which would return as a problem during the course of the franchise term.¹²

11. Eddie Muraszko, Deputy Director, Midlands, North and Wales Market, DfT, said that “although we let the franchise in quite difficult circumstances, we left enough flexibility

6 North Wales Economic Ambition Board ([WBR 22](#))

7 Professor Stuart Cole ([WBR 04](#))

8 Q3

9 Arriva UK Trains Limited (AUKT) is the parent company of Arriva Trains Wales

10 Q37

11 Q134

12 Q37

for bidders to offer us improvements within the overall subsidy level of the minimum [and that] the lesson learned is to allow bidders to innovate”.¹³ This resulted in ATW offering a fundamental restructuring of the timetable as part of the bidding process, which was designed to drive better value out of the inherited resources. Roger Cobbe explained:

We were told very clearly, “These are the trains you will have”. The SRA did not wish us and in fact told us not to think of procuring any new trains from anywhere else, but to use the fleet we inherited. We said, “Fine. With that resource base and with the subsidy that will be necessary for the base offer to meet the requirements of the SRA, we can in fact introduce this better timetable at our own commercial risk”. That is what we did; that was put in in 2005. It provided about 20% more train services for the same level of subsidy and it moved capacity to where it was needed more and where it would earn more”.¹⁴

12. However, from the late 2000s demand started to rise. We were told by Ken Skates AM, that there had been “growth of something in the region of 60% since 2003”,¹⁵ and Paul Maynard MP told us passenger numbers had increased by around 75%.¹⁶ Roger Cobbe said that around this time “the pips began to squeak” and that there was a series of discussions with the Welsh Government, which by then had the devolved powers, which led to some additional capacity that had “been added effectively as bolt-ons to the original franchise agreement”.¹⁷ In summary, Ken Skates AM said that awarding the franchise based on a zero-growth contract was a huge failure,¹⁸ a point that was reiterated by Paul Maynard MP.¹⁹

Subsequent investment during the franchise term

13. The significant increase in demand that was experienced meant that investment in rolling stock became necessary. However, this came at a higher price than it would have been in the initial competition, when bidders would have been competing on prices to win that franchise. Professor Cole imagined the train suppliers thinking, “well, we now have the Welsh Government over a barrel and therefore we can charge a higher price.”²⁰

14. By April 2006, the Welsh Government had the power to provide financial support to operators to develop Welsh services,²¹ and under the Joint Parties’ Agreement it was also responsible for management of the franchise.²² Ken Skates AM told us that since then the Welsh Government has invested “something in the region of £30 million each year for extra services” in order to meet some of the increasing capacity demands of passengers. The Marches Strategic Rail Group told us that this funding was instrumental in providing “additional services and rolling stock for new services”.²³ In addition, ATW have made investments amounting to £35 million over the franchise term, despite the

13 Q134

14 Q38

15 Q99

16 Q132

17 Q38

18 Q99

19 Q134

20 Q3

21 [Railways Act 2005](#)

22 Department for Transport and National Assembly for Wales, [Joint Parties’ Agreement](#), March 2006

23 Marches Strategic Rail Group ([WBR 05](#))

contracted investment requirement being set at a minimal level of only £400,000 over the 15 year period.²⁴ Paul Maynard MP's assessment was that the investments have already significantly enhanced services, "so it is not really the same franchise it was when it was let in 2003".²⁵

15. Despite these efforts, Professor Cole told us that the Welsh Government were unable to acquire diesel trains, as none had been built in Britain for 20 years.²⁶ Therefore, ATW had to manage with their existing fleet.²⁷ Elizabeth De Jong, Director of Policy, Rail Delivery Group (RDG), posited that, had growth in passenger numbers been considered in the specification of the franchise, then:

there would have been the provision for more rolling stock, more capacity in other ways to reach that forecast growth, and with a higher forecast growth, that is more money, more revenue for passengers to the franchise. Again, that would have perhaps enabled more investment".

She emphasised that it was now more important to get future growth projections and the next franchise right "so that it produces something solid for the future".²⁸

16. The low level specification under which the 2003 franchise was let has resulted in the people of Wales and Borders being deprived of many improvements that could have been expected during its 15 year term. This has been exacerbated by the fact that whilst the franchise did not allow for growth, passenger numbers have increased by approximately 75% during that time. Whilst efforts and investments have been made to cope with the increase in demand, this has come at a higher cost than would have been expected at the outset of the franchise. We agree with the Ministers who have described awarding the franchise based on a zero-growth contract as a huge failure.

Arriva Trains Wales' performance

17. The rail industry's standard measure of operational performance is the Public Performance Measure (PPM). For ATW, this shows the percentage of trains which arrive at their terminating station on time, defined as within five minutes of their intended arrival time, having called at all advertised stops, and combines figures for punctuality and reliability into a single performance measure. The Welsh Government told us that ATW's contractual benchmark of 88.8% has been met and exceeded since Quarter 4 of 2006–07.²⁹ ATW explained that they have consistently exceeded the targets set at the start of the franchise "achiev[ing] an increase from 78% in 2003 to over 92% today". Furthermore, they have attained industry-leading 'right time' performance, "which is a more challenging standard of punctuality than the ... PPM" which has been achieved "with the same fleet of trains, achieving high levels of reliability, despite much of ATW's fleet now approaching 40 years old".³⁰

24 Arriva UK Trains Ltd ([WBR 27](#))

25 Q160

26 Qs 6 and 21

27 Q5

28 Q64

29 The Welsh Government ([WBR 18](#))

30 Arriva UK Trains Ltd ([WBR 27](#))

18. Our witnesses were eager to stress the excellent work of the ATW engineering staff to maintain the fleet, so that the performance measures could be met. Professor Cole noted that ATW had “done a good job with what they had—sometimes I am amazed at the number of trains their engineers manage to keep on the railway”.³¹ Ian Bullock explained that engineering excellence had been a real focus for the company, given the age of the fleet; which every year “gets older and does more miles. Some of the trains we have are approaching 4.5 million miles on the clock”.³² He added:

If you look at the average age of the fleet, it is around 27 years, which we believe is the oldest in the UK. So these trains have to work very hard and our engineers have to do a really good job—and they do a fantastic job—keeping them going, but occasionally there are problems with them. The problems with the fleet is still the key issue for us achieving that public performance measure and it is a constant focus of our attention and, I have to say, of our investment as well.³³

19. Ian Bullock told us improving performance was a key part of the franchise contract. He said “when the franchise started ... there was ... nearly 1 million delay minutes attributed to us and Network Rail”.³⁴ Through investment and improvements ATW “have drastically improved the performance of our fleet to the point nowadays where there is about half the level of delay there was at the start of the franchise”.³⁵

20. The expert witnesses we heard from gave a fairly positive assessment of ATW’s performance, with Professor Cole saying “given the conditions that Arriva Trains were faced with, they have provided—I think—a reasonable service”.³⁶ The Rail Delivery Group (RDG), the industry body for train operators, told us that the franchise had been positive for both the franchisee and franchisor. There had been very high growth rates in passenger journeys, improvements in performance despite ageing rolling stock, and investment of £35 million by ATW over the franchise, which were clear markers of success. Furthermore, there had been a reduction in the subsidy required for the franchise, which was positive for taxpayers.³⁷

21. The witnesses on behalf of the respective Governments were also generally positive. Ken Skates AM stated “Arriva would be right to identify their performance as being in line with industry standards across the UK. I think, in fairness to Arriva, they are performing in the top half of the league table”.³⁸ Paul Maynard MP agreed that “what we have also seen is quite high performance in terms of meeting PPM targets [and] overall, I think it performs well”,³⁹ and “I think it is very hard to find specific criticisms to make of Arriva Trains Wales’s performance”.⁴⁰

31 Q5

32 Q39

33 Q40

34 Q39 - at the start of the franchise, ATW were responsible for about 60% of the total delay and Network Rail were responsible for 40%. This position has reversed.

35 Q39

36 Q5

37 Q63

38 Q99

39 Q132

40 Q158

22. Despite ATW's satisfactory performance against the industry standard, Ian Bullock was keen to emphasise that there was no part of the network that was perfect, and that there was always room for improvement. In terms of specific routes, he said "the key areas at the moment are the Cambrian, which has certainly taken a dip in performance, some of the Marches [and the Valley] services are not performing as well as they used to".⁴¹

Passenger satisfaction

23. Whilst it is generally acknowledged that ATW are meeting their industry standard, and have been active in developing and improving the services it provides, an essential element in the assessment of their performance is the views of its customers, the passengers. Transport Focus, the independent consumer watchdog representing the interests of rail users throughout Great Britain, consults over 54,000 rail passengers a year for the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS). This provides a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel, and is a comprehensive source of information about current and historic passenger perceptions.⁴²

24. ATW told us that during the current franchise agreement, it had "consistently achieved high customer satisfaction" as measured by the NRPS, and that "our NRPS results are consistently above the franchise benchmark and above the industry sector average scores. 31 out of the 32 different categories of measurement within NRPS have improved over the past decade".⁴³ However, ATW also told us that "the effects of a lack of capacity, quality of rolling stock and impact of engineering work are now showing some effect on the NRPS results and through customer and staff feedback". Whilst it believes that "consistently good results together with improved train service performance, have made rail services in Wales more attractive", the significant rise in passenger numbers has not been matched by a similar rise in train capacity which is "to the fore in customer perceptions".⁴⁴

25. Ken Skates AM believed that a lot more could be done to improve passenger satisfaction, although since the Welsh Government became the franchise manager, passenger satisfaction levels had compared "quite favourably with the network across the UK".⁴⁵ Professor Cole agreed that the NRPS results were "high figures compared with other operations" but they had shown a decline from 89% overall satisfaction in the spring of 2015 to 82% at the present time. He emphasised that those figures required "a degree of breaking down ... to see which parts of the service have declined". This is because of the variety of services on the network, such as rural services (e.g. Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury); urban commuter services (e.g. in Cardiff and Newport); and long-distance services (e.g. Carmarthen to Manchester). Commuters would be dissatisfied if, for example, they arrived late for work while leisure travellers "would not worry too much about that, but would be more concerned about cleanliness and reliability", and different users would be seeking different standards of performance.⁴⁶

26. Despite the difficulties in attributing reasons for the decline in passenger satisfaction, Ken Skates AM told us that over the past 12 months overcrowding had been a particular

41 Q41

42 Transport Focus ([WBR 28](#))

43 Arriva UK Trains Ltd ([WBR 27](#))

44 Arriva UK Trains Ltd ([WBR 27](#))

45 Q99

46 Q15

problem. Following the receipt of the latest NRPS results, he has been in correspondence with ATW to address “some of the concerns around overcrowding and the quality of the service that was being provided to passengers”.⁴⁷

27. On the whole, Professor Cole’s view was that people wanted a reliable service, and easy to access information, so that if there was a delay, they could be quickly notified. He added that “the railways have come a long way in doing that, with real-time information systems online, at stations and on the telephone”. However, the only financial penalty on the train companies was for punctuality, and these other customer service elements had not been included on the franchise.⁴⁸ Ken Skates AM told us that complaints from passengers were all “pretty fundamental stuff”, relating to the quality of rolling stock, insufficient available seats, and the quality of refreshments and toilets. He agreed that “it goes back to the actual franchise and the lack of incentives and penalties that were available and built into the contract”.⁴⁹

28. Arriva Trains Wales have consistently met their service standards for punctuality, which should be commended, and for many years the National Rail Passenger Survey has shown that passengers have been satisfied with their performance. Recently, however, satisfaction levels have fallen as passengers have had to deal with a lack of capacity leading to overcrowding, and ageing rolling stock. Although Arriva Trains Wales have taken steps to address this, there is no financial penalty for a fall in satisfaction levels. Just as it is important that future franchise contracts are based on target-driven passenger growth, it is also important that contracts incentivise the operator to consider the whole of the customer experience, not just punctuality and reliability.

29. It must be recognised that the railway investment can be an important driver of economic growth, particularly where existing services are substandard. We were told that the North Wales and Mersey Dee area has some of the highest car-based commuting mode shares anywhere in the UK, that rail share is as low as 1% in some regions of Wales and that public transport in some regions does not meet aspirations in terms of connectivity, frequency or quality of service.

47 Q101 (see also Welsh Government ([WBR 42](#)))

48 Q18

49 Q100

3 Transfer of rail franchising responsibility to the Welsh Government

30. As has been set out earlier in this report, during the course of the current franchise, the Welsh Government have acquired a number of powers, for example in relation to the day to day management of the franchise. In November 2014, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced a further devolution of power, in that the responsibility for specification and procurement of the next Wales rail franchise was due to be transferred to the Welsh Government from 2017.⁵⁰

Devolution of powers

Transfer of Ministerial functions

31. During the House of Commons stages of the Wales Bill, the process of devolving these powers was raised during the Report Stage debate on 12 September 2016. The Secretary of State for Wales informed the House, “we intend to use other powers—under the Government of Wales Act 2006—to devolve franchising functions, in agreement with the Welsh Government”.⁵¹

32. During our evidence sessions, Paul Maynard MP clarified that the existing transfer of powers orders⁵² are sufficient to transfer the franchising functions to the Welsh Government “for them to take the decisions” and as such it was not necessary to make further provision in the Wales Bill.⁵³ Ken Skates AM explained that the transfer of functions had been agreed prior to the Wales Bill, and “because of the timeframe operating with the procurement exercise ... a transfer through the Wales Bill could not take place in time”.⁵⁴

33. In terms of the progress that has been made, Roger Cobbe told us that “everybody is acting on the assumption that [the transfer of functions] is just part of a process and within the timeline of tasks to be done, the little bit of missing legal powers will be one of the things that is done at the right time. It is not holding anything up at the moment and the bodies are co-operating”. He added that management of the franchise had been devolved for 10 years, “so there is no reason at all why the letting of a franchise shouldn’t be done so too”.⁵⁵ Ken Skates AM informed us that whilst there were some elements to be finalised, there was good liaison and dialogue between DfT and the Welsh Government, and he was “satisfied that the position we are in today is where we would wish to be in the overall timeframe of the procurement exercise”.⁵⁶ Paul Maynard MP added that whilst

50 [“PM announces rail package to electrify Valley Lines and boost Welsh economy”](#), Prime Minister’s Office press release, 21 November 2014

51 HC Deb, 12 September 2016, [col 648](#) [Commons Chamber]

52 Government of Wales Act 2006, [section 58](#) (Transfer of Ministerial functions)

53 Qs139-140

54 Q84

55 Q53

56 Qs84-85

“there are a number of outstanding issues that will still need to be decided”,⁵⁷ the two Governments were “working through all of these issues in as constructive a manner as possible”.⁵⁸

34. *Whilst we note that the transfer of franchising powers from the UK to the Welsh Government is progressing with good will, we recommend that, in response to this report, we are updated on the progress of the discussions, and informed when the transfer is due to be completed.*

35. *We note that, as there was already provision for the transfer of franchising powers to Wales, it would have been duplication to include such provision in the Wales Bill. However, one of the benefits of the Wales Bill is that there has been an opportunity to debate and scrutinise the Government’s plans for functions and powers in a vast range of policy areas. So Members have the opportunity to scrutinise the Transfer of Functions Orders, and contribute to the debate in a similar manner, we recommend that the Committee be notified when the Orders are laid before the House.*

Funding associated with the transfer of functions

36. One aspect that was still to be finalised was in relation to funding that was associated with the transfer of rail franchising functions to the Welsh Government. In evidence to the Welsh Assembly’s Enterprise and Business Committee in September 2015, DfT officials set out the financial settlement which accompanied the agreement for the transfer. Under the agreement, the UK Government would fully fund Great Western electrification, including the section between Cardiff and Bridgend, and would contribute £125m towards the cost of the Cardiff Valley Lines electrification. Because this work would reduce the overall costs of running the franchise, there would be no increase in the Welsh Block Grant.⁵⁹ Ken Skates AM told us it was too early to tell whether this investment was sufficient to off-set the absence of a commensurate increase in the block grant, and that “there is still a good piece of work to be done before we reach the final financial settlement”.⁶⁰ Paul Maynard MP agreed “there are a number of outstanding issues that will still need to be decided, but stressed “we are working through all of these issues in as constructive a manner as possible”.⁶¹

European Union funding

37. In addition to funding from the UK and the Welsh Governments, railways in Wales have also been the beneficiary of EU funding. Railfuture Wales told us that “European funding has helped station and other improvements but at present it is unclear whether similar levels of funding from UK Government rather than from the EU will be available in future”.⁶² Ken Skates AM addressed this:

I think we have been quite clear that we need for infrastructure in Wales every penny that we would have benefited from had Britain voted to remain

57 Q141

58 Q142

59 National Assembly for Wales, Research Service Briefing, [Rail Franchising in Wales](#), July 2016

60 Q92

61 Q141-142

62 Railfuture Wales ([WBR 38](#))

in the EU and were to remain in the EU. I think it is fair to say that there will be risks ... if we do not have a guarantee of every penny coming to Wales that we have based our proposals on.⁶³

38. Responding to this issue, Paul Maynard MP provided the following clarification:

We have been quite clear that if the Welsh Government continue to make bids into the European Union while we are still a member of the European Union and is successful in those bids ... then after we have left the European Union we will guarantee that funding in the future. [The Secretary of State for Transport] made that commitment at the Conservative Party conference. ... He was quite clear about that, which I hope gave reassurance to the Welsh Government as well that it can continue planning for its own enhancement programmes and applications to Brussels for that funding. I recognise the need for certainty.⁶⁴

He added that if a successful application was made to the European Regional Development Fund for multi-year funding, and the date of completion is beyond the date at which the UK leaves the European Union, the UK Government is guaranteeing that extra funding,⁶⁵ and he urged the Welsh Government to progress its applications for EU funding as soon as possible.⁶⁶

39. We welcome the clarification made by the UK Government regarding the status of European Union funding prior to the UK's exit. We note however that discussions concerning the transfer of funding, from the UK Government to Wales, associated with the responsibility for rail franchising have not yet concluded. We recommend that, in response to this report, the UK Government set out the progress that has been made in resolving these matters, and the areas that are still in dispute.

Co-operation between the Welsh and UK Governments

40. It is important that the UK and Welsh Governments work well together, both to finalise the transfer of functions, and to provide an ongoing quality rail service for Wales. The Heart of Wales Line Development Company highlighted that the current franchise agreement covers many cross border services, and that passengers do not care who runs the service, so long as they can “get from A to B efficiently”. They reiterated that both jurisdictions needed to work together to provide a 21st century rail network.⁶⁷ The Association of Community Rail Partnerships did not think this was happening at present, and said “our current experience is that the Welsh and UK transport departments are at best, confused about who is responsible for what and this is driven by lack of clarity at government level. The passenger—and by extension, our CRPs—find themselves in the middle and this is entirely unacceptable”.⁶⁸

41. Consequently this was an area that we sought to explore with our witnesses. Elizabeth De Jong acknowledged that, whilst the detail of joint work would be kept within the

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67 Heart of Wales Line Development Co Ltd ([WBR 11](#))

68 Association of Community Rail Partnerships ([WBR 32](#))

respective departments, she was aware that the two Governments were co-operating and engaging with one another, particularly with regards to the Welsh Government's plans for the franchise.⁶⁹ Roger Cobbe concurred that there was an understanding in the industry that "the co-operation is there".⁷⁰ Iwan Prys-Jones, Programme Manager, North Wales Economic Ambition Board, thought it was hard as an outsider to comment on how the relationships work, but his co-witness, Councillor Samantha Dixon, Chair, North Wales and Mersey Dee Cross-Border Rail Task Force, said "it appears to me that it is in a more constructive place than it has been".⁷¹

42. However, Professor Cole disagreed with these assessments. He said "looking at it from the outside ... it is not good" and gave the example that DfT has not increased its funding for the electrification of the Valley lines from £125 million, despite the costs increasing from £350 million to £550 million. He argued "that is not a fair proportion of the total cost of Valley lines electrification, and I put that down to the fact that [DfT] never had an interest in a separate Welsh franchise".⁷² He further described a lack of investment for rail in Wales as "foot-dragging by [DfT]" and stated "there are a number of examples that point to the fact that it is not all roses between the two organisations".⁷³

43. Understandably, the representatives of the respective Governments painted a brighter picture. Eddie Muraszko told us that since DfT were notified of the plans that the Welsh Government have for the franchise, they "have actively engaged to provide our experience and expertise" offering a workshop where DfT officials could all work with people from Transport for Wales (TfW), which was extremely well received.⁷⁴ Additionally, when TfW were producing its documentation to go out to the bidders, they requested that DfT review it at short notice. Within 48 hours DfT were able to provide comments, which were very gratefully received. Mr Muraszko added that whilst DfT continue to volunteer its expertise, they were also looking forward to learning from the Welsh experience "because they are doing something quite different and we may well learn from them. We are not the fount of all knowledge".⁷⁵ From the Welsh Government perspective, Ken Skates AM said that their officials working on procurement had done so with the assistance of DfT, who had "been able to offer advice and guidance where and when possible".⁷⁶ Simon Jones, Director of Transport and ICT infrastructure, Welsh Government, added that the Welsh Government have entered into a formal agency agreement with DfT as the bidding competition proceeds, whilst another agency agreement would "establish how cross-border considerations will be managed".⁷⁷

Rail expertise within the Welsh Government

44. Although the Welsh Government have had experience of managing the day to day running of the current franchise, letting the 2018 franchise will be a new challenge. Roger Cobbe told us that the Welsh Government had assembled a team, comprised of its own officials and people with expertise of working on DfT franchises. Eddie Muraszko also

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informed us that the TfW team includes people who had worked in DfT.⁷⁸ They had also spoken a lot to Transport Scotland, “which seems an eminently sensible thing to do” because the procurement has many similarities with that of the new Scotrail franchise.⁷⁹ Elizabeth De Jong explained that one of the officials at TfW has been on secondment at her organisation in the past, and that RDG had offered help, discussing performance metrics and customer experience, “so there are lots of areas to get advice and expertise”.⁸⁰

45. Despite these steps, Professor Cole thought that the Welsh Government was over-reliant on consultants. He told us that the Welsh Government required more expertise on the Network Rail interface, the acquisition of appropriate rolling stock, planning services, and on the procurement of a train operating company. He made the point that there was a difference between being a consultant and working as a permanent member of staff with a long-term career commitment to making TfW work.⁸¹

46. Ken Skates AM explained to us why he thought that TfW had acquired the expertise it required. In terms of expertise, procurement specialists had been recruited. Additionally, TfW had worked with the assistance of DfT who had “been able to offer advice and guidance”.⁸² He argued:

I think we have been able to demonstrate through the ongoing process a considerable degree of insight and expertise because we have had no slippage. Had we had slippage in the process, that would be alarming and we would then be able to assess where the lack of capacity is. But at the moment we are where we would wish to be.⁸³

He also concluded that because there were four companies bidding for the franchise, this was a reflection that the industry was content with the level of expertise and resource. He said “all these bidders are going to be committing many millions of pounds to the process over the next year or so. They would not commit that if they did not believe that we were able to run a proper process”.⁸⁴

47. Although the Welsh Government have had experience of managing the day to day running of the current franchise, letting the 2018 franchise will be a new challenge. Whilst we have heard anecdotally that the relationship between the Welsh Government and the Department for Transport has not been good, we have also heard that it has improved over the years. We were provided of clear examples of this, such as both entering into the formal agency agreement and the degree of co-operation which has been taking place to share knowledge and expertise on procuring the next franchise.

48. The Brown Review of Rail Franchising recommends that ‘the specification and oversight of franchises should be managed by authorities that are closest to their communities and local economies’. Based on that recommendation it is vitally important that the local authorities and regional bodies, whether in Wales or England, have the opportunity to shape the next franchise specification. We were told that such

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an approach, perhaps via a strategic forum, would strengthen the ability of the North Wales and Mersey Dee Rail Task Force to lever the benefits of rail in order to deliver the range of economic benefits set out in their Growth Track 360 Prospectus.

Complaints by English passengers

49. One consequence of the transfer of responsibility for the franchise to the Welsh Government is that they will also be responsible for services that are in England. For example, the Manchester to South Wales route via Crewe and Shrewsbury does not enter Wales until it is south of Hereford.⁸⁵ The Marches Strategic Rail Group were concerned that there was a democratic deficit whereby “English passengers and the English local authorities have little or no input into the delivery of the rail services”,⁸⁶ whilst the Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users’ Association said that if the Wrexham to Bidston Line was “to remain in the devolved W&B Franchise, devolution of responsibility to Wales alone will result in no democratic representation of English interests”.⁸⁷

50. When we raised these concerns with our witnesses, ATW said it was “a factor that needs to be addressed as part of this process”,⁸⁸ Councillor Dixon was confident that a mechanism could be facilitated to provide a level of representation,⁸⁹ and Iwan Prys-Jones said it would not be an unreasonable proposition to establish a statutory right of complaint to the Welsh Assembly.⁹⁰

51. We also asked the respective Government representatives for their view. Paul Maynard MP was aware of the concerns and stated:

the moment I started to look at this issue this particular fact leapt out at me as potentially troublesome, so I was very clear I wanted to ensure that English passengers on English-only routes have an effective means of redress and representation”.⁹¹

He told us that although he was not sure what the current practice was, he would “try to ensure that the cross-border forum was as effective a vehicle as it could possibly be to enable English people to feel adequately represented in terms of service delivery”.⁹²

52. Ken Skates AM was more forthcoming, saying he would be willing to take up complaints from English MPs in the same way as he does from Welsh AMs. He stated:

“in all fairness to passengers who may board a train in England and then disembark in England, it is only fair that we give all passengers the right process that they are comfortable with to express their concerns to their elected members, who can then express them to us. How we resolve this process issue will be the subject of a second agency agreement with the Secretary of State”.⁹³

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86 Marches Strategic Rail Group ([WBR 05](#))

87 Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users’ Association ([WBR 07](#))

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53. When rail franchising powers transfer to the Welsh Government, this will remove the UK Government from the process. As a result, oversight will switch to the National Assembly for Wales, and Members of Parliament will not have a direct scrutiny role. Whilst Welsh residents and users can raise concerns through their Assembly Member, English residents and those who use the parts of the franchise that are solely in England, will have no such representation.

54. *We welcome the approach taken by the Welsh Cabinet Secretary, who said that he would be willing to take up complaints about the rail franchise from English MPs in the same way as he does from Welsh AMs. We therefore recommend that a protocol be established whereby Members of Parliament for English constituencies can write to the Cabinet Secretary on behalf of constituents using Wales and Borders rail franchise services in England, with an expectation that they will receive a substantive response within a reasonable period of time, such as 15 working days.*

Responsibility for rail infrastructure

55. One function of the railways that is being retained by the UK Government is the power to direct Network Rail. Ken Skates AM said that this was an area of disappointment, and that he “would have preferred the UK Government to agree to devolve funding for rail infrastructure and also perhaps to direct Network Rail, as Scotland already has”. He argued that the disparity in powers between Wales and Scotland had to be addressed, and that there had been historical underfunding of the rail network within Wales “that should be dealt with in the next control period”.⁹⁴ The Welsh Government’s written evidence stated that since 2011 “only around 1.5% of the rail enhancement expenditure across England and Wales has been made in the Wales Route areas”.⁹⁵ However, whilst Mr Skates thought there could be advantages to devolving Network Rail in Wales, he warned:

you have to make sure you can get the funding agreed and watertight, otherwise you could be taking on roles and taking on responsibilities and taking on powers without the necessary resources ... if there were to be devolution of powers, then I would also expect appropriate settlements.⁹⁶

56. From the UK Government’s perspective, Paul Maynard MP said that the devolution of Network Rail for Wales had been discussed at some length following the Silk Commission, and that “no political consensus was reached at all, so we are not taking the idea of Network Rail devolution further forward”.⁹⁷ Furthermore, he said that it was very difficult to assign transport infrastructure spending to a particular region, because the benefit of any enhancement was not solely experienced in the region in which it took place. For example, he said “in the case of Wales there may be a significant benefit to the Welsh economy from investments that occur in and around Reading”.⁹⁸ However, he explained that he frequently considered how best to hold Network Rail to account to ensure it delivered on its priorities. One new element which could improve how Network Rail are held to account for its performance and investment in particular regions is through the introduction of route scorecards. Mr Maynard informed us that these would

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95 The Welsh Government ([WBR 18](#))

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give stakeholders more information about how Network Rail were performing with regard to their delivery of particular infrastructure, which would be comparable over time as well as between different regions. He said that these would give “Ministers in devolved Governments and myself more tools at their disposal to assess Network Rail’s performance because we will be able to compare region with region, like with like” and that hopefully this would lead to more meaningful discussions with Network Rail officials.⁹⁹

57. During this inquiry we heard that since 2011 only around 1.5% of the rail enhancement expenditure across England and Wales has been made in the Wales Route areas. However, this has to be seen in the context of improvements within England, which have direct beneficial impacts on Wales. Nonetheless, we welcome the introduction of route scorecards for Network Rail, which should assist in assessing Network Rail’s performance, and could better hold them to account to ensure they deliver on the infrastructure priorities on the Wales route. We also recommend that the devolution of rail infrastructure and associated funding and their interaction with the franchising powers are kept under review as a means of improving clarity of responsibility to the public and ensuring that Wales’s transport needs receive appropriate priority.

4 The 2018 franchise—a transformational change?

58. When Ken Skates AM appeared before us, he was effusive about the Welsh Government’s ambitions for the 2018 franchise. He declared “we want the next franchise to be truly transformational and we want the improvements that rail passengers have identified and require now to be met as soon as possible”.¹⁰⁰ He explained that many of these improvements were related to the “primary concerns [and] the failures that have been experienced” such as the quality of rolling stock, the lack of capacity, and the poor standard of on-board services.¹⁰¹ In this chapter we explore some of the key hurdles that have to be overcome to achieve transformation of the franchise, and highlight some of the improvements that have been proposed to us.

Changes to the franchise specification

59. From a rail industry perspective, Elizabeth De Jong noted some general improvements to franchises that the RDG would promote. These included prioritising customer needs, providing a sustainable business model which attracted investment and creating a franchise that “supports economic growth for Britain, and ... delivers value for money too”.¹⁰² More specifically for the WBRF, she said there was a need to attract competition to the market so there was innovation during the bidding process “which will lead to good services for customers and also value for money and also it will lead to investment”. There was also a need to enable change during the franchise, so that it was responsive to customer needs and changes in demand.¹⁰³

60. The Marches Strategic Rail Group agreed with the RDG that the franchise specification should prioritise customer needs and argued that “there needs to be more engagement and understanding on what the passengers’ priorities are and how these can be met”.¹⁰⁴ We were also told by Iwan Prys-Jones the next franchise should include contractual obligations that rewarded high-quality performance and incentivised the franchise holder to increase the number of passengers using the trains, which would hopefully lead to a reduction in subsidy. He added “if the operators fail to provide that, I would expect to see contractual penalties”.¹⁰⁵

61. Professor Cole noted that at the moment, the only financial penalty on the train company was in relation to punctuality. He told us:

what is not there ... is anything about real-time information and keeping that system going. There is nothing in there about the age of the train and the fact that they are old trains. From the point of view of Government as the funders of the subsidy, there is nothing in there about pushing up

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104 Marches Strategic Rail Group ([WBR 05](#))

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passenger numbers, reducing journey times or having clean trains, and therefore reducing the subsidy by pushing up revenue and pushing down costs as a result of newer trains.¹⁰⁶

62. Paul Maynard MP also highlighted that there were a range of clauses which could be included in the franchise to incentivise good behaviour, based on NRPS results, punctuality, or the number of passengers who might be standing. These were “a range of options that are at the Welsh Government’s disposal that they could choose depending on what they think the major problems are that they are trying to solve.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, in his experience significant improvement could be driven through during the bidding process. Bidders would decide through the invitation to tender and the bid-making process how they can deliver the specified minimum, and then set out how they planned to exceed that minimum. He said that these “quality points” led to improved quality of service for passengers each time a franchise is re-let, and concluded “[this] is why the last Northern franchise was such a step change from the no-growth franchise it had in 2003. I hope that Wales will benefit passengers similarly”.¹⁰⁸

63. During the current franchise, the only financial penalty in the contract relates to the punctuality of the trains. As a result there has been no incentive to maintain or improve passenger satisfaction in other respects. Under the new franchise, it is vital that there are a range of incentives and contractual obligations that ensure customers receive a good level of service in all respects throughout the franchise term.

Franchise length

64. When the current WBRF ends in 2018, it will have run for 15 years. ATW told us that whilst there were “some complex balances and trade-offs in the length of a franchise and the answer is not going to be the same for every franchise”, the fact that the present WBRF was for 15 years enabled ATW to achieve “a far more positive outcome”.¹⁰⁹ Roger Cobbe said a 15 year franchise gave ATW the chance to improve the business over a longer term, so that they could voluntarily invest £35 million, and choose to put in a new timetable. Had the franchise been, for example, eight-years long, he said “we would have just done what it said on the contract and I think we would be sitting now with the number of passengers far lower, satisfaction lower, performance lower”.¹¹⁰

65. Elizabeth De Jong argued that the length of franchise had to be a function of what the objectives for the franchise were. If the franchise needed to deliver a complex project or a big investment, the RDG would recommend there was a period in which to ensure that the benefits of that project are fully realised and properly delivered.¹¹¹ Roger Cobbe noted that, for DfT, when they were looking at high-revenue earning franchises, such as the East and West Coast Main Line, the challenge of predicting revenue 15 years into the future was colossal and “a 0.5% difference at the beginning turns into hundreds of millions of pounds as you get further downstream”. The WBRF was a different type of franchise, and the current WBRF already included ways of sharing risk and reward. He added that there

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had been two review points at years five and 10, which ATW passed “with flying colours and carried on improving the service”. In conclusion he said that Arriva favours a longer franchise.¹¹²

66. Paul Maynard MP said “there is no real magic figure as to what the ideal length of a franchise is” because it was a balance between, first, ensuring that anyone investing in the franchise is getting a return on that investment, and second, predicting the rate of passenger growth. He noted that the recent review into franchising, conducted by David Brown,¹¹³ recommended a franchise length of between seven and 10 years, and that information had been passed on to the Welsh Government.¹¹⁴

67. Whilst Ken Skates AM acknowledged there was a careful balance to find the right franchise length, he stated:

I think 15 years is acceptable because it enables continuity, which is necessary to get the best possible transformational change, and we need it. We also need to ensure that there are contractual weapons built into the franchise contract and formal reviews at years 5 and 10 to assess the performance of the successful bidder. Throughout the contract period, there should also be termination rights built into the contract in the event that non-compliance or default are experienced.¹¹⁵

68. *In terms of the length of the franchise, we have heard arguments for both a short and a long franchise. We were told that forecasting future passenger demand is difficult and that a shorter franchise length can help overcome this. We were advised that a 10 year length for the recently-let, and in many ways similar, Northern and TransPennine franchises, as well as others, has not discouraged investment. Given the number of improvements that are required throughout Welsh services, we recommend that the franchise be let for a term that allows the necessary investments to be made, and for the successful bidder to recoup these outlays. Therefore, we recommend that the franchise term be between 10 and 15 years. In order to manage the risk of letting a long-term franchise, we also recommend that there be a comprehensive review every five years, and a mechanism for profit sharing, if excess profits are accrued. However, if after an advertisement for the franchise has been made, with all due diligence performed, and there is no confidence in any bidder, we would recommend that consideration be given to other models, such as a management contract operated by the Welsh Government through its not-for-dividend subsidiary Transport for Wales for at least five years.*

Franchise map

69. A further concern regarding the specification of the franchise that was raised during our inquiry was whether there would be changes to its geographical extent, also known as the franchise map, which is shown in figure 1:

112 Q51

113 Department for Transport, The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme, [Cm 8526](#), January 2013

114 Q134

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Figure 1: Wales and Borders Franchise Route Map



Source: Arriva Trains Wales website—<http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/RouteMap/>

70. The Heart of Wales Line Development Company told us that the current franchise map covers many cross border services, and that “in real life passengers do not care who runs them, simply needing to get from A to B efficiently”. Therefore they were alarmed by reports of turf wars between DfT and the Welsh Government that “serve no purpose other than to muddy the water”.¹¹⁶ The Association of Community Rail Partnerships echoed these sentiments, stating “imposing operating boundaries along the England/Wales border would be counter-productive and would not best serve the interests of rail passengers”.¹¹⁷

71. Professor Cole identified the key discussion point for the current franchising operating area as being north Wales to north-east Wales, and “in particular the services from Shrewsbury to Manchester and Birmingham”. These were described as profitable routes which brought in a considerable amount of revenue, “which means that the Welsh

116 Heart of Wales Line Development Co Ltd ([WBR 11](#))

117 Association of Community Rail Partnerships ([WBR 32](#))

Government’s net subsidy figure is reduced”, and that DfT had “made noises some time ago about wanting English routes in English franchises”. He could see no reason why any of the current routes should be taken away from the Welsh franchise, and thought that doing so did not make any practical or financial sense.¹¹⁸

72. Our witnesses from North Wales and North West England were firmly opposed to any remapping. Ashley Rogers, Chair, North Wales Business Council, told us that the current route in North West England, Cheshire, Wirral and North Wales “represents the same footprint as our economy, so we desperately need that to stay the same”. Iwan Prys-Jones added:

the arbitrary lines on maps that we construct around ourselves get in the way of the types of journeys that passengers want to make. ... from a passenger perspective, what is necessary is a fully integrated network that enables people to get to the destinations that they are seeking to get to. The worst possible solution is that we end up with people having to get off trains and get on other trains just because it happens to cross some administrative boundary that makes sense to people somewhere else.

He concluded that from a business perspective the area functioned as a single economy, but “we struggle to provide a transport network that works within that single economy”.¹¹⁹

73. Roger Cobbe echoed the view that passengers were not that bothered by which trains are in which franchise, and said “passengers expect a joined-up railway network that enables them to make the sort of train journeys they want to do”. He pointed out that whilst the current WBRF includes routes into England, some other franchises included routes into Wales, so there was an element of balance. His view was that “the worst thing of all would be if the franchising process led to the severing of these much-needed services [to places like Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol].” Ian Bullock emphasised that “the customer does not want to change trains at the border [and] we should not be looking at remapping that disadvantages the customers, or indeed could lead to less rail travel”.¹²⁰

74. On reports that the franchise map might change, Roger Cobbe said that these were questions that were naturally going to be asked and should not be seen specifically as a Wales and Borders issue. He stated:

Every time a franchise comes up for renewal, there is a little bit of a debate. ... There is always a review each time as one approaches the procurement process: does the client body wish to re-let the franchise with exactly the same bundle of services as it had before or is it going to add some or remove some? Inevitably, from our perspective, if you add a strand of devolution to it, that perhaps spices it up a little bit.¹²¹

75. Elizabeth De Jong concurred that questions about franchise remapping were often raised, but argued “there would need to be a good reason for that to be a better idea for Great Britain plc”.¹²² Her assessment was that remapping the WBRF, so that people had

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to change trains at the border, would make people less likely to use trains, and thus have an impact on demand. It would also disconnect economic centres which would be to the detriment of growing economies at either end of the rail lines.¹²³ Furthermore, remapping could have an impact on the viability of the WBRF, as “it would be a smaller franchise and that might impact on the number of bidders”.¹²⁴

76. Ken Skates AM was able to allay some of the concerns about the franchise map, saying “based on the scopes we have we do not anticipate any significant changes to the map. Indeed, we have also reached agreement now, in principle, for the franchise to operate services from destinations in Wales to Bristol and to Liverpool”.¹²⁵ Paul Maynard MP agreed that the WBRF should stay as it is, which would provide a network that coheres, a franchise that is as economically viable as possible, and one that does not require disproportionate levels of subsidy. He added:

I have always taken the view that any changes you make within the rail industry have to be demonstrably for the benefit of passengers rather than the convenience of any one train operating company or infrastructure provider. As far as I am concerned, passengers want to see a unified and coherent network and that means that we need to retain the current franchise.¹²⁶

77. We welcome the comments of the UK Minister, that there is no intention of remapping the Wales and Borders Franchise. We believe that the mapping of the franchise has to ensure that it remains as a viable economic unit. More importantly, it has to meet the needs of passengers who want to benefit from a unified and coherent network.

78. We recommend that close co-operation should occur with other franchises and devolved regions and that the feasibility of other franchises extending their long distance services into Wales be explored where this is deemed efficient and cost-effective. Furthermore, it is important that the Wales and Borders franchise be given a strong and equal representation of interests in dealings with other franchises, for example in relation to securing and retaining paths for direct services to international airports.

Improvements to services and to rail infrastructure

Stations

79. In addition to improvements in the franchise specification, we have heard a number of suggestions for improvements to the rail service, and to the infrastructure on the franchise network. As described earlier in this report, the WBRF has been suffering from a lack of capacity for many years, despite efforts from ATW and the Welsh Government to improve the situation. During this inquiry we heard some concerns regarding the facilities at stations. Ian Bullock told us that due to infrastructure failings at Cardiff Central, the station was not fit for purpose “in terms of the number of people it carries or tries to move during special events” which can be up to 45,000. Furthermore, the track

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and signalling around the station was constrained which did not allow for much flexibility in the system. Roger Cobbe emphasised that capacity was not just an issue at major events, when problems were at their most extreme, but that the station was “handling far more people than it was ever designed for”. At rush hour, the staircases, subways, concourse, and ticket barriers were suitable for a station carrying half the number of passengers. He argued that Cardiff needed “a station fit for a capital and there needs to be a programme to get us from where we are now to there without too much inconvenience along the way”.¹²⁷

80. Away from Cardiff, we were informed that investment was required more generally in improving stations, with the passenger environment at some stations being described as “significantly inferior to that at stations managed by other nearby operators”.¹²⁸ Ian Bullock informed us that “a lot of time, effort and money has gone into bringing up some of the basic facilities in the 246 stations that are part of Wales and Borders franchise”, but there were some matters, particularly accessibility, that were yet to be addressed.¹²⁹ Modernising stations, principally Cardiff Central, was also an area of work that Ken Skates AM told us would have to be carried out in the next franchise.¹³⁰

Rolling stock

81. In addition to capacity concerns at stations, there are also concerns on trains. Bangor University said “being able to get a seat on the train is essential under the new franchise. This is far from the case at the moment” and argued for improved luggage space, which was “a prerequisite for an economy ... where tourism is such an important factor”¹³¹ The Institution of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru, told us that in south Wales insufficient capacity led “to up to 20% of passengers standing”,¹³² whilst Ashley Rogers told us that it was not possible “to get people off the roads and on to rail [as] currently there is not enough capacity to do that”.¹³³ Furthermore, as Mr Timothy Richards expressed, there are also concerns about the quality of the rolling stock:

Arriva do not provide the running stock that we, as passengers, deserve, for the prices we pay ... The rolling stock is ancient and often rather shabby and it is amazing that it does not break down more often.¹³⁴

82. We heard that some of the trains in the fleet are now 40 years old.¹³⁵ Roger Cobbe clarified that at the start of the franchise, “the fleet was presented to us effectively and we were actively discouraged from seeking to add to it, even if additional trains had been available”. Since then, in collaboration with the Welsh Government, ATW have been able to add “a small number of additional older diesel units”.¹³⁶

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128 Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association ([WBR 07](#))

129 Q49

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131 Bangor University ([WBR 03](#))

132 Institution of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru ([WBR 02](#))

133 Q111

134 Mr Timothy Richards ([WBR 12](#))

135 Q9

136 Q55

However, Ian Bullock added:

there are not currently any diesel trains, as we sit here today, available for us to lease. ... That is deeply frustrating for us as a business, but even worse for our customers, because we cannot address that demand that we have.¹³⁷

83. As well as improving the quality of the rolling stock, there is also a requirement to improve accessibility. On 1 January 2020, the rail accessibility legislation¹³⁸ will be amended so that all rail vehicles will have to be accessible for persons of reduced mobility.¹³⁹ Professor Cole told us that some of ATW's rolling stock was "not accessible for people with various disabilities, and they are therefore not usable after 2020 unless, of course, a derogation is obtained for those trains".¹⁴⁰ Roger Cobbe explained that, "because the present Wales and Borders franchise ends in 2018, [ATW] have no specific responsibility to do anything to the trains to ensure compliance", but added that they have been reminding all interested parties of the coming deadline, and that "there needs to be a plan to address this".¹⁴¹ Ken Skates AM acknowledged "there is no doubt it will present a problem as well, in terms of being able to ensure that all services comply with those measures".¹⁴²

84. The lead in time for purchasing new rolling stock means it will be difficult to meet the 2020 deadline. Professor Cole informed us that "the delivery time for new trains is, generally speaking, two to three years for electric and three to four years for diesel trains", and that to have new trains available in 2020, they had to be ordered now.¹⁴³ When we raised the procurement timeline with Ken Skates AM, he was more positive, saying:

In terms of rolling stock roll-out in four years, I think they can be delivered quicker than that. I am not entirely sure whether four years is the absolute minimum period, and there are other options for transforming existing rolling stock where possible.¹⁴⁴

However, Ashley Rogers raised concerns about what the rolling stock strategy was, stating "we are less than two years away from the start of the new franchise, and we have no understanding of what we are getting from where and when",¹⁴⁵ while Iwan Prys-Jones called for more urgency.¹⁴⁶

85. We heard from our witnesses of a couple of ways that the procurement process could be speeded up. For example, Elizabeth De Jong told us it was possible for franchise bidders to have already made their selection for rolling stock and to have contracts in place "to reduce the lead time for that element of the process".¹⁴⁷ Simon Jones implied that a similar exercise was taking place. He said that the Welsh Government had "set homework" for the bidders to inform them about the level of rolling stock required. Furthermore, he emphasised that it was not the Welsh Government alone who would be purchasing the rolling stock:

137 Q56

138 The Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Non-Interoperable Rail System) Regulations 2010 ([SI 2010/432](#))

139 For more information see: Office of Rail and Road, [Rail vehicle accessibility](#)

140 Q9

141 Q55

142 Q102

143 Q10

144 Q103

145 Q119

146 Q121

147 Q68

The companies that we have announced as bidding for this work have considerable buying power as well as us ... We would be in partnership with one of these organisations who are buying rolling stock on a global basis. ... It is their buying power as well that we would be leveraging, so we are confident.¹⁴⁸

86. Professor Cole described a possible alternative approach, which meant that if one of the large train manufacturers had an order in place for British trains, it might be possible for Wales to “tag on to the end of that”.¹⁴⁹ By way of example he said that the Welsh Government might explore if it could tag on to DfT’s “order for trains for the Northern franchise and look to see if those were suitable for use on the Valley lines”.¹⁵⁰ Additionally, Paul Maynard MP explained that as progress was made with infrastructural projects across the country, this could free up rolling stock that could potentially be cascaded to the WBRF.¹⁵¹ He reiterated that “there is no interest within the Government in having rolling stock lying idle if it can be suitably accommodated on the network”,¹⁵² that the two Governments were co-operating, and he was having a “continuing dialogue with the Welsh Government over what becomes available and what might be suitable”.¹⁵³

87. Overall, Professor Cole’s assessment was that if the Welsh Government were to get capacity right this time, they would have to carry out demand analysis to ensure that they had a number of options. Based on differing assumptions for an increase in demand, the additional capacity required could be extrapolated, and a series of plans made. The rolling stock could be acquired, but if after five years demand turned out to be higher, there would be a plan B to then acquire more rolling stock. He also argued for a closer relationship with the manufacturers, so that the supply side could be managed. He stated that this was:

so that we are not in a position where, as happened with diesel trains, no diesel trains were built in Britain for 20 years. Consequently, when the Welsh Government tried to get diesel trains in 2008–09, it wasn’t possible because they just weren’t there. That’s something that we haven’t to come across again.¹⁵⁴

88. The rolling stock used on the Wales and Borders rail franchise has an average age of 27 years, with the oldest being 40 years old. We commend Arriva’s engineers who do a fine job to keep the aged fleet going. However, the age of the trains is a key issue for Arriva achieving its public performance measure and achieving passenger satisfaction. We believe that more could be done to improve the cleanliness of the existing rolling stock. Furthermore, with the introduction of improved accessibility requirements by 2020 it is paramount that new rolling stock be acquired for the franchise route, so that the franchise need not request a derogation from these regulations.

89. We note the Welsh Government’s optimism that it can acquire new rolling stock on a timescale sooner than what is considered the industry minimum. However, given the expected lead in time of three to four years that is required for rolling stock orders,

148 Q91

149 Q11

150 Q25

151 Q162

152 Q155

153 Q162

154 Q21

we recommend that the UK and Welsh Governments work together to identify current orders on to which the procurement of trains for the Wales and Borders Franchise can be tagged. Furthermore, where existing rolling stock is made available due to the completion of infrastructure projects, we recommend that the Wales and Borders Franchise be given first refusal on these trains. It is important that the franchise operator has an increased ability to link rolling stock together so that it can respond with more flexibility to fluctuations in demand.

Infrastructure

90. In addition to improvements in the franchise specification, and in relation to capacity, we have heard a number of suggestions for improvements in the infrastructure on the franchise network. Electrification of the network was the most prominent of these, and Professor Cole told us this would bring benefits as it was “the fastest and most efficient way of moving people these days [as] electric trains can be larger [and] they have faster acceleration, which therefore reduces journey times”.¹⁵⁵ He added that new electric trains would provide “increased frequencies and better reliability, that means more passenger numbers, which hopefully means a reduction in subsidy—certainly reductions in journey times”.¹⁵⁶

91. In terms of increasing the speed of trains, Ashley Rogers said this was a priority. He told us that the average speed from Bangor to Manchester is 37 mph; 34 mph from Holyhead to Bangor; and that from “Wrexham to Liverpool is an interstellar 24 miles an hour, which is actually slower than a horse”. Professor Cole agreed that increasing the line speeds in North Wales was a priority, and explained “it makes no sense to have a railway that varies between 75 mph and 90 mph around different stretches [as] trains will always drive at 75 mph because no company wants the trains to accelerate and then decelerate—it uses fuel”.¹⁵⁷

92. Another way to improve services through improved infrastructure is by doubling single tracks. Professor Cole told us “there is a lot of padding in timetables where you have single track, because the companies do not want to have to pay fines for late running at the destination”. He therefore argued that doubling of the track gives an opportunity to increase frequencies and reduce journey times quite considerably.¹⁵⁸

93. For the Welsh Local Government Association, it was essential that infrastructure improvements such as these resulted “in a service that provides an incentive for travellers to switch to rail from car use”.¹⁵⁹ Professor Cole echoed this when he pressed for the electrification of the Valley lines, “because that is where we have the congestion on our roads in Wales on the largest scale”.¹⁶⁰

94. Many of the suggestions for infrastructure improvements were focused on particular regions. Concerning North Wales, the Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users’ Association told us that “rail connectivity linking communities and employment locations in North East Wales and across the border into North West England is poor” which forced many to

155 Q4

156 Q26

157 Q35

158 Q26

159 Welsh Local Government Association ([WBR 08](#))

160 Q35

drive to work on heavily congested roads,¹⁶¹ a point echoed by Bangor University.¹⁶² It was felt that improvements could bring substantial economic benefits,¹⁶³ and the Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association contended that South East Wales was already relatively well served by public transport, and thus felt that "modest rail service improvements in North East Wales will ... realise comparable and possible more significant economic and social benefits than in South East Wales".¹⁶⁴

95. ASLEF told us there was a strong case for upgrade work to the Wrexham-Bidston line and the lines between Holyhead and Crewe as a first step in electrifying the network in north Wales and improving connections to cities in the North West of England, which they supported.¹⁶⁵ During our evidence sessions, Professor Cole told us that in the 1970s he worked on an evaluation that showed that "electrification was a justifiable investment all the way to Holyhead" which should have happened "when the West Coast main line was re-engineered". He added that "the people of north Wales would like to see the North Wales main line electrified ... but it is the DfT that is responsible and we have to get the North Wales main line further up its list of priorities".¹⁶⁶ When we asked Ken Skates AM about the improvements required on the network, he responded likewise, saying "significantly, the North Wales mainline needs electrifying".¹⁶⁷

96. In terms of South Wales, electrification of the main line from Cardiff to Swansea was the main priority, with Ken Skates AM stating "we need electrification as soon as possible".¹⁶⁸ This sentiment was echoed by Professor Cole,¹⁶⁹ and the Institution of Civil Engineers Wales, who also expressed concerns about the lack of capacity in the region.¹⁷⁰

97. Given the broad scope for improvements, Professor Cole told us "there is this opportunity now for us to get a really good network all round"¹⁷¹ and Ken Skates AM stated:

We have before us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a franchise that meets the growing demands of the people of Wales and, indeed, England.¹⁷²

Mr Skates explained that his priorities were to "ensure that there is the correct investment channel into improving journey times and making journeys swifter", to better integrate rail journeys with other forms of public transport and to improve capacity.¹⁷³ It was also a time when "historical underfunding of the network within Wales and within the franchise map" could be dealt with.¹⁷⁴ However, Professor Cole was uncertain whether funding for improvements would be forthcoming, as that required HM Treasury and DfT approval. He said "we are not high on its list of priorities, so I would welcome anything that could be

161 Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association ([WBR 07](#))

162 Bangor University ([WBR 03](#))

163 Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association ([WBR 07](#)) and Bangor University ([WBR 03](#))

164 Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association ([WBR 07](#))

165 Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) ([WBR 33](#))

166 Q6

167 Q85

168 Q85

169 Q6

170 Institution of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru ([WBR 02](#))

171 Q5

172 Q84

173 Q104

174 Q85

done through this Committee, the Welsh Government, the National Assembly and so on to pressure the DFT to give more consideration to the Welsh options ... we are not at the top of many lists".¹⁷⁵ Ken Skates AM appreciated that addressing these priorities was a big challenge, but said "we have confidence in our ability to be able to do this",¹⁷⁶ and "that is why this could and should be a truly transformational franchise".¹⁷⁷

98. As the Welsh Cabinet Secretary said, the 2018 franchise presents the opportunity to bring about transformational change. From the evidence we have received, this will only be possible if a number of infrastructural improvements are made, principally, the electrification of the network, but also line speed and signalling enhancements, station facilities upgrades and increased capacity at stations which currently act as bottlenecks. Substantial progress on electrification has already been made on the South Wales line, and should be completed; electrification of the North Wales line should now be prioritised.

175 Q36

176 Q90

177 Q104

Conclusions and recommendations

The 2003 franchise

1. The low level specification under which the 2003 franchise was let has resulted in the people of Wales and Borders being deprived of many improvements that could have been expected during its 15 year term. This has been exacerbated by the fact that whilst the franchise did not allow for growth, passenger numbers have increased by approximately 75% during that time. Whilst efforts and investments have been made to cope with the increase in demand, this has come at a higher cost than would have been expected at the outset of the franchise. We agree with the Ministers who have described awarding the franchise based on a zero-growth contract as a huge failure. (Paragraph 16)
2. Arriva Trains Wales have consistently met their service standards for punctuality, which should be commended, and for many years the National Rail Passenger Survey has shown that passengers have been satisfied with their performance. Recently, however, satisfaction levels have fallen as passengers have had to deal with a lack of capacity leading to overcrowding, and ageing rolling stock. Although Arriva Trains Wales have taken steps to address this, there is no financial penalty for a fall in satisfaction levels. Just as it is important that future franchise contracts are based on target-driven passenger growth, it is also important that contracts incentivise the operator to consider the whole of the customer experience, not just punctuality and reliability. (Paragraph 28)
3. It must be recognised that the railway investment can be an important driver of economic growth, particularly where existing services are substandard. We were told that the North Wales and Mersey Dee area has some of the highest car-based commuting mode shares anywhere in the UK, that rail share is as low as 1% in some regions of Wales and that public transport in some regions does not meet aspirations in terms of connectivity, frequency or quality of service. (Paragraph 29)

Transfer of rail franchising responsibility to the Welsh Government

4. *Whilst we note that the transfer of franchising powers from the UK to the Welsh Government is progressing with good will, we recommend that, in response to this report, we are updated on the progress of the discussions, and informed when the transfer is due to be completed.* (Paragraph 34)
5. *We note that, as there was already provision for the transfer of franchising powers to Wales, it would have been duplication to include such provision in the Wales Bill. However, one of the benefits of the Wales Bill is that there has been an opportunity to debate and scrutinise the Government's plans for functions and powers in a vast range of policy areas. So Members have the opportunity to scrutinise the Transfer of Functions Orders, and contribute to the debate in a similar manner, we recommend that the Committee be notified when the Orders are laid before the House.* (Paragraph 35)

6. *We welcome the clarification made by the UK Government regarding the status of European Union funding prior to the UK's exit. We note however that discussions concerning the transfer of funding, from the UK Government to Wales, associated with the responsibility for rail franchising have not yet concluded. We recommend that, in response to this report, the UK Government set out the progress that has been made in resolving these matters, and the areas that are still in dispute. (Paragraph 39)*
7. Although the Welsh Government have had experience of managing the day to day running of the current franchise, letting the 2018 franchise will be a new challenge. Whilst we have heard anecdotally that the relationship between the Welsh Government and the Department for Transport has not been good, we have also heard that it has improved over the years. We were provided of clear examples of this, such as both entering into the formal agency agreement and the degree of co-operation which has been taking place to share knowledge and expertise on procuring the next franchise. (Paragraph 47)
8. The Brown Review of Rail Franchising recommends that 'the specification and oversight of franchises should be managed by authorities that are closest to their communities and local economies'. Based on that recommendation it is vitally important that the local authorities and regional bodies, whether in Wales or England, have the opportunity to shape the next franchise specification. We were told that such an approach, perhaps via a strategic forum, would strengthen the ability of the North Wales and Mersey Dee Rail Task Force to lever the benefits of rail in order to deliver the range of economic benefits set out in their Growth Track 360 Prospectus. (Paragraph 48)
9. When rail franchising powers transfer to the Welsh Government, this will remove the UK Government from the process. As a result, oversight will switch to the National Assembly for Wales, and Members of Parliament will not have a direct scrutiny role. Whilst Welsh residents and users can raise concerns through their Assembly Member, English residents and those who use the parts of the franchise that are solely in England, will have no such representation. (Paragraph 53)
10. *We welcome the approach taken by the Welsh Cabinet Secretary, who said that he would be willing to take up complaints about the rail franchise from English MPs in the same way as he does from Welsh AMs. We therefore recommend that a protocol be established whereby Members of Parliament for English constituencies can write to the Cabinet Secretary on behalf of constituents using Wales and Borders rail franchise services in England, with an expectation that they will receive a substantive response within a reasonable period of time, such as 15 working days. (Paragraph 54)*
11. *During this inquiry we heard that since 2011 only around 1.5% of the rail enhancement expenditure across England and Wales has been made in the Wales Route areas. However, this has to be seen in the context of improvements within England, which have direct beneficial impacts on Wales. Nonetheless, we welcome the introduction of route scorecards for Network Rail, which should assist in assessing Network Rail's performance, and could better hold them to account to ensure they deliver on the infrastructure priorities on the Wales route. We also recommend that the devolution of rail infrastructure and associated funding and their interaction with the franchising*

powers are kept under review as a means of improving clarity of responsibility to the public and ensuring that Wales's transport needs receive appropriate priority. (Paragraph 57)

The 2018 franchise – a transformational change

12. During the current franchise, the only financial penalty in the contract relates to the punctuality of the trains. As a result there has been no incentive to maintain or improve passenger satisfaction in other respects. Under the new franchise, it is vital that there are a range of incentives and contractual obligations that ensure customers receive a good level of service in all respects throughout the franchise term. (Paragraph 63)
13. *In terms of the length of the franchise, we have heard arguments for both a short and a long franchise. We were told that forecasting future passenger demand is difficult and that a shorter franchise length can help overcome this. We were advised that a 10 year length for the recently-let, and in many ways similar, Northern and TransPennine franchises, as well as others, has not discouraged investment. Given the number of improvements that are required throughout Welsh services, we recommend that the franchise be let for a term that allows the necessary investments to be made, and for the successful bidder to recoup these outlays. Therefore, we recommend that the franchise term be between 10 and 15 years. In order to manage the risk of letting a long-term franchise, we also recommend that there be a comprehensive review every five years, and a mechanism for profit sharing, if excess profits are accrued. However, if after an advertisement for the franchise has been made, with all due diligence performed, and there is no confidence in any bidder, we would recommend that consideration be given to other models, such as a management contract operated by the Welsh Government through its not-for-dividend subsidiary Transport for Wales for at least five years. (Paragraph 68)*
14. We welcome the comments of the UK Minister, that there is no intention of remapping the Wales and Borders Franchise. We believe that the mapping of the franchise has to ensure that it remains as a viable economic unit. More importantly, it has to meet the needs of passengers who want to benefit from a unified and coherent network. (Paragraph 77)
15. *We recommend that close co-operation should occur with other franchises and devolved regions and that the feasibility of other franchises extending their long distance services into Wales be explored where this is deemed efficient and cost-effective. Furthermore, it is important that the Wales and Borders franchise be given a strong and equal representation of interests in dealings with other franchises, for example in relation to securing and retaining paths for direct services to international airports. (Paragraph 78)*
16. The rolling stock used on the Wales and Borders rail franchise has an average age of 27 years, with the oldest being 40 years old. We commend Arriva's engineers who do a fine job to keep the aged fleet going. However, the age of the trains is a key issue for Arriva achieving its public performance measure and achieving passenger satisfaction. We believe that more could be done to improve the cleanliness of the existing rolling stock. Furthermore, with the introduction of improved accessibility

requirements by 2020 it is paramount that new rolling stock be acquired for the franchise route, so that the franchise need not request a derogation from these regulations. (Paragraph 88)

17. *We note the Welsh Government's optimism that it can acquire new rolling stock on a timescale sooner than what is considered the industry minimum. However, given the expected lead in time of three to four years that is required for rolling stock orders, we recommend that the UK and Welsh Governments work together to identify current orders on to which the procurement of trains for the Wales and Borders Franchise can be tagged. Furthermore, where existing rolling stock is made available due to the completion of infrastructure projects, we recommend that the Wales and Borders Franchise be given first refusal on these trains. It is important that the franchise operator has an increased ability to link rolling stock together so that it can respond with more flexibility to fluctuations in demand.* (Paragraph 89)
18. As the Welsh Cabinet Secretary said, the 2018 franchise presents the opportunity to bring about transformational change. From the evidence we have received, this will only be possible if a number of infrastructural improvements are made, principally, the electrification of the network, but also line speed and signalling enhancements, station facilities upgrades and increased capacity at stations which currently act as bottlenecks. Substantial progress on electrification has already been made on the South Wales line, and should be completed; electrification of the North Wales line should now be prioritised. (Paragraph 98)

Formal Minutes

Monday 16 January 2017

Members present:

David T.C. Davies, in the Chair

Chris Davies	Liz Saville Roberts
Dr James Davies	Craig Williams
Paul Flynn	Mr Mark Williams

Draft Report (*Wales and Borders rail franchise*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 56 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 57 read.

Amendment proposed, in line 7, at the end, to add “We also recommend that the devolution of rail infrastructure and associated funding and their interaction with the franchising powers are kept under review as a means of improving clarity of responsibility to the public and ensuring that Wales’s transport needs receive appropriate priority.”.—
(Liz Saville Roberts.)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 4	Noes, 2
Paul Flynn	Chris Davies
Liz Saville Roberts	Dr James Davies
Craig Williams	
Mr Mark Williams	

Question accordingly agreed to.

Paragraph 57, as amended, agreed to.

Paragraphs 58 to 98 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Monday 30 January at 3.40 pm.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 5 September 2016

Question number

Professor Stuart Cole, Emeritus Professor of Transport, University of South Wales

[Q1–36](#)

Thursday 15 September 2016

Ian Bullock, Managing Director, Arriva Trains Wales, and **Roger Cobbe**, Policy Director, Arriva Trains

[Q37–59](#)

Elizabeth De Jong, Director of Policy, Rail Delivery Group

[Q60–82](#)

Monday 17 October 2016

Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Welsh Government, and **Simon Jones**, Director, Transport and ICT Infrastructure, Welsh Government

[Q83–109](#)

Councillor Samantha Dixon, Chair, North Wales and Mersey Dee Cross-Border Rail Task Force, **Ashley Rogers**, Chair, North Wales Business Council, and **Iwan Prys Jones**, Programme Manager, North Wales Economic Ambition Board

[Q110–130](#)

Monday 24 October 2016

Paul Maynard MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport, and **Eddie Muraszko**, Deputy Director, Midlands, North and Wales Market, Department for Transport

[Q131–168](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

WBR numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Angel Trains ([WBR0006](#))
- 2 Arriva UK Trains Limited ([WBR0027](#))
- 3 ASLEF ([WBR0033](#))
- 4 Association of Community Rail Partnerships ([WBR0032](#))
- 5 Bangor University ([WBR0003](#))
- 6 Bring Back British Rail ([WBR0031](#))
- 7 Caerphilly County Borough Council ([WBR0029](#))
- 8 Cheshire West and Chester Council ([WBR0036](#))
- 9 D Olivier ([WBR0014](#))
- 10 Department for Transport ([WBR0040](#))
- 11 Gloucestershire County Council ([WBR0024](#))
- 12 Heart of Wales Line Development Co Ltd ([WBR0011](#))
- 13 Institution of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru ([WBR0002](#))
- 14 John Morton ([WBR0039](#))
- 15 LGA Public Transport Consortium ([WBR0021](#))
- 16 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ([WBR0030](#))
- 17 Marches Strategic Rail Group ([WBR0005](#))
- 18 Merlyn Cooper ([WBR0013](#))
- 19 Mersey Dee Alliance ([WBR0010](#))
- 20 Mid Wales Regional Transport Group ([WBR0034](#))
- 21 North Cheshire Rail Users' Group ([WBR0035](#))
- 22 North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum ([WBR0041](#))
- 23 North Wales and Mersey Dee Task Force ([WBR0016](#))
- 24 North Wales Economic Ambition Board ([WBR0022](#))
- 25 Professor Stuart Cole ([WBR0004](#))
- 26 Rail Delivery Group ([WBR0017](#))
- 27 Railfuture Wales ([WBR0038](#))
- 28 RMT ([WBR0025](#))
- 29 Tim Mourant ([WBR0020](#))
- 30 Timothy Richards ([WBR0012](#))
- 31 Transport Focus ([WBR0028](#))
- 32 WBRUA ([WBR0007](#))
- 33 Welsh Government ([WBR0018](#)) and ([WBR0042](#))

- 34 Welsh Local Government Association ([WBR0008](#))
- 35 West of England Local Enterprise Partnership ([WBR0023](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2015–16

First Report	Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Wales Bill	HC 449 (HC 280)
First Special Report	Prisons in Wales and the treatment of Welsh offenders: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 424

Session 2016–17

First Report	Broadcasting in Wales	HC 14 (HC 697)
Second Report	The future of nuclear power in Wales	HC 129 (HC 758)
First Special Report	Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Wales Bill: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2015–16	HC 280
Second Special Report	Broadcasting in Wales: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2016–17	HC 697
Third Special Report	The future of nuclear power in Wales: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2016–17	HC 758