

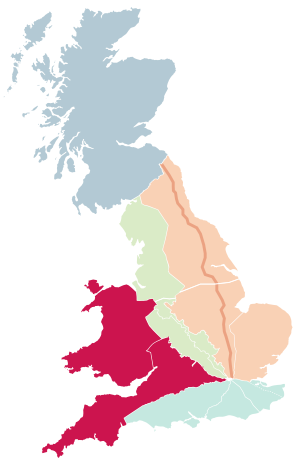


Wales & Western

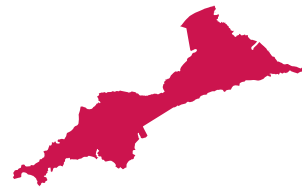


Mark Langman,
managing director, Wales & Western

16 July 2020



Wales & Borders



Western

In 2019, as part of the Putting Passengers First programme we established Wales and Western, bringing together Wales & Borders route, Western route and Wales and Western Infrastructure Projects. Our aim is to deliver a safe, reliable and punctual railway for the passengers, communities and businesses we serve across Wales, the Thames Valley and the West. The new accountabilities and decision-making levers we can now use will help us be more responsive and agile to the needs of our train operators, stakeholders, lineside neighbours and passengers.

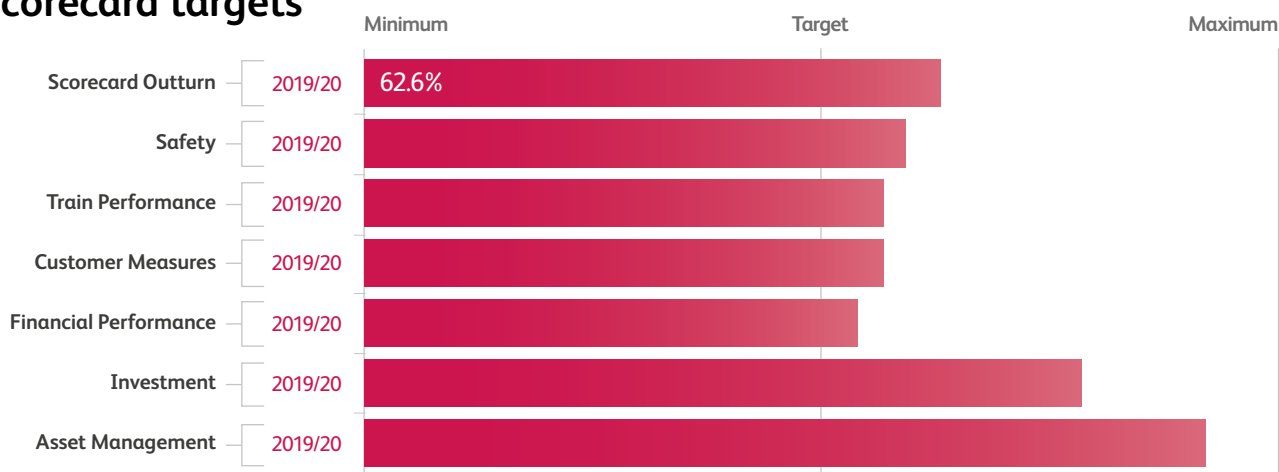
With more than 5,200 colleagues we are a significant employer across Wales and Western. We will continue to increase our diversity, create apprentice and graduate opportunities and build relationships with our local communities, universities and university technical colleges.

Communities across the Wales and Borders route rely on the railway network to connect people to places, driving economic growth. Almost 50 per cent more passenger journeys are made to, from and within Wales & Borders than a decade ago. The inter-urban and commuter routes transport passengers to and from the key economic centres, including Swansea and Newport. Rural routes connect low population areas, especially in mid-Wales. The Wales route is also vital for moving freight, with around 15 per cent of rail freight across the UK, starting, ending or crossing the network, carrying steel and petrochemicals in South Wales and container traffic between Wales, the Midlands and major ports.

Wales & Western continued

The Western route stretches from London across the Thames Valley to Oxford, Worcestershire, the Cotswolds, the West and South West, serving some of Britain’s most important towns and cities. For many people, their first experience of the UK is the rail line linking Heathrow, Europe’s busiest airport, to Western route’s busiest and most iconic station, London Paddington, which we own and operate along with Reading and Bristol Temple Meads stations. The Western route also supports automotive industries in Swindon and Oxford, aggregate suppliers in the Mendips and the petroleum industry in Westerleigh and Theale. On top of this we work with Bristol Port to deliver 10 per cent of the UK’s coal, 25 per cent of the UK’s aviation fuel, and 600,000 motor vehicles annually.

Key scorecard targets



➤ Train Performance

The introduction of a new, enhanced timetable in December 2019 realised the benefits of 10 years of investment to modernise and electrify the Great Western Main Line from Paddington to Cardiff, Newbury and Chippenham. In January 2020, this culminated in the completion of electrification to Cardiff, enabling electric trains to operate in South Wales for the first time.

Improved infrastructure, electric trains and better signalling enabled us to timetable more trains on the Wales and Western network and allows Great Western Railway (GWR) to offer new high-speed peak services for customers in South Wales, the South West and from Bristol to London. In the December 2019 timetable change, Transport for Wales (TfW) also introduced new weekend services to meet increasing demand. For passengers, this means reduced journey times, an increased number of seats and better connections to the communities we serve.

Train performance in Wales has been weaker than in previous years; this is reflected in the figures for TfW’s ‘Average Passenger Lateness and Cancellations’, which both miss target. This performance reduction has been caused by a combination of factors including ageing fleet, fleet availability reduction due to accessibility train modifications, fleet replacement delays and significant weather incidents. The introduction of TfW’s new fleet beginning in 2020 has

helped us see further improvements to train performance, as the new train fleet has helped to reduce cancellations and alleviate crowding problems. A joint Network Rail and TfW taskforce to support performance through the autumn period this year was successful with a significant year on year reduced impact to passengers.

➤ Freight

One of the biggest freight flows in the UK is the movement of stone from quarries near Shepton Mallet to London and the South East for building and construction, this sector remains buoyant and has seen the reactivation of quarries in anticipation of higher demands for aggregate from the construction of HS2. In other sectors, deliveries into Heathrow Airport continue to grow, with British Airways now receiving all their fuel by rail. Freight performance has generally been strong throughout the year across the region, however the key performance freight delivery metric has been significantly affected by the three storms during February.

➤ Finance & efficiencies

Income for the region has been strong in the year mainly due to good Network Rail asset reliability. This has allowed additional investment in longer term performance

Wales & Western continued



improving programmes of work including vegetation and tree management. A number of key efficiencies were delivered during the year. For operating expenditure these included improved contracts leading to reduced costs, enhanced business processes and a continued risk-based maintenance approach to track patrolling.

the risk of fatalities and workforce injuries alongside making our railway safer for passengers and local communities. The safety of passengers remains core to the service we deliver and the work to improve passenger safety and reduce train accident risk continues. In the year the region saw a reduction in infrastructure and signalling wrong side failures, broken rails and serious bridge strikes.

> Safety

The year saw areas of improvement in safety, health and environmental performance in Wales and Western. However, in July 2019, we were deeply saddened by the loss of Gareth Delbridge and Michael ‘Spike’ Lewis at Margam in South Wales. Since then we have been working across Wales and Western, and with national colleagues in the Track Worker Safety Task Force, to prevent incidents like this from reoccurring. We will constantly seek ways to reduce

> Core Valley Lines transfer

We’re supporting TfW’s £5bn plan to transform rail services, with increased capacity, new rolling stock and improvements to stations across the network in Wales & Borders. This included the transfer of the Core Valley Lines infrastructure to TfW on 28 March 2020. The Core Valley Lines are now owned by TfW and the infrastructure maintained by Amey Keolis Infrastructure.

Case study

Putting Passengers First

Wales and Western manages three stations and has improved facilities for passengers at London Paddington, Reading and Bristol Temple Meads over the past year. All three stations have also seen improvements in results on the National Rail Passenger Survey. Bristol Temple Meads saw a 12 percentage point improvement in overall satisfaction, Paddington increased by four per cent (driven by 25 per cent increase from toilet facility improvements) and Reading improved by one per cent overall.

We have begun to make journeys simpler for those passengers with accessibility needs; we have changed the way car parking has been organised at Paddington, allowing disabled passengers to park with increased ease, as well as developing a ‘one team’ approach with operators, recruiting over 20 additional mobility assistance staff. We have also further increased the flexibility for passengers with accessibility needs by removing the requirement to pre-book assistance at London Paddington.



Network Rail and TfW are producing joint customer scorecards to ensure that performance issues are addressed and aim to continue to work together to improve the passenger experience.

➤ In the year ahead (2020/21)

The next year will see some vital infrastructure projects begin to progress, this includes:

- Renewal of the Grade II listed Barmouth Viaduct connecting passengers to North West Wales;
- Reduced delays into and out of London Paddington through £50m of investment in new signalling equipment;
- The delivery of the South West Rail Resilience Programme, including phase 1 of a new sea wall in

Dawlish, to maintain the vital rail link between Devon, Cornwall and the rest of the UK;

- New pumps at Sudbrook pumping station to keep passengers moving through the Severn Tunnel;
- Bi-directional signalling at Bristol Parkway to enable new, faster services; and,
- West Wales re-signalling scheme to improve reliability of services west of Swansea.

The region experienced a very limited impact to the 2019/20 outturn due to the Coronavirus outbreak, however we do expect a much bigger impact in the 2020/21 year both financially and in outputs. In this constantly evolving situation we will continue to do whatever is needed to keep our passengers, colleagues and the public safe. That includes playing a critical role in transporting vital goods, and making sure those who need to travel can get to their jobs.

Case study

Efficiencies

While delivering asset renewals, the Wales & Borders route exploited the closure of the Conwy Valley line due to flooding to efficiently deliver track, drainage and structures improvements. This proved the effectiveness of better access planning and utilisation during blockade activity, rather than prolonged possessions, leading to reduced unit rates for renewals work delivering approximately £5.4m of efficiency.