

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a
Sgiliau
Datblygu Trafnidiaeth Cymru yn y
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Ymateb gan David Flint

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

Whether the current governance, structure and funding of Transport for Wales are effective and transparent.

TfW governance is not transparent. It is quite unclear, where responsibility lies. The TfW website provides little detail, and even for stakeholders (and I think STAG and MAGOR could count themselves as stakeholders here) it is very difficult to actually work out with whom one has to deal and which officer / manager / department takes the lead in what. There is no organisational structure on the website.

TfW has made comments in the past that one of the reasons for the lack of transparency with rail issues is the franchise process. There have been some progress since the franchise has been awarded, e.g. the publication of many documents relating to the tendering and contracting of KA (aka TfW Rail), and TfW Rail have appointed stakeholder managers, but overall there is very little information available about what many of the announcements actually mean, what work has been done, and who is leading it. For example, the franchise announcement states that there are substantial plans for the development of Chepstow station. But what are these? Are there any designs or costings? It is now seven months since the franchise was awarded, and while there have been a few meetings, little detail has been forthcoming and all local stakeholders, including Monmouthshire County Council, seem to be quite in the dark.

What action should be taken to develop these aspects of the organisation? And what other governance models and good practice are available?

It is difficult to comment on TfW structure because of the lack of transparency. However it appears to be that there are still issues with the delineation between TfW and WG. For example it appears that while procurement and management of Wales' national rail system is led by TfW, procurement and management of Wales' national bus system (i.e. TrawsCymru) is still being led by WG – surely this should be done jointly, by the very same staff, with complete integration of services, fares, ticketing, branding, marketing, etc? Similarly, sponsorship of Traveline Cymru appears to be still with WG when Traveline Cymru really ought to be TfW's one-stop-shop for travel information.

I also suspect TfW continues to suffer from projectitis – that is activities as seen as projects, to be developed and then delivered by a certain date, often by ad-hoc project management groups and/or consultants. In practice many public transport activities are about day-in-day-out service delivery. For example in terms

of integrated fares much emphasis of TfW work seems to be on smartcards (which are a medium, but not integration) and technical systems (like back office) with not much about developing and then managing the necessary underlying integrated fares scheme. This approach contrasts noticeably with the fares/ticketing work of, say, leading continental city-region transport authorities such as the Hamburg Transport Association.

There also seems to be uncertainty about the remit. For example is TfW primarily a public transport organisation (as can be found in all the city-regions highlighted as good practice in various Metro studies) or should it get involved in (trunk) roads?

The future role of Transport for Wales in delivering transport policy. What additional responsibilities should it take on and how should these integrate with the role of the Welsh Government, local government and emerging regional transport authorities?

And as regional transport authorities are mentioned, it may be worth noting that these do not in practice exist. The Cardiff Capital Region city-deal has one transport coordinator. Much more is done collectively by council officers, but again this contrasts badly with pretty much every other city-region in Europe which has a regional public transport body with (at the minimum) dozens and often hundreds of dedicated staff. It could be argued that Wales is not a big country, and having a national public transport authority is sufficient, and that this body can deal directly with individual councils (compare e.g. with Berlin-Brandenburg which has one PT authority for one city and a rural state 50% bigger than Wales) – but then the national public transport body must be set up accordingly which TfW currently isn't. Yet it is difficult to be confident that any regional transport authorities are actually 'emerging': Despite acknowledgement that the CCR needs something better than the former South East Wales Transport Alliance (whether this is a regional or Wales-wide body), the current CCRTA terms of reference (i.e. remit, functions) is more limited and less serviceable, and as said there are even fewer staff – and that's despite the SEWTA agreement still being in place, i.e. councils could, if they had chosen, resurrected SEWTA at any time with pretty much immediate effect.