

WELSH GOVERNMENT POLICY PRIORITIES FOR WALES AND BORDERS RAIL SERVICES AND METRO OPERATOR AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNER PROCUREMENT

The bidders were provided with the Welsh Government's priorities at the start of the procurement process. We expect bids to be aligned to these priorities subject to competitive dialogue.

General

- Ensure that all activities support the Welsh Government's policies and strategies.
- Ensure alignment with the Secretary of State for Transport's statement of policy published in March 2013 in exercise of his power under section 26(1) of the Railways Act 1993.
- Maximise benefits to the economy of Wales and the Borders area.
- Deliver no increase in the current subsidy level and a clear business case setting out the need for increase needs to be provided if this is not achievable.
- Transport for Wales should appropriately incentivise an operator and the associated supply chain to deliver value for money contract outcomes, taking a fair view of not for profit bids. Any contract should incentivise reinvestment in the network / service improvements.

Stakeholder / Passenger considerations

- Actively consider the views expressed by stakeholders during the Welsh Government's recent public consultation exercise on quality outcomes.
- Continue stakeholder engagement activities, including at least one further twelve-week public consultation prior to any Invitation to Tender being published.

Employee relations

- Put arrangements in place which ensure that employees are engaged in decision making effectively and constructively.

Improved financial and operating efficiency

- Make every effort to deliver more from the new franchise so that value for money from government subsidy is improved.
- Put arrangements in place for assuring quality and reviewing the contract at appropriate point(s).

Embracing new technology

- Encourage the utilisation of new technologies where they would be likely to deliver improvements for passengers, but not drive a reduction in overall staffing levels as a result.

Services

- Deliver the best possible range of services, including appropriate Metro-type services in North Wales and the delivery of the South Wales Metro outcomes.
- Ensure that:
 - As a baseline, current service frequencies and connectivity are maintained, unless there is a clear case for change.
 - Options for efficiently utilising spare network capacity available now, or which is known to become available during the lifetime of the new franchise agreement, are considered.
 - Opportunities are considered for including new services subject to infrastructure constraints and business case assessments.
 - Capacity for freight traffic is protected.
 - Flexibility is provided to deliver additional services efficiently as new capacity and infrastructure becomes available.
- Within the South Wales Metro:
 - Ability to operate at least 4 tph across the Core Valley Lines with increased frequencies south of Pontypridd and Caerphilly.
 - Aim to reduce journey times on Core Valley lines by 20% compared to present timetable.
 - The future Core Valley Lines system is expected to retain or modify freight operations including co-existing with other potential modes.
 - Operate direct services between major residential areas in the Metro area, including Cardiff City and Bay.
 - The potential to be extended to provide additional stations and extensions including future on street running.

Rolling stock

Rolling stock must:

- Deliver an increase in passenger capacity to cater for existing and forecasted growth in passenger numbers.
- Provide an improvement in quality to meet increasing passenger expectations, including Wi-Fi and charging points.
- Include adequate space to store luggage and bicycles.
- Comply with the Persons with Reduced Mobility Technical Specification of Interoperability

- Use Controlled-Emission Toilets on all railway vehicles where toilets are provided.
- Use electric traction on newly electrified Valley Lines routes in South Wales.

Stations

- Arrange for a priority action plan to be developed prior to the new franchise being awarded which identifies opportunities for improvements to stations, including in respect of accessibility and integration with other modes. This needs to set out how these can be achieved and funded working with the new franchisee, Network Rail and the UK Government.

Depots

- Consider the utilisation of depot facilities across the Wales and Borders area, including Landore depot.

Fares and Ticketing

- Encourage increased patronage at off peak times on services where patronage is currently low.
- Include requirements for discounts to the cost of travel for people working irregular work patterns or part time hours.
- Support current ticketing options as well ensuring future iterations of electronic ticketing and smart ticketing.
- Make considerable progress to better integrate tickets with other public transport modes during the lifetime of the franchise.

Community rail

- Require the operator to work with Community Rail Partnerships and facilitate the emergence of new ones where there is value in doing so.

Co-operation with other public transport providers

- Ensure that relevant public transport providers, including local authorities, are consulted on proposals as and when appropriate.

Environmental improvements

- Put arrangements in place to improve environmental efficiency across the franchise.