

# Cabinet Secretary sets out aspiration for pan-Wales transport body

Whilst updating Assembly Members on positive discussions with the UK Government regarding the transfer of powers and the Core Valley Lines railway asset, the Cabinet Secretary set out how this further devolution would give us more of the tools we need to develop the schemes which will provide much needed improvements across Wales.

Taking Wales Forward, Prosperity for All and the Economic Action Plan will be strengthened as we drive a step change in the way we understand, plan, use and invest in transport in Wales. For the first time the Welsh Government has committed to a five-year programme of transport capital funding through Transport for Wales for both transport maintenance and new projects.

Speaking to Assembly Members, Ken Skates said:

“I am mindful of the need to make sure that Transport for Wales can deliver effectively for the whole of Wales, and following my announcement last month of the intention to set up a Transport for Wales business unit in north Wales, I have instructed Transport for Wales to bring forward proposals for a North Wales office. I expect this to be delivered at pace.

“On our new Wales and Borders rail service – we have made significant progress with the UK Government since last summer, and the Secretary of State for Transport and I have now reached agreement on the way forward on a number of key issues. On other issues officials are continuing to make good progress. Further devolution would give us the tools we need to develop the schemes which will provide much needed improvements across Wales, as identified within Network Rail’s Welsh route study.

“Transport for Wales is now entering a new stage of mobilisation, working closely with Business Wales to make opportunities available to local SMEs and third-sector enterprises, through the new rail service and the different metro schemes. Indeed as result of their progress, and subject to the UK Government doing their bit, I look forward to the award of the first made in Wales rail services contract – in May.

“Following the successful model of acquisition of Cardiff Airport, our aim is for the public transport network to be increasingly directly owned or operated by Transport for Wales. We need a transport body that prioritises people and businesses and finds innovative ways of building a truly resilient and modern transport system for the benefit of the people of Wales.”