



Assembly Members

28 February 2018

Dear Member

This morning I was advised by Arriva Trains Wales that due to serious safety issues the fleet of 27 class 175 trains were being temporarily withdrawn from service.

Overnight checks by Arriva engineers have discovered significant damage to the wheels of the class 175 fleet. The rail industry's primary concern is the safety of rail users. The wheel damage has therefore necessitated the withdrawal of the fleet until the cause is known. It is believed that a fault with a section of rail track or points has caused the damage to the trains.

Network Rail engineers have been working since the early morning to locate, and then rectify, the section of track or points across the Wales route and on lines into Manchester which has caused the damage. This work is on going at this time.

The removal from service of 27 trains is having a significant impact on the ability of Arriva Trains Wales to deliver its timetabled service. Services usually operated by the class 175 trains such as those between South Wales and Manchester and between North and South Wales have been cancelled or are only able to operate on part of their normal route.

Arriva have advised that some services will be operating with fewer carriages and additionally, given the worsening weather predicted over the next few days, they are advising customers to travel only if absolutely necessary and to ensure that they check www.arrivatrains.wales/check to see if their journey will be affected.

This will also impact capacity provision on other routes as trains are moved to ensure that services do continue to operate. I have asked Arriva Trains Wales to ensure that bus replacement services are in place on any routes where it is not possible to operate a rail service.

I have today spoken with both ATW and Network Rail to express my deep concern over this matter and to seek further details about when normal services are likely to resume.

I will be raising this matter with the UK Government Department for Transport at a national level to understand how this situation has arisen, given responsibility for the rail tracks and points remains un-devolved.

I will provide a further update as soon as more information is known.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport