# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **South East Wales Transport Commission report** |
| **DATE**  | **17 December 2019** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport** |

I welcome this [report](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fsouth-east-wales-transport-commission-progress-update&data=02%7C01%7CGovernment.Plenary.Business%40gov.wales%7C410601c720f649d369e108d782ea2b58%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637121814565411021&sdata=0dOzn5lLmSbJlztgq5DgqrVmFlZEGS1CLWMmIkqSpvc%3D&reserved=0) from the recently established South East Wales Transport Commission. It is early days but it is clear that a significant amount of evidence-gathering, consultation and analysis has already been undertaken and I thank the Commission for getting to this milestone so quickly.

Since the Commission was launched in October, they have met three times and held workshops with around 100 stakeholders across the South-east. They have wasted no time in understanding the problems faced by the public in accessing jobs and services, businesses in reaching customers and markets, and the freight industry in moving goods quickly and efficiently. They have given us three early proposals for fast track, motorway-focused measures designed to make an immediate impact on traffic flow.  My officials are working on these with a view to responding without delay in the New Year.

As the report makes clear, the Commission is working on a broad and ambitious set of recommendations designed to address the underlying issues.  The scope of their work is summarised in particular in paragraphs 25-27, covering options for new transport services, active travel, integration of services, and governance and land use issues.

In the meantime, the Welsh Government is moving ahead with action to enhance connectivity in the region.  In September, I set out my Principles for Public Transport Connectivity[[1]](#footnote-1)[1], setting out the Government’s ambitions for public transport services in Wales to enable the connectivity that is critical to our future prosperity, at the frequencies required to deliver the behavioural change needed to support a greener transport system.

Delivering this step-change in options and opportunities for travellers in the region means:

* A ‘turn-up-and-go’ frequency of four trains per hour to each of our Metro stations, including to Abergavenny, to Chepstow, and along the Ebbw Valley line
* Six trains per hour between Cardiff, Newport, and Bristol (with 4 to Temple Meads, subject to UK Government agreement)
* High capacity park and ride facilities where the rail network intersects with strategic or arterial roads, and
* Local bus services, and comprehensive active travel provision linking interchanges with their communities and the wider region.

Over the summer, the Metro Enhancement Framework has been developed by the Welsh Government in collaboration with Transport for Wales and the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA). Its purpose is to help identify key areas and priority transport corridors.

I have tasked officials and Transport for Wales to take forward next year a Strategic Weltag Appraisal of these priority corridors, including between Chepstow and Newport, to identify the most appropriate suite of complimentary transport solutions that will contribute towards addressing these challenges by extending the current phase of the Metro to Newport and beyond.

This report is just the beginning of the Commission’s work and I look forward to receiving further updates next year. Traffic management measures can only ever play a small role in a holistic solution that considers the structural, societal, and economic root causes of congestion on the M4 while meeting the needs of, and our obligations to, future generations. The Commission are committed to hear people’s views, and I would encourage responses from all sectors with an interest in the issues raised and the solutions identified.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.

1. [1] https://gov.wales/written-statement-principles-public-transport-connectivity [↑](#footnote-ref-1)