



Ein Cyf/Our Ref: OAQ53886

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Dear Leanne,

I write following our exchange during First Minister's Questions on 21 May where you asked about toilet facilities available on the new train carriages.

I wanted to make sure you had the most up to date position.

South Wales Metro: toilet facilities

Background

The transformation of the railway in south east Wales to the South Wales Metro will deliver an integrated, high-speed, high-frequency system with accessible toilet facilities either on trains or at stations (where the rolling stock is unable to include a toilet). This is an approach used successfully on other metro networks in the UK, such as:

- the London Underground,
- Docklands Light Railway in London,
- Manchester's Metrolink, and
- Tyne & Wear Metro.

In order to transform the existing railway to a modern Metro system that is extendable, some difficult decisions needed to be taken, including how toilets facilities are provided. This is because the way a rail system operates and is extendable is dictated by the rolling stock type, and Metro rolling stock cannot accommodate Passengers of Reduced Mobility (PRM) compliant toilets.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

TfW carried out rigorous consultation as part of their development of the plans for the South Wales Metro, including engaging with customers and stakeholders. The consultation addressed the issue of toilet facilities along with other aspects of the customer experience of the new Metro, and fed these back to us to inform our policy priorities for the Metro and Wales and Borders rail services.

Following the consultation and engagement process, the provision of suitable and accessible toilet facilities, and the impact this has on the type of Metro we could procure, was discussed thoroughly both prior to and at Cabinet last year.

The agreed approach was that on-board toilets would be retained on all Wales and Cross Borders services. Until South Wales Metro Phase 2 transformation delivers the new service frequencies, there will be different types of rolling stock on the Valley Lines that will include toilet provision.

Following transformation, on the Metro network, train services on the Rhymney, Maesteg, Ebbw and Vale of Glamorgan lines will retain on-board toilet facilities. On the remaining Metro lines (Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr) TfW will equip a further six stations with Universal Access Toilets (UATs) to satisfy our requirement that no customer will be more than 20 minutes from a UAT.

In addition to the existing UATs at stations this will result in a maximum journey time to a UAT of 14 minutes, with 95 per cent of journeys being within 10 minutes. Furthermore, the last services each day will include provision for a break in service mid-point for passengers to use the facilities should they wish to. This would be advertised and be part of the formal service provision.

Current position

Rolling stock

- Metro Vehicles, which will enter service from 2022, will not be fitted with on-board toilets.
- These vehicles have the ability to operate on street, and as such the design of the vehicles and type of operation (regular stops with rapid alighting and boarding) does not permit the incorporation of toilets.
- These vehicles have been chosen with flexibility and extendibility in mind, making new Metro lines potentially more achievable in the future.
- The Metro vehicles will be fairly short units which in many cases will operate in pairs to provide the required capacity. Incorporation of a PRM compliant toilet would provide a notable reduction in passenger capacity
- The Stadler FLIRT tri-mode and diesel-electric trains, Wales and Borders CAF diesel trains and all refurbished/rebuilt trains will be fitted with on-board toilets

Routes

- Metro Vehicles will exclusively operate on the Treherbert, Merthyr and Aberdare lines
- The Stadler FLIRT tri-mode and diesel-electric trains, Wales and Borders CAF diesel trains and all refurbished/rebuilt trains will operate on all other routes

Stations

TfW are conscious of the lack of toilets on the Metro Vehicles so are investing to provide accessible toilet facilities at many more stations on these routes and the 'turn up and go'

frequencies (e.g. a train every 5 minutes between Pontypridd and Cardiff) will make it possible to get off a train and board the next one without having to wait long times. The last train of the day will have a scheduled stop to allow passengers to use the toilet facilities.

Best wishes
Mark.

MARK DRAKEFORD