



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

RESEARCH

# Evaluation of the Llandaf and Radyr train station improvements (summary)

The report assesses the delivery of the Llandaf and Radyr Train Station Improvements operation.

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# Background

Carreg Las, in partnership with Loxley Consultancy, were appointed to undertake a final evaluation of the Llandaf and Radyr Station Improvements.

The Llandaf and Radyr Train Station Improvements are a key element in Phase 1 of the Metro Station Improvements Programme (MSIP), which is part of the South Wales Metro Programme, now in its second phase. The operation is part-funded by European Structural Funds through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) East Wales Operational Programme, contributing:

- towards Priority 4 output target Intermodal facilities created or improved
- specific Objective 4.1 Increasing urban and labour mobility to and from key urban and employment centres, as well as the Cross-Cutting Themes

The evaluation was undertaken between October 2021 and March 2022, three years after completion of the construction works in 2018.

## Policy review

### Context

Welsh Government (WG) has long recognised the need to improve train stations throughout Wales as poor access, unsightly waiting facilities, and the perception of a lack of safety are all barriers to the increased take up of public transport. The strategies developed to address these needs aim to provide a lasting legacy, contributing towards long-term sustainability of increased use of public transport, for commuting as well as other journeys.

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## Relevance to Wales Transport Strategy

The Wales Transport Strategy (March 2010) set out the Welsh Government's policy framework and aspirations for the creation of an integrated transport system to deliver the Government's "One Wales" agenda. Alongside the Regional Transport Plans the strategy prioritise accessibility (for example, more level boarding), provision for cycles and measures to improve not only station infrastructure, but also interchange with other modes of transport.

The ERDF funded station improvements at Radyr and Llandaf benefit from synergy with the Access for All programme, which also supported station accessibility improvements that deliver added value. Welsh Government recognise the benefits of these programmes and remain committed to strengthening delivery of similar infrastructure through the Llwybr Newydd – the Wales Transport Strategy 2021.

## Relevance to other WG policies and national strategies

The station improvement schemes fit well within interrelated policies that are encapsulated in the Programme for Government "Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021", which sets out the headline commitments in a long-term context to lay the foundations for achieving prosperity for all (Welsh Government: Prosperity for All, The National Strategy, 2016).

The approach incorporates the concepts embedded in the Well Being and Future Generations Act, 2015 that aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. In particular, the Act established seven well being goals to create: a globally responsible Wales, that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, cohesive, with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

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The Act's 'sustainable development principle' established goals that underpin ERDF actions across Wales and influence the Cross-Cutting Theme (CCT) objectives of all operations. Amongst the CCT objectives is the promotion of the Welsh language in line with the Government's Welsh Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050. In response, the station improvements incorporate actions that ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

## ERDF Cross Cutting Themes

In accordance with ERDF regulations and WG Policy the operation integrates a range of social, economic, environmental and well-being outcomes through attention to CCT actions that focus on:

- equal opportunities/gender mainstreaming
- sustainable development
- tackling poverty and social exclusion
- Welsh language

The approach of Transport for Wales (TfW) to sustainable transport infrastructure delivery shows an understanding of the importance of activities that support CCT objectives and the goals of the Well Being and Future Generations Act.

## Methodology

### Overall approach

In developing an evaluation methodology, we have been aware that works supported under ERDF are part of the wider MSIP and the importance of

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distinguishing what has been funded through the UK Government's Access for All Programme, which included improved access for passengers with reduced mobility. Our approach has, therefore, taken a holistic review of the station improvements, since rail user perceptions are unlikely to differentiate the separate elements constructed during the same time period.

We are cognisant of the fact that the Llandaf and Radyr Train Station Improvements were underway before ERDF funding was requested and have adapted best practice guidelines in our approach to include:

- desk research of available policy documents and literature related to the operation to establishing a full understanding of the project and to support analysis
- assessments of delivery through site visits, which feed into the appraisal of the impact and achievement of objectives
- fieldwork, incorporating discussions with key stakeholders and a survey of station users to ascertain a perception of the operation to validate objectives, value and expectations of the initiative

The approach to gather data has used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, quantitative data has been drawn from official statistics (for example, Office of Rail Regulator) to support longitudinal analysis. Layered onto this is primary data collected in the evaluation (through an online survey) to provide specific qualitative perceptions of station users.

The online survey responds to the need to avoid face-to-face interviews at stations due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## Findings

Overall, the operation has been highly successful in meeting objectives set out

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in the Business Plan.

## **Objective 4.1 Increasing urban and labour mobility to and from key urban and employment centres**

Based on the raw patronage data it is clear there has been a steady increase in mobility to and from key urban and employment centres connected to the stations, which might be attributed to a more attractive service provision.

The evaluation utilised ticket data for the Llandaf and Radyr stations to demonstrate the short-term impact of the improvements (seen in 2018 and 2019). Station utilisation was growing at a slow rate prior to the station improvements (for example, in 2016-17 Llandaf by 0.5% and Radyr by 4.8%. Utilisation continued to grow during the construction phase (for example, in 2017-18 Llandaf by 2.9% and Radyr by 7.4%).

Growth continued after completion, in 2018-19 Llandaf by 5.3% and Radyr by 5.3%. By way of comparison patronage across the whole of Wales only rose by 0.4% in 2018-19.

COVID-19 work from home guidance has prevented any reliable analysis for 2020 and 2021 rail patronage. Available rail patronage figures remained strong despite the impact of work from home rules and Covid-19 lockdowns, with falls at both stations broadly in line with the 4.4% national decline (2019-20).

## **Priority 4 Intermodal facilities created or improved**

The operation has created and enhanced infrastructure at both Llandaf and Radyr stations, thereby making the expected contribution towards Priority 4 objectives of the East Wales ERDF Operational Programme. In particular, the operation and the Access for All works have provided:

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- platform shelters
- additional CCTV and lighting
- enhanced ticket offices
- improved traffic access, car bays and passenger pickup areas
- additional cycle facilities
- 187 space Park & Ride facility
- new signage and information boards
- bridges and lifts

The quality of the station improvements is clear to see based on observation of the facilities and comparisons with pre-improvement photographic evidence. This is supported by the opinions of rail users.

## Satisfaction with station improvements

The online survey of 644 rail users generated 96 responses (51 at Llandaf and 45 at Radyr). This represents a 14.91% response rate. The majority (67.72%) used the stations frequently (i.e., more than twice a week), mostly to commute to work or education (76.84%).

The design concept for on platform shelters has been generally well received. However, the unfinished nature of bad weather protection, particularly at Llandaf station where 62.75% were dissatisfied (N = 32) remains a concern, because planning approval to remove the old structure was not received, so the area around that shelter is inaccessible and ugly.

Overall, respondents expressed moderately high levels of satisfaction (47.37% N = 45) with personal security at the station (e.g., CCTV coverage), with only 3.16% being dissatisfied (N = 3). It is clear that the discrete CCTV enhancements are welcomed, but for some have gone unnoticed. The related aspect of lighting and safety attracted moderately high levels of satisfaction (66.67% N = 64).

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Respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with access to the ticket office and ticket machines (85.42%), with praise for the staff involved.

Most respondents (65.62%) had a neutral / no opinion on the bicycle storage, which reflects the low number of respondents (2.08%) who typically cycle to the train station.

The resurfacing of car parking facilities and improved traffic circulation at the stations is clearly a success from the rail user perspective. Overall, respondents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with Park and Ride at both stations (76.05% N = 73).

Observation of signage on site confirms it is of appropriate quality and in the standard multilingual format. In general respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction (63.83%), however, dissatisfaction with travel information and electronic signs was more strongly expressed at Llandaf station (29.41% N = 15).

Respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with level access to and within the station (71.87% N = 69), although reliability of the lifts is a concern.

The Final Report contains detailed comments on specific aspects where facilities are particularly appreciated, or might be further enhanced.

## Conclusions

The evaluation has found evidence that the Llandaf and Radyr Train Station Improvements operation has succeeded in meeting all the commitments outlined in the Business Plan, including, the specific objectives (SO4.1 EW), relevant output indicators and result indicators. In particular, we find:

- the infrastructure improvements contribute 2 intermodal facilities created or

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improved towards the Programme's overall output target

- rail patronage data shows there has been a steady increase in mobility to and from key urban and employment centres connected to the stations, which might be attributed to a more attractive service provision, fulfilling Specific Objective 4.1: Increasing urban and labour mobility to and from key urban and employment centres
- overall, the station improvements are highly appreciated by station users
- CCT activities have been effectively carried out and have become embedded in contractor practices ensuring achievement of the cross-cutting themes, aims, objectives and CCT related indicators outlined in the Business Plan
- the ERDF station improvements have benefited from synergy with the Access for All programme

Project management of the works has gone well and has led to useful lessons for future initiatives.

## Contact details

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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