



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# A Railway for Wales

Meeting the needs  
of future generations





## Meeting the needs of Future Generations

Our vision for full rail devolution will enable us to deliver a **transformative railway** development programme across Wales that meets the needs of future generations



The importance of rail devolution and a fair funding settlement for Wales can not be underestimated. In a Plenary debate on the future of rail in Wales in February 2019, there was an unprecedented cross-party support for change. We now have a deep conviction across the National Assembly for Wales that rail devolution is essential for us to deliver the comprehensive, integrated, and efficient transport network needed across Wales to better connect our nation, grow our economy, and deliver on our commitment to tackle climate change.

For too long Wales has been denied its fair share of rail infrastructure funding and the Welsh Government has had little choice but to divert our own funding from our devolved responsibilities like health and education in order to make essential investments in our rail network, despite it being under the control of the UK Government. We must end this historic and continuing under-investment so that we can finally prioritise and properly fund our own needs and

meet our own statutory duties – under the Equality, Environment, Welsh Language, and Wellbeing of Future Generations Acts - alongside our determination to treat all areas of Wales equally in terms of accessibility to economic and social opportunities.

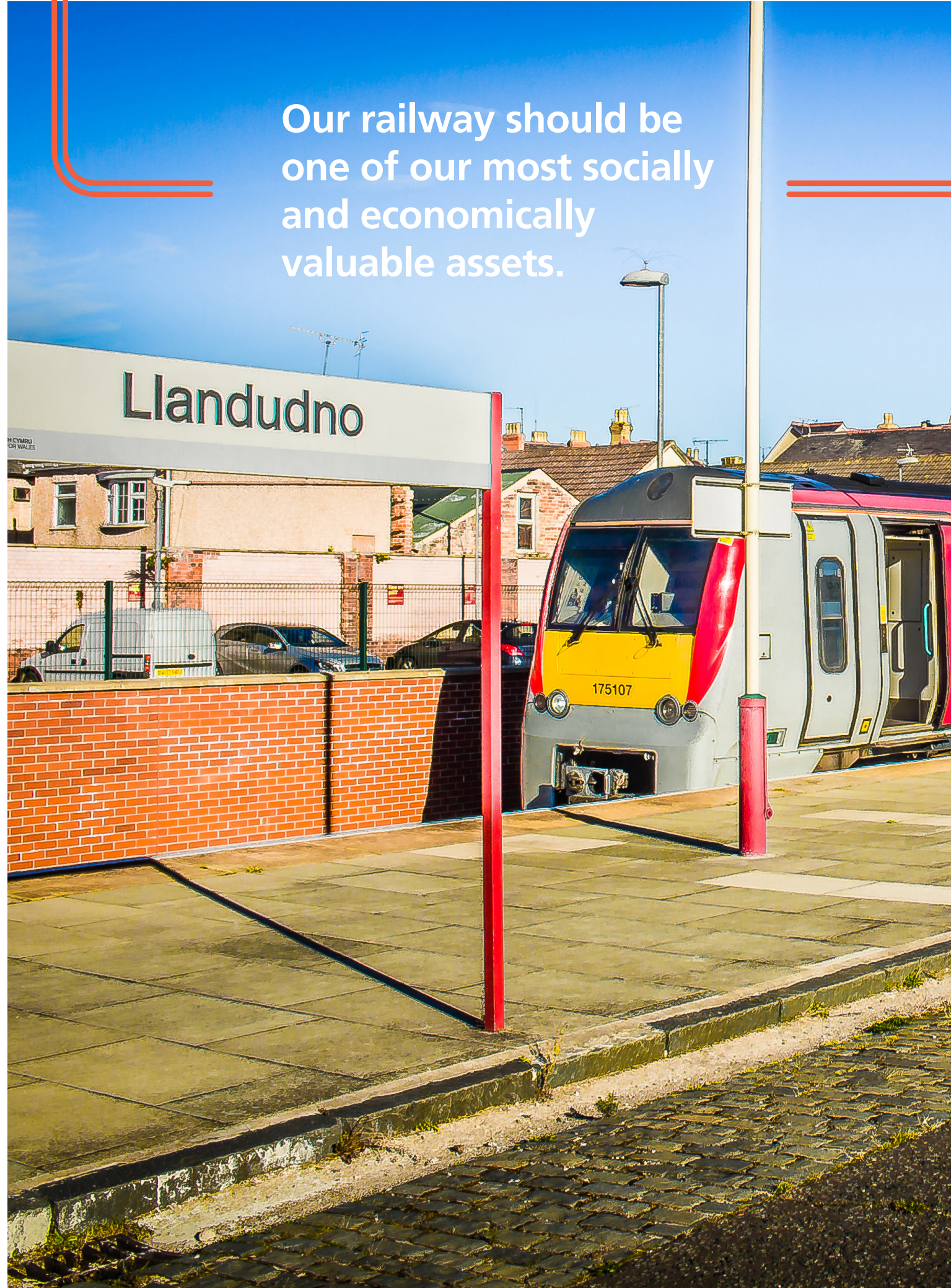
We have set out our clear, comprehensive, and conclusive case for full rail devolution and a fair funding settlement in our submission to the UK Government through the Williams Rail Review. This is fully supported by the cross-party Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee of the National Assembly for Wales.

Now is the right time for the UK Government to put things right and empower us to deliver for our future generations through our exciting vision for the transformative railway development programme for the future set out in this document.

**Ken Skates AM**  
Minister for Economy and Transport



Our railway should be one of our most socially and economically valuable assets.



It has the potential to make a significant contribution in Wales to people's lives, our communities, the environment, and to our economy.

Our rail infrastructure and rail services are fundamental to an effective and efficient transport network. Their continued development and expansion will contribute to our ambition to develop a stronger, inclusive and more equitable economy and to deliver prosperity for all by connecting people, communities and businesses to jobs, services and markets.

Perhaps more importantly the expansion of rail services can help us to address some of the underlying causes of the climate emergency we face by making it possible for far more of us to access affordable, efficient, and attractive public transport services and so reduce road congestion, carbon emissions and air quality impacts.

The devolution, and subsequent award, of the Wales and Borders franchise has allowed the Welsh Government, through Transport for Wales, to develop an approach that will deliver transformational changes to Welsh rail services, including almost a third more weekday services, the majority using new rolling stock, and new and improved, stations.

Furthermore, the ability to dedicate time and focus effort on delivering outcomes that meet local needs, regional priorities, and the Welsh Government's objectives has resulted in wider benefits in terms of attracting employment, developing local expertise, comprehensive community benefits, and promoting Welsh culture and language.

However, we are also aware that this is only the beginning of a journey. Many areas in Wales either continue to suffer from infrequent services, unreliable infrastructure, and indirect routes.

Our ambition is to continue to support our economy and communities, by continuing to develop an integrated transport network that allows more of us to travel where we want to, when we want to, and to do so more sustainably.





With the right powers and necessary funding, **we could be doing much more:** more services to improve access to jobs and leisure activities, more attractive journey times to encourage people away from private cars, and more stations to connect our communities.

Despite not being funded to do so, the Welsh Government has chosen to invest in our rail infrastructure – choosing to connect communities through re-opening lines and new stations, prioritising increasing capacity to provide viable and popular services, and closing level crossings to improve safety and journey times.

Without a fair devolution and funding settlement from the UK Government, this investment by the Welsh Government can only currently come at the expense of the funding that we receive to pay for improvements to the wider transport network, local services, and new schools and hospitals.

While a programme of enhancements worth over £150 billion is being funded for development and delivery across the border, we continue to wait for a similarly ambitious commitment from the UK Government to fund and deliver strategic schemes in Wales. To fill this void, the Welsh Government last year published The Case for Investment<sup>1</sup>, to develop our own strategic vision for the rail network. This work clearly established the rationale for an ambitious, realistic, and equitable investment programme in Wales' rail infrastructure.

A fair devolution settlement for Wales would allow us over the next 10 years to fund an ambitious strategic programme (including the re-opening of railway lines, upgrade of the south and north Wales mainlines, new routes, and new stations across the network) to support the level of services required to meet our objectives for our communities, our economy, and our environment.

The transfer of the Core Valleys Lines (which already carry over half of existing services in Wales) to the Welsh Government, offers further evidence of the benefits of how decentralisation and devolution can develop innovative bespoke solutions to delivering an integrated transport network. In particular, bringing track and train together through Transport for Wales is an approach that has only secured limited political traction and institutional interest at a UK level. With the establishment of Transport for Wales, therefore, we not only have the ambition, but also the capability to develop innovative solutions to deliver our objectives for the environment, our communities, and our economy.

1. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/the-rail-network-in-wales-case-for-investment.pdf>



## Why we need full rail devolution



The context for rail delivery in Wales is complex, fragmented and under-funded.

We are struggling with the legacy of a railway system that was designed before the advent of devolution, and whilst some efforts have been made to evolve it, the current settlement is still a reflection of the times in which it was created. Twenty years on from devolution, the Secretary of State for Transport in Westminster retains control of railway infrastructure in Wales.

This imperfect devolution settlement is the root of many of the problems with our railway. It undermines our ability to encourage inclusive economic growth, to deliver balanced investment across regions, and to develop a railway that meets the social needs of our rural communities. The current arrangement is also an impediment to developing coherent integrated public transport solutions.

We are approaching a critical juncture in the evolution of the railways in Great Britain, and in particular the opportunity to develop a network that better meets the needs of the people that use it. It is clear that in order to meet our ambitions for a step-change in integration, efficiency, and broader outcomes, we need greater control and autonomy of the railway in Wales to manage and develop our infrastructure.

The UK Government must now enable Welsh Government to run our own railway that delivers our wider objectives, to have a greater say in specifying our rail services that meet Welsh passengers' needs, and to manage and develop our infrastructure with a fair funding settlement that benefits the whole of the Wales and Borders area.





## A Programme to Meet the Needs of Future Generations

With the full and proper devolution of infrastructure and services aligned to a fair funding settlement we will be able to begin to develop a railway in Wales that meets our own needs and objectives for the economy, our responsibilities to the environment, and our obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

### > A prosperous Wales

Wales needs a rail network that allows people and goods to move efficiently, promoting business and generating employment opportunities to boost productivity and economic growth.

### > A resilient Wales

Wales needs a reliable and efficient railway that offers resilience to current weather patterns and future climate changes through a well-maintained, modern network that minimises whole life costs.

### > A healthier Wales

Wales needs a railway that improves physical and mental health by promoting active travel opportunities and reducing loneliness and isolation through facilitating efficient and attractive door-to-door journeys.

### > A more equal Wales

Wales needs a railway that enables efficient, practical and affordable journeys that is accessible to all regardless of their economic status or whether they share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital, or maternity status).

### > A Wales of cohesive communities

Wales needs a railway that supports the communities it serves and an effective foundation economy through expanding access to rail services, allowing efficient journeys between all regions of Wales.

### > A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Wales needs a railway that facilitates access to leisure, tourism and heritage sites and actively promotes the Welsh language and culture.

### > A globally responsible Wales

Wales needs a railway that encourages and helps people to use more sustainable forms of transport as part of a wider integrated public transport system, minimises its own energy requirements, and the environmental impacts of energy use.

Our first task is to address the legacy of a historic lack of investment in improving the railways in Wales through an ambitious and deliverable programme of national, regional, and local improvements to our railway infrastructure.





# Strategic Railway Development Programme

The award of the recent Wales and Borders franchise by Transport for Wales will see many of the Welsh Government’s ambitions for improved rail services and new and improved stations and interchanges delivered (Figure 1, pg.13).

However, we are also aware that many people in Wales are not currently well served by rail and we could be doing much more: more services to improve access to jobs and leisure activities, more attractive journey times to encourage people away from private cars, and more stations (Figure 2, pg.14), and improved accessibility, to connect more people and more communities.

With the appropriate devolution and funding settlement, we would progress a railway development programme based on the well-being objectives and the principles of WelTAG, our own transport appraisal framework, to deliver an integrated transport network that promotes inclusive and equitable growth, protects the environment, supports our communities, towns and cities, and promotes our culture and the Welsh language.

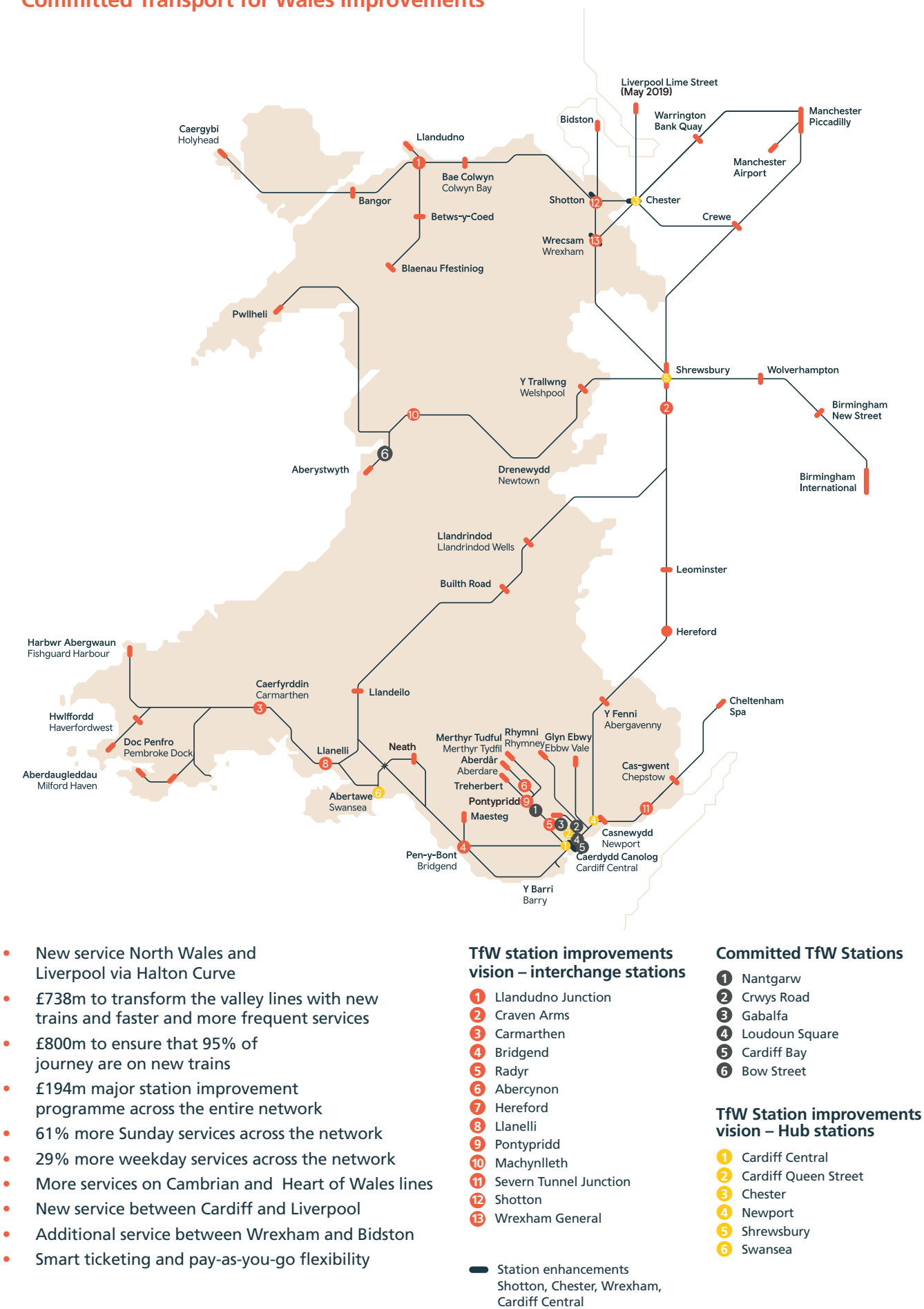
Our development of the South Wales Metro, plans for the North-east Wales Metro and the Swansea Bay Metro (Figure 3, pg.15) and our ambitions for the upgrade of the North Wales mainline and the South Wales mainline (Figure 4, pg.16) will provide a viable alternative to the car for commuter trips.

We also plan to develop further opportunities to improve connectivity on the nation’s other key corridors – especially the western corridor from Ynys Môn to Aberystwyth, Carmarthen and Swansea Bay.

Equally important to the Welsh Government is the role that the railway plays in supporting our rural communities, delivering vital connectivity to employment and services, while enhancing accessibility to our world class tourist destinations. Our commitment to the integration of the rail network with bus services and active travel infrastructure will deliver seamless “end to end” journeys for passengers. Rail freight would also make an increased contribution to our decarbonisation objectives and offer efficient logistics solutions to businesses and industries.

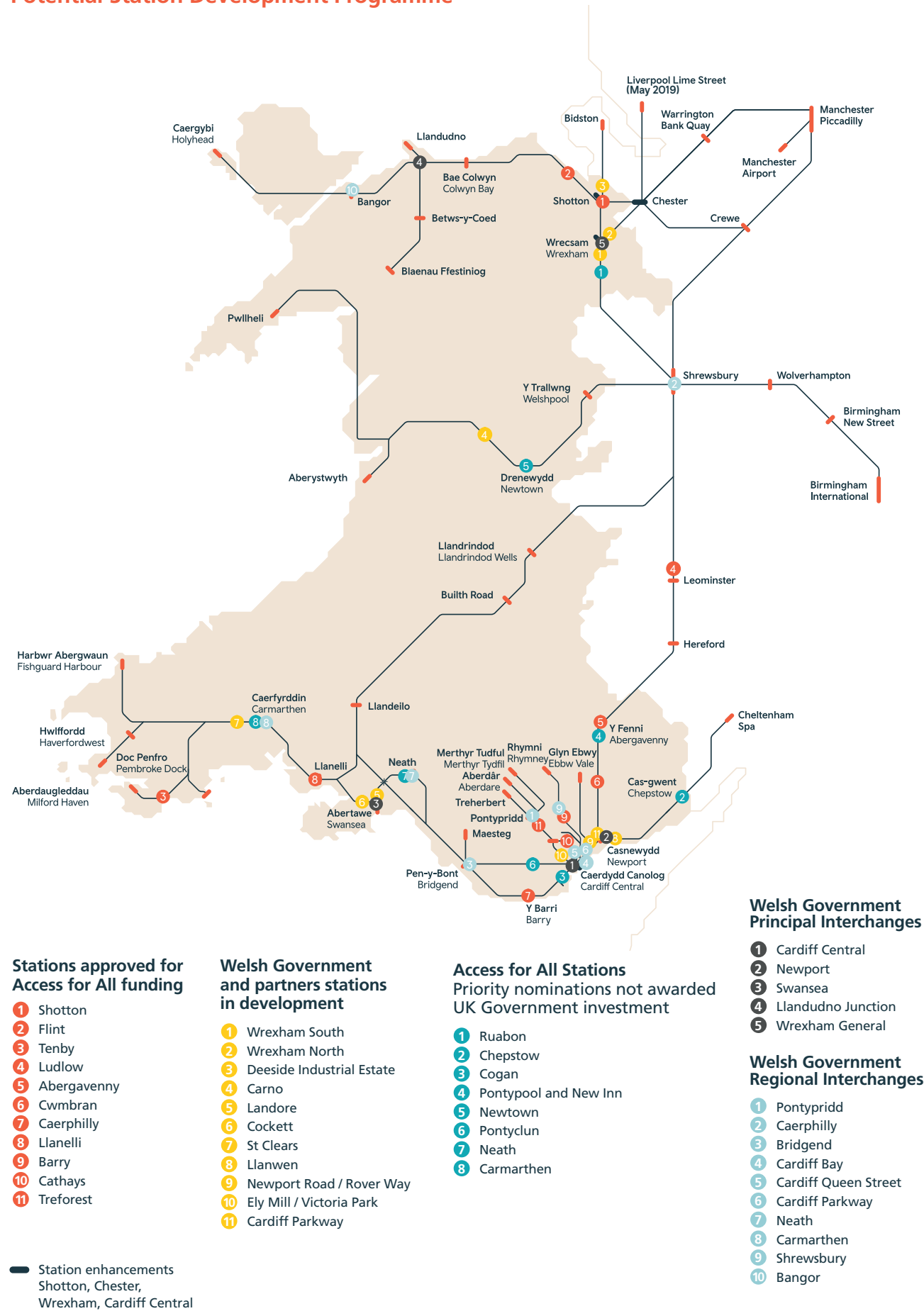
Building on the Case for Investment published in 2018, an ambitious, coherent, and justifiable programme is being developed to enhance our railways including new stations, upgrades of existing stations and routes, our regional metro developments and future major strategic corridor developments (Figures 1 – 4, pgs. 13-16). It will transform services, accessibility and usage of the railway across all our regions and will enable our railway to fulfil its role at the core of an integrated transport network and its potential as one of our most socially and economically valuable assets.

Figure 1  
Committed Transport for Wales Improvements

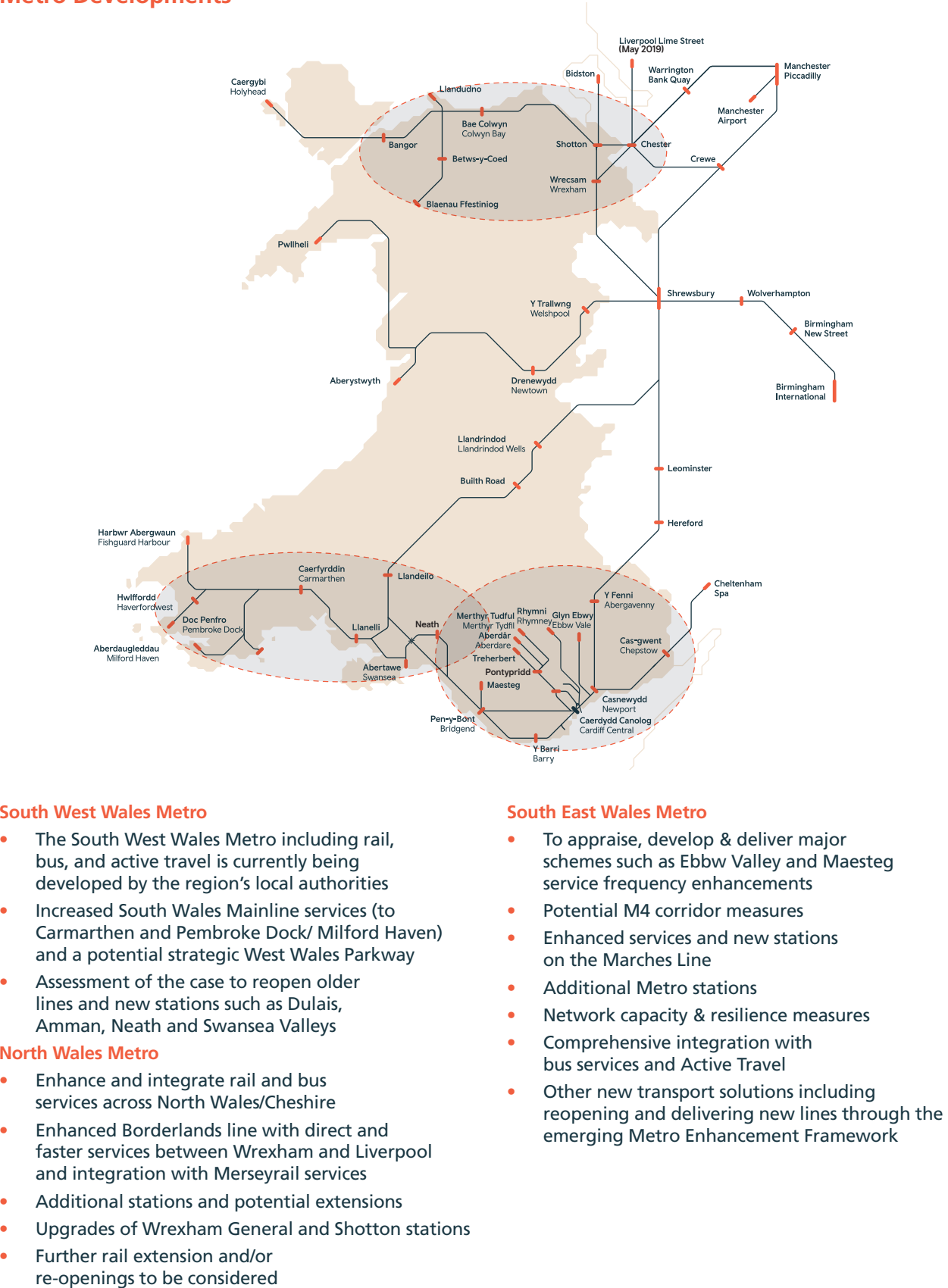




**Figure 2**  
Potential Station Development Programme

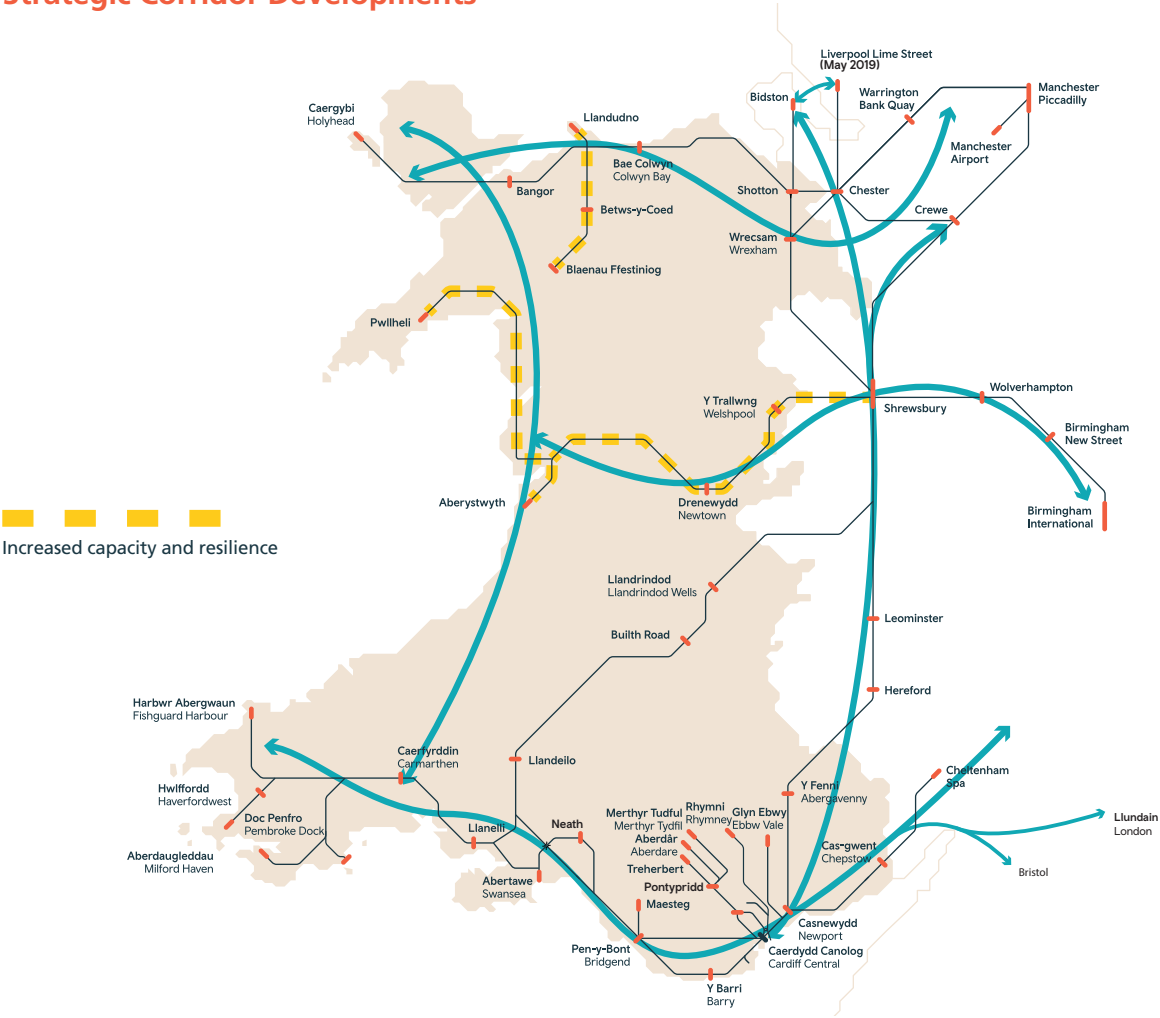


**Figure 3**  
Metro Developments





**Figure 4**  
**Strategic Corridor Developments**



**South Wales Mainline**

- More services to enable mix of express and stopping services from London and Bristol Temple Meads across South Wales to Pembrokeshire
- Improved journey times: Cardiff-London 85 minutes, Cardiff-Swansea 30 mins, Cardiff-Bristol Temple Meads 35 mins, Carmarthen-Cardiff 75mins
- TEN-T standards, including electrification, gauging and line speed improvements

**North Wales Mainline**

- More services to enable a mix of express and stopping services across North Wales and to/from Holyhead, Bangor, Llandudno to Liverpool, Manchester, Chester, Crewe, etc
- Improved journey times: Llandudno-Crewe 60 mins, Holyhead-Chester 60 mins
- TEN-T standards, including electrification, gauging and line speed improvements
- Future HS2 compatible operation

**North - South Connectivity**

- Enhanced connectivity from Ynys Môn to Bangor, Caernarfon, through Dolgellau, Aberystwyth and to Swansea Carmarthen and South West Wales
- This may include upgraded lines, reopened lines and new lines– as well as integration with bus services

**East - West Connectivity**

- More capacity and shorter journey from the West Midlands through Shrewsbury & Mid- Wales to Aberystwyth

**Marches Line**

- A major upgrade of the existing Marches line to enable more and faster services enabling a mix of express and stopping services