

## Interview with Sharp End re reopening of Valleys Line train to Cardiff

<b>Date and time</b>	Monday 29 January 2023: 13:30 – 14:00
<b>Interviewer and organisation</b>	ITV Sharp End
<b>Length</b>	7 mins
<b>Format</b>	Face to Face
<b>Location</b>	CP2 – FM Press Conference Room
<b>Press officer</b>	Redacted – Section 40
<b>Brief summary</b>	This is a briefing for your interview with Sharp End. Subjects that will be discussed include the re-opening of the Cardiff to Treherbert line, 20mph, and the one year anniversary of the Roads Review in the context of the new Dyfi Bridge opening on 2 February.
<b>Key messages</b>	<p><b>Treherbert rail line and South Wales Metro</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Treherbert line will reopen in February 2024.</li> <li>• Work is progressing at pace to upgrade the rail network, public transport hubs and active travel routes across south Wales.</li> <li>• The South Wales Metro will transform the way people travel and provide a more sustainable option to taking the car, supporting the fight against climate change.</li> </ul> <p><b>20mph</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new 20mph default speed limit in Wales is estimated to save up to 100 lives in its first decade and help avoid 20,000 casualties.</li> <li>• Independent data produced by Agilisys illustrates encouraging signs of continuing compliance.</li> <li>• It found average speeds were down 2.4mph (3.9km/h) compared to speeds before the change last September.</li> <li>• Welsh Government will be publishing its own data next month.</li> </ul> <p><b>Roads Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's been almost a year since the independent report of the Roads Review panel was published.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are continuing to invest in new roads providing that they meet the four tests set out in the report.</li> <li>• We are also committed to maintaining the roads we already have before building new.</li> <li>• Next month we will be opening the new Dyfi Bridge which is a fine example of how we want new roads to look in the future. The new bridge provides excellent active travel paths, enabling more people to leave their cars behind and travel actively. It also has improved flood prevention measures, protecting the bridge and surrounding areas.</li> </ul>
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## **Treherbert to Cardiff Rail line**

### **Upcoming Milestones**

Background - Redacted – not in scope for relating to misinformation, public messaging strategy, or reputational risk

### **Why are we introducing Class 150's onto the Treherbert line and not brand-new trains straight away?**

- Driver training is underway on the line. Following the completion of this training the Treherbert line will reopen for passenger services in February 2024.
- TfW will initially use their Class 150 trains (currently used on the Aberdare and Merthyr lines, and from Pontypridd to Cardiff) on the line.
- The Overhead Line Equipment on the line will not be live when the line is reopened in February. This equipment is expected to be energised in May 2024,
- From Summer 2024, TfW will begin to introduce brand-new trains onto the line in a phased approach. These will initially be the Class 756 trains, which will run on the overhead lines.
- From early 2025, the Class 756 trains will be replaced by Class 398 Tram-Trains, which will continue to run on the Treherbert line. The Tram-Trains are fully electric vehicles, powered by the Overhead Lines and by battery through short sections.

### **Is there work yet to be done on the line?**

- Following the reopening of the line in February 2024, the infrastructure will continue to work towards the energisation of the Overhead Line Equipment, which is expected to take place in May 2024.
- TfW will also continue to undertake work at Ynyswen Station, to install a new station platform and Access for All bridge, similar to the work that has been undertaken at Dinas Rhondda Station.
- Ynyswen Station will continue to be closed to passengers following the reopening of the line, with no services starting or stopping at Ynyswen. A shuttle bus service will be in place to take passengers to the nearest operating stations; Treorchy and Treherbert.
- We expect works to be completed at Ynyswen station in Winter 2024.

### **What are the long-term benefits of your metro programmes?**

- Work is progressing at pace to upgrade the rail network, public transport hubs and active travel routes across south Wales.
- The South Wales Metro will significantly improve connectivity throughout the region and will provide passengers with a first rate-customer experience
- The South Wales Metro will transform the way people travel and provide a more sustainable option to taking the car, supporting the fight against climate change.
- For communities in the Rhondda, this will mean an increase from 2 trains an hour to 4 trains an hour into Cardiff, following the completion of key infrastructure work.

### **How is work on the South Wales Metro progressing?**

- The development of Cardiff's new multi-modal transport interchange in the heart of the city provides passengers with a more enjoyable experience and safer environment with on-street bus stops, taxi, active travel provision and improved connectivity to Cardiff Bay.
- The new £100 million Integrated Control Centre and train depot at Taffs Well is making great progress and will play a key role in increasing the number of services on the core valleys line, as well as housing the new fleet of tram trains.
- Some people are already benefitting from the new trains with a plan for up to 95% of all rail passengers to travel on the new trains by 2025.

### **How long will electrification of the core valleys line take and how much will it cost?**

- Works on the electrification of the core valleys line is progressing at pace with the majority of work on the South Wales Metro scheduled for completion in 2024.
- To date TfW has completed 75% of foundations, 45% of main part steel, 28% of small part steel and 31% of wiring works for OLE across Core Valley Lines.
- Some people are already benefitting from the new trains with a plan for up to 95% of all rail passengers to travel on the new trains by 2025.
- To date, we have invested £751m in the South Wales Metro, £50m in the North Wales Metro, and £13m overall in 2022/23 in Metro projects in North, Southeast and Swansea Bay & West Wales. In addition, £800m on rolling stock which will operate across Wales, totalling over £1.6bn.
- Details of the CVL investment will be revealed in the Welsh Government's final budget to be published in early spring.

### **20mph**

### **Considering the criticism you've received, are you going to repeal the policy?**

- The new 20mph default speed limit in Wales is estimated to save up to 100 lives in its first decade and help avoid 20,000 casualties.
- We recognise this is a big change – just like the mandatory use of seat belts were when they came in but as with any cultural change we know it will take time to win hearts and minds and inevitably we will face some challenges.
- It will be safer, now and for future generations.
- We are part of a global movement of introducing slower speed limits where pedestrians and cyclists mix with motorised vehicles in urban areas
- Areas that have made the change have kept it, people do get used to it. (Spain, Bristol, Edinburgh, Cornwall, Scottish Borders etc)
- Scotland and Northern Ireland are also considering roll-out.

### **Has the 20mph default had an impact on speeds?**

- We have been monitoring the impact since the 20mph default speed limit was introduced in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase settlement areas.
- There are encouraging signs of continuing compliance with the 20mph speed limit. Independent data produced by Agilysis found average speeds were down 2.4mph (3.9km/h) compared to speeds before the change last September.
- 75% of drivers are driving at 26.1mph or less
- Measured speeds dropped from an average of 22.7mph down to 19.8mph in the analysis period immediately after the change.
- International research analysed by the Global Road Safety Facility<sup>2</sup> suggests a 3mph drop in average speeds would result in a reduction of 32% in those killed on the roads, and a 25% reduction in those seriously injured.
- A final report on the pilot areas and the first 3 months of roll-out will be published shortly.

### **Are you concerned about recent reports that say 20mph is affecting bus services?**

- We have been clear from the outset that we would monitor any impacts of the 20mph on bus services. We are working closely with bus operators, local authorities and TfW to tackle the challenges the industry is facing. We have asked bus companies for their data to help us understand any impacts.
- The forthcoming review will also look at the impact on bus services in Wales.

### **There has been a lot of variation across Local Authorities in applying the exceptions. Why do you think that is? Is the exceptions criteria too rigid?**

- Highway Authorities made decisions on which roads should be exempt from the default 20mph limit, in consultation with their communities, and based on guidance.

- We are reviewing how the new default speed limit and guidance on exceptions have been implemented across Wales. It is not a review on the policy itself.
- The review will include consideration of whether further clarity on the guidance is necessary, for example by including bus routes.

**Is it right that the 20mph review is being chaired by the same person whose company worked on the implementation of the policy?**

- Phil Jones did not recommend the 20mph policy to the Welsh Government. He chaired the Task Force Group that published a report in July 2020, and it recommended a default approach, which was endorsed in principle with cross-party support by the Senedd.
- The Welsh Government has appointed a small team to work with local authorities to consider the way the policy has been implemented and how the exceptions guidance has been applied.
- The review team includes Professor Peter Jones, Professor of Transport and Sustainable Development at University College London. The other two members of the panel are Kaarina Ruta, Transport Adviser at the WLGA, and Phil Jones, the Chair of the 20mph Task Force Group that made the initial recommendations.
- I've met Council Leaders to agree review of 20mph roll-out. Prof Peter Jones will provide independent challenge, the WLGA will give practical advice and Phil Jones will test against the expert panel Interim report next month.

**The First Minister recently said motorists wouldn't be fined if they are genuinely confused by the new speed limit. Doesn't this imply that you don't know what you're doing with regard to enforcing the 20mph default?**

- Engagement sessions will take place where the speed limit should be clear to the motorist, so there is no reason to exceed the limit. The engagement sessions reinforce the change to the default position in Wales that motorists should "see streetlights, think 20".
- Operation Ugain started in January 2024 and will see GoSafe, Fire and Rescue Services and Welsh police forces continue their engagement-focused approach to 20mph.
- We have always been clear that drivers will be given a choice between roadside engagement or points and a fine, but anyone caught exceeding the speed limit to a greater degree will not be eligible for engagement sessions and will be prosecuted. Drivers who turn down the engagement session will face prosecution.
- If drivers choose the engagement session, the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services will deliver a free presentation that lasts approximately 10 minutes.
- It aims to inform people on the change in default speed limit, the reasons behind the change, and how they can identify the roads it applies to.
- GoSafe, in conjunction with the four police forces in Wales, will issue a statement ahead of wider enforcement taking place.

## **Roads Review**

**It's now a year since your Roads Review. Do you feel that this was the right decision to implement such narrow criteria for building new roads?**

- Transport generates around 17% of all our emissions, so must play its part if we are to reach our target of net zero emissions by 2050.
- We can't keep doing what we've been doing for the past 70 years – building new roads to meet demand – if we're going to reach NetZero by 2050.
- This does not mean the end of road building in Wales, but it does mean a greater emphasis on looking after the roads we already have and shifting our investment towards more sustainable transport.
- We need to invest in the Road Network for the right reasons.
- To move away from spending money on projects that encourage more people to drive and redirect this money on maintaining our existing roads and investing in real alternatives.
- Money saved by not building new roads will be used to improve existing infrastructure, helping to create new bus and cycle lanes that give people a meaningful alternative choice for travel.
- The new Dyfi Bridge project to be opened shortly is a great example of how we can build new roads but with the consideration of the environment and people's health in mind.
- The new road includes an active travel route and is designed to be resilient to floods.

