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Russell George AM
Chair
Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

23 May 2019

Dear Mr George

I have been asked to respond to the Committee regarding points raised by Mr Hefin David AM concerning the connectivity of the Valley lines.

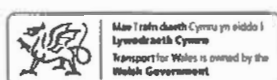
We have taken steps to increase our overall fleet by introducing 5 x ex-GWR Class 153, as well as bringing back into service a long-stopped Class 150 after repair of flood damage.

The class 153s will be used to service various lines across the Wales and Borders network, allowing the release of stock to strengthen the peak morning and afternoon services on the Rhymney Valley line. From the date of the May Timetable Change (19th May), seven of the eight morning peak services into Cardiff and all eight afternoon peak services out of Cardiff will be made up of four carriage sets.

In June, we will introduce refurbished, 'Class 37' loco-hauled, four carriage sets to the line. This will allow us to remove some of the existing stock - one by one - for refurbishment and PRM compliance works. A Class 37 hauled train (four carriages) will have 220 seats so there will be an increase in seating capacity on some services.

We have been able to access the Class 37s fairly quickly to provide the much-needed capacity resilience on this very busy passenger line. We are hiring them until the end of the year, at which point we plan to introduce more modern, refurbished 'Class 769' trains.

The Class 769s are currently expected to enter service on the Rhymney line from September, however, the current plan is to also continue to operate the Class 37s through until the end of the year to provide additional resilience through the autumn period.



The Class 769s are planned to be in use, alongside class 150s from the existing fleet, until all trains on the Rhymney Valley Line are replaced with brand new, 'tri-mode' trains from 2023. These innovative trains, which will be able to run on diesel (only off the core Valley Lines), overhead electric and battery power, will offer a more frequent service which provides greater capacity and faster journeys than the current service.

Since the change to the May Time Table on 20th May, there will be +3 carriages (11%) provided in the AM peak within the May timetable plan against the actual average last 10 weeks, and +4 (14%) for the PM peak.

AM peak (arrive between 7am and 9am), Rhymney/Bargoed – Cardiff Central

| | Number of services | Number of carriages |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Previous TT average | 8 | 27 |
| May TT plan | 8 | 30 |

PM peak (leave between 16:15 and 18:05), Cardiff Central - Rhymney/Bargoed

| | Number of services | Number of carriages |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Previous TT average | 8 | 28 |
| May TT plan | 8 | 32 |

Yours sincerely



James Price