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National Station Improvement Programme for Wales (NSIP+): Phase 2 Evaluation

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AECOM

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

For further information please contact:

David Roberts

Social Research and Information Division

Welsh Government

Sarn Mynach

Llandudno Junction

LL31 9RZ

Tel: 0300 062 5485

Email: David.Roberts@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Glossary of acronyms

ATW	Arriva Trains Wales
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
GRIP	Guide to Rail Investment Process
LDG	Local Delivery Group
NR	Network Rail
NSIP+	National Station Improvement Programme for Wales
PMB	Project Management Board
QCRA	Quantified Cost Risk Analysis
RTC	Regional Transport Consortia
TOCs	Train Operating Companies
WEFO	Welsh European Funding Office
WG	Welsh Government

Executive Summary

AECOM was commissioned by the Welsh Government in June 2015 to undertake a final evaluation of the National Station Improvement Programme for Wales (NSIP+). The programme, part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Welsh Government, Network Rail, and Arriva Trains Wales, was developed to improve railway stations and their connections with other transport modes across the ERDF West Wales and the Valleys area over a 5-year period (2010-2015).

Individual projects consisted of improvements including station modernisation and upgrades (such as new or modernised station buildings), new or improved passenger facilities (such as ticketing), general station access improvements (such as cycle parking facilities) and easier access improvements (including lifts and ramps).

The programme was delivered in two phases, with Phase 1 schemes funded under the 2007-2013 ERDF programme and Phase 2 schemes funded under the 2014-2020 ERDF programme. This report focuses on the Phase 2 schemes which were predominantly delivered by a direct delivery model, with Welsh Government contracting the work to Network Rail to delivery via third parties.

NSIP+ Phase 2 consisted of improvements to five intermodal facilities; Pontypridd, Rhyl, Ystrad Mynach, Port Talbot and Aberystwyth, in line with the Business Plan target.

This evaluation has considered the results and impacts of the programme in terms of the numbers of stations improved and the nature of the improvements made, as well as the results of these improvements for users in terms of the change in passenger kilometres. The perceptions of station users have also been gauged by way of a review of the National Rail Passenger Survey and face to face surveys undertaken at a sample of two stations improved as part of NSIP+ Phase 2.

Additionally, a process evaluation has been undertaken based upon interviews with key project staff and stakeholders and available project data sources, to establish key lessons learnt and examples of best practice from NSIP+ Phase 2.

In terms of the impacts of the programme on passenger kilometres the methodology adopted for the Business Plan was repeated utilising ticket sales data for the period following completion of the schemes. Although a full years' worth of ex-post ticket sales data is not yet available interim analysis of gross passenger kilometres indicated no strong evidence that the enhancements have influenced passenger levels, with some stations experiencing reduced levels of use, despite growth across their corresponding rail lines, particularly in the case of Rhyl.

Face to face surveys were undertaken at Port Talbot and Pontypridd. The results of this indicated relatively high levels of satisfaction with the improvements delivered at both stations, with over a third of those surveyed either fairly or very satisfied with the projects delivered, however levels of awareness of the improvements made at Pontypridd was low. Safety was a key area where the schemes were considered beneficial, though fewer respondents considered increased awareness of rail services as a recognised benefit of the projects.

Whilst over 60 per cent of respondents had always used the corresponding station for their stated journey, between 14 per cent and 21 per cent had switched to rail from car, indicating that the stations were helping to encourage modal shift away from car use. Only three of the passengers surveyed had specifically started using the stations as a direct result of the improvements made at the stations.

A broad range of stakeholders were interviewed as part of the process evaluation including the Welsh Government, Network Rail, Arriva Trains Wales, as well as Disability Wales and a sample of local authorities. Available

project documents were also reviewed to establish the processes utilised to deliver the projects and how performance compared against plans.

Cost increases were experienced on all of the projects, with the exception of Rhyl, which was delivered within budget. Across the five projects a cost increase of £2.24m was experienced, part of which related to additional items of scope which were funded by WG and other delivery partners. Key cost variances included costs associated with unanticipated utilities diversions at Port Talbot and the decision to utilise Chinese granite at Pontypridd. Cost savings were achieved through measures such as the external financing of the steel cladding utilised at Port Talbot. Cost management exercises were also utilised.

Significant delays were experienced across the Phase 2 programme totalling 791 days. The largest delays were caused by utilities diversions at Port Talbot and delays in the hand back of assets to the Train Operating Company.

Development and delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 Schemes was overseen by Local Delivery Groups utilising a collaborative approach. This was considered an effective means of project delivery in ensuring the needs of various stakeholders were considered from design development through to the final delivered schemes. This helped to reduce costly redesign, although it was acknowledged that some issues were still experienced.

Stakeholder involvement across the programme has been widespread, with a number of different organisations engaged in helping to shape the schemes delivered. Examples of where this engagement have resulted in positive impacts for the delivered schemes include the taxi waiting arrangements at Pontypridd, which were modified following stakeholder input to ensure waiting taxis did not queue onto the road.

1 Introduction

Project Overview

- 1.1 AECOM was commissioned by the Welsh Government in June 2015 to undertake a final evaluation of the National Station Improvement Programme for Wales (NSIP+). The programme, part funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Welsh Government (WG), Network Rail (NR), and Arriva Trains Wales (ATW), was developed to improve railway stations and their connections with other transport modes across the ERDF West Wales and the Valleys area over a 5-year period (2010-2015).
- 1.2 The NSIP+ schemes have been delivered in two phases:
- Phase 1 schemes were funded under the 2007-2013 ERDF programme and were completed over one year ago; and
 - Phase 2 schemes were funded under the 2014-2020 ERDF programme and were completed by June 2016.
- 1.3 In addition to these committed schemes, the WG prioritised the following station improvement projects to be delivered by NSIP+ as part of Phase 2:
- Pontypridd.
 - Rhyl.
 - Ystrad Mynach.
 - Port Talbot.
 - Aberystwyth.
- 1.4 This Final Evaluation Report focuses on those schemes delivered as part of NSIP+ Phase 2. The Phase 1 schemes have been considered as part of a separate evaluation report. Figure 1 indicates the locations of the Phase 2 schemes discussed above. Table 1 sets out the forecast cost and ERDF funding contribution, as outlined in the Business Plan for the five NSIP+ Phase 2 stations.

Table 1: NSIP+ Phase 2 Costs and Contributors

Station	Estimated total cost £million	ERDF Contribution £million
Pontypridd phase 2	5.106	3.803
Ystrad Mynach	1.351	0.925
Aberystwyth	2.725	1.539
Port Talbot	11.049	9.155
Rhyl	1.802	0.994
Total	22.033	16.416

Source: NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan

Figure 1: NSIP+ Phase 2 Station Locations



Source: AECOM

1.5 Table 2 summarises the project indicators and targets, as outlined in the NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan, produced in April 2016. This document was produced after the completion of four of the five NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, and therefore the below figures include some outturn values as well as forecasts. Although an indicator related to CO₂ emissions is included within the Business Plan, no baseline or target information is provided for the delivered programme to be assessed against.

Table 2: NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan indicators and targets

Output Indicator	Baseline	Target
Inter-modal facilities created or improved	0	5
Gross passenger kilometres on public transport (million passenger km per annum)	79.477 (2011)	2.324 (additional)
Reduction in CO ₂ equivalent emissions	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

Source: NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan

Scope of the Evaluation

1.6 As required under ERDF arrangements for projects receiving in excess of £2 million support, NSIP+ Phase 2 had to be independently evaluated. The specification for the final evaluation of the project identified the following requirements

- To determine how and to what extent the project activity reflected the commitments set out in the Business Plan.
- To establish what the perceived results of the project were from the perspective of the beneficiaries of the scheme.
- To determine which aspects of project delivery have led to positive outcomes, or could be viewed as good practice
- What barriers and constraints has the project faced? What are the lessons learnt from dealing with such barriers and constraints?

Purpose and Structure of this report

1.7 This report presents the key findings of the final evaluation and includes the following sections:

- **Section Two - Impact Assessment:** Evaluating the results and impacts of the programme for users of the improved stations, based upon the analysis of key patronage data as well as surveys with users of a sample of stations.
- **Section Three - Process Evaluation:** Evaluates the processes used to deliver the programme, focusing on the following topic areas confirmed at the scoping phase:
 - Project Identification and Inception.
 - Finance.
 - Project Schedule/Programme.
 - Project Delivery Team/Skills.
 - Stakeholder Engagement.
 - Cross Cutting Themes.
- **Section Four – Conclusions:** concluding on the overall success of the project and key lessons learnt.
- **Section Five – Recommendations:** summarising the issues for consideration in future project/programme evaluations.

2 Impact Assessment

2.1 This section examines the key results and impacts of NSIP+ Phase 2 in terms of the following:

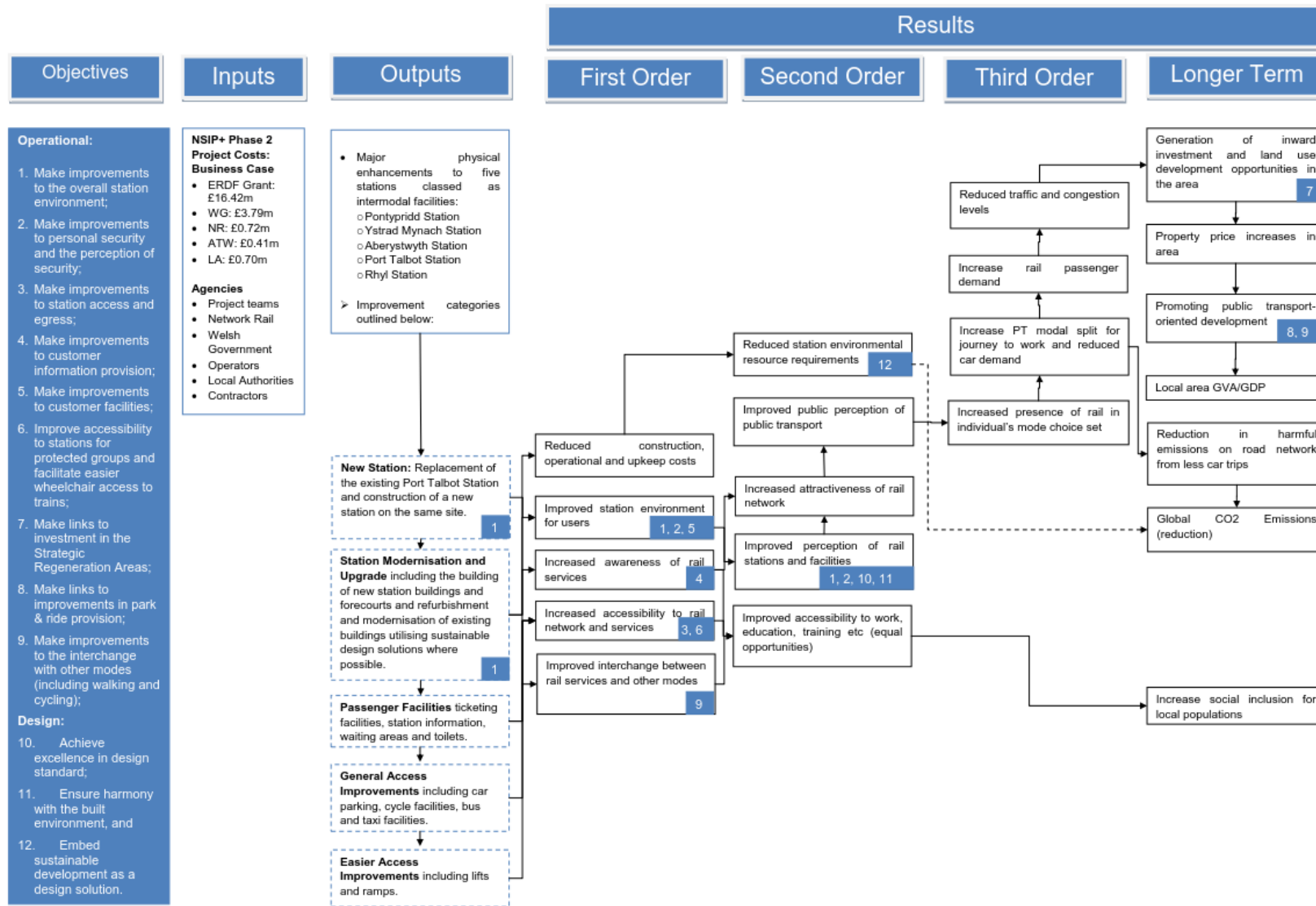
- The delivery of planned outputs and results.
- Whether the programme has delivered its planned objectives.
- The impacts achieved for end users when compared to the situation if the improvements had not been implemented using national level data from the National Rail Passenger Survey for comparison.

2.2 Following a scoping phase with key WG stakeholders the following impact evaluation questions were defined

- How and to what extent did project activity reflect the commitments set out in the Business Plan?
- What are the perceived outcomes of the project from the perspective of beneficiaries?
- How and to what extent is this making a difference compared to if the improvements had not been implemented?

2.3 To support the evaluation of project results and impacts Figure 2 presents a logic map of NSIP+ Phase 2 to indicate the causal pathways by which the objectives were anticipated to be achieved. The blue numbered boxes represent where each objective is anticipated to be relevant. This has been discussed and validated with the project team as part of the process evaluation interviews and is considered to accurately reflect the anticipated results of the programme. As part of a theory of change approach adopted for this commission the outcomes predicted as part of this logic map were analysed to establish the results that were achieved in outturn.

Figure 2: Logic Map of NSIP+ Phase 2



Number of intermodal facilities created or improved

2.4 As part of NSIP+ Phase 2 a total of five stations received some degree of improvement. The stations where improvements were made are listed below:

- Pontypridd (Phase 2).
- Ystrad Mynach.
- Aberystwyth.
- Port Talbot.
- Rhyl.

2.5 Of these, all met the criteria of an intermodal facility as defined by the presence of an on-station car park. As part of the final evaluation it has been confirmed based upon available evidence and discussions with key stakeholders that all of these schemes were delivered successfully, subject to changes to scope outlined within the process evaluation section. This Business Plan target has therefore been met.

Station Improvements

2.6 This section outlines the improvements made at each station as part of NSIP+ Phase 2, with images of the stations before and after the improvements where suitable images could be sourced.

Pontypridd Phase 2

2.7 The improvements made at Pontypridd as part of NSIP+ Phase 2 consist of improvements to the station forecourt, entrance and platforms, as well as the provision of a lift from the street to platform level. A new footbridge and lifts have also been installed to enhance access from one platform to another.

2.8 Figure 3 shows the before and after images of the station improvements. As the after images shows, there is a new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant bridge as well as more overhead shelter.

Figure 3: Pontypridd Station Improvements

Before



Source: Network Rail

After



Source: Network Rail

Ystrad Mynach

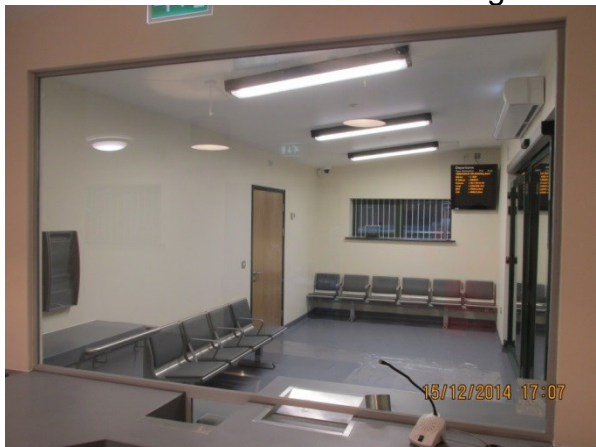
2.9 Figure 4 shows Ystrad Mynach station before and after the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements. Enhancements include a new ticket office with a waiting room and toilets, improving facilities for passengers.

Figure 4: Ystrad Mynach Station Improvements

Before – Platform and Bridge



After - New ticket office and waiting area



Source: Network Rail

After – Ticket office and Bridge



After - New shelter



Aberystwyth:

2.10 Figure 5 shows Aberystwyth before and after the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements. To the right hand side of the station there is now an enclosed waiting area with increased overhead coverage on the left hand side via the provision of a new canopy. The station façade also received major refurbishment, as well as the provision of step-free access to the platforms.

Figure 5: Aberystwyth Station Improvements

Before



Source: Network Rail

After



Source: Network Rail

Port Talbot

2.11 The before and after photos of Port Talbot can be seen in Figure 6. The existing station at Port Talbot has been demolished and replaced with a new station including an enclosed footbridge with lift access to all platforms. New waiting facilities have been provided which includes new retail units, as well as an additional 111 car park spaces and better facilities for cyclists, bus passengers and taxis.

Figure 6: Port Talbot Station Improvements

Before



Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-12807279>

After



Source: www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements/wales-station-improvements-programme/

Rhyl

2.12 Figure 7 shows that at Rhyl station the main concourse/building has been refurbished. Other improvements here included improved access arrangements and a renovated footbridge.

Figure 7: Rhyl Station Improvements

Before



Source: www.nationalrail.co.uk/SME/html/NRE_RHL/images/photos/800/o2873-0000013.jpg

After



Source: www.networkrail.co.uk/improvements/wales-station-improvements-programme/

Passenger Kilometres

- 2.13 One of the key benefits of NSIP+ Phase 2 was anticipated to be an increase in passenger kilometres as a result of the station improvements. A target increase of 2.324 million gross passenger kilometres was presented within the NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan. The Business Plan explains that this target was extrapolated from the target calculated for the original NSIP+ project, which was calculated using an industry forecast which takes into account a range of factors that describe station quality improvements.
- 2.14 The forecast was based upon the recommended guidance in the Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook. The appropriate percentage uplift applicable to the type of enhancement was applied to the base 2011 passenger miles figure for travel originating at the station being upgraded. A global figure for abstraction (where passengers have changed from using another station) was estimated at 30 per cent, with a gross to net estimate of 92.6 per cent, applying guidance from WebTAG unit 3.13.2¹.
- 2.15 As part of the face to face survey undertaken as part of this commission the levels of observed abstraction from other stations were established. This indicated that around 2 per cent of passengers at Port Talbot and Pontypridd had previously used a different station. This is significantly below the 30 per cent global abstraction figure utilised in the forecasting of gross passenger kilometres, suggesting that the forecasts may be underestimating passenger kilometre growth.
- 2.16 The target increase of 2.324 million gross passenger kilometres for NSIP+ Phase 2 was not broken down by station. Consideration was therefore given to the station-level forecasts presented in the NSIP+ Phase 1 Business Plan (Table 3). This included the Phase 2 schemes

¹ Industry standard guidance

but a different Phase 2 forecast increase of 1.79million gross passenger kilometres.

Table 3: Forecast Increase in Gross Passenger Kilometres presented in the Business Plan

Station	Gross Passenger km increase (2011)	% increase	Actual Completion
Llandudno*	85,092	1.00	Jul-14
Rhyl	621,283	2.14	Sep-15
Aberystwyth	417,990	1.30	Feb-15
Pontypridd	221,111	2.14	Jul-15
Port Talbot	524,839	2.14	Mar-16
Ystrad Mynach	4,818	0.09	Feb-15
Swansea*	693,071	0.53	Jun-12
	2,568,203		

Source: NSIP+ Phase 1 Business Plan, *Phase 1 schemes

2.17 In order to assess whether the forecast growth has been achieved, the pre-implementation 2011 Lennon ticket sales data² and forecast growth assumptions presented in the Business Case have been compared against post implementation Lennon data to establish any changes in passenger kilometres. It is recognised that this approach does not allow for external factors (such as fares, the economy, timetable, weather or special events), which may have contributed to changing demand, to be excluded or accounted for, which might be a significant issue. This is particularly relevant at smaller stations or where smaller improvements have been made as part of NSIP+ Phase 2. The Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook expects these to play a greater contributory factor than the station improvement itself.

2.18 A full ex-post impact evaluation of gross passenger kilometres is not possible at this time for the NSIP+ Phase 2 schemes as they have been complete for less than a year. However, analysis has been undertaken of the year-on-year changes in passenger km for the applicable period up to December 2015 since the NSIP+ Phase 2 station enhancement projects were completed, as shown in Table 4. For example, Rhyl station

² Rail industry ticket sales database with revenue allocation to individual operators. Includes rail journey origin/destination, fare paid, ticket type and mileage.

opened in September 2015 therefore the comparison is October to December 2015 versus October to December 2014. Due to the very recent completion of the Port Talbot Station project no analysis of growth at this station is presented.

Table 4: Year-on-Year Growth since the Station Enhancement³

Station	Year-on-year average growth since completion	Year-on-year average growth for all stations in same area
Rhyl	-4.6%	0.3% (North Wales coast)
Aberystwyth	1.2%	2.4% (Mid-Wales)
Pontypridd	0.6%	1.0% (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Ystrad Mynach	2.4%	3.1% (Caerphilly)

Source: AECOM

2.19 Table 4 also shows the average year-on-year change in gross passenger kilometres for stations in the same areas as those targeted for NSIP+ Phase 2 enhancements. These areas act as a comparison for the impact NSIP+ Phase 2 stations. It can be seen that all NSIP+ stations with the exception of Rhyl experienced growth. However, this growth was lower than that experienced at other stations in the comparison area. In the case of Rhyl a drop in gross passengers was experienced, which is not mirrored by the other stations in the area; which recorded a 0.3 per cent increase.

2.20 This comparison highlights that the level of change at NSIP+ stations was lower than that experienced across the wider network. This is contrary to the anticipated results of NSIP+ Phase 2 and suggests that network level changes were greater than any positive results generated by NSIP+ Phase 2. At this stage (though with limited evidence) there is no indication that the station enhancements have had a substantial impact on levels of passenger travel. This is perhaps unsurprising as it was acknowledged in the scoping report that the use of ticket sales data is effective for measuring absolute usage, but does not allow for consideration of external factors which may have a greater impact on changing demand.

³ Station Enhancements were completed at the following points; Rhyl, September 2015; Aberystwyth, February 2015; Pontypridd, July 2015; Ystrad Mynach, February 2015; Port Talbot, March 2016.

Passenger Satisfaction

2.21 To evaluate passenger satisfaction with the improvements delivered at the stations as part of NSIP+ Phase 2, data from two sources has been used. First, the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS)⁴ collected by Transport Focus, to provide context to the analysis. Secondly, a bespoke face to face survey conducted with station users was undertaken by AECOM at selected NSIP+ Phase 2 stations, through which to consider changes at the station level. A summary of the data used is provided below, followed by the outputs from the data analysis.

National Rail Passenger Survey

2.22 The NRPS data coverage was reviewed as part of the scoping of this evaluation. This indicated that for the majority of NSIP+ Phase 2 stations, the data was not of a sufficiently robust sample size on an individual station basis for any analysis to have statistical significance. Even through combining a number of NRPS 'waves' it would not be possible to achieve significantly robust before/after sample sizes for the majority of individual NSIP+ Phase 2 stations, with the exception of Aberystwyth.

2.23 'Building block' level NRPS data, which presents the results by rail line and area, was also considered as a means of aggregating individual station data. However, the methodology for classifying stations into 'blocks' was changed in 2014 which prevents the consideration of long term trends. Data reported at the Wales level is therefore presented within this report, purely to provide context to the station specific data.

⁴ The NRPS is a network-wide picture of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel where passenger opinions of train services are collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys.

2.24 All questions from the NRPS have been analysed, with this report detailing the ones considered relevant to NSIP+ Phase 2 and key topic areas/objectives⁵. These are as follows:

- Personal security.
- Provision of rail information.
- Connections with other modes of transport.

Face-to-Face Survey

2.25 In recognition of the limitations of the NRPS data and the lack of any pre-existing survey data for NSIP+ Phase 2 stations a bespoke face-to-face survey was undertaken. This was completed retrospectively to assess the views of passengers on the station improvements delivered. For future projects a more appropriate approach would be to undertake surveys both pre and post implementation. This would allow overall views on the quality of each station to be assessed without explicit reference to the improvements made and allow changes in behaviour to be revealed without prompting.

2.26 Due to a number of stations having been improved as part of NSIP+ Phase 2 it was not possible to undertake surveys at all locations. It was therefore agreed during the scoping phase that a survey should be undertaken at a sample of stations to investigate the views of the public on each category of improvement delivered. The following NSIP+ Phase 2 stations were selected to be included in the survey sample:

- Port Talbot.
- Pontypridd.

2.27 The surveys were conducted for one day at each station (from 7am to 7pm) on the 11th of April 2016 for Pontypridd and the 14th April 2016 for Port Talbot. These were face to face interviewer led surveys; however self-completion questionnaires were also offered at busier stations and

⁵ Data is shown for all relevant NRPS surveys over the past 5 years, from Spring 2011 through to Autumn 2015.

times of day to maximise the response rate achieved. All self-completed surveys were collected at the stations.

2.28 Table 5 shows the 2013/14 average daily passenger flows for the two stations. These were calculated using the MOIRA database published by the Office of Rail and Road and were used in the survey planning process to ensure an appropriate level of survey staffing was assigned to each station to ensure an appropriate sample size was achieved.

Table 5: Passenger Flow and Target Sample by Station

Station	2013/14 Entries & Exits	Average Daily Flow	Achieved Sample Rate (No. & %)
Pontypridd	861,092	2,366	287 (12.1%)
Port Talbot	509,976	1,401	235 (16.8%)

Source: MOIRA database

2.29 Table 6 shows the number of interviews completed and the percentage of the average daily passenger flow sampled: 12 per cent at Pontypridd; and 16 per cent at Port Talbot.

2.30 The survey questions were chosen to allow for an investigation of the key topic areas aligned to the objectives of the NSIP+ Phase 2 and focused on the following key areas:

- Satisfaction with station enhancements.
- Perception of safety and security following enhancements.
- Impact of the improvements in terms of awareness of rail services.
- Impact of the improvement in terms of access to the rail network, rail services and travel information.
- Satisfaction with the ability to interchange between modes as a result of the enhancements.
- Impact of the improvement in terms of levels of use of rail services to/from this station and change of mode of travel to rail – if so what was previous mode of travel.

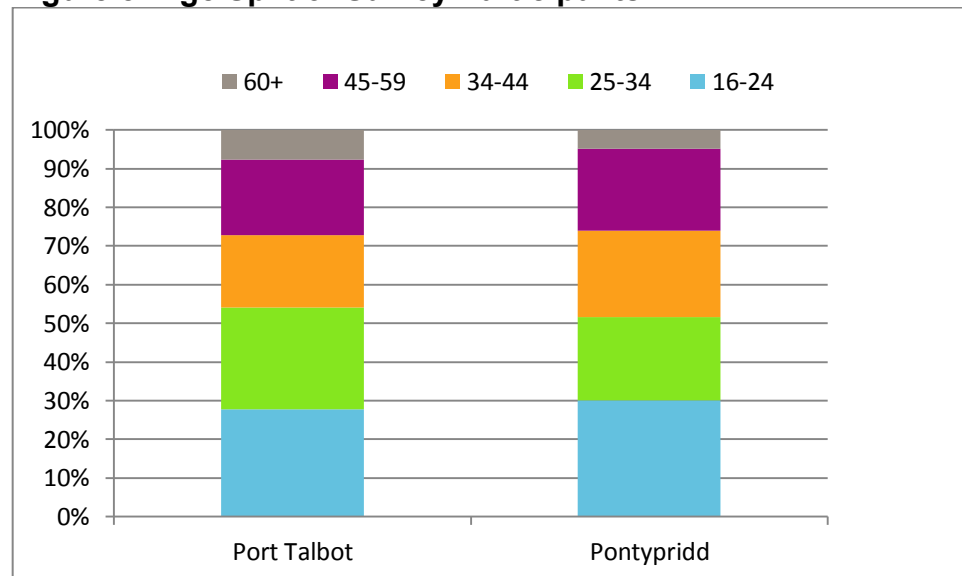
2.31 All survey material was provided in English and Welsh and AECOM utilised their in-house, local, Welsh speaking team of trained interviewers to conduct the survey in the language of choice for the interviewee. The questionnaire used can be found in Appendix A to this

report. The individual results for each survey can be found in Appendix B.

Survey Analysis

2.32 The survey respondents generated a 49:51 male to female ratio. From the participants that were surveyed, there was a relatively even age split, as shown in Figure 8, indicating that results should represent a range of views across all ages of the wider community. The number of people answering the questionnaire who reported a physical disability was deemed too small to allow any robust analysis of this sub-group, with between 1 per cent (Port Talbot) and 6 per cent (Pontypridd) of respondents indicating they had a disability.

Figure 8: Age Split of Survey Participants



Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 235, Pontypridd – 287

Awareness of Changes

2.33 Survey respondents were asked whether they had noticed any changes at the station in the last 1 to 2 years and what those changes were. The unprompted changes most often identified at both stations included the provision of a bridge, lifts and general improvements to the station and its environment. Table 6 and Table 7 outline the improvements identified at Port Talbot and Pontypridd respectively.

Table 6: Have you noticed any changes to this station [Port Talbot] in the last 1-2 years

Improvements Identified	Number	%
Complete Station Replacement	62	26%
Bridge	61	26%
Lifts	45	19%
Station environment/cleanliness	40	17%
Waiting areas/rooms	34	14%
None	31	13%
Better toilets	19	8%
Ticket desk/office	17	7%
Platform Improvements	13	6%
Improved access	12	5%
Better Parking	10	4%
Walkways	9	4%
Canopy/Shelters	8	3%
Ticket Machines	7	3%
Information signs/screens	6	3%
Stairs	6	3%
Station entrance	5	2%
Lighting	4	2%
Barriers/Gates	1	0%
Ramps	1	0%
More security	1	0%

Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: 235

Table 7: Have you noticed any changes to this station [Pontypridd Station] in the last 1-2 years

Improvements Identified	Number	%
None	152	53%
Bridge	64	22%
Station environment/cleanliness	46	16%
Lifts	35	12%
Additional Platform	16	6%
More security	15	5%
Waiting areas/rooms	14	5%
Barriers/Gates	13	5%
Stairs	10	3%
Canopy/Shelters	9	3%
Ramps	6	2%
Lighting	5	2%
Ticket Machines	5	2%
Staff	4	1%
Information signs/screens	3	1%
CCTV	2	1%
Extra services	1	0%

Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: 235

2.34 At Port Talbot 13 per cent of respondents stated they had observed no change, compared to 53 per cent at Pontypridd. The primary reason for not being aware of changes at Port Talbot was that respondents were

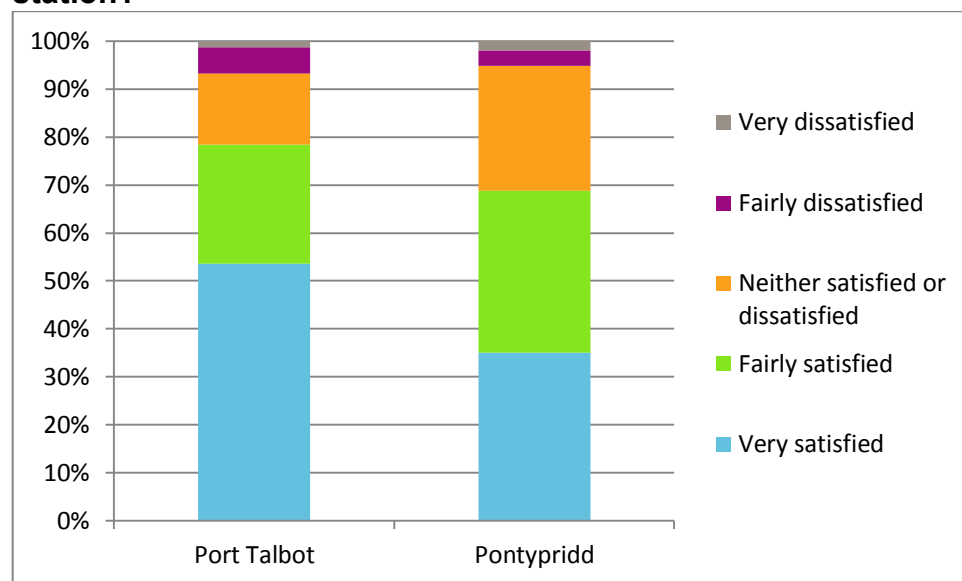
new to the area and/or station. Furthermore, 24 per cent of those surveyed at Pontypridd had used the station for less than a year, so could therefore have been unaware of the changes at the station having not used it prior to the improvements.

- 2.35 At Port Talbot the largest observed change was the complete replacement of the station (observed by 26 per cent of respondents) followed by the new pedestrian bridge (26 per cent), lifts (19 per cent) and general improvements to the station environment and cleanliness (17 per cent).
- 2.36 At Pontypridd the most commonly observed changes were the provision of the pedestrian bridge (observed by 22 per cent of those surveyed), followed by the improvements to the station environment and cleanliness (16 per cent) and the provision of new lifts (12 per cent), although a number of respondents commented that not all of the lifts were yet working. Additional platforms were also identified, however the additional bay platform was delivered as part of the previously evaluated Taff Rhondda turn-backs scheme and is not part of the NSIP+ Phase 2 scheme.

Satisfaction with station enhancements

2.37 Passengers at the two surveyed stations were asked to rate their satisfaction with the improvements. As Figure 9 shows, Port Talbot achieved the highest levels of satisfaction, with 78 per cent of participants stating that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied', compared to 69 per cent at Pontypridd.

Figure 9: How satisfied are you with the improvements made at this station?



Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 222, Pontypridd – 144

2.38 Respondents were asked to provide a reason for the level of satisfaction given. The reasons given have been grouped into categories as shown in Tables 8 and 9 for Port Talbot and Pontypridd respectively.

2.39 At Port Talbot the improved station environment was a key factor in the positive responses given by 23 per cent of respondents, alongside the access improvements provided by the new station (mentioned by 21 per cent). Key reasons for negative or neutral comments included that it was considered unfinished at the time of the survey (5 per cent of respondents) and the increased walking distances to access platforms and the car park (4 per cent of respondents). Four per cent of respondents also disliked the appearance of the new station and others considered it not to represent value for money.

Table 8: What are your reasons for the satisfaction rating - Port Talbot Station

Reason	Number	Percentage
Better station environment	55	23%
Access Improvement	49	21%
Appearance	43	18%
Don't know	23	10%
Other	18	8%
Unfinished	11	5%
Better facilities	10	4%
Walking distances	10	4%
Dislike appearance	10	4%
No changes observed	8	3%
Safer	7	3%
Waste of money	5	2%
OK	3	1%
Changes of no benefit to me	2	1%
More shelter	2	1%
Car park price	1	0%

Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: 235

2.40 At Pontypridd, access improvements were the key reason for satisfaction with the station improvements (mentioned by 10 per cent or respondents) followed by an improved station appearance (7 per cent) and better station environment (4 per cent). Five percent of respondents had observed no changes at the station. Dissatisfaction was due to factors including not all lifts working and the early closure of facilities whilst 3 per cent considered the changes made to be of no benefit to them.

Table 9: What are your reasons for the satisfaction rating - Pontypridd Station

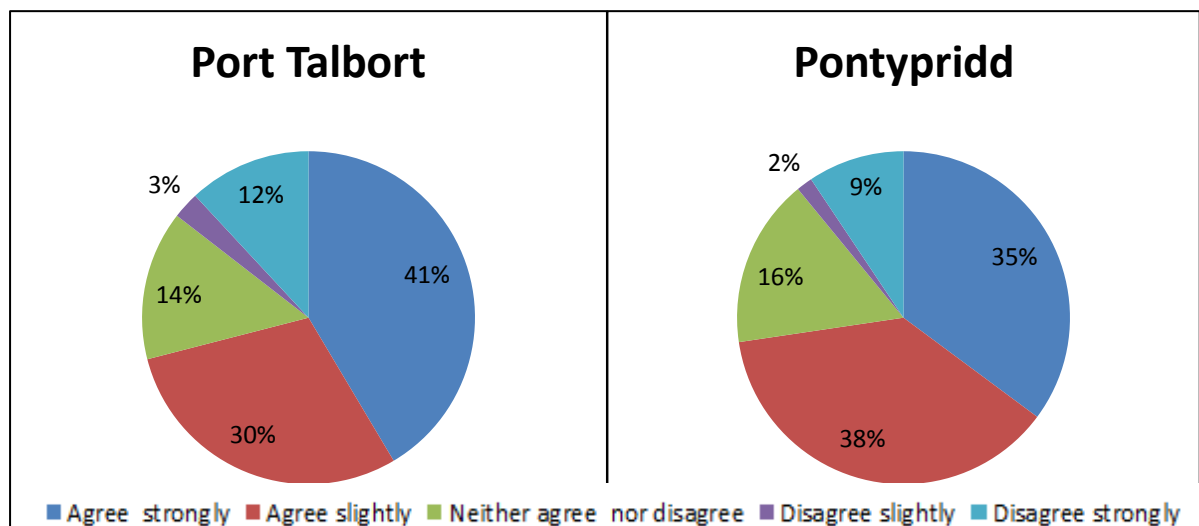
Reason	Number	Percentage
Don't know	146	51%
Access Improvement	28	10%
Appearance	21	7%
Better station environment	20	7%
Other	16	6%
No changes observed	15	5%
Safer	12	4%
Changes of no benefit to me	9	3%
Lifts not working	8	3%
Could be nicer	7	2%
OK	7	2%
Early closure of waiting room and or ticket office	4	1%
More shelter	3	1%
No roof on bridge	1	0%
Waste of money	1	0%

Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: 287

Perception of safety and security following enhancements

2.41 The survey required passengers to rate their level of agreement with various aspects of the station improvements. One of these aspects related to safety within the station (incorporating personal security), with the results presented in Figure **Error! Reference source not found.**10. Over 70 per cent of the participants across both stations strongly or slightly agreed that the improvements have made the stations safer. However, at Port Talbot 15 per cent of the respondents strongly or slightly disagreed with this statement, while at Pontypridd 11 per cent of respondents strongly or slightly disagreed with this statement.

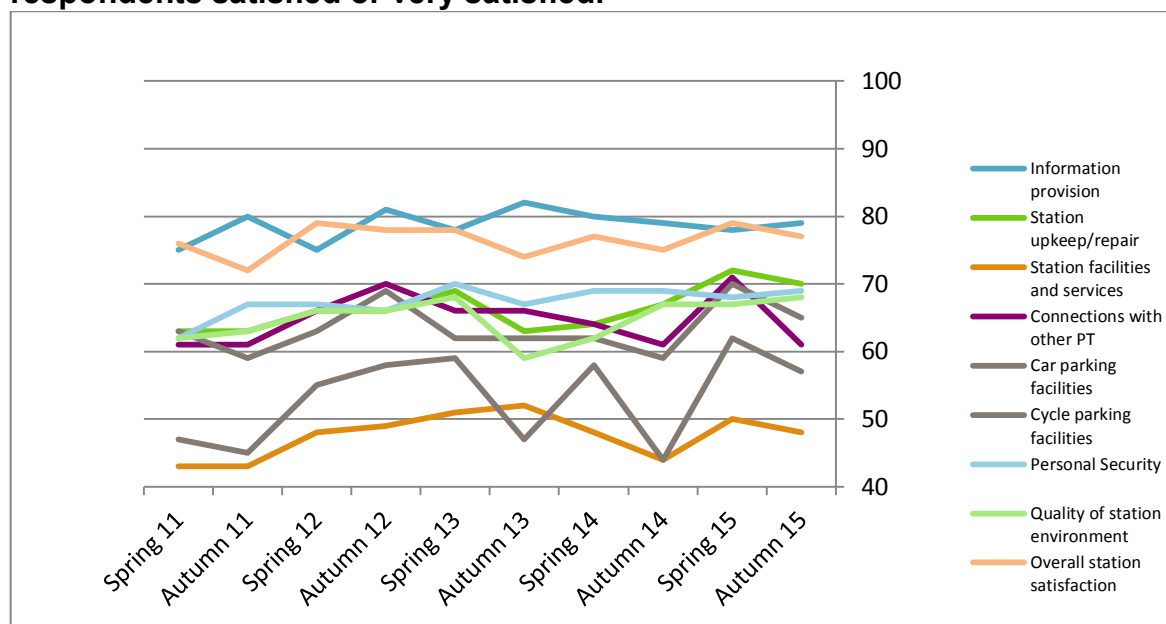
Figure 10: The improvements at this station have made the station safer



Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 193, Pontypridd - 128

2.42 To consider the level of satisfaction at NSIP+ Phase 2 stations with wider trends in passenger satisfaction across Wales, the NRPS has been used for comparison. The NRPS asks similar questions to those covered by the survey, including questions on information and parking provision, station facilities and connections with other modes. Figure 11 shows the overall trends observed within the NRPS data for the period from spring 2011 to autumn 2015.

Figure 11: National Rail Passenger Survey – All Wales – Percentage of respondents satisfied or very satisfied.



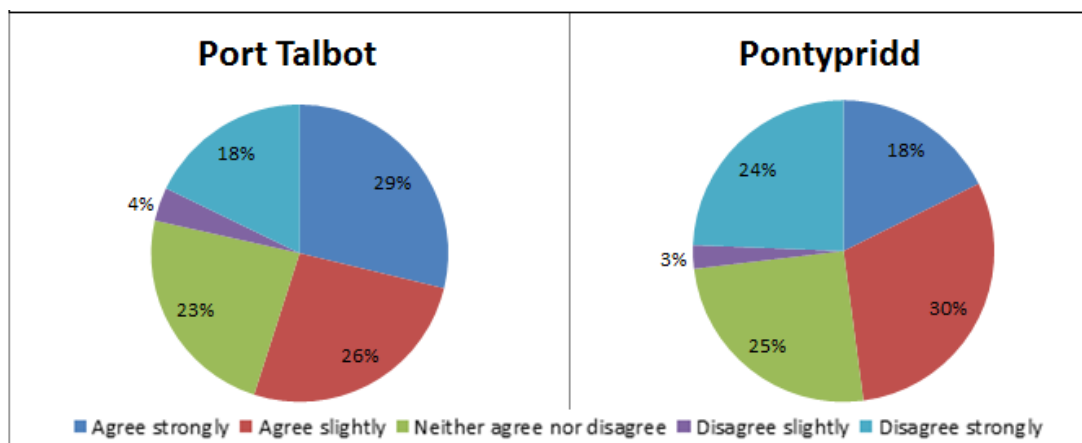
Source: NRPS Wales Spring 2011 – Autumn 2015

2.43 As part of the NRPS a similar question relating to personal security within stations was asked to that contained within the survey, with the results shown in Figure 10. Although the overall trend has risen gently upwards from spring 2011, more recently from 2014 through to 2015 the general trend has been static, with just below 70 per cent being satisfied or very satisfied with personal security. The ex-post results for the NSIP+ Phase 2 stations were therefore similar to the overall national average.

Impact of the improvements in terms of awareness of rail services

2.44 Access to information at stations formed a key part of the improvements made through NSIP+ Phase 2, and was anticipated to influence the levels of awareness of rail services. Survey participants were asked whether the improvements made had increased their awareness of rail services, with the results shown in figure 12. Fifty-five percent of the respondents at Port Talbot and 48 per cent of the respondents from Pontypridd agreed with the statement. Over 25 per cent of the respondents from Pontypridd disagreed with the statement, indicating that the improvements have not increased awareness of rail services.

Figure 12: Increased Awareness of Rail Services



Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 191, Pontypridd – 119

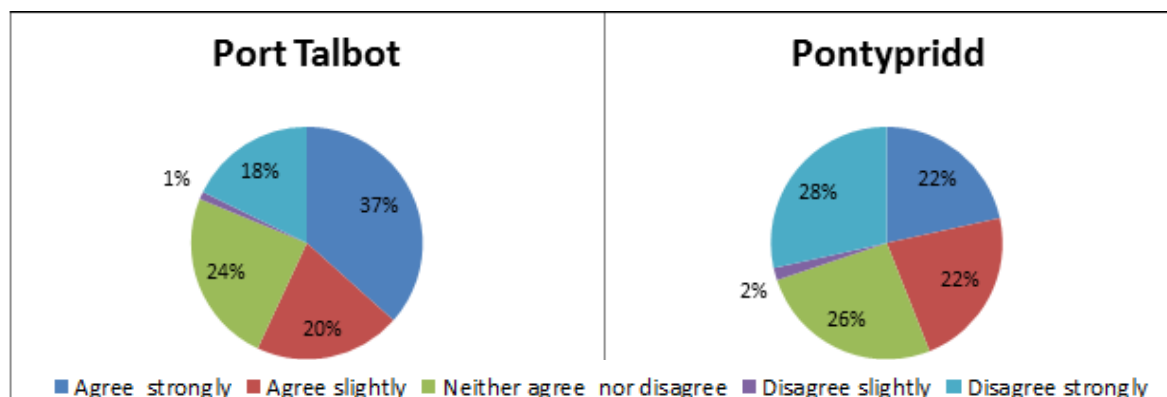
2.45 As figure 11 shows the NRPS includes a question focusing on information provision. Since spring 2011, satisfaction with information provision across Welsh stations has risen from 75 per cent satisfied to over 79 per cent. Given this context, it is perhaps not surprising that the improvements delivered through NSIP+, of which information provision was only one facet, has not generated a step-change in passenger satisfaction levels.

Impact of the improvement in terms of access to the rail network and rail services

2.46 Increased accessibility to rail services was one of the key impacts outlined in the Business Plan to justify the improvements at both Port Talbot and Pontypridd stations. This could be improved through measures to improve access for those with mobility limitations, as well as improvements to the facilities to support interchange with other modes more generally. Respondents were asked whether they thought that the access to rail services had been improved, with the results displayed in Figure 13. Over 40 per cent of the respondents at both stations agreed that access had improved; however, 19 per cent for Port Talbot and 30 per cent for Pontypridd disagreed that access had improved.

2.47 The bridge and lifts were the key factors considered by respondents to have improved levels of accessibility at both stations. Accessibility issues identified at Port Talbot included a perceived increase in walking distance to access trains. Some users also felt that changes made had not influenced levels of accessibility for them personally. At Pontypridd issues with the commissioning of lifts was a factor negatively affecting perceptions of station accessibility, alongside the early closure of ticket facilities and waiting rooms.

Figure 13: The improvements at this station have improved my ability to access rail services

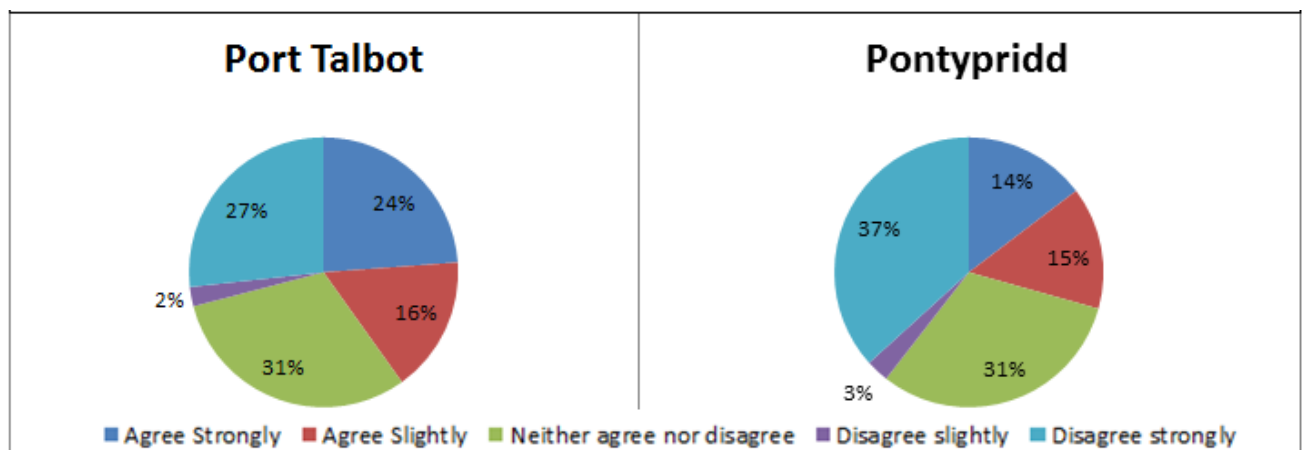


Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 193, Pontypridd - 128

Satisfaction with the ability to interchange between modes as a result of the enhancements

2.48 The NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements made at Port Talbot and Pontypridd were designed to enhance the ability to interchange between transport modes. Participants were asked whether or not the improvements had made changing modes of transport easier. Figure 14 shows that 40 per cent of participants at Port Talbot and 29 per cent of participants at Pontypridd agreed either slightly or strongly that the improvements to their station have made it easier to change between modes. However, 27 per cent of participants at Port Talbot and 37 per cent of participants at Pontypridd strongly disagreed that the improvements to their station have made it easier to change between modes.

Figure 14: The improvements have made it easier to change between modes



Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 172, Pontypridd - 109

2.49 At Port Talbot the key reasons for dissatisfaction with the interchange between modes was that users perceived there to have been an increase in the walking distances to trains and to the car park as part of the new station design.

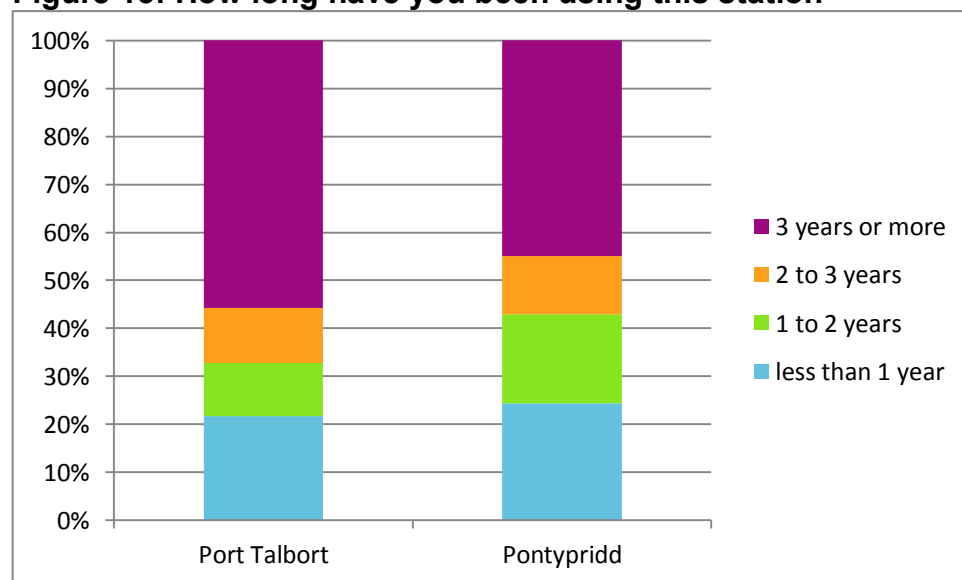
2.50 At Pontypridd the key reasons why users did not agree that the improvements had made it easier to change between modes was because they did not perceive the improvements made to have any benefit to them personally.

2.51 The NRPS also includes a question on satisfaction with connections with other public transport services (e.g. buses and taxis), with the results shown in Figure 11. Since 2011 there is no obvious trajectory within this data, with 61 per cent of respondents in 2011 and 2015 satisfied with the connections provided, although higher levels of satisfaction were observed in autumn 2012 and spring 2015.

Impact of the improvement on levels of use of the station and change of mode of travel to rail

2.52 Passengers at each NSIP+ Phase 2 surveyed station were asked for how long they had used that specific station. As indicated in Figure 15, 56 per cent of those surveyed at Port Talbot had used the station for over 3 years, while 45 per cent of those surveyed at Pontypridd had used the station for over 3 years.

Figure 15: How long have you been using this station



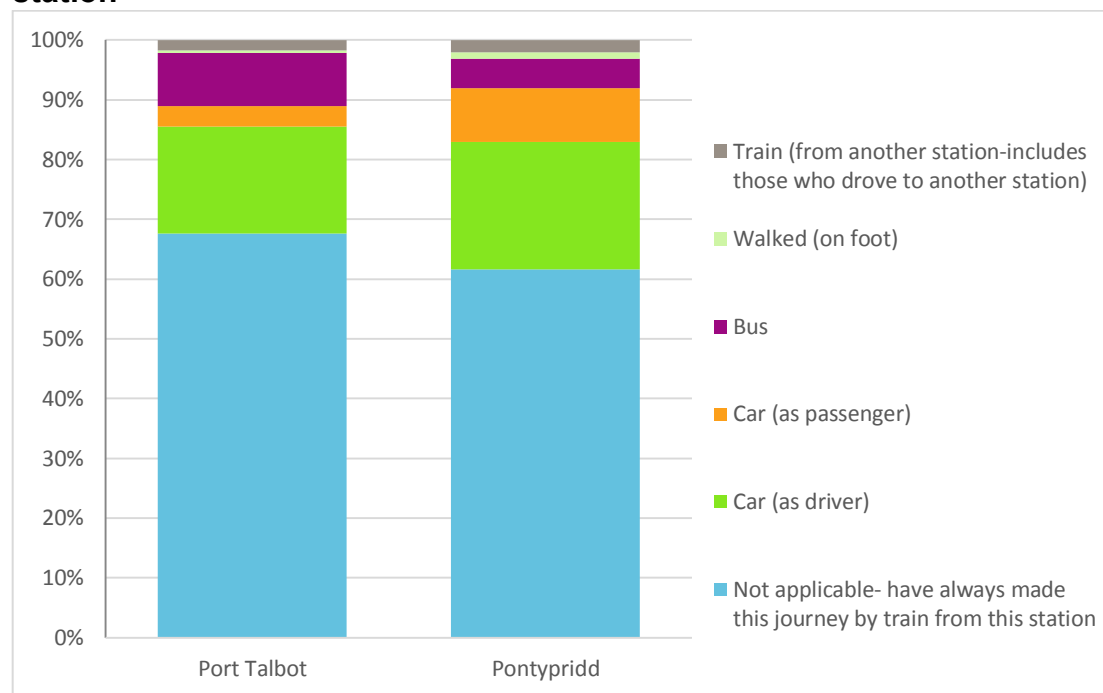
Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 235, Pontypridd - 287

2.53 The greatest proportion of users at both of the surveyed stations had used that station for over three years. This indicates that these users have not been influenced to use the station by the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements as they were already users before the improvements. However, between 22 per cent of users (at Port Talbot) and 24 per cent (at Pontypridd) had used the station for less than one year and therefore potentially since the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements were implemented.

2.54 Passengers at each station were asked the reasons why they had started using the station. The most common reasons were the convenience offered by the station, either in relation to a place of education or in general terms, or because of a new job. Between nine per cent (at Port Talbot) and twelve per cent (at Pontypridd) had chosen to travel from that station because the train was considered easier than previous modes used. Only three of the passengers surveyed (two at Port Talbot and one at Pontypridd) specifically indicated that they had commenced use of that station directly because of the improvements made to the station.

2.55 Passengers were also asked how they previously made the type of journey they were undertaking prior to their decision to travel by rail. The results are shown in Figure 16. Between 62 per cent (Pontypridd) and 68 per cent (Port Talbot) of people indicated that they had always made this journey by train from the same station. Thirty-two per cent of the respondents at Port Talbot and 38 per cent of respondents at Pontypridd indicated that they previously used a different mode of travel. Of these between 14 per cent (Pontypridd) and 21 per cent (Port Talbot) indicated that they previously travelled by car. A further five per cent (Pontypridd) to nine per cent (Port Talbot) of people indicated that they previously travelled by bus to make the journey. It should be noted that the change in mode indicated here cannot directly be attributed to the improvements made as part of NSIP+.

Figure 16: How did you previously travel before starting to use this station



Source: AECOM Surveys. Sample size: Port Talbot – 235, Pontypridd - 287

2.56 A small proportion of respondents previously travelled from another station (2 per cent for both stations) indicating that the level of abstraction to the two stations from other stations has been relatively low. Neath and Swansea were mentioned as the stations which users of Port Talbot station previously utilised, whilst Radyr and Treforest were mentioned at Pontypridd Station.

Summary of Passenger Satisfaction Findings

Overall, the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements at the two surveyed stations have been viewed positively, although a significant proportion of users at Pontypridd were not aware of the changes made and some users identified issues with the improvements made at both surveyed stations. The station improvements were considered to have made the stations feel safer, however this was against a backdrop of improving perceptions of personal security across stations in Wales, indicating that other factors may also be affecting perceptions of safety.

2.57 Station users indicated levels of modal shift away from car travel of between 14 per cent and 21 per cent as a result of their decisions to

travel by rail, although this cannot solely be attributed to the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements.

Theory of Change

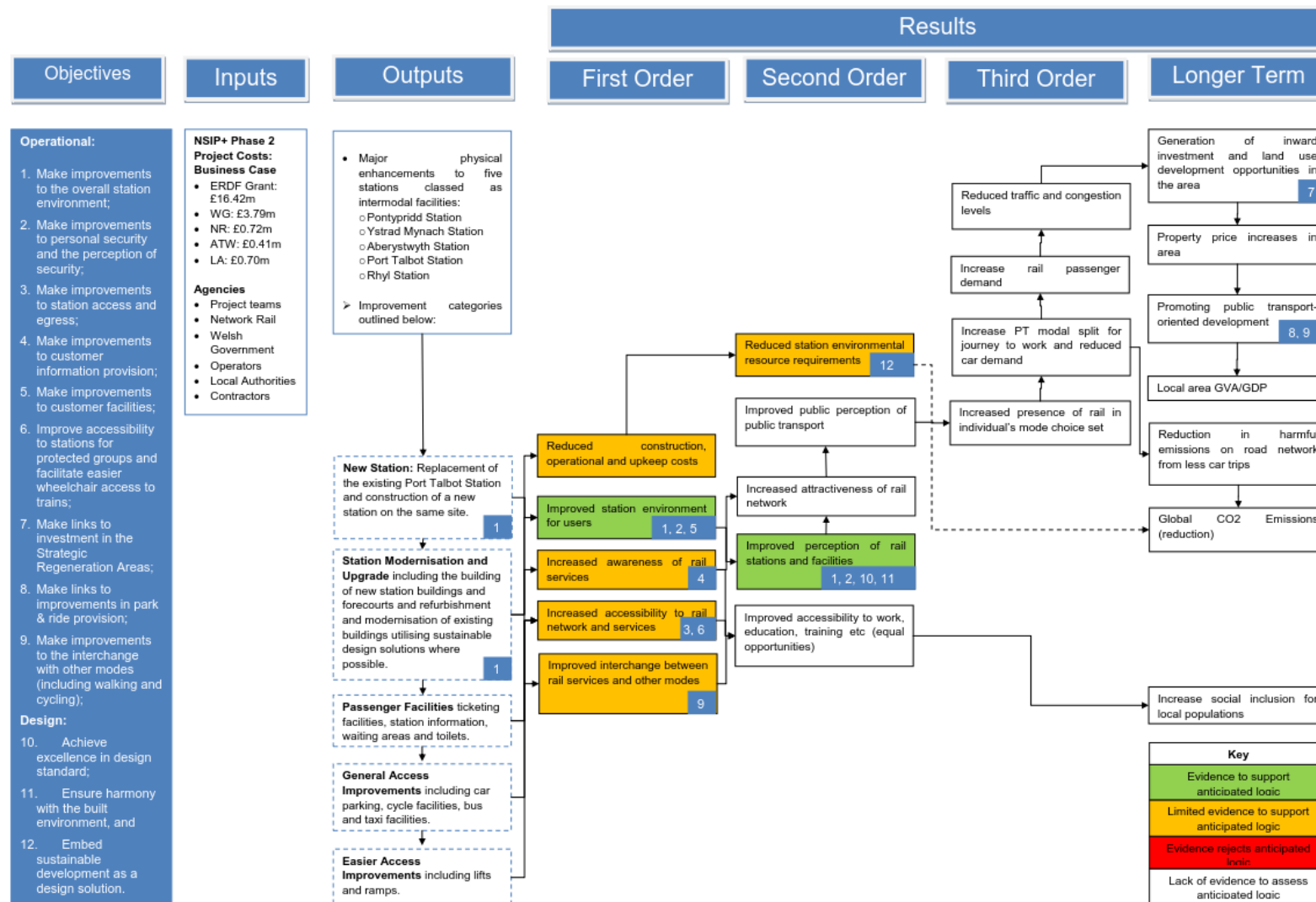
2.58 As part of a theory of change evaluation approach adopted for this commission, the anticipated first, second and third order results of NSIP+ Phase 2 were reviewed with stakeholders. They were further reviewed following the analysis of the above datasets. A summary of the findings are presented in Table 10. This is also transposed onto the Logic Map utilising a Red, Amber, Green colouring system to indicate where the anticipated logic can be evidenced, see Figure 17.

2.59 This indicates that there is some evidence to support the majority of first order and second order outcomes having been achieved to an extent from evidence collected as part of the survey and process evaluation interviews, discussed in Section 3 of this report. There was limited evidence to support third order outcomes, reflecting the long term nature of these outcomes and the variety of factors which influence these outcomes.

Table 10: Summary of Evidence to Support Anticipated Project Outcomes.

Anticipated Results	1st, 2nd or 3rd order	Evidence
Improved station environment for users	1st	Survey of sample of stations indicated the majority of users were satisfied with improvements made, although specific issues were identified by users at both surveyed stations.
Increased awareness of rail services	1st	ca.50per cent of survey respondents at Port Talbot and Pontypridd stations indicated an increased awareness of rail services.
Increased accessibility to rail network and services	1st	Over 40 per cent of respondents at Port Talbot and Pontypridd stations agreed that their ability to access rail services had improved.
Improved interchange between rail services and other modes	1st	40 per cent of respondents at Port Talbot and 29% at Pontypridd agreed that their ability to interchange between services and transport modes had been enhanced.
Improved perception of rail stations and facilities	2nd	Over 70 per cent of respondents at all surveyed stations felt that the improvements made had made the stations safer.
Increased attractiveness of rail network	2nd	As indicated above surveyed users felt that the improvements made at individual stations had improved these stations. However it is not possible to ascertain the impacts of this on perceptions of the wider rail network, although it is likely that these improvements will have contributed to removing barriers to rail travel.
Improved public perception of public transport	2nd	As indicated above satisfaction with the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements was high, but it is not possible to ascertain the impacts of this on wider public perceptions of public transport.
Improved accessibility to work, education, training etc (equal opportunities)	2nd	Levels of accessibility to destinations will be unchanged, however easier access improvements will facilitate greater access for people with mobility difficulties. Improved perceptions of safety at stations may also facilitate use of rail for those who previously would not choose to.
Increased presence of rail in individual's mode choice set	3rd	32 to 38 per cent of survey respondents had previously used a different mode of travel. However, it is not possible to ascertain the role of NSIP+ Phase 2 in this mode choice decision.
Increase PT modal split for journey to work and reduced car demand	3rd	Between 14 per cent and 21 per cent of those surveyed had previously undertaken similar journeys by car. However, it is not possible to ascertain the role of NSIP+ Phase 2 in this mode choice decision.
Increase rail passenger demand	3rd	Ticket sales data indicated no significant impacts on levels of passenger travel, however it is too early to conclude on the impacts of the projects and these impacts may be obscured by external factors.
Reduced traffic and congestion levels	3rd	No evidence available.

Figure 17: Results Logic Map



3 Process Evaluation

3.1 A process evaluation has been undertaken to examine some of the key aspects of project delivery for NSIP+. The aspects in scope for this evaluation included:

- Which aspects of project delivery have led to positive results, or could be viewed as good practice?
- What barriers and constraints has the project faced?
- What are the lessons learnt from dealing with such barriers and constraints?

3.2 This process evaluation has drawn on evidence from a number of different sources including interviews with the project team and key local and national stakeholders, as well as project information in the form of reports and working documents where these could be made available to evaluators. This allows for the triangulation of findings.

Interviews

3.3 The delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme was managed by NR on behalf of the WG, with ATW providing an interface into the Phase 2 projects. The interviewees for this project have therefore concentrated on these organisations, with a focus on individuals with a working knowledge of the project delivery processes. Interviews have focused on the following key individuals:

- Welsh Government EU Programme Manager.
- Welsh Government Rail Development and Delivery Manager.
- Welsh Government Rail Technical Advisor.
- Network Rail Programme Development Manager.
- Network Rail Project Manager.
- Arriva Trains Wales Project Interface Manager.

- 3.4 In addition, a number of groups were stakeholders in the delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 works. The stakeholders listed below were contacted and interviewed to gain their views with regard to both the national perspective (on accessibility from Disability Wales) and specific local circumstances (from the Local Authorities). To align with the two stations where surveys were undertaken the corresponding Local Authorities were also contacted:

National Accessibility:

- Disability Wales Policy Officer - Access & Transport.

Local Stakeholders:

- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Scope of Evaluation

- 3.5 A process evaluation scoping exercise was undertaken and the findings presented in a Scoping Report delivered to the Welsh Government. This identified the scope of the process evaluation to be undertaken with the NSIP+ Phase 2 project team and stakeholders and also what topic areas were to be covered as part of the interviews, these were:

- Inception and Scheme Identification.
- Finance.
- Project Schedule/Programme.
- Project Delivery Team Skills.
- Stakeholder Engagement.
- Cross Cutting Themes.

- 3.6 The decision to cover these topics was based on those where sufficient project documentation and information was available to evaluators to undertake analysis of delivery against forecasts, and where discussion of how the project had progressed could be undertaken.

Inception and Scheme Identification

- 3.7 The NSIP+ (Phase 1 and 2) programme has its origins in the original £150million National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP); a Department for Transport/Network Rail led initiative to improve over 150 medium sized stations in areas such as passenger information provision and station facilities across England and Wales⁶. It was felt that this funding was limited in scope as it could not be used beyond the boundary of the station and therefore did not facilitate wider investment outside of the station to make journeys fully accessible.
- 3.8 Around £6million of NSIP funds were made available to make improvements to stations in the Wales and Borders area. A Local Delivery Group (LDG) was set up between ATW, WG and NR to provide appropriate governance to this programme of works, as well as the selection and prioritisation of projects. This funding was also utilised to select eleven schemes for future investment and to undertake the GRIP stage 1 to 4 processes for these schemes.
- 3.9 NSIP+ was devised to build on the successes and limitations of the original NSIP, utilise a parcel of committed WG funding and maximise the value of this funding via an application for EU funds and other sources of matched funding. The initial aim was to create an innovative programme, with WG bidding for ERDF funding and holding this as a pool for 3rd party applicants to then apply for. This was based upon an open grant scheme model previously successfully used by WG for coastal protection projects. It was anticipated that the Train Operating Companies (TOCs), NR and the Regional Consortia/Local Authorities would bid for this funding. The WG announced NSIP+ in July 2010 at an opening event at Llandudno station, where a call for schemes was initiated.

⁶ <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/nsip/>

3.10 As part of the NSIP+ grant application process an application form was utilised to collate the key information about each project. This information was then used as part of an assessment framework, which was put in place to allow the prioritisation of schemes for delivery with the available NSIP+ funds. This included the following assessment criteria:

- Scheme cost.
- Station footfall (2012).
- Scheme cost per footfall.
- Level of match funding available.
- Level of match funding as a percentage of cost.
- Forecast footfall growth.
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation relative score.

3.11 This scheme selection and prioritisation process was overseen by the LDG and was used to ensure that available funds achieved benefits for the highest number of potential users.

3.12 At the inception phase of NSIP+ an issue was identified with the planned grant delivery model for the programme, whereby third parties would be responsible for the direct delivery of schemes. Rail industry lawyers interrogated the planned contracting arrangements and identified that the rules were considered to represent 'unreasonable' risk in relation to the proposed funding claw back procedures. This led to the decision for the five schemes which became NSIP+ Phase 2 to be delivered directly by the WG, via NR.

3.13 NSIP+ was initially to be delivered all in one phase, to be funded by ERDF funds from the 2007-13 period. At the request of WEFO and to balance available funds the latter five schemes were instead delivered as part of the ERDF 2014-2020 period and therefore became NSIP+ Phase 2.

- 3.14 Development of the five NSIP+ Phase 2 schemes was overseen by the LDG. The NR GRIP process was utilised for the management, control and delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, as well as selection of preferred options to be taken forward for delivery. Some interviewees felt that this process was too prescriptive and lacked scalability. It was felt that this requirement may stifle contractor interest in such projects in the future.
- 3.15 The process did however ensure clarity as to the scope of work, with all LDG members clear on what was and was not within the agreed project scope. This provided the opportunity for individual partners to pay for elements of work they considered worthwhile, but were not within the agreed scope. For example, at Aberystwyth station ATW funded additional seating and made a contribution towards canopy painting at Rhyl station.
- 3.16 For the first four NSIP+ Phase 2 projects contracting arrangements between NR and the WG were set up in the form of Contribution Letters between NR and WG. WG considered this arrangement to be preferential to NR in that there were no termination, delay or penalty clauses should NR fail to deliver to schedule. To overcome this issue for Port Talbot Station an Implementation Agreement was utilised, which formed an emerging cost contract between NR and WG. As the level of ERDF funds was fixed this placed the financial risk on WG to fund any cost increases. It has been indicated that to minimise financial risk for WG for future projects, consideration will be given to the utilisation of Fixed Contribution contracts and potentially project delivery outside of NR where this is viable.
- 3.17 As part of the requirements of ERDF funding, matched contributions were sought from delivery partners for each of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects. Table 11 indicates the forecast costs for each of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, as well as the sources of match funding achieved for each project. In total, the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme had a forecast

cost of £22.08million, of which £5.62million was to be delivered by match funding, with the additional £16.42million coming from ERDF funds. The largest source of match funding came from the WG (67 per cent) followed by NR (13 per cent) and the Local Authorities (12 per cent). The largest scheme in terms of overall cost was Port Talbot Station; however the majority of this cost was covered by WG and ERDF funds. Port Talbot received the largest amount of ERDF funds, being allocated 56 per cent of the total NSIP+ Phase 2 ERDF funds (£9.15million).

Table 11: Forecast Costs and Funding Breakdown (£million)

Station	Estimated total cost	ERDF	Welsh Government rail budget	Welsh Government Regeneration	Network Rail	ATW	Local Authority	Total Match funding
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Pontypridd phase 2	5.11	3.80	0.71	0	0.19	0.41	0	1.30
Ystrad Mynach	1.35	0.93	0.43	0	0	0	0	0.43
Aberystwyth	2.73	1.54	0.31	0.83	0.05	0	0	1.19
Port Talbot	11.05	9.15	1.19	0	0	0	0.70	1.89
Rhyl	1.80	0.99	0.32	0	0.49	0	0	0.81
Fees	0.05	0.00	0.05	0	0	0	0	0.05
Total	22.08	16.42	2.96	0.83	0.72	0.41	0.70	5.62

Source: NSIP+ (Phase 2) Agreed Business Plan

Finance

3.18 A review has been undertaken of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme finances, and considered the following key questions:

- Whether the projects were delivered to the forecast cost, and if not what were the main causes for variation?
- Which areas of project delivery experienced the greatest level of cost variance, and why?
- What mitigation was developed to minimise cost variance and how effective were they?
- How the financial spend was managed to ensure project delivery?
- What lessons can be learnt regarding project costing assumptions?

Forecast and Outturn Costs

3.19 The Network Rail contract documents have been used to ascertain the forecast costs of each scheme ahead of construction. These values include all costs on the projects, including those deemed ineligible for ERDF funding. These values do not therefore align with the values shown in Table 12 from the Business Plan, which relate to eligible costs only. Information provided by Welsh Government was utilised to establish the estimated outturn costs on the project. It should be noted that final outturn values were not available at the point of finalisation of this report. The outturn values may therefore vary slightly from the estimates assumed in this report. It should also be noted that additional items of scope are included within the outturn values presented.

3.20 Table 12 compares the forecast costs to the estimated outturn costs and indicates that, with the exception of Rhyl, outturn costs were greater than that initially forecast. Increases of between £70,000 (for Ystrad Mynach) and £1.7million (for Port Talbot) were experienced on these schemes; however a saving of £0.45m was achieved for Rhyl. Overall an increase of £2.24m was experienced across the five NSIP+ Phase 2

schemes. These cost increases were covered by additional funds provided by the Welsh Government and other delivery partners, rather than an increase in the ERDF contribution.

Table 12: Comparison of forecast and outturn costs

Project	£million		
	Forecast Cost	Outturn Cost	Difference
Pontypridd	5.628	5.969	-0.341
Ystrad Mynach	1.50	1.57	-0.07
Aberystwyth	2.466	3.024	-0.558
Rhyl	2.563	2.11	0.453
Port Talbot	11.089	12.813	-1.724

Source: Network Rail Contract/Implementation Agreement and WG Financial Data

Cost Variances

- 3.21 A number of cost variances and changes to project scope were experienced on the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme, which are discussed below on a station by station basis.
- 3.22 Items deemed to be outside the original scope were considered by NR as those not outlined in the Quantified Cost Risk Assessment (QCRA). For the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, project level contingencies were not intended to be used to deliver items of additional scope and no programme level contingency pot was available to deliver additional items of scope. Additional scope items were therefore funded through other sources of WG funding, or funding provided by the other delivery partners. For future projects interviewees felt that it would be beneficial if a programme level contingency pot was maintained to more efficiently facilitate additional scope. This would be managed by the client (WG), but might form part of the contract for contractual ease.
- 3.23 Where cost increases occurred or were foreseen monthly finance and tactical meetings were undertaken to manage spend and help to ensure projects were delivered to forecast costs.

Port Talbot

3.24 Costs on the Port Talbot station scheme increased by ca.15 per cent over the course of the project. Cost increases experienced at Port Talbot primarily related to complications associated with the diversion of utilities. As is standard practice for schemes in the Control Period 4 programme, NR utilised consultants to develop the project up to GRIP Stage 4 via a desk based approach, with no site investigation work undertaken until the procurement of contractors at GRIP4. When the contractor commissioned to undertake GRIP stages 5 to 8 dug trial holes they identified a gas main and sewer in need of diversion. This required the sewers to be rerouted to the new Port Talbot distributor road and more attenuation storage to be provided onsite which was costly due to the land being contaminated. Due to the nature of the contract between WG and NR these issues were risks owned by WG and led to a £1,455,000 increase in project costs. The cost increases associated with these works could have been higher, however WG were able to avoid paying additional delay costs to the contractor due to a parallel contractor design issue which caused additional delays, as the contractor was appointed on a fixed cost basis.

3.25 Although the risk of unforeseen utilities cannot be completely mitigated it is recommended that future projects undertake site investigation works at the earliest stage possible to seek to minimise the likelihood of cost escalations due to the need for utilities diversion, scheme redesign and delays to construction.

3.26 Additional scope changes at Port Talbot had the following financial implications, totalling £265,000:

- £87,000 for additional signs and benches.
- £86,000 for additional lighting to central fuselage
- £92,000 for additional scope related to LED lighting and Customer Information Screens (CIS).

- 3.27 At Port Talbot a major issue was the constraints around the EU funding period, with funds initially needing to be spent in 2014, before the option to utilise ERDF 2014-2020 funding materialised. This created a risk that WG might have had to fund the scheme from its own funds had further delays occurred, which could have impacted upon WGs other funding commitments. At this point consideration was also made to de-scoping of the works to ensure the project was delivered to available time and budget. The decision to fund the scheme from the 2014-2020 ERDF period mitigated these issues. This change did however mean that some costs accrued before 2014 became ineligible for ERDF funding within the 2014-20 period.
- 3.28 As a marketing opportunity Tata Steel provided a contribution to the Port Talbot scheme in the form of the specialist steel used to clad the pedestrian bridge. This approach was designed to reflect the importance of steel to the local area. This replaced the copper cladding planned within the original design and led to a cost saving on the project.
- 3.29 Value management processes were also utilised to manage spend on the project. The project specification was reduced to save costs, including reducing the number of lifts and scale of parking provision proposed. The cladding requirements were also de-scoped. Cost information was not available to allow the savings from these changes to be quantified.
- 3.30 In summary, costs at Port Talbot increased by £1.72m, of which £265,000 was due to items of additional scope and £1,455,000 was due to complications involving utilities diversions.

Pontypridd

- 3.31 At Pontypridd scheme costs increased by ca. £300,000 due to items of additional scope and programme over runs. To ensure continuity between the station and town centre and at the request of local authority Heritage officers, Chinese granite was requested to be added to the

station forecourt at additional cost. Heritage trust funding was available to part fund these additional costs and the locations where this granite was used were de-scoped to just include the main thoroughfares.

3.32 As part of the delivery of the project a building used as a site office by NR was refurbished. This allowed it to be sold off as a retail unit, creating additional capital for the project.

Aberystwyth

3.33 At Aberystwyth, the project was delivered within the allocated budget. Additional seating was also provided which was separately funded by ATW, and a decision was made to tarmac the station forecourt, hence the outturn project finances indicate an increase of ca. £500,000 compared to the initial forecasts reflecting these items of additional scope.

Rhyl

3.34 This project was delivered within the allocated budget, with spare funding available to fund the painting of the station canopy. The outturn project finances indicate that the project was delivered with £450,000 to spare.

Ystrad Mynach

3.35 Ystrad Mynach station improvement was delivered with no major changes to the agreed scope of works, although a minor cost overrun of £70,000 was experienced.

Project Schedule/Programme

3.36 As part of an assessment of the NSIP+ Phase 2 delivery programme the following key questions have been considered:

- Was the project delivered on time, as scheduled at the business case stage, and if not what were the main causes of programme slippage?
- Which areas of project delivery experience the greatest variance in terms of programme and why?

- What techniques and methods for project programming and management represented good practice and why?
- What lessons were learnt regarding project programming and slippage?

3.37 Table 3 indicates the planned and actual completion dates for the key elements of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme, based upon available information. For the purposes of this analysis completion of GRIP Stage 6 (Construction, Testing and Commissioning) has been inferred as project completion. This shows that all projects have been delayed as compared to the forecasts provided in the contract documentation. The largest delays have occurred at Port Talbot, where the scheme was completed 307 days later than planned, with the shortest delays experienced at Aberystwyth (38 days) and Ystrad Mynach (47 days).

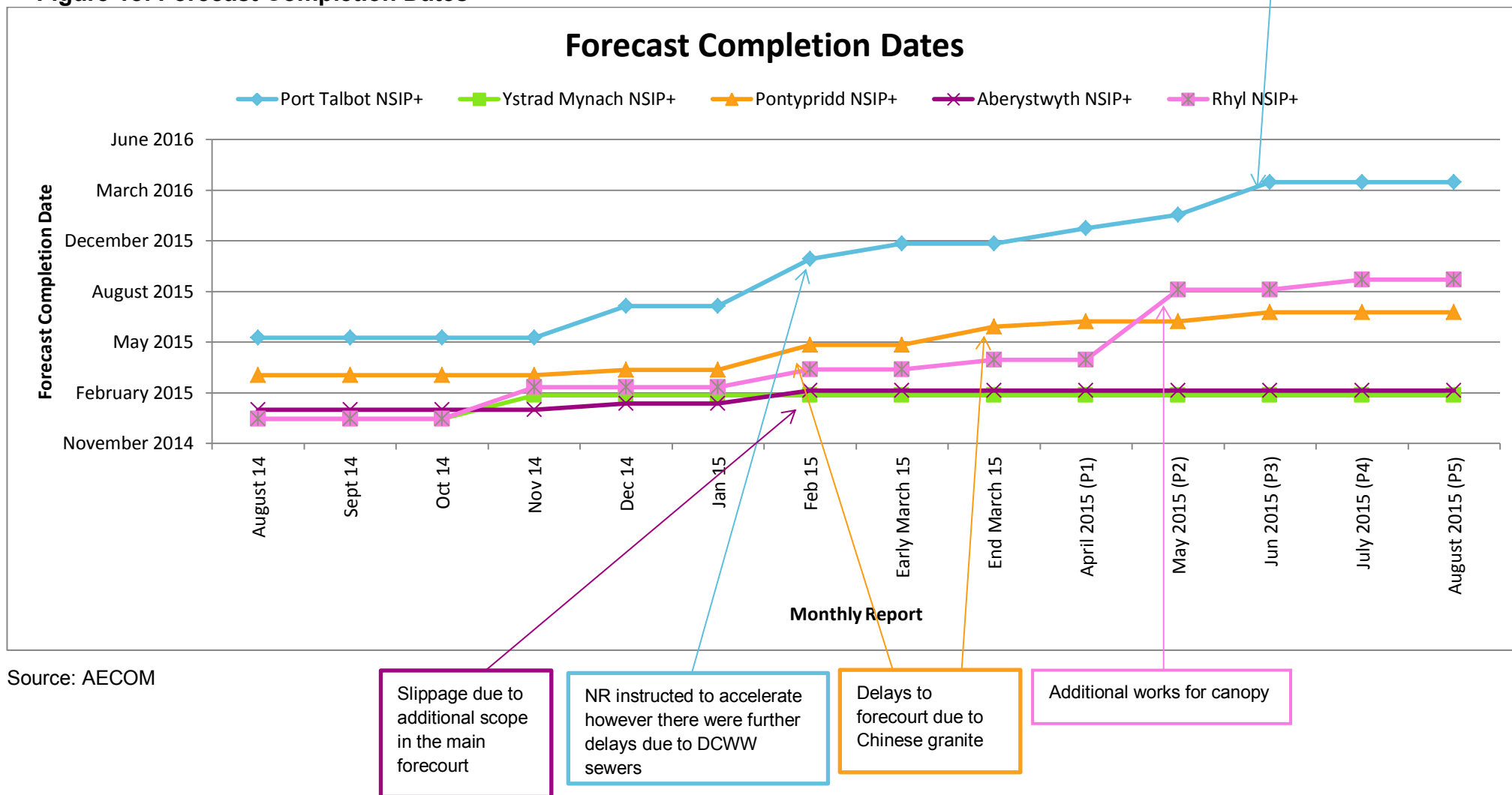
Table 13: Forecast and Actual Project Completion Dates

Scheme (Phase 2)	Contracted Completion Date*	Actual Completion Date (As of August 2015)	Total Project Delay (Days – As of August 2015)
Pontypridd	January 2015	July 2015	124
Ystrad Mynach	December 2014	February 2015	47
Aberystwyth	December 2014	February 2015	38
Port Talbot	March 2015	March 2016	307
Rhyl	December 2014	September 2015	275

Source: NSIP+ Application Forms

3.38 Figure 1 indicates how the forecasted completion dates have changed throughout the construction of the scheme until August 2015. This shows the variance in the forecast completion dates for each NSIP+ Phase 2 station improvement as time progressed as well as the key reasons for these delays. The delays experienced at each station are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 18: Forecast Completion Dates



Port Talbot

- 3.39 The programme for the Port Talbot improvements suffered the most setbacks of the five NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, totalling 307 days delay up until completion of construction. The first significant delay of approximately one month came during December 2014, which was caused by an uncharted gas main. Scheme design issues due to the complexity of the chosen design also caused delays.
- 3.40 The second major delay came in February 2015, where delays were caused by an unanticipated Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) sewer causing an additional three months delay to the programme. NR had access to historical drawings showing the anticipated locations of utilities and confirmed these via trial holes. When digging to install the lift shafts they identified that the pipes were not in the locations anticipated and in fact went through two 90 degree bends, which were not predicted. A legal process between NR and DCWW was required to get these diverted, which, as NR land was not on the normal land registry mapping required proof of ownership to be confirmed via a statutory declaration. This issue could have been mitigated by digging in the actual locations where works were planned at a sooner point in time.
- 3.41 During April 2015, delays caused by the gas main and sewer diversions were overtaken by contractor design delays, which meant that the main bridge lifts were delayed by an additional month. The bridge design adopted an approach similar to Newport station which involved fabrication at the factory and delivery of the bridge in modular form. The complexity of the design, which was architecturally led, led to additional delays and caused an additional three months delay to the programme.
- 3.42 To partially mitigate some of these delays a number of none critical path activities were able to be delivered ahead of schedule. This included completion of the platforms, waiting rooms, toilets, mess room and changing places facilities. This allowed these facilities to be opened to the public ahead of completion of the project, allowing some benefits to be realised early, without affecting the delivery of the remaining elements of the project.

Pontypridd

- 3.43 Pontypridd suffered programme delays of 124 days in total. Eighty-five of these days came as a result of the decision that Chinese granite be used on the forecourt at the request of council heritage officers. This was a change to the original scope and caused a delay due to the lead-time in delivering the granite. Earlier engagement with heritage officers could have identified this issue earlier, avoiding delays to project delivery.
- 3.44 Interfacing with other projects was a difficulty at Pontypridd, where the Taff Rhonda Turnbacks project was also being delivered by the same contractor. This created commercial difficulties which NR had to act as arbiter to resolve. However there were also efficiencies in delivering projects in tandem, including minimising disruption to passengers.
- 3.45 An additional source of significant delays occurred in the hand back of the station to ATW and related to the commissioning of the new lifts and the need for the operator to have override control of these. This issue was exacerbated by the contractor having moved onto jobs outside of Wales. Interviewees indicated that a 'one hit' snagging meeting and a better defined programme in relation to commissioning works would have been beneficial to allow these issues to be resolved more quickly.

Ystrad Mynach

- 3.46 Ystrad Mynach suffered a delay of just over six weeks during November 2014. A new scheme hand back process was used at Ystrad Mynach for the lifts which worked well and could inform the process developed for future projects.

Aberystwyth

- 3.47 Aberystwyth suffered the smallest delays of the NSIP+ Phase 2 schemes, totalling 38 days. Delays of 13 days occurred in December 2014 and 25 days occurred in February 2015. The more substantial delay to programme was down to the additional items of scope agreed. Additionally there were drainage issues due to the age of the existing drainage (1850s) and the listed building environment of the station.

Rhyl

3.48 Rhyl's programme suffered delays totalling 247 days. Delays included issues with the installation of an uninterrupted power supply and the surrender of a lease. The largest source of delay of 138 days came in May 2015, where additional works for the canopy were required.

Project Hand back

3.49 A major delay experienced on all projects has been in the hand back procedure, which was not as smooth as anticipated.

3.50 All of the NSIP+ Phase 2 stations are leased to the Train Operating Company (TOC) to manage and maintain, therefore changes to these stations overseen by NR require an interface to be maintained between NR and the TOC, in this case ATW. The TOC has to sign off the works before they will accept back responsibility for the assets as operator and maintainer.

3.51 Issues with the hand back of facilities to ATW were experienced at all stations. It was reported that the process for sign off of snagging works was an iterative process, requiring extensive and protracted communication between different people in different roles at ATW and NR.

3.52 A comprehensive walk through involving all of the individuals at NR and ATW required for approving hand back, undertaken at one point in time would be beneficial to speed up the hand back process. Interviewees indicated that a workshop between NR and ATW was planned, with route asset managers and scheme sponsors to be present to seek to identify a better process. It was also indicated that a new hand back process was used at Ystrad Mynach for the lifts which worked well and could inform the process developed for future projects

Programme Management Methods

3.53 To ensure tasks were completed to schedule senior management meetings were held between NR and its suppliers. As a number of projects were managed by the same suppliers it was possible to delay work on one scheme to speed things up on another. Weekly programme meetings were held during critical elements of projects to ensure tasks were completed on time.

- 3.54 The Local Delivery Group (LDG) was set up to provide governance to the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme, incorporating representatives from WG, NR, ATW and the local authorities. This was regarded as providing the right forum for escalated issues to be discussed at facilitating quick decision making.
- 3.55 Ministerial level intervention also proved to be a useful last resort to resolve issues with NR and others.
- 3.56 Following the delays caused by unanticipated utilities at Port Talbot station, as well as similar experiences on other rail projects and awareness of the complexity of the ongoing Great Western Electrification programme, senior director level meetings are now undertaken between Network Rail and the main utilities companies operating in Wales. This provides a suitable forum for key issues to be escalated, allowing issues to be resolved more quickly.

Project Delivery Team Skills

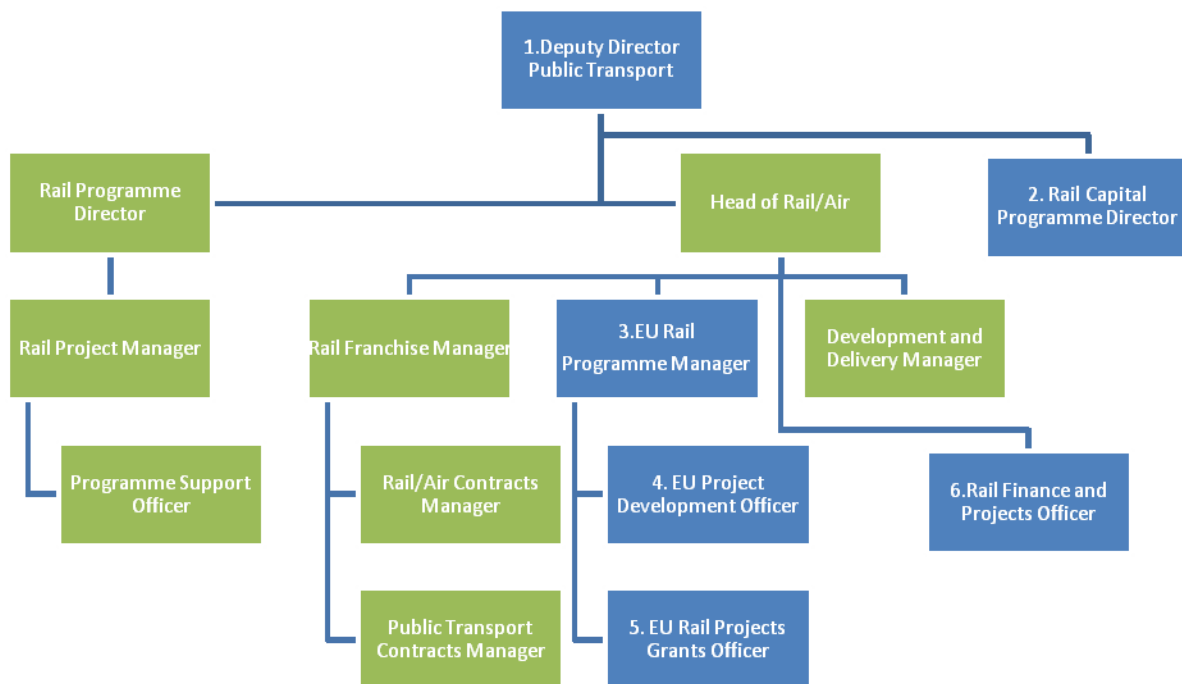
3.57 The following key questions have been considered to evaluate the team used to deliver the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme:

- What approach was adopted to the formation of a project team for this project?
- How well aligned were staff resource levels to the resource requirements of the project?
- What was done to ensure that the team had the necessary skills to undertake the project?
- What techniques were used to improve team performance?

Team Structure

3.58 In terms of the team in overall control of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme, Figure 1 presented within the Business Plan indicates how the WG Public Transport Division, which has overall responsibility for the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme, is organised. This included officers specialising in the management of EU funded projects, as well as director level governance of the overall programme. WG had the role of project client, ensuring project delivery and making decisions on changes to project scope.

Figure 19: WG Public Transport Division Organogram



Source: NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan

3.59 The individual NSIP+ Phase 2 projects were all delivered by Network Rail, via contractors procured via competitive tender, however a collaborative approach was utilised for all projects to varying degrees, with regular meetings held between WG, NR, ATW and the relevant local authorities via the Local Delivery Group (LDG). All interviewees agreed that this approach was beneficial in ensuring all relevant parties were well informed on project progress and allowed issues to be escalated in a smooth manner where required. For example, because WG were invited to the project technical meetings it was possible for a change of scope in relation to the station canopy at Aberystwyth to be agreed swiftly, without delaying project progress.

3.60 A Project Review Group (PRG) was also put in place to allow detailed design issues to be ironed out ahead of the LDG. This was attended by NR, ATW and Rail Heritage.

3.61 A Programme Management Board (PMB) was also set up to oversee the range of WG projects being delivered NR. This was considered beneficial in ensuring 'moral buy-in' to the projects at a senior level.

- 3.62 In most instances collaborative working at the design stages helped to reduce the potential cost of redesign and rework. However, issues were experienced at Pontypridd, where problems such as the need for pigeon netting and issues with the stair nosing at the station entrance could have been mitigated at the design stage through greater involvement of ATW in the design process.
- 3.63 For all NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, contractors were procured via competitive tender on a project by project basis to deliver the works. Opportunities for shared contracting arrangements between multiple projects at stations were considered, however this was not considered viable due to the varied nature of the projects and differing timescales. Procuring a high quality contractor was considered by interviewees to be a key factor in avoiding internal project delays.

Approach to Delivery

- 3.64 To manage the programme senior management meetings were held between NR and its suppliers. As a number of projects were managed by the same suppliers (e.g. Pontypridd and Ystrad Mynach) it was possible to delay work on one scheme to speed things up on another, which was beneficial in ensuring critical path activities were completed on time. There were also efficiencies in delivering projects in tandem, including minimising disruption to passengers and achieving cost efficiencies. However, some interviewees indicated that this created commercial difficulties which required NR staff to act as arbiter to resolve. Weekly programme meetings were also held during critical elements of projects to ensure tasks were completed on time.
- 3.65 To ensure swift decision making between NR and ATW, as station operator a member of the ATW team was seconded into the NR project delivery team. This was considered particularly beneficial in speeding up the project hand back process, although as mentioned previously a number of hand back delays were still experienced on NSIP+ Phase 2 projects, particularly at Pontypridd.
- 3.66 NR invited the WG along to Project Technical Group meetings, as well as its QCRA (Quantified Cost Risk Analysis) and Programme Management Board (PMB) meetings. Where greater levels of WG involvement have been achieved, this

involvement was considered beneficial in speeding up the process of agreeing changes to the project scope.

- 3.67 WG officers also agreed that higher levels of project involvement from them were beneficial and that the most successful projects were the ones where 'the WG were able to sit in the same room as the contractors'. Ministerial level intervention also formed a useful means of escalation of the most serious issues. For example, at Port Talbot there was an issue in confirming when the steel cladding donated by Tata would be supplied, which could have led to additional project delays. WG were able to quickly resolve this issue at ministerial level through its close relationship with Tata. Close involvement of WG in project delivery was also considered beneficial in ensuring a suitable degree of project knowledge amongst WG officers to inform WEFO/EU reporting.
- 3.68 As with other projects delivered by WG via NR the PMG and Programme Tactical Group (PTG) meetings between NR and WG provided useful oversight of the wider programme of works on the railways and facilitated WG greater influence over this delivery programme. This also helped to achieve 'moral buy-in' to the projects to ensure smooth delivery.
- 3.69 Across the programme the key project team interviewed as part of this process evaluation have indicated that there was a good level of collaboration between the various organisations delivering different aspects of the programme.
- 3.70 An issue at Port Talbot station related to the hand back of the pedestrian bridge. As the new bridge was not entirely within the station land and can be used as a right of way without accessing the station ATW were unwilling for this to be handed back as part of their lease. It was determined that this would instead be funded by WG/NR for parts of the bridge to be managed by ATW. This would continue for the duration of the current franchise period before it can become part of the next franchise contract.
- 3.71 Lessons learnt reports are produced by Network Rail as a matter of course for all of its projects. These provide a useful means of evaluating project successes and failures to help inform future works. Interviewees indicated that although Welsh Government and the TOCs are invited to attend these workshops they tend not to do

so, which could be a missed opportunity to collaboratively assess project successes and failures.

3.72 For future projects it was indicated that WG would give further consideration to who is best placed to deliver different elements of a rail scheme. This could include utilising NR for works involving track and signals, Local Authority supply chains used to deliver works on highway land, such as car park and access improvements and the WG delivering station improvements via directly procured suppliers.

Stakeholder Engagement

3.73 To evaluate the success of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme in relation to stakeholder engagement the following key questions have been considered

- Who were the key stakeholders and why? What were their roles and responsibilities?
- What were the different approaches to stakeholder engagement? Which were the most effective at engaging with their target audience and why?
- What lessons were learnt regarding stakeholder management and engagement?

Key stakeholders

3.74 At the outset of the overall NSIP+ Phase 2 programme a number of stakeholders were engaged in the project as part of the Grant Delivery model to identify applicant schemes for funding. This was achieved through publicity raising events, such as a launch event at Llandudno Station, which was attended by the Deputy First Minister. This process was initially successful in engaging the key potential delivery organisations, however, as discussed previously, legal and contractual issues eventually led to a WG decision to deliver the Phase 2 schemes itself via a Direct Delivery model.

3.75 Key stakeholders directly involved in the delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects included:

- Network Rail.
- Arriva Trains Wales.
- Welsh Government.
- The Local Authorities.

3.76 A collaborative approach to project delivery was utilised for these projects, with regular meetings were held between the above groups, via the LDG, which have been discussed in the team/skills section of this report.

3.77 Alongside the groups listed a number of stakeholders were engaged at the design and delivery stages to inform the development of the project. These included:

- Rail users
- Local access panel.
- Line side residents & local businesses.
- The British Transport Police.
- Disability Wales.
- Rail Heritage.

Stakeholder Engagement Approaches

3.78 A variety of approaches to stakeholder engagement were utilised during the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme. Key techniques included:

- Equalities impact assessment (EqIA) meetings.
- Drop in centres – at both the concept and implementation stages.
- Online scheme information.
- Coffee mornings.
- Provision of signs at stations.

3.79 The following sections outline the key stakeholder approaches and findings for the NSIP+ Phase 2 schemes on a station by station basis.

Port Talbot

3.80 The Port Talbot project generated positive interest from the public. This was demonstrated by the presence of around 40 people to witness the lowering of the new bridge structure into place during the night-time installation. In part this was due to the positive engagement with the community undertaken by the contractor, such as providing the town Christmas tree and undertaking talks at local schools on the dangers of railways.

- 3.81 An issue was experienced with a taxi firm who had a depot near to the station. A road closure was required to allow the bridge structure to be lifted into place, which was a concern for this firm. They wanted compensation for this impact despite NR offering a number of alternative solutions including use of alternative facilities.
- 3.82 Additional consultations and public exhibitions were undertaken as part of the EqlA process with access groups. Following stakeholder communications, the forecourt proposals were de-scoped to align with NPTs plans to realign the road outside the station.
- 3.83 Disability groups requested for hand rails to be provided along the span of the bridge at Port Talbot via a letter to the Minister. This was not considered by the project team to be an Equalities Act issue and a compromise was found where benches were added at intervals across the bridge, which was considered a more cost effective solution.

Pontypridd

- 3.84 At Pontypridd a fly through visualisation was produced which assisted stakeholder groups and individuals in visualising how the station would look and operate.
- 3.85 As plans were distributed to stakeholders early in the process local taxi companies were able to identify that the planned taxi rank was in the wrong position, as queuing taxis would end up on the road. This was identified early enough in the design process so that the design could be changed without incurring additional costs.
- 3.86 The Women's Institute produced a tapestry which was displayed at Pontypridd station. This helped to encouraged positive community stakeholder engagement. As the project was delivered alongside the Taff Rhondda turn-backs project awareness raising for both projects was considered to have been mutually beneficial in raising awareness of the improved transport opportunities available.
- 3.87 An issue was experienced with local authority conservation officers seeking to minimise the impact of the project on the listed station environs, by providing consistent Chinese granite paving as used in the town centre. This had the effect of

reducing tactile paving provision, thereby reducing station accessibility for blind and partially sighted users. This issue was, in part, caused by of the inconsistent nature of stakeholder involvement in the project. Interviewees felt that stakeholders were important in helping to explain the 'project journey'.

Ystrad Mynach

3.88 Interviewees felt that community engagement events undertaken at Ystrad Mynach had generally kept people informed about the project and limited the number of complaints raised. Awareness raising activities including NR sponsoring a local football teams kit and holding coffee mornings which were opportunities to explain the improvements.

3.89 Disability issues as part of the proposals were considered via local disability groups who Network Rail regularly consulted on such proposals.

3.90 Extensive talks were required with local people on the visual impact of the proposals at Ystrad Mynach. A particular issue for this scheme related to heritage issues and ensuring the proposals were in keeping with the history of the station. Some nearby residents were concerned about the proposed car park (which was not part of NSIP+).

Aberystwyth

3.91 At Aberystwyth an issue occurred due to a local restaurant owner who was a sub-tenant of a nearby restaurant not having been consulted at the project design stage. The issue related to a lack of access for loading and unloading to his business which was not initially identified as only property owners were consulted. This issue was resolved through the provision of a loading bay, however sole access to the bay could not be guaranteed. For future projects consultation with tenants, as well as property owners should be considered.

Equalities Impact Assessment

3.92 As stipulated within the Business Plan, it was a funding requirement that NSIP+ Phase 2 projects undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to ensure the projects do not lead to the unequal treatment of any particular groups within society. Whilst it has not been possible to review all of these documents, stakeholders have

confirmed that the EqlA process has been followed for all NSIP+ Phase 2 projects as part of the GRIP Stage 4 (single option development) process.

3.93 The format of EqlA consultation meetings was discussed with access groups ahead of the meetings to ensure that the needs of different types of attendees were catered for wherever possible.

3.94 Some interviewees felt that the approach adopted to the EqlA and wider consultations on access issues as part of NSIP+ Phase 2 focused too much on the requirements of those with physical disabilities, with too little consideration of the requirements of those with other disabilities, such as those with hearing or visual impairments. Additionally it was felt that local access groups tended to be composed predominantly of people with physical impairments. In future, impairment specific groups should also be approached as part of the consultation process and encouraged to provide feedback as part of the EqlA process and other consultation activities to ensure designs meet the requirements of all users.

Cross Cutting Themes

3.95 The European Commission requires that all projects qualifying for EU funding must incorporate the following cross-cutting themes to help contribute towards a well-balanced, sustainable and innovative economy:

- Equal opportunities.
- Environmental sustainability.
- Value for money.

3.96 This section of the report brings together the evidence presented elsewhere in this evaluation to establish how the project has contributed towards each of these themes.

Equal Opportunities

3.97 No evidence was available to the evaluators through which to assess the extent of equal opportunities monitoring undertaken as part of this project. However, a qualitative assessment of the key equality benefits delivered has been undertaken, based upon the evidence presented in process interviews and documentation.

3.98 Key physical accessibility benefits of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme are considered to include:

- Provision of lifts providing step-free access to all platforms.
- Footpath/cycle way construction/reconstruction including tactile paving.
- Car park provision including disabled parking.
- 'Changing places' accessible changing and toilet facilities.
- Cycle storage facilities.

3.99 All projects have been designed in accordance with the Design Standards for Accessible Railway Stations⁷.

3.100 The improved access arrangements for people with physical disabilities and mobility impairments resulting from the above improvements have been significant. For example accessing Port Talbot station for those with physical disabilities previously required one weeks' notice for staff to unlock a gate to an access ramp. This notice period was reduced ahead of the project however the new lifts offer step-free access to all platforms without prior notification, offering a significant improvement on the previous arrangements.

3.101 Equality is at the heart of the WG and European funding policy and this placed requirements on scheme promoters to ensure that correct processes were in place for engaging with equality impact groups. As a part of the funding, it was a requirement that all of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure the projects do not lead to the unequal treatment of any particular groups within society. Process evaluation interviewees have indicated that these processes were followed, although these documents were not made available to the evaluators.

3.102 A key objective of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme has been to improve access to rail for all users. As part of the design stages of each NSIP+ Phase 2 project local access groups were consulted to consider any access issues resulting from the works. This has facilitated improvements to be made to the schemes to benefit specific groups.

⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425977/design-standards-accessible-stations.pdf

- 3.103 Some access groups felt that not enough work was done in exploring the types of access requirements. There was a view that it was assumed by NR that access issues relate only to wheelchairs and the needs of partially sighted or blind users or those with other access requirements were not considered. The interviewee felt that the DfT/NR guidance with regard to safety was a restriction in relation to this issue.
- 3.104 The projects have facilitated access to employment opportunities for local people. For example, local labour was utilised by the contractor delivering the Port Talbot Station improvement and the contractor for Aberystwyth Station employed a local storeman. Welsh local suppliers were utilised by contractors where possible and this approach was encouraged by Network Rail.
- 3.105 The projects have supported the use of the Welsh language as part of their consultation and publicity processes. Compliance with the Welsh Language Act 1993 was stipulated within the contracts signed between Welsh Government and Network Rail. Process evaluation interviewees indicated that bilingual consultation materials were produced, with Welsh speaking staff available as part of consultation exercises.
- 3.106 Where possible NR and its contractors have sought to provide additional community benefits alongside the delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects. Examples of this include the aforementioned sponsorship of a football team kit at Ystrad Mynach, talks at local schools on the dangers of railways at Port Talbot and support to the Women's Institute in the production of a tapestry at Pontypridd.

Environmental Sustainability

- 3.107 No evidence was available to the evaluators through which to assess the extent of environmental sustainability monitoring undertaken as part of this programme. However, interviewees identified the following aspects of environmentally sustainable behaviour adopted during the programme:
- LED lighting has been utilised for the projects where major refurbishments have been made. This has helped to reduce electricity usage, although in some instances additional lighting has been provided where previously there was none.
 - Where possible local materials suppliers and local labour have been utilised, minimising transport emissions and costs.

3.108 As outlined in the logic map presented in Section 2 (Figure 2) of this report, a number of the key outcomes/results should, in the long term, lead to environmental benefits. These include:

- Modal shift from car use to rail, reducing CO₂ emissions. This is evidenced to some extent within the survey findings, which indicate some degree of modal shift from car to rail.
- Reduced noise and air quality impacts resulting from road transport.
- Promotion of development designed to enhance public transport availability and use.

Value for Money

3.109 The following key activities have been undertaken to ensure that the project represents value for money. These include activities undertaken at the planning, procurement and construction phases:

- A competitive tender process was utilised to ensure the chosen contractors, and planned approach, represented best value for money.
- Materials and technologies chosen will limit ongoing maintenance requirements and service costs, for example through the use of LED lighting.
- Local suppliers and labour were utilised where possible which would have reduced the cost of transport.
- Value engineering was utilised to stay within the allocated budgets. An example of this related to the desire to utilise Chinese granite paving throughout Pontypridd station. This was re-scoped to just include the main thoroughfares, with cheaper materials utilised elsewhere. At Port Talbot the originally planned copper cladding was replaced with steel, which was provided by Tata Steel at no cost to the project.

3.110 A number of additional projects have been delivered alongside the NSIP+ Phase 2 works, or are planned to be delivered to maximise the benefits of the NSIP+ Phase 2 projects. For example, additional development is planned at Port Talbot station as part of wider park and ride and public transport hub. These improvements aim to maximise the impact of the project by encouraging greater levels of rail and public transport use.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 This evaluation of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme has considered the performance of the programme in relation to its stated aims and objectives, and determined which aspects of project delivery led to positive outcomes/results. The barriers and constraints that the project experienced and the lessons learnt in dealing with these were also assessed.
- 4.2 Additionally a process evaluation has been undertaken to establish key lessons learnt and examples of best practice from the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme. This considered five key areas of project performance; Finance, Schedule/Programme, Team/Skills, Stakeholder Engagement and Cross Cutting Themes.
- 4.3 The evaluation has considered the impacts of the programme in terms of the numbers of stations improved and the nature of the improvements made, as well as the impact of these improvements for users in terms of the resultant change in passenger kilometres. The perceptions of station users have also been gauged by way of a review of the National Rail Passenger Survey and face to face surveys undertaken at two stations improved as part of NSIP+ Phase 2.
- 4.4 A target increase of 2.324million passenger kilometres was set as part of the NSIP+ Phase 2 Business Plan for these stations. Although a full years' worth of ex-post ticket sales data is not yet available, interim analysis of gross passenger kilometres indicated no strong evidence that the enhancements have influenced passenger levels, with some stations experiencing reduced levels of use, despite growth across their corresponding rail lines, particularly in the case of Rhyl.
- 4.5 Passenger satisfaction surveys results indicated relatively high levels of satisfaction with the improvements delivered at Port Talbot and Pontypridd, with over two thirds of those surveyed at both stations either fairly or very satisfied with the projects delivered, however levels of awareness of the improvements made at Pontypridd was low. Safety was a key area where the schemes were considered beneficial, though fewer respondents considered increased awareness of rail services as a recognised benefit of the projects.
- 4.6 Whilst over 60 per cent of respondents had always used the corresponding station for their stated journey, between 14 per cent and 21 per cent had switched to rail

from car, this might be an indication that the stations were helping to encourage modal shift away from car use however only three of the passengers surveyed had specifically started using the stations as a direct result of the improvements made at the stations.

- 4.7 A broad range of stakeholders were interviewed as part of the process evaluation including the Welsh Government, Network Rail, Arriva Trains Wales, as well as Disability Wales and a sample of local authorities.
- 4.8 Available documents were also reviewed to establish the processes in place and project performance against plans. It was noted that not all the desired documents were available to evaluators, which has limited certain aspects of the process evaluation.
- 4.9 Development and delivery of the NSIP+ Phase 2 Schemes was overseen by Local Delivery Groups utilising a collaborative approach. This was considered an effective means of project delivery in ensuring the needs of various stakeholders were considered from design development through to the final delivered schemes. This helped to reduce costly redesign, although it was acknowledged that some issues were still experienced.
- 4.10 Cost increases were experienced on all of the projects, with the exception of Rhyl, which was delivered within budget. Across the five projects a cost increase of £2.24m was experienced. Key reasons for cost changes included changes to project scope, such as the inclusion of Chinese granite at Pontypridd and additional seating at Aberystwyth. These changes to scope were funded via additional funds from WG and the other delivery partners. Other cost increases related to project delays and utilities diversion issues, such as those experienced with sewers and gas mains at Port Talbot.
- 4.11 Cost saving measures were adopted, such as the external financing of the steel cladding used at Port Talbot and the selling of a refurbished site office at Pontypridd. Cost management exercises were also utilised to ensure projects were delivered to cost where possible.
- 4.12 Delays totalling 791 days were experienced during the construction, testing and commissioning phases of the programme as a whole. The largest delays were

experienced at Port Talbot station and related to the unanticipated utilities diversions and legal issues surrounding these. Significant delays were experienced for all projects in the hand back of assets to the Train Operating Company, which was an iterative process.

- 4.13 Suitable escalation procedures were put in place via the Local Delivery Group to allow issues to be resolved quickly, with ministerial level intervention a useful last resort.
- 4.14 High level meetings between Welsh Government and Network Rail via the Programme Management Group and Programme Tactical Group were beneficial in ensuring WG retained a higher level of influence on the overall delivery programme.
- 4.15 Stakeholder involvement across the programme has been widespread, with a number of different organisations engaged in helping to shape the schemes delivered. Examples of where this engagement have resulted in positive impacts for the delivered schemes include the taxi waiting arrangements at Pontypridd, which were modified following stakeholder input to ensure waiting taxis did not queue onto the road.
- 4.16 A number of engagement techniques were utilised including drop in centres, coffee mornings and community outreach activities, such as the paying for the local Christmas tree and engaging with local schools. These measures were beneficial in increasing awareness and engagement in the projects.
- 4.17 The European Commission requires that all projects qualifying for EU funding must incorporate the following cross-cutting themes of equal opportunities, environmental sustainability and value for money. Analysis of these cross cutting themes has indicated that the EqIA process has been followed to ensure the schemes deliver equal opportunities to access rail services for all users. Environmental sustainability practices have been adopted, including the use of efficient LED lighting and the use of local contractors and suppliers. Value for money has also been maximised through the use of competitive tender processes.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 This evaluation has identified a number of recommendations for future projects which could help improve project delivery for future rail projects in Wales. These recommendations are listed below by the key areas of project delivery covered by the evaluation.

Impacts

- 5.2 The analysis of passenger kilometre impacts of station improvements requires these improvements to have been complete for at least a year, which the NSIP+ Phase 2 schemes have not. Further analysis of passenger kilometre impacts should be undertaken at a later date to establish the longer term impacts that have occurred.
- 5.3 For this evaluation a retrospective survey has been undertaken to establish the impacts of the NSIP+ Phase 2 improvements. For future projects pre and post implementation surveys should be undertaken to more accurately assess changes in passenger perceptions and behaviour in relation to the improvements made. This will require earlier involvement of the evaluation team in designing and commissioning a suitable evaluation before the capital improvements themselves are undertaken.

Finance

- 5.4 One difficulty in delivering NSIP+ Phase 2 through a series of separate contracts was the management of cost increases and contingencies. For future programmes of this nature, the potential for a single contingency fund to be used should be investigated. This would be beneficial in allowing savings on one project to fund cost increases on another, with greater levels of Welsh Government oversight on how contingency funds are spent.

Programme

- 5.5 A key cause of programme delays was in the hand back of assets from NR to the train operating company, ATW, which was described as an iterative process rather than standard across all projects. The process adopted for the lifts at Ystrad Mynach was considered to have worked well and future projects should give consideration to how the hand back process can be streamlined, for example through a comprehensive walk through involving all protagonists involved in the hand back process.

- 5.6 An example of good practice from the programme was related to approaches taken in minimising the impacts of delays on passengers. For example at Port Talbot the new platforms, waiting room, toilets and 'changing places' facilities were opened to the public ahead of completion of the bridge. This allowed the use of these facilities to be maximised without affecting the delivery of remaining elements of the project.

Team

- 5.7 A member of the ATW team was placed within the project delivery team as part of the overall project. It was felt that although some delays were experienced this was beneficial in speeding up the project hand back process which helped to ensure delivery to scope. It is recommended that such an approach is considered for future major programmes to ensure efficient delivery.
- 5.8 An example of good practice was the use of 'Lessons Learnt' exercises. These are adopted as standard practice by NR and allow the key lessons from a project to be established and recorded to inform the approach used for future projects. It is recommended that this approach is adopted by all delivery partners to ensure key project lessons are successfully captured for future projects.
- 5.9 All interviewees agreed that Welsh Government direct involvement in the delivery of projects for which they were the client was beneficial in ensuring the quick resolution of issues as well as the ability to accurately report progress to WEFO. It is recommended that where possible Welsh Government Officers attend Project Technical Meetings and Risk workshops to ensure greater levels of input into and awareness of project development.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 5.10 Where adopted, early consultation with access groups and other stakeholders has been beneficial in identifying and resolving project issues and ensuring the improvements delivered were beneficial to all. It is recommended that comprehensive early consultation with a wide range of access groups representing the needs of different users is undertaken to ensure designs meet the needs of all users.

Cross Cutting Themes

5.11 Limited information was available to facilitate the evaluation of cross cutting themes as part of the NSIP+ Phase 2 programme, although examples were provided for specific projects within the overall programme. For future projects of this nature it is recommended that the following programme level records are centrally maintained during the delivery of the programme to facilitate the evaluation of cross cutting themes

- Records of equalities impact assessment findings undertaken at the project planning stage.
- Records of consultation activities undertaken with equalities or environmental groups including the concerns expressed and how these issues/concerns were addressed.
- Records of any construction plans indicating how environmental sustainability has been maximised as part of the construction process.
- Records of any value engineering exercises and the outcomes of these in reducing project costs.

Appendix A: Questionnaire Surveys

NSIP PASSENGER PROFILE SURVEY PHASE 2			
Int Initials	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Time	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>
Date	<input style="width: 95%;" type="text"/>	Q1 Station	
		Port Talbot..... <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>We are collecting this information on behalf of the Welsh Government in order to assess use of this station. The information collected will be reported at an aggregated level and no individual responses will be identifiable.</p>			
Q2 How long have you been using this station for ?			
Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 1 to 2 years... <input type="checkbox"/> 2 2 to 3 years... <input type="checkbox"/> 3 3 years or more <input type="checkbox"/> 4			
Q3. And why did you start using this station? <i>Please select all that apply</i>			
Convenient for place of education .. <input type="checkbox"/> 1		New job/ potential job opportunity... <input type="checkbox"/> 2	
Moved house <input type="checkbox"/> 3		Previous mode no longer available. <input type="checkbox"/> 4	
Train is easier than previous mode used <input type="checkbox"/> 5		Improvements made to station <input type="checkbox"/> 6	
Other <input type="checkbox"/> 7			
Other reason not listed- please write in:		<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
Q4. And how did you previously make this journey before you started using this station?			
Not applicable- have always made this journey by train from this station		<input type="checkbox"/> 1	
Car (as driver)		<input type="checkbox"/> 2	
Car (as passenger)		<input type="checkbox"/> 3	
Bus		<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
Walked (on foot).....		<input type="checkbox"/> 5	
Bicycle.....		<input type="checkbox"/> 6	
Train (from another station-includes those who drove to another station).....		<input type="checkbox"/> 7	
Other		<input type="checkbox"/> 8	
Other mode - please write in		<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
Which train station did you use previously if applicable?		<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	

- Q5** Have you noticed any changes to this station in the last 1 to 2 years?
Please write in those you have noticed

- Q6** And what difference would you say the changes on the station have made to you?

	<i>Station buildings, forecourt and waiting areas</i>	<i>Information and ticketing facilities</i>	<i>Station access incl. bridges, lifts and ramps</i>	<i>Parking, cycle and drop-off areas</i>
No impact- I use the station the same amount as I did previously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slight impact- I use the station more frequently than I did previously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High impact- I use the station a lot more than I did previously	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q7** How satisfied are you with the improvements made at this station?

Very satisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Fairly dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Fairly Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Very dissatisfied.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

- Q8** And what are your reasons for giving the satisfaction rating above?

- Q9** To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
The improvements made at this station have:

	Agree strongly	Agree slightly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly	Don't know
Made the station safer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased my awareness of the rail services available at this station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved my ability to access rail services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made it easier for to change between modes of transport (e.g. train and bus)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased my use of the station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q10** Do you have any further comments to make about this station and its facilities?

- Q11** What is the main purpose of your journey today from this station?

Tick one box only

Travel to/from work.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Leisure/recreation.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Travel to/from education and/or training.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Meeting friends/relatives.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Shopping.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Personal business.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
		Other.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 7

Other, please
specify

- Q12** To which of these age groups do you belong?

16-24.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	35-44.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	60+.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
25-34.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	45-59.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4		

- Q13** Which of these best describes your current working status? (Tick one box only)

In full time employment.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Volunteer.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
In part time employment.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Unemployed.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
in full/part time education.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Other.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
Retired.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 4		

Other - please specify

Q14 Do you have a physical disability which limits your mobility?

Yes ☐ ¹ No ☐ ²

Gender (by observation) Male ☐ ¹ Female ☐ ²

Thank respondent for their time

Appendix B: Questionnaire Results

Q2 How long have you been using this station for?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
1 to 2 years	26	53
2 to 3 years	27	35
3 years or more	131	129
Less than 1 year	51	70
Total	235	287

Q3 And why did you start using this station?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Convenient for place of education	32	61
New job/ potential job opportunity...	103	95
Moved house	18	41
Previous mode no longer available	3	9
Train is easier than previous mode used	22	35
Improvements made to station	2	1
It's convenient	15	14
Leisure/holiday/visiting	17	8
Using to go shopping	9	2
Used to get to work	3	1
Cheaper	1	1
No alternative	4	6
Always used it	2	5
Easier journey/good service/parking	3	4
Medical appts	0	2
Missing	1	2
Total	235	287

Q4 And how did you previously make this journey before you started using this station?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Bus	21	14
Car (as driver)	42	61
Car (as passenger)	8	25
Not applicable- have always made this journey by train from this station	159	177
Train (from another station- includes those who drove to another station)	4	6
Walked (on foot)	1	3
Total	235	287

Q5 Have you noticed any changes to this station in the last one to two years?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Additional Facilities / Signage / Announcements	42	23
Complaints about Trains	0	5
Don't know / No answer	0	63
Facilities Close too Early	0	2
Improved / Modernized / Renovated	79	25
Improved Lighting	0	3
Improved safety	0	12
More accessible	57	62
More people / Well run / More efficient	2	4
New buildings / Structural improvements	8	8
New Shelter	2	5
Not noticed a change	11	70
Other	36	5
Total	235	287

Q6 And what difference would you say the changes on the station have made to you?

Station buildings, forecourt and waiting areas

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Don't know	8	79
High impact- I use the station a lot more than I did previously	7	14
No impact- I use the station the same amount as I did previously	204	172
Slight impact	16	22
Total	235	287

Information and ticketing facilities

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Don't know	8	82
High impact- I use the station a lot more than I did previously	4	5
No impact- I use the station the same amount as I did previously	211	169
Slight impact	12	26
Total	235	287

Station access inc. bridges, lifts and ramps

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Don't know	8	82
High impact- I use the station a lot more than I did previously	7	18
No impact- I use the station the same amount as I did previously	206	165
Slight impact	14	17
Missing	0	5
Total	235	287

Parking, cycle and drop-off areas

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Don't know	10	99
High impact- I use the station a lot more than I did previously	3	3
No impact- I use the station the same amount as I did previously	212	168
Slight impact	10	12
Missing	0	5
Total	235	287

Q7 How satisfied are you with the improvements made at this station?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Don't know	12	133
Fairly dissatisfied	12	5
Fairly Satisfied	55	52
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	33	40
Very dissatisfied	3	3
Very satisfied	119	54
Missing	1	0
Total	235	287

Q8 And what are your reasons for giving the satisfaction rating above?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Complaints about cleanliness / Temperature	6	7
Complaints about closing times	0	4
Complaints about Stations	33	30
Don't know / No answer	17	143
Ease of access / More Convenient	50	22
Generalised positive statements	71	24
Haven't noticed any changes	16	28
Improved Cleanliness / Safety	30	11
Improvements to Facilities	6	3
Neutral Sentiments	3	11
Positive train comments	3	5
Train complaints	0	0
Total	235	287

Q9 To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The improvements made at this station have:

Made the station safer

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Agree strongly	80	45
Agree slightly	57	48
Disagree slightly	5	2
Disagree strongly	23	12
Don't know	42	159
Neither agree nor disagree	28	21
Total	235	287

Increased my awareness of the rail services available at this station

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Agree strongly	55	21
Agree slightly	50	36
Disagree slightly	7	3
Disagree strongly	34	29
Don't know	44	163
Neither agree nor disagree	45	30
Missing	0	5
Total	235	287

Improved my ability to access rail services

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Agree strongly	68	25
Agree slightly	38	26
Disagree slightly	2	2
Disagree strongly	33	33
Don't know	49	166
Neither agree nor disagree	45	30
Missing	0	5
Total	235	287

Made it easier for to change between modes of transport (e.g. train and bus)

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Agree strongly	41	16
Agree slightly	28	16
Disagree slightly	4	3
Disagree strongly	46	40
Don't know	63	173
Neither agree nor disagree	53	34
Missing	0	5
Total	235	287

Increased my use of the station

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Agree strongly	32	15
Agree slightly	15	13
Disagree slightly	15	6
Disagree strongly	66	54
Don't know	50	162
Neither agree nor disagree	58	32
Missing	0	5
Total	235	287

Q10 Do you have any further comments to make about this station and its facilities?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Complaints about cleanliness / Security	5	9
Complaints about train / station service	2	3
Don't Know / No Answer	158	227
Facilities close early	0	0
Generalised negative statements	28	18
Generalised positive statements	27	18
Improved cleanliness / Security	0	4
Improvements to facilities	3	1
Needs additional facilities / Facilities need repairs	12	6
Use it anyway	0	1
Total	235	287

Q11 What is the main purpose of your journey today from this station?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Leisure/recreation	28	25
Meeting friends/relatives	26	26
Other	5	2
Personal business	8	11
Shopping	27	34
Travel to/from education and/or training	141	185
Medical appt.	0	1
Missing	0	3
Total	235	287

Q12 To which of these age groups do you belong?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
16-24	65	86
25-34	62	62
35-44	44	64
45-59	46	61
60+	18	14
Total	235	287

Q13 Which of these best describes your current working status?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
In full time employment	129	131
in full/part time education	33	62
In part time employment	24	39
Other	4	6
Retired	15	21
Unemployed	1	28
Volunteer	29	0
Total	235	287

Q14 Do you have a physical disability which limits your mobility?

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
No	233	271
Yes	2	16
Total	235	287

Gender (by observation)

	Port Talbot	Pontypridd
Female	120	143
Male	113	144
Missing	2	0
Total	235	287