

First 756 electric train runs on the Core Valley Lines

April 9, 2024



History was made this month as the very first electric train ran north of Cardiff to Pontypridd during daylight hours.

The moment marked the next vital step in our vision to build a world class metro for south east Wales.

On 3 April, a small crew successfully completed a test run from Canton Depot via the City line up to Radyr and Pontypridd using the brand new Overhead Line Electrification.

Project Manager Alex Cochrane said: "It was a fantastic moment to see a train run on the Valleys under electric power for the very first time and today was really special.

"It is a testimony to the hard work that has gone into the project from so many teams across TfW and our infrastructure and supplier partners.

"There is still plenty of work to do before they can enter passenger service but we know customers will

really appreciate the huge benefits they will bring.”

Following the test run, further routes on the Core Valleys Network will see testing take place in the coming weeks before the start of an intensive train crew training programme. The trains will then be entering public service later this year.

Boasting either three or four modern, spacious carriages, the Stadler 756 fleet are almost identical to the brand new trains we introduced on the Rhymney line in 2023, but with the ability to run on overhead or battery power, or as a diesel/battery hybrid.

They can travel up to 75mph and are also able to switch to run on battery or diesel hybrid power for sections of the network that are difficult or costly to electrify.

Work began to electrify the Merthyr, Treherbert and Aberdare lines in 2020 and at various points the lines have been closed for extended periods to ensure the work is able to progress. The Merthyr and Aberdare lines were successfully electrified in 2023, with the Overhead Line Equipment now live.

Alongside electrifying the network, significant transformation work has been undertaken to upgrade our railway infrastructure including upgrading our stations to ensure they’re ready for the introduction of the new longer trains and brand-new signalling. Major track work has also been undertaken to install new passing loops and track doubling in many areas, allowing us to begin increasing the frequency of trains on the South-East Wales network from Summer 2024.

With 24 of the new class 756 fleet in total, it is important to keep the fleet in top condition.

With meticulous attention to detail and skilled craftsmanship, the paint team at Pullman Rail have been working hard to ensure the trains are looking their very best for when they do enter service ensuring a seamless finish and impeccable appearance.