

SOUTH WEST WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE (SWWCJC)

Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee

15th January 2025

Report of the Chief Executive

Report Title: Draft Regional Transport Plan

<p>Purpose of Report</p>	<p>To seek endorsement from Members of Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee for the Draft Regional Transport Plan that will be subject to public consultation prior to official approval to commence consultation which will be determined by the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SWWCJC) on 21st January 2025.</p>
<p>Recommendation(s)</p>	<p>That Members of Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee is asked to endorse the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the verbal progress reports from officers on the Regional Transport Plan development workstreams 2. Endorse the Draft Regional Transport Plan and supporting documents for public consultation 3. Endorse the latest Regional Transport Plan development work programme 4. That members agree that the Chair of the Regional Transport Sub Committee be granted delegated authority to make any amendments that may be necessary to amend the Draft Regional Transport Plan prior to endorsement by the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.
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Parc Cenedlaethol
 Arfordir Penfro
 Pembrokeshire Coast
 National Park



1. Introduction

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (“SWWCJC”) has been mandated to produce a Regional Transport Plan for the region by Welsh Government, in conformity with the Transport (Wales) Act (2006) and to complement Llwybr Newydd: Wales Transport Strategy (2021).

Following the successful approval of the Implementation Plan by Welsh Government prior to Christmas 2023 the region submitted its Case for Change (considered by this Sub-Committee on 21st February 2024).

Welsh Government has not offered formal feedback on the Case for Change, but officials have indicated their broad support for the Case for Change and advised that the SWWCJC should proceed on the appropriate timeline for delivery of the Final Regional Transport Plan in Summer 2025.

A further public consultation is required to enable the Draft Regional Transport Plan to be finalised for submission to Welsh Government. This report seeks the Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee’s endorsement of the Draft Regional Transport Plan for consultation.

2. Progress on the RTP

2.1 Data Book and Accessibility Analysis

To aid the development of the Draft Regional Transport Plan a ‘data book’ that sets out a quantitative analysis of various data sources including the regional indices of multiple deprivation (IMD), 2021 census population, transport information and information on environmental matters.

To support the analysis for the Draft Regional Transport Plan officers have produced an analysis of accessibility by active travel, bus & rail and car travel modes to a number of key destinations across the region. This information, when used in conjunction with the data book, forms the broad basis on which policy requirements and schemes / interventions will be assessed. Given the importance of the Accessibility Analysis this forms an Appendix to the Draft Regional Transport Plan document.

The data book is available as a background paper to this report.

The Accessibility Analysis is an appendix to the Draft Regional Transport Plan (Appendix 4).

2.2 Draft Regional Transport Plan

The Draft Regional Transport Plan has continued to be developed.

The Draft Regional Transport Plan sets out the proposed policies to enable the delivery of the Regional Transport Plan. An essential element of the development of the Final

Regional Transport Plan is public consultation and the purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the Draft Regional Transport Plan to enable the SWWCJC to formally agree to the content and consultation at its meeting of the 21st January 2025.

The Draft Regional Transport Plan confirms the need for change in the region's transport system and the evidence that supports the policies that are designed to enable that change.

The Draft Regional Transport Plan follows the Welsh Transport Strategy's core priority themes of (i) reducing the need to travel (ii) allowing people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable transport and (iii) encouraging people to make the change to more sustainable transport.

Within these three priorities specific modes of travel and region-specific requirements cover, for example, tourism related transport and the need to ensure the transport system and land use planning are connected in a sustainable way are recognised. It also provides for the region's need to grow its population and economic base.

The Draft Regional Transport Plan is structured to lead the reader through the background to why the Regional Transport Plan is being developed, the evidence that supports the Regional Transport Plan, the proposed policies, a summary of how the supporting Draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan has been developed and the initial outputs from the statutory assessments that the Regional Transport Plan requires.

The Draft Regional Transport Plan is supported by a number of Appendices that provide supporting information, and which will also be subject to public consultation.

The Appendices are:

1. A Glossary to provide explanation of acronyms and terms;
2. The Regional Transport Plan Engagement Plan (as approved by the SWWCJC in September 2024);
3. Stakeholder Engagement activities to date;
4. Accessibility Mapping covering access to key locations in the region. The mapping is set out by destination and method of travel;
5. Prioritisation tool details. This sets out how the proposed interventions and schemes in the Draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan are to be analysed;
6. Integrated Impact Assessment of the Draft Regional Transport Plan; and
7. The Draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan listing those schemes which have the potential to be prioritised for assisting in delivering the Regional Transport Plan.

2.3 Draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan

The Draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP) sets out the initial aspiration for specific schemes and interventions.

The Regional Transport Plan guidance sees the final RTDP as being the region's recommended programme for investment. All specific schemes, if funding is allocated, will remain subject to further development under the Government Welsh Transport

Appraisal Guidance process and tests of value for money and deliverability at key project milestones.

The RTDP has been developed to use an assessment matrix that provides an evidence-based approach to scheme selection. The assessment matrix has been developed and schemes and interventions identified. The SWWCJC were briefed on the basis of the assessment approach in October 2024.

The region has not had the advantage of a “Burns” transport commission investigation (as conducted for the Newport M4 and A55 North Wales corridors) to develop a series of detailed transport scheme proposals. To this end an initial scheme list has been developed based on broad themes using the latest local authority transport work programmes. The programme of scheme development is continuing and will include elements of the 2024/2025 Metro development workstream that has been designed in part to inform the RTDP.

As technical work on scheme development and assessment continues, officers will provide a verbal update to the Scrutiny Committee on progress which the Committee is asked to note.

The Draft RTDP represents the initial list of schemes and interventions based on information available in December 2024. This is included as Appendix 7 to the Draft Regional Transport Plan.

2.4 Timescales

Officers continue to review the programme to deliver the Regional Transport Plan to reflect availability of supporting information and timing of the required approval processes.

A number of unforeseen external influences have caused delay until this point:

- General election and delayed informal consultation – consultation outcome report not available until mid-September;
- More complex metro programme – issues of data availability and scheme scope revisions;
- Lack of scheme development due to Southwest Wales not being subject to a “*Burns Transport Commission*”;
- Agreement on due process for final approval of the RTDP, and
- Awaiting further data inputs from Transport for Wales.

The latest programme milestones are set out in Appendix A to this report.

2.5 Consultation and stakeholder engagement to date

The objectives of the Regional Transport Plan and the Case for Change were subject to initial public consultation in July 2024. This was an informal, non-statutory consultation focussed on problems and issues identified in the preparatory work for the Regional Transport Plan. The consultation ran for a period of six weeks from Monday

15th July until Monday 26th August 2024 and feedback was gathered via an online survey.

A summary report of the initial public consultation has been published and can be found here <http://www.SWWCJCsouthwest.wales/37375>.

During summer 2024 an early stage of public consultation was held to:

- Let people know that a new RTP is being developed.
- Give people an opportunity to comment on the transport problems they are currently experiencing in the region and on their transport priorities for the future.
- Ensure the new RTP addresses the issues that are of most pressing concern.

A summary report of the initial public consultation has been published. This forms part of the text of the Draft Regional Transport Plan.

The public survey saw 818 responses. These recorded that alternatives to private cars are lacking and that public transport service delivery lacks effectiveness. Also cycling and walking opportunities were limited and that asset maintenance is of critical importance. These themes were repeated when future priorities for the Draft Regional Transport Plan were asked about.

In parallel to the public consultation, a series of themed workshops with technical stakeholders have been conducted to inform the Draft Regional Transport Plan. The outcomes of these workshops are recorded in Appendix 3 of the Draft Regional Transport Plan.

2.6 Integrated Impact Assessment

The SWWCJC is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage;
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language;
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English, and
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Integrated Impact Assessment workstream has generated a Draft Scoping Report for the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the RTP. The Scoping Report includes

the scoping of an Integrated Wellbeing Assessment (IWBA), the scoping of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and scoping of the requirements for the SWWCJC's Integrated Impact Assessment.

The Draft Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Assessment of the Regional Transport Plan forms a key element of the proposed consultation material and is appended to the Draft Regional Transport Plan (Appendix 6).

In line with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the Scoping Report was consulted on in October / November 2024 for 5 weeks, with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and Cadw, as statutory consultees. The Scoping Report includes the following:

- The level of scope and detail to be included in the IIA;
- A review of relevant plans, programmes and initiatives that will inform the IIA and the Regional Transport Plan;
- The relevant baseline information including trend data of relevant transport planning;
- The identification of key sustainability issues and opportunities for the Regional Transport Plan; and
- An appraisal framework of objectives and decision aiding questions, against which the Regional Transport Plan will be appraised.

In response to the consultation, Cadw has confirmed that '*The historic environment has been appropriately considered in the scoping report and we agree with the proposed methodologies for assessing the impact of the strategy on it.*' Welsh Government confirmed that the approach to IWBA can integrate SEA, but the findings of the IWBA as a standalone assessment should be made clear. The team did not receive comments from NRW within the statutory timeframe.

Following the Scoping exercise, the emerging Regional Transport Plan objectives and policies were assessed. Iterative feedback has been provided and recommendations have been integrated into the development of the policies during the drafting process. The next stage in the Assessment process will be to assess the Schemes within the Regional Transport Plan against the IIA Framework. Recommendations to improve the positive sustainability effects, or reduce potentially negative effects, will then be identified and incorporated where appropriate.

4 Funding Implications

4.1 Development of the Regional Transport Plan

The SWWCJC has allocated funding to assist with the development of the Regional Transport Plan and Welsh Government made available £125k of funding in the 2023-24 financial year towards the development of the Regional Transport Plan. A further £100k has been allocated for 2024-25.

The full cost of developing the Regional Transport Plan is yet to be determined but it is clear that further funding will be required. The funding will need to be provided to enable the plan to be progressed; and this will need to be identified and allocated through ongoing discussion with Welsh Government.

4.2 Delivering the Regional Transport Plan

The Welsh Government is still to provide clarity on funding for delivery of the Regional Transport Plan. As the Regional Transport Plan covers the years 2025 to 2030, interim funding arrangements are intended to be deployed for the 2025/26 financial year. This was reported to the SWWCJC in November 2024, with a fully revised grants system in operation from the 2026/2027 financial year onwards.

The limited clarity to date applies to the level of funding and the distribution mechanism to be used. Informal advice to date from Welsh Government indicates that the following funds would be rolled into a single Regional Transport Plan delivery fund:

- Local Transport Fund
- Active Travel Fund
- Resilient Roads Fund
- Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund
- Safe Routes in Communities
- Road Safety Grant (Capital)
- Road Safety Grant (Revenue)

Further informal Welsh Government advice indicates overall future funding levels are intended to remain at broadly similar levels to those seen in previous financial years for the funding streams noted above but this is also not confirmed to date.

As the development of schemes progresses it is anticipated that schemes identified through the Regional Transport Plan and RTDP will be capable of becoming capital schemes at an early stage wherever investment in physical infrastructure is proposed.

At the time of writing the Welsh Government have provided no further guidance on whether revenue funding for non-infrastructure interventions will be included in the Regional Transport Plan grant settlement.

5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Alignment with SWWCJC Corporate Plan 2023-2028 and the identified SWWCJC Well-being Objectives.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

The SWWCJC approved its Corporate Plan 2023-2028 in March 2023. The Corporate Plan contains the SWWCJC's well-being objectives and frames the corporate direction of travel. To this end, it is considered that the recommendation(s) contained within this report align(s) to the corporate policy framework of the SWWCJC as set out within its Corporate Plan.

5.1 Well-Being Objective 2

“To produce a Regional Transport Plan for South West Wales that is founded on collaboration and enables the delivery of a transport system which is good for our current and future generations of people and communities, good for our environment and good for our economy and places (rural and urban).”

The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) will consider the impact of the Regional Transport Plan on future generations by reference to Objective 2. The Integrated Impact Assessment Scoping Report proposed for public consultation alongside the draft Regional Transport Plan responds to the IIA requirements.

6. Impact Assessment

6.1 Workforce Impacts

The SWWCJC has approved resources to support the ongoing development of the Regional Transport Plan and hence recruitment processes are being followed to secure support. In addition, the region will continue to procure specialist support as necessary to develop the Regional Transport Plan.

The delivery of the Regional Transport Plan will require retention of officers in the constituent authorities to develop and deliver the schemes and interventions in the RTDP. A review of the commitment of officer time to deliver the Plan is about to commence with reporting to the constituent authorities anticipated when completed.

6.2 Legal Impacts

The requirement for local authorities to produce a Local Transport Plan is set out in the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Transport (Wales) Act 2006. This duty was transferred to corporate joint committees on 30th June 2022 by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Statutory guidance is set out in the Corporate Joint Committee Statutory Guidance². The Corporate Joint Committees (Transport Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2021³ set out how the SWWCJC should prepare its Regional Transport Plan.

Although the duty to produce a Regional Transport Plan sits with the SWWCJC, the duty to deliver the Regional Transport Plan sits with the local authorities. Despite this, it is expected that the local authorities in the SWWCJC will collaborate on a single collective delivery plan. Endorsement of the final RTDP by each local authority will therefore be required before the final approval of the Regional Transport Plan and RTDP by the SWWCJC.

6.3 Risk Management Impacts

The Welsh Government has indicated that the timely submission of the final Regional Transport Plan in Summer 2025 is essential for release of grant funding for 2026/27 which is predicated on the approval of the Regional Transport Plan. A failure to submit the Regional Transport Plan on time carries a risk that Welsh Government grant funding for 2026/27 would not be made available.

6.4 Consultation

No formal consultation required for the purpose of this summary report but noting that the Draft Regional Transport Plan will proceed to public consultation once approved.

6.5 Reason for proposed decision

To meet the duty placed on the SWWCJC to produce a Regional Transport Plan.

6.6 Implementation

This report will be implemented following the conclusion of the three day call in period.

6.7 Appendices

Appendix A - South West Wales Draft Regional Transport Plan
December 2024

Including;

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Appendix 2 – Engagement Plan

Appendix 3 – Stakeholder Engagement Outcomes

Appendix 4 – Accessibility Analysis

Appendix 5 – Prioritisation Tool Details

Appendix 6 – Integrated Wellbeing Assessment and Strategic Environmental
Assessment Scoping Report

Appendix 7 – Draft RTDP

6.8 List of Background Papers

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=491&MId=11501&Ver=4>

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=491&MId=11609&Ver=4>

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=491&MId=11921&Ver=4>