

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

21 February 2024

Chairperson: Councillor R.Stewart

Vice Chairperson: Councillor D.Price

Councillors: P.Miller and S.K.Hunt

**National Park
Representatives:** A.Edwards

Co-Opted Members: E.Evans, E.Woollett and S.Toombs

**Officers In
Attendance:** M.Nicholls, W.Walters, G.Jones, T.Jones,
C.Moore, C.Griffiths, S.Aldred-Jones, K.Tillman,
S.Davies, D.Griffiths, R.Lewis, L.McAndrew,
D.Thomas, M.Wade, L.White, A.Williams and
J.Woodman-Ralph

Scrutiny Invitees: Councillor T.Bowen

1. **Welcome and Chairs Announcements**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23 January 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

4. **Forward Work Programme**

The Corporate Joint Committee Forward Work Programme was noted.

5. **Regional Transport Plan - Case for Change**

Members were provided with the Case for Change, which formed part of the process of developing the Regional Transport Plan (RTP).

Officers explained that the Case for Change was the next required stage in progressing the RTP; this was following on from the previous stage of producing the Implementation Plan. It was stated that the Case for Change was a document which set out the regions current position and why change was required; throughout the document, Officers had given consideration to a number of factors, such as the economy and environmental issues.

In regards to why change was needed, it was noted that the Welsh Government policy was a significant driver; however, there was also a clear imperative for the transport network to evolve. It was mentioned that these drivers for change were set out in the circulated report.

The Committee were informed that the document also set out how Officers will engage with stakeholders and conduct public consultation on the final RTP; as well as detail in regards to the integrated impact assessment process, which follows on from the various consultation exercises.

In terms of next steps, it was confirmed that the Case for Change would need to be submitted to Welsh Government by the end of February 2024; Officers will then continue the process of developing the RTP, with the current timescale for completion by spring 2025. The challenging timescales associated with the development of the RTP was highlighted.

A discussion took place in regards to the confirmed funding that will be provided by Welsh Government; £125k for the current year, and £100k for next year. It was mentioned that there will be a need for additional funding to facilitate the number of work streams and consultation work.

Officers stated that Transport for Wales had identified specific resource to help with the development of the RTP; in addition to that they've started to develop useful modelling information, which will assist with the evidence base and testing interventions for developing the programmes.

Another concern raised by Officers was in regards to the difficulty in working up a capital programme, as the information to do this will be based on the Plan information. Officers mentioned that Welsh Government were aware of this challenge.

The Committee expressed the need to develop a sustainable public transport system, considering the rural areas as well as those which were greatly populated; and the need to think innovatively in terms of addressing the transport issues that the Region currently faces.

Members asked to be provided with further explanation in regards to the delivery and prioritisation of objectives; it was acknowledged that it will be difficult to deliver on all of the objectives due to funding and resourcing issues.

It was intended that as Officers progressed through the stages, there will be a very well developed programme of work; making sure to target each of the interventions. It was mentioned that the transport hierarchy was clear in that sustainable transport was a priority, such as walking, cycling and public transport; filtering down to private car at the bottom of the list. Officers added that they will build a case in regards to the benefit that the different interventions would bring, and what programmes will work; following this, they will consider the detail of the schemes, the economic and social benefit, and how they will achieve the transport objectives and meet the integrated impact assessment.

Officers highlighted that they were working with Welsh Government on the rail interventions, which would be more costly than some of the other interventions; however, they were all measured against their impact. It was hoped that there would be funding streams available when the time comes to implement these interventions. It was stated that the RTP would be a tool, and provide a strong case, to obtain any future Welsh Government funding.

In conclusion, it was explained that there was a lot of evidence to drive the choices that need to be made. Officers expressed the importance of coming up with detailed interventions, which will be split into small and large packages; the way in which these packages were distributed across the Region would be a fundamental piece of criteria to apply. It was added that the analysis would need to feature the rural areas, where there were very distinct transport challenges, as well as the urban areas.

A discussion took place in regards to the environment and greening of the transport system; specifically the nature of movement in the National Park areas. The representatives of the National Parks highlighted the need to shift the emphasis to provide adequate resourcing for people within the area, who need to reach public services and the like; particularly those who were most vulnerable.

Officers stated that when analysing the evidence, it will be based on data of what was occurring internally in the National Parks. Members were informed that it would be important to understand what will need to be done at the local level, in order for the community to have the access that it needs; as well as considering how to deal with some of the adverse effects of the tourism, particularly carbon travel into the areas.

A suggestion was made to utilise National Park representatives on the various groups associated with progressing the RTP, as their contribution would offer different perspectives. Reference was also made to the importance of utilising the multinational businesses, which were associated with the Region, to lobby on a greater scale in regards to transport.

It was confirmed that Officers were carrying out transport accessibility studies to assist the National Park in Pembrokeshire, which was beginning to identify some specific locational studies. Officers recognised the importance of addressing the local community issues and managing the impact of day trip journeys on the community; whilst also addressing the wider, strategic issues. Members were assured that these matters will be reflected in the production of the plan going forward.

In terms of lobbying, Officers had recently linked in with Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone Board members; and further to this, understood the benefit of asking these types of individuals to lobby in regards to transport. It was noted that the stakeholder list that was currently being collated utilised a number of very significant people to hopefully be involved in the plan production. It was added that the more engagement, the stronger the voice will be in terms of acquiring funding and having more of a significant impact for the Region.

Members asked Officers for reassurances that they will appropriately challenge the policy framework, if there were elements that did not work for the Region. In addition, Members sought reassurance that the delivery will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Following on from the query above, it was noted that Welsh Government would require Officers to make sure that consideration was given to the high level policy drivers, however more specifically relating the challenges and situations in which sustainable transport may not be the solution; doing this would provide a way of bidding for funding, and an ability to push for other interventions.

RESOLVED:

That the Case for Change, as detailed as an appendix to the report, be approved for submission to the Welsh Government to meet the requirements of the Regional Transport Plan mandate.

6. **Appointment of Deputy Chief Executive**

The Committee received a report seeking to appoint a Deputy Chief Executive to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

It was explained that this appointment would ensure additional resilience in the absence of a particular Chief Executive, for any fixed period of time; the Chief Executives from the constituent authorities of Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Carmarthenshire would then be capable of exercising the powers in the long term absence of a Chief Executive.

It had previously been agreed that the Chief Executive role will rotate; Officers confirmed that the Deputy Chief Executive roles would rotate to correspond with that going forward. In addition, it was noted that the role will not be remunerated; therefore there were no financial impacts.

RESOLVED:

That the role of Deputy Chief Executives be created to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee; and the Chief Executives of Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot be appointed as Deputy Chief Executives, and be authorised to act as Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee in the absence of the identified Chief Executive.

7. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items received.

CHAIRPERSON

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