



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting MONDAY, 24 APRIL 2023, 5.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

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Ref: SharePoint/Scrutiny/Env/Correspondance24.04.2023

Date: 27th April 2023

Councillor Dan De’Ath
Cabinet Member – Transport & Strategic Planning



By email

Annwyl Cyngorydd / Dear Councillor

CASTLE STREET – CITY CENTRE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS & REVIEW OF ROAD USER PAYMENT OPTIONS

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 24th April 2023, I would like to thank you and officers for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the **Castle Street** traffic management arrangements and the review of **Road User Payment options**. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations, and you will find our recommendations and requests, listed at the end of the letter.

CASTLE STREET CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Some members expressed a preference to close Castle Street, but given the impact that this would have on the wider transport network, they feel that Castle Street should remain open.

Committee members noted that the delivery of the preferred permanent scheme is dependent on the availability of funding from Welsh Government and that this has not yet been confirmed. They asked if the total funding was not made available what were the alternative proposals? Officers responded that Welsh Government are very supportive of the scheme that is compliant in it's temporary form and that issue was in respect of the timing of meetings.

If / when the funding is confirmed the committee noted that the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and bus users is of paramount importance. Members also noted that the Wood Street scheme has been well received.

Committee members noted that there was only reference to NO2 levels in the papers and would welcome more information about the levels of **Particulate**

Matter and the general levels of Air Quality, they also asked if the impact of the new bus station, when completed, would impact on Air Quality levels in the City Centre.

Members asked how confident are they that the modelling that has informed the proposed solutions is accurate and has been verified. Officers replied that the modelling had been undertaken using recognised systems i.e. VISSIM (multi modal traffic simulation software) PTE Visum and the South East Wales Transport model, air quality monitoring stations across the city and all reports are reviewed by a Welsh Government committee.

Clarification was sought in relation to the 'bus box' and the controlled Parking Zones aspirations. Officers confirmed that the bus box is an area reserved for getting on and off buses and that the controlled parking zones are to manage the current unrestricted kerbside parking in residential areas and that the restrictions would lessen as you move away from the City Centre and that P&D refers to Pay and Display parking.

The Committee asked if bus operators had been consulted as it appears that some 'pop-up' cycle ways are hindering bus routes. Officers reassured members that they were in dialogue with operators.

Committee members also asked that the 'rain gardens' (SUDS) were aesthetically pleasing, and officers commented that depending on the season that the scheme is completed and planted it will take time for any plants to grow and mature.

It was also noted that some roads were very nearly 'non-compliant' in relation to acceptable air quality levels. Officers commented that reallocating road space to sustainable transport and active travel methods would reduce the amount of traffic on the road and therefore improve air quality, which is constantly monitored at various locations across the city.

Officers were asked by members if they were confident that the range of other schemes, that will improve the overall transport networked noted in the report would be delivered. Officers remarked that depending on the availability of

funding that the options are fluid and that decisions are not made in isolation or in silos because of the knock on impact to other areas.

Officers also noted that there would continue to be periodic evening closure of the Butetown Tunnel to allow for planned essential maintenance.

REVIEW OF ROAD USER PAYMENT OPTIONS

You and officers emphasised the long term benefits and impacts of introducing a road user charging scheme being significantly improved health and well being for residents and an improved transport infrastructure and network.

The Committee acknowledged that the introduction of any type of road user charging scheme would not happen before 2027, as a considerable amount of work needs to take place with key stakeholders and the public, and that in the current proposed timeline an outline scheme would be brought back to Cabinet by the end of 2024. It was also noted that the Cabinet has committed to ringfence the revenue generated to support transport improvements.

It was also acknowledged that the detail in relation to the type of scheme to be introduced is yet to be decided, although the priority is to introduce an understandable fair scheme that benefits the well being of people in Cardiff in the widest sense.

Members voiced worries that currently the provision of public transport appears to be diminishing and would need to improve significantly to give the public confidence that it was an effective substitute to using their cars. You and officers agreed that there would need to be a level of alternative provision in place before any charging was introduced. However, the detail in relation to this was varied, i.e. £1 bus fare on key routes, but no indication of what the 'key routes' are / will be, although it was confirmed it would be for all bus operators. The Committee acknowledged that some elements are vague so that they can be shaped following conversations with the public. However,

you and officers are confident that the schemes identified are deliverable before the introduction of a road user changing scheme.

The Committee expressed concerns about the proposed consultation and engagement and commented that it will need to be meaningful and will need to be innovative and use different methods to engage with the widest range of people. Officers agreed and stated that the consultation will be a dialogue with citizens and stakeholders, including representative panels, so that a shared understanding of the issues and proposals is gained.

Members asked how during the consultation and engagement process duties in relation to the **Future Generations Act** will be met, and asked for further details.

Members also expressed concerns that a road user payment scheme may disadvantage further those unable to purchase a new hybrid/electric vehicles that rely on their older cars in the absence of an **efficient** and **reliable** public transport service. You confirmed that mitigation in relation to low income families would need to be teased out the process, possibly though exceptions.

The Committee noted that the cost of bus/train fares may not be preventing the public using public transport services but it is possibly the **infrequent, unreliable, disjointed service** that is currently being delivered. Officers confirmed that they work closely with bus operators and Transport for Wales and recognise high train fares may be prohibitive and they will continue to lobby on citizens behalf.

Officers confirmed that best practice from cities in the UK and also Europe will be used to inform the development of any proposals going forward

Following the discussion members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee also offered to support the consultation and engagement process as they recognise the significance of the issue and that fact that we will probably being seeing further reports in the future.

To confirm a response to the letter which responds to the following points is requested:

- More information about the levels of Particulate Matter and the general levels of Air Quality
- Clarification of how duties in relation to the Future Generations Act will be met .

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted or Not Accepted	Cabinet Response	Responsible Officer	Action Date
Recommend that 'schemes' to be in place before road user charging is introduced are clarified as soon as possible in order to provide some reassurance to the public.				
Recommend that consideration is given to a phased approach to the introduction of road user charging.				

Once again thank you once more for attending Committee and for considering our comments and observations.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely / Yn gywir



Councillor Owen Jones
Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc: *Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee*

Cllr Dan De'Ath, Cabinet Member Transport & Strategic Planning

Andrew Gregory, Director, Planning, Transport & Environment

Claire Moggridge, Head of Transport

Gethin Shields, Transport Programme Manager

Jason Dixon, Operational Manger for Transport Development & Network Manager

Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rodney Berman, Group Leader , Liberal Democrats

Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations

Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Business Manager