

ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 FEBRUARY 2017

Present: County Councillor (Chairperson)
County Councillors Awan, Clark, Chris Davis, Hill-John,
Keith Jones and Darren Williams

57 : APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIRPERSON

The Committee appointed Councillor Gavin Hill-John as Chairperson for the meeting.

58 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aubrey and Councillor Mitchell.

59 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

60 : CARDIFF WEST TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE - CONSIDERATION OF CALLED IN CABINET DECISION CAB/16/38; REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CITY OPERATIONS.

The Council's Constitution makes provision for any decision taken by the Cabinet to be called in by giving notice to the Operational Manager Scrutiny Services within seven days of the publication of that decision. During the period following the Cabinet meeting of 15 December 2016 a non-executive Councillor submitted a request to call-in the decision on the item entitled 'Cardiff West Transport Interchange'. The report had sought approval to proceed with the development of an Integrated Transport Hub on the site of the former Waungron Road Recycling Depot.

Members were advised that the Cabinet Decision CAB/16/38, published on 16 December 2016 with a proposed implementation date of 29 December 2016, resolved that:

- The proposed Western Transport Interchange development be approved;
- Authority be delegated to the Director of City Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability, the Council's 151 Officer and the Director of Law and Governance to deal with all aspects of the procurement of the Works for the Western Interchange Development as set out in this report, up to and including the award of the contract;
- The transfer of Indicative Capital Programme allocation from Bus Corridor improvements to the Cardiff West Interchange Scheme be approved.

A copy of the Cabinet Decision Register and the Cabinet report were attached as appendices to the report.

A non-executive Member requested that the decision be called-in for the Committee's consideration. The main reasons for calling in the decision were summarised as follows:

- **Financial** – including the cost of the Scheme, the elements of the costing, the calculation of running costs, and the source of funding chosen for the scheme;
- **Traffic Flow & Modelling** – concerns about issues covered in AECOM's Modelling Report provided as a background paper in the Cabinet Report
- **Parking** – whether the proposal would impact on parking capacity in the area;
- **Transport & Connectivity** – querying the impact of the proposal on the development of rapid transport bus corridors and integrated ticketing;
- **Health & Safety Concerns** – for the safety of bus passengers, cyclists and car drivers; and
- **Cycling Issues** – the principle of placing cyclists on shared pavements, and the placement of cycle stands in the middle of the triangle.

Members were asked to consider the call-in in accordance with the requirements of the Call-In Procedure. The scope of this scrutiny is limited to exploring the reasons for the call-in summarised above.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Neil McEvoy to address the Committee and present the reasons for call-in of the Cabinet Decision. Councillor McEvoy stated that the reasons for the call-in were outlined in his submission. He considered that the proposed Transport Interchange would not achieve any additional improvement to services that could not otherwise be achieved by providing more services and more imaginative timetabling.

Councillor McEvoy stated that, in his opinion, the driver for the Transport Interchange was the Council, who were being advised by officers with little or no local knowledge. Traffic congestion in the area was already a major problem. It was quicker to walk to Ely Bridge to catch a bus and there were dangers presented by providing extra buses on an already overloaded network which were not being addressed.

Furthermore, Councillor McEvoy considered that the provisions of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act – whereby communities must be involved in the decision-making that affects them – was not being adhered to. There was no consultation with the community regarding this decision. Conversely, a community poll that had asked whether to return the site to a Household Waste Recycling Centre received 100% support.

Councillor McEvoy argued that the proposal was not in the public interest. There was no fixed price for the proposal and the £1.7 million budget could increase. The plan, he stated, had no merit, was rushed and the Cabinet had no right to sanction approximately £2 million of expenditure at this time. The decision was likely to be reappraised following the local government election in May.

The Committee sought clarification on Councillor McEvoy's views on a number of issues, including parking concerns and the location of the proposed interchange.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Ramesh Patel, Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability; Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance. The Cabinet Members were invited to make statements.

Councillor Patel stated that it was important to understand the authority's vision and direction of travel in terms of transportation. The City is growing. Around 80,000 commuters travel into the City every day and the LDP will also bring new developments. Transport in the City has to change and 'bus hubs' enable cross-city travel and will avoid the need to come into the City Centre.

Councillor Patel disputed the claim that the decision was being rushed. The proposals were developed over a long period of time and Councillor McEvoy was advised of the plans during the early stages. No alternative proposals have been put forward. Councillor Patel closed by saying that the bus hub aims to encourage people to give up travelling by car – the operation of the HWRC at this site had caused traffic congestion problems in the past due to parking.

Councillor Hinchey stated that the officers will address each of the points made by the call-in. Councillor Hinchey emphasised that the facility was intended to be a bus interchange and not a park and ride site. In a growing city it was important to take a strategic view of traffic management. This site lay at the crossroads of a number of communities and the Council has a responsibility to make the best use of land under its control.

Councillor Hinchey considered that the Cabinet was given enough information before making its decision was made and that is made clear in the report.

The Chairperson welcomed Andrew Gregory, Corporate Director and officers from the City Operations Directorate. The officers were invited to deliver a presentation on the Cardiff West Interchange. Following the presentation, the Chairperson invited comments and questions from Members of the Committee. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members noted that the financial advice stated that the cost of the project stood at £1.7 million – with a possibility that a further element of funding may be required. Members asked whether the £1.7 million figure included the cost of consultants and staff time. Members also asked whether the figure accounted for the whole of the Bus Corridor Improvements budget for the next 4 years. Officers stated that the cost did include the staff and consultancy costs. The £1.7 million figure was the best estimate of the overall cost of the project, however, this figure may increase or decrease.
- The Cardiff West Interchange represented a radical new proposal. New opportunities from s106, grant funding and the parking reserve would allow for additional enhancements. Work was continuing on the strategic network of bus corridors and funding from civil enforcement penalties has been ring-fenced for transport projects.

- Members agreed that the provision of improved journey times was key to encouraging people to use public transport. Members asked whether bus movements would be improved as a result of the proposals. Officers anticipated that in the future there would be more bus services and greater choice for bus users. Efforts would be made to minimise delays. Four additional bus stops would be provided. The aim would be to achieve a 'turn up and go' operation meaning that there would be no more than a 10-minute wait for a bus service. This was a Metro project objective, it would benefit all users, and it could only be achieved if there was an increase in capacity.
- The Cabinet Member stated that doing nothing was not an option. It was crucial that the authority did everything it could to provide the best facilities. New developments would lead to an increase in pressure on the transport network and this needs to be addressed.
- Members asked whether there were any other potential sites for a Transport Interchange in Cardiff West and what opportunities may present themselves in the future if the Waungron Road site was not developed. Officers advised that there were no other Council-owned sites in Cardiff West.
- The Committee noted that the call-in has challenged the technical advice received by the Cabinet. Members asked officers how confident they were in the accuracy of the technical advice provided. The Cabinet Member stated that a number of communities would be affected by the proposals. There were approximately 10,000 houses within walking distance of the site and the shift towards sustainable transportation would not happen unless there were viable alternatives for people to use.

The meeting was briefly adjourned at this point following the receipt of a request for legal advice from the Monitoring Officer.

- Officers were asked to clarify what consultation was carried out with local residents. Officers stated that during the planning application process consultation with both local residents and local Councillors was carried out. Consultation on planning applications is standardised and local Councillors have an opportunity to feed into this as a part of the consultation process. Feedback from the Ask Cardiff survey indicated that the public supported the provision of increased public transport and reducing congestion.
- Members noted that the costs of the project were escalating. Members expressed the view that they would have preferred to have had an opportunity to scrutinise these matters at an earlier stage.
- Members asked officers to indicate how access to the parcel of land would be facilitated. Officers advised that access was indicated on the diagram provided to the Committee. Access would be restricted and would be the subject of a separate planning application. These issues were secondary to the called-in decision and would be subject to a second report to Cabinet. Members considered that it would be useful to know whether access to the site is feasible at this stage. Members requested further clarification of how any arrangements would be enforced. Officers noted the concerns of the Committee regarding

access arrangements.

- The Committee noted that there were 2 strategic housing developments proposed on Llantrisant Road. Members asked what additional bus routes/services might be provided from the Cardiff West Transport Interchange. Officers stated that this was a matter for bus operators, but it was envisaged that additional services would be provided not only on Llantrisant Road, but also on Plasmawr Road and St Fagans Road. Members were also asked to note that the Park and Ride proposals at Junction 33 would also have an impact in terms of additional routes/services.
- Officers were asked for comments regarding the use of the interchange by cyclists. Officers stated that the site was a destination on a strategic route. It was anticipated that the interchange would connect with high-quality cycling routes.
- Officers confirmed that there would be no parking available at the site. However, drop off/pick up points would be provided. The Cabinet Member considered that parking at the Cardiff West Transport Interchange would be less problematic than the parking associated with the former HWRC.
- Members asked what specific measures were proposed to improve journey times and movements. The Cabinet Member stated that measures were already in place, such as bus corridors and parking enforcement. Feedback from bus operators indicated that journey times are improving as a result of these measures.
- The Committee was advised that as the Arriva Trains franchise was due to be renewed in 2018, it was unlikely that any additional train services would be provided in the short-term. However, the Cardiff West Transport Interchange will make links with other routes possible.

The Chairperson welcomed Max Wallace of the Cardiff Cycling Campaign to the meeting. Max Wallace was invited to make representations. These are summarised as follows:

- Cardiff Cycling Campaign support a bus interchange at Ely Mill. Such provision was omitted from the LDP but it may still be feasible.
- By allowing cycling and pedestrians to share the footway, the proposal agreed by the Cabinet has failed to comply with the Council's stated policy of segregated provision for cyclists. Separation could have been accommodated in the design for the interchange but it has not been.
- The interchange design was described as secluded, unattractive and impractical, with no supervision and no space for cycle stands.
- The interchange was considered to be not useful for cyclist and there would be little incentive for cyclists to use such a facility. The funding for the scheme could be used for other projects which would aid cyclists.

The Chairperson invited all those present to make closing remarks.

Councillor McEvoy stated that the Cabinet decision was a 'farce' and it would result in nothing that could not be achieved by better timetabling. He considered that project to be a 'waste of public money', that would result in slower journey times and that would have no parking provision. Roads in the area are already beyond capacity. Concerns were expressed that communities had not been consulted regarding the proposals. The health of residents living near the site was also likely to be affected by harmful pollutants. Councillor McEvoy requested the Committee to refer the decision back to the Cabinet for further consideration.

Councillor Patel stated that the scheme was essential. For the city to grow and have a good transport strategy things need to be done differently. The authority has a clear direction. No objections were received from local Members regarding the planning application for the site. Councillor Patel emphasised that the site was not a park and ride facility.

Councillor Hinchey advised that the interchange was a strategy development and was well-positioned. Cabinet had considered the cost of the project, the revenue streams and the potential capital receipt. Ely Mill was already being developed and it could not be considered as a potential location for the Cardiff West Transport Interchange. The strategic plan was to use bus corridors to combat ever grown congestion. Residents and commuters will make the change to public transport if facilities such as this are provided. The Cabinet followed due process when coming to its decision.

AGREED – That the decision be referred back to the Cabinet for the following reasons:

- **Financial** – On balance Members were concerned at the increase in costs from £500,000 for the outline concept to £1.7million for a fully designed scheme. They would ask that a review of all costs is undertaken before taking the scheme any further.
- **Parking** – On balance Members were concerned that there had not been adequate consideration in the local area of any potential parking issues that could be caused by the scheme. It is felt that further evaluation of the potential parking impact needs to take place before Cabinet takes a decision on the scheme.
- **Traffic Congestion** – On balance Members were not convinced that the scheme would reduce traffic congestion in the area and could potentially increase some journey times. It is felt that the traffic modelling data needs to be reviewed and reconsidered before Cabinet takes a decision on the scheme.
- **Potential Site Development Options** – The inner triangle area of the transport interchange has been identified as a potential development site that could generate a capital receipt to support the funding of the scheme. Members would like a Cabinet view on the type of development which could be created on the site and some assurance that access plans for the inner triangle area development have been reviewed.
- **Cycling** – The majority of Members felt that cycling provision needed to be improved at the site, for example, further consideration should be given to integrating segregated cycle lanes in and around the site and site security should

be reviewed to ensure that it is safe to leave bikes at the site for extended periods of time.

- **Transport Connectivity** – On balance Members were not convinced by the location of the proposed transport interchange and its connectivity to other key transport locations around the city. In particular, there was concern around how the scheme would link in with future rapid bus transit corridors which have yet to be clearly defined; the obvious sites mentioned (for example, junction 33 and Heath) regularly experience significant traffic congestion problems. The Committee, therefore, recommends that potential linkage to any rapid bus transit corridors is reviewed before any decision is taken by Cabinet.

61 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that the next Environment Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 14 February 2017.

The meeting terminated at 1.30 pm

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg