

**CABINET MEETING: 17 JUNE 2021**

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**NORTH WEST CARDIFF CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION  
STUDY: UPDATE**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING & TRANSPORT (COUNCILLOR CARO  
WILD)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 10**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to receive an update on the transportation study work that will identify the short-term and long-term public transport options that offer the best business cases in order to improve access through North West Cardiff towards the City Centre.
2. This report asks Cabinet to note the outcome of the current stage of the study work and the way forward to progress the short-term and long-term business cases.

**Background**

3. Cabinet considered a report on the Cardiff Capital Region Metro vision on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014. Cabinet resolved to:
  - a) Authorise officers to engage with Welsh Government, key transport and other stakeholders in carrying out further detailed work to develop the Metro proposals and that progress with this work be reported to Cabinet, as necessary; and
  - b) Authorise officers to develop proposals for a project delivery mechanism appropriate for the implementation of Metro plan projects in Cardiff, including arrangements for resourcing, governance, programme management and partnership working, the meeting of any regulatory or statutory requirements and other ancillary matters, and such matters to be set out in a future report to Cabinet.
4. The Transport White Paper approved by Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 included proposals for major new rapid public transit for North West Cardiff into RCT. In the short term the focus was on new Bus Rapid Transit services, Park & Ride, transport hubs and interchanges. The longer-term Crossrail route could include tram-train lines serving North West Cardiff and beyond to Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). The Adopted Local Development Plan 2006-2026 also includes a policy framework to

protect routes required for Cardiff City Region Metro network improvements. Cabinet resolved on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 inter alia:

- a) The development of strategic and outline Business Cases on Delivery Options be approved and authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, Transport and Environment, subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member Strategic Planning and Transport, Cabinet Member Finance, Modernisation & Performance, s.151 Officer and Director Governance and Legal Services, to deal with all aspects of the procurement process (including approving the evaluation criteria to be used, commencing the procurement and authorising the award of the proposed contract) and all ancillary matters pertaining to the procurement.
  - b) A further report be received on the outcomes of the Outline Business Case to agree any necessary consultation and next steps to develop the full business case.
  - c) Authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to engage with the Regional Transport Authority and other partners/stakeholders on the White Paper and delivery option Business Cases.
5. In July 2019, Mott Macdonald Transport Consultants were commissioned to undertake a WelTAG Stage 1 study to investigate which short-term and long-term public transport options serving a corridor from North West Cardiff towards the City Centre offer the best business case for further development and eventual implementation. Transport for Wales (TfW), the Welsh Government and Cardiff and RCT Councils jointly commissioned this study.
  6. The study work was done in accordance with the Welsh Government, "Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance" (WelTAG) and the Future Generations framework. The purpose of WelTAG Stage 1 is to understand the issues of concern, explore the context and to present a long list of possible solutions, sufficient to be able to decide whether there are any solutions within the transport sector that are worth pursuing and to select a short list of options for more detailed consideration.
  7. In accordance with WelTAG guidance, a Review Group for the study was established and included Welsh Government, TfW/ TfW Rail Services, Cardiff Council, RCT, Vale of Glamorgan County Council, Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority and Network Rail. The purpose of the WelTAG Review Group was to consider the contents of the WelTAG Stage Reports, assess the study objectives, assess each of the options presented, and decide on the actions to be taken at the end of that WelTAG stage.
  8. This corridor was identified for further investigation primarily due to the following factors:

- The Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008 has identified the area centred on North West Cardiff / Talbot Green / Llantrisant as a Strategic Opportunity Area within the Cardiff Capital Region.
  - Cardiff's role has been recognised as a key economic driver for the Capital Region. However, it has also been recognised that it will not be able to function effectively as a networked city region unless a fully integrated, high quality transport system is put in place. The highway network along the North West Cardiff corridor (particularly the A4119) has experienced significant traffic congestion (Pre-COVID19) which is forecast to worsen long-term without strategic sustainable transport improvements.
  - Both Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf Councils' Local Development Plans have highlighted significant future growth taking place along the corridor linking Talbot Green, Llantrisant and North West Cardiff, in terms of residential development and economic activity.
9. The scale of these proposed developments is likely to have a significant impact on the existing transport infrastructure in the area, with residents and commuters working in Cardiff experiencing worsening conditions. It is recognised that any future large scale developments in this area will place considerable pressure on the existing transport network unless the planned growth can be delivered in a sustainable way and that a phasing of new transport infrastructure can support these planned developments. Developer contributions through s106 Agreements are being used to invest in a phased implementation of infrastructure supported with subsidised bus services and incentives to use sustainable travel in order to mitigate the impacts. The master planning design of the strategic sites is aimed at supporting sustainable travel, reducing travel distances and internalising trips. Land is also being safeguarded to provide for additional future public transport and active travel routes.

## **Issues**

10. The WelTAG Stage 1 of the Business Case for the North West Cardiff Corridor has been completed, with an executive summary of the outcome included in Appendix A. The overarching purpose of the WelTAG Stage 1 study is to identify a short-list of potential public transport solutions for the corridor, in response to a set of objectives that have been derived from a specific set of existing and future transport-related issues.
11. The Stage 1 WelTAG report in Appendix A identifies a shortlist of potential short-term Phase 1 measures that could be delivered before 2025 including:
- Increased service frequency on the City Line between Cardiff Central and Radyr (of at least 4 trains per hour);
  - A new station on the City Line at Ely Mill;
  - Increased service frequency on the South Wales Main Line and therefore enhanced services from Pontyclun;

- A new 'Parkway' station on the South Wales Main Line at Junction 34 of the M4;
  - Enhanced quality of interchange at train stations between active travel, bus, rail and car;
  - Improved active travel:bus:rail interchange at Radyr station on the City Line;
  - A strategic bus park and ride at Junction 33 of the M4 Motorway;
  - A new BRT route between central Cardiff and Junction 33 via Leckwith Road and the A4232;
  - A bus gate and spur providing access from the A4232 (northbound and southbound) to Plasdwr;
  - An active travel:bus:rail interchange at Waun-gron Park station on the City Line;
  - A new BRT route from Central Cardiff to Plasdwr via Cowbridge Road East, Waun-gron Park and Fairwater; and
  - A new BRT route from Junction 33 to Talbot Green via the A4119 with onward connections to settlements in southern Rhondda Cynon Taf.
12. The short-term options will require further design, development and assessment which will be undertaken as part of the WelTAG Stage 2 process.
13. Regarding the next stages of work, the first phase of assessment will examine the opportunity for new Bus Rapid Transit services, Park & Ride, transport hubs and interchanges, along with 4 trains per hour on the City Line through unlocking the pinch point at Cardiff West, new stations, new tram-train routes including Cardiff Crossrail supported with Active Travel connections. Short term improvements up to 2025 will focus on bus related and Active Travel improvements. The later phase of work, 2025-2030 will include an assessment of rail and tram route improvements for Crossrail including lines serving North West Cardiff and beyond to Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). The tram-train routes for further study include:
- A new tram-train route via the City Line and potentially utilising the route of the safeguarded corridor between central Cardiff, Junction 33 and Creigiau;
  - An extension of the tram-train route from Creigiau to Pontyclun via Cross Inn; and
  - An extension of the tram-train route from Creigiau to Beddau via Cross Inn.
14. A key constraint to achieving the new tram-train options, as well as increasing frequencies on the existing City Line, is the capacity of Cardiff West Junction and Cardiff Central to accommodate additional rail services. Network Rail is leading on a technical feasibility study to identify options to improve the network capacity for North West Corridor, City Line and Crossrail.
15. The development of a sustainable public transport solution for the North West Cardiff Corridor will support the aims and objectives of the

Council's Capital Ambition, Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan, Local Transport Plan, Transport White Paper and One Planet Strategy. For example, the public transport proposals will help address air quality and congestion issues, support the shift to a Carbon Neutral City and improve connectivity and access to new employment opportunities.

16. These proposals will also meet a number of the goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For example, a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.
17. The transportation study and related Business Case process has highlighted the advantages of a 'joined-up' approach to developing a range of public transport proposals in the Cardiff Capital Region, many of which will operate cross boundary. It has also highlighted the importance of achieving improved connectivity to/from central Cardiff and between local and regional destinations elsewhere.
18. This project is of regional significance and has the potential to attract several hundreds of millions of pounds of funding into the area. If delivered, the public transport solutions will transform travel behaviour and provide a safe, reliable, convenient and sustainable transport option. As well as facilitating transport from Rhondda Cynon Taf into Cardiff, it would support growth in the Strategic Development sites of the Adopted Local Development Plan 2006-2026:
  - Site C: North West Cardiff
  - Site D: North of Junction 33
  - Site E: South of Creigiau
19. It could also encourage travel into Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly in association with the development of the new town centre at Talbot Green. It is possible that the wider economic benefits could extend northwards into the Rhondda Valley and Gilfach Goch areas as the creation of new employment in Talbot Green and planned reduction in journey times to/from Cardiff will offer residents in these communities with improved access to new jobs, training and learning opportunities.
20. The next step is the Phase 1 WelTAG Stage 2 process which will progress assessment of increased service frequency on the City Line and South Wales Main Line, new stations and station improvements with inter-connected bus and active travel measures for the short-term up to 2025. Further packages of technical feasibility work will be undertaken at the appropriate time to inform future Phase 2 WelTAG studies and business cases for the long-term options. Some of the long-term options may be reliant on sufficient density and quantum of development to support the demand needed to justify the business case for investment.
21. The WelTAG Stage 2 Outline Business Cases will identify preferred options to be assessed in detail in the WelTAG Stage 3 Full Business Cases. The Business Cases will inform bids for grant funding and where appropriate to supplement s106 Developer Contributions.

## **Local Member consultation**

22. Following completion of the initial stages of the WelTAG process, extensive consultation with the public and key stakeholders will be undertaken at the appropriate time prior to the WelTAG Stage 3 Full Business cases. This consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

## **Reason for Recommendations**

23. Prior to implementing proposals for major infrastructure schemes in Wales, promoters are required to follow a multi stage business case process which examines the Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial and Management Cases for implementing any new schemes. This process has been established by the Welsh Government and is known as WelTAG. It is closely aligned to the Department for Transport's WebTAG process.
24. Developing a business case involves five distinct stages (i) Strategic Outline Case, (ii) Outline Business Case, (iii) Full Business Case, (iv) Implementation and (v) Post Implementation. Stage 1 has been completed for the North West Cardiff Corridor Transportation Study and it is now intended to take the business case for the Phase 1 proposals drawn-up forward to Stage 2 for the short-term options short-listed.

## **Financial Implications**

25. Grant funding continues to be secured by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council from the Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund to progress WelTAG Stage 2 of the Business Case. This is being managed via Transport for Wales and any expenditure will need to be in accordance with the terms, conditions and timescales of the grant. The initial study highlighted various options and a number of potential sources of funding that may be available towards costs. As proposals are considered as part of further detailed business case development, the financial implications and associated risks and mitigations will need to be considered in further detail.

## **Legal Implications (including Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate)**

26. The report is submitted for noting purposes only and as such does not seek a decision. It is understood that; (i) the WelTAG process is being followed in this project, (ii) WelTAG is the name given to the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance produced by the Welsh Government for use in the development, appraisal and evaluation of any proposed transport intervention, (iii) the output produced at the end of each stage is a document, known as a WelTAG Stage Report (iv) the Stage Report is

considered by a Review Group who review the contents of the Stage Report and decide on the actions to be taken. As regards the Review Group, it is understood that pursuant to the delegated authority granted to the Director of Planning, Transport and Environment (which delegations are referred to in the body of the report under the heading Background) the Director is a member of and engages with the Review Group on behalf of the Authority.

27. In developing the proposals for the North West Corridor consideration must be had to:- (i) the relevant legislative requirements and wider policy and guidance documents which regulate/affect the proposals under consideration ( these are numerous and it is not practical to list the same in this advice) and (ii) the potential legal implications and liabilities that could flow. The Council's internal Legal Services are not advising on this project but have been informed that the relevant legal advice has and will continue to be taken throughout the various stages of the WelTAG process.
28. In terms of on - going resource it is understood that there will be need for some input from Cardiff Council officers, as part of the wider officer working arrangements. Once further information is received on this point, consideration can be given as to how this matter can be resourced from a legal perspective (if requested) and any resulting legal costs.
29. Generic legal advice

(a) Equalities & Welsh Language

In considering this matter the decision maker must have regard to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are: (a) Age, ( b ) Gender reassignment, ( c ) Sex, (d) Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, (e) Disability, (f) Pregnancy and maternity, (g) Marriage and civil partnership, (h) Sexual orientation and (i) Religion or belief – including lack of belief.

The decision maker should be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

(b) The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible. In discharging its duties under the Act, the Council has set and published well being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the national

well being goals. The well being objectives are set out in Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2020 -23.

When exercising its functions, the Council is required to take all reasonable steps to meet its well being objectives. This means that the decision makers should consider how the proposed decision will contribute towards meeting the well being objectives and must be satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to meet those objectives.

The well being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with a 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Put simply, this means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must:

- Look to the long term
- Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
- Deliver an integrated approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
- Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions
- Involve people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them

The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposed decision accords with the principles above; and due regard must be given to the Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, which is accessible using the link below: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/statutory-guidance/?lang=en>

- (c) The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposal is within the Policy and Budget Framework, if it is not then the matter must be referred to Council.

### **HR Implications**

30. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

### **Property Implications**

31. There are not immediate property implications raised within this report. However the specific options detailed and put forward for future consideration do contain actions potentially relevant to Council land and property. At such time when the options are considered in full, it will be important to review in consultation with Strategic Estates and in adherence with the Council's asset management processes, professional advice and agreed governance relating to land and property transactions.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the outcome to date of the North West Cardiff Corridor Transportation Study.
2. Note the next stage in progressing this study – WelTAG Stage 2.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Andrew Gregory</b> <b>Director of Planning, Transport &amp; Environment</b>
	11 June 2021

*The following appendices are attached:*

Appendix A: “North West Corridor WelTAG Stage 1 Report”, dated 8 Feb 2021.

*The following background papers have been taken into account*

- Cabinet report on the Cardiff Capital Region Metro vision, 21st February 2014.
- Cabinet report on the Transport White Paper, 23rd January 2020.