

Welsh Government White Paper – ‘One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket’ Consultation Response: PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

Purpose of the Report

1. To give Members the opportunity to consider the Council’s response to the Welsh Government White Paper Consultation “One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket: planning buses as a public service for Wales”, prior to its consideration by Cabinet at their meeting on 23 June 2022.

Structure of the Papers

2. To facilitate Members’ scrutiny, the following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix 1 – *Cabinet Report*

The following appendices are in turn attached to Appendix 1:

- **Appendix A – *Cardiff’s Response to the Welsh Government White Paper Consultation***
- **Appendix B – *Welsh Government White Paper***
- **Appendix C – *Welsh Government White Paper Regulatory Impact Assessment***
- **Appendix D – *Presentation providing an overview of the papers***

Scope of Scrutiny

3. At their meeting on 23 June 2022, the Cabinet will consider the Councils response to the Welsh Governments formal White Paper consultation that runs between 31 March 2022 and 24 June 2022.
4. The White Paper sets out, on a national basis, proposals for public transport bus services to better plan and grow the bus network, to ensure it meets public need, maximises the value for the investment in bus services and breaks the reliance on private cars.
5. The White Paper sets out to:
 - Require the franchising of bus services across Wales
 - Allow local authorities to create new municipal bus companies
 - Relax restrictions on existing municipal bus companies to put them on the same footing as new ones
6. During this scrutiny, Members have the opportunity to explore:
 - The Welsh Government Consultation White Paper
 - The Council's response to the Consultation
 - The recommendations to Cabinet.

Background – Cardiff Bus

7. Cardiff City Transport Services (Cardiff Bus) was created following the enactment of the Transport Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) which reformed local authority bus operations by establishing limited companies. The intention was that the municipal companies would operate at arms length but that their shares would be owned by local authorities. This is the case with Cardiff Bus which was created as a wholly owned company of the Council.. As stated in **point 32 of Appendix 1** in Wales, only Newport and Cardiff Council retained municipal ownership of their respective operators.

8. The White Paper seeks to promote municipal ownership of bus companies and through legislation remove the current ban on new municipal bus operations. However, as set out in **point 51** and **52** of **Appendix 1**, the Council's response is that the White Paper does not provide enough detail to give Cardiff Council assurance that its interests in the Municipal Bus Company would be protected.

Background – Cardiff's Transport White Paper & Cardiff Bus Strategy Development

9. The Transport White Paper, approved by Cabinet in January 2020, includes a commitment to low-carbon transport and contains a target to double the numbers travelling by bus between 2018 and 2030, from 10% commuters to 20% of commuters. The One Planet Cardiff Strategy sets a target for 100% low emission taxis and buses by 2027.
10. In July 2021, Cabinet approved the undertaking of a public consultation to develop and inform a Bus Strategy for Cardiff. The papers presented to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee prior to Cabinet consideration of the Bus Strategy consultation, detailed that until the Covid pandemic, bus ridership in Cardiff had remained relatively stable, primarily due to population growth. However, the pandemic led to public transport numbers falling to approximately 10% in April 2020; and as of Summer 2021, transport numbers rose to approximately 60% pre-Covid levels. In addition, as of Summer 2021, bus service frequency had returned to 100% of pre-Covid levels.
11. As Committee Members will be aware, the pandemic had a significant impact on public transport and in response, the Welsh Government provided financial assistance to bus companies via the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) - which was operational between April 2020 to 31 July 2022.
12. However, as detailed in **point 4** of **Appendix 1**, ongoing funding to support bus companies is being arranged under BES3.0 as bus usership has not yet returned to pre-covid levels.

13. As part of the consultation for a Cardiff Bus Strategy, a number of strategic actions were identified to transform bus services. These strategic actions were entitled 'Big Moves' and are as follows:

- **Big Move 1: Complete the Bus Interchange**
- **Big Move 2: Create New Priority Bus 'Smart' Corridors**
- **Big Move 3: City Centre Package**
- **Big Move 4: Metro Integration, Integrated Ticketing and Information Package**
- **Big Move 5: Fares**
- **Big Move 6: Review of Bus Network Governance arrangements for the medium and long term**
- **Big Move 7: Creating a Better Customer Experience**
- **Big Move 8: A Low Emission/Zero Carbon Bus Fleet**
- **Big Move 9: Integration of Schools Transport**

14. Committee Members are to note, that as detailed in **point 11** of **Appendix 1**, a draft Bus Strategy, which will have been informed by the July 2021 consultation, will be considered by Cabinet by December 2022.

15. For background purposes, the Cardiff Transport White Paper considered by this Committee in January 2020 can be found [here](#), and the proposals to initiate a consultation for the Cardiff Bus Strategy [here](#).

16. In addition, the letter detailing the full comments and observations from this Committee's consideration of the bus strategy consultation, along with the Cabinet response, can be found [here](#). And the Committee's observations following their consideration of the Cardiff Transport White Paper can be found [here](#), from pages 7 to 10.

**Welsh Government Consultation - One network, One timetable, One ticket:
Planning buses as a public service for Wales**

17. The focus of this scrutiny is to consider the Welsh Government's White Paper consultation, and the Council's proposed response.

18. The proposals contained in the White Paper seek to establish a new policy environment for the funding and delivery of bus services on a national basis. As a

result, it proposes a legislative change which would affect the current role of the Council in the delivery of bus services.

19. **Point 17 of Appendix 1**, states that overall, the objectives proposed in the White Paper are agreed by the Council and align closely to the Council's Transport White Paper 2020, One Planet Cardiff Strategy and Local Development Plan. However, as detailed in the Council's response to the consultation (**Appendix 2**) there are issues relating to the Welsh Government's proposals which require careful consideration.

20. Those issues identified within the Council's response are:

- **The Franchise Model: Balancing Local Control and System Coordination**
(Points 20 – 26 of Appendix 1)
- **Approach to Funding**
(Points 27 – 31 of Appendix 1)
- **Municipal bus companies and 'operators of last resort'**
(Points 32 -41 of Appendix 1)
- **Decarbonisation - fleet renewal**
(Point 42 of Appendix 1)
- **Bus Depot Facilities**
(Point 43 of Appendix 1)
- **Bus Passengers Charter**
(Point 44 of Appendix 1)
- **Fares, ticketing and information provision**
(Points 45 -48 of Appendix 1)
- **Impact on Local Authority Finances and Resources**
(Points 49 – 50 of Appendix 1)

21. Committee Members are reminded to consider the Council's proposed response and to provide their comment and observation.

Proposed Recommendations to Cabinet

22. The report to Cabinet contains the following recommendations:

- *'Note the Welsh Government White Paper and its proposals for changes in the governance arrangements for bus services'*
- *'Approve the consultation response in Appendix A'*

- *'Authorise the Director of Planning, Transport & Environment to submit the final consultation response after agreement with the Cabinet Member for Transport.'*
- *'Note Cardiff's Bus Improvement Programme'*

Way Forward

23. Councillor Dan De' Ath (Cabinet Member –Transport & Strategic Planning) will be invited to make a statement and answer questions. Andrew Gregory (Director of Planning, Transport and Environment), Jason Dixon (Operational Manager – Transport Development and Network Management) and Claire Moggridge (Operational Manager - Network Management) will also attend to present the presentation attached at Appendix D and answer Members' questions.

Legal Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial

implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- i) Consider the information in this report, its appendices and the information presented at the meeting;
- ii) Determine whether they would like to make any comments, observations or recommendations to the Cabinet on this matter in time for its meeting on 23 June 2022; and
- iii) Decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

10 June 2022