

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 18TH DECEMBER, 2017

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 30TH NOVEMBER, 2017

“ M4, JUNCTION 34 TO A48 WELTAG STAGE 1 TRANSPORT STUDY (REF) –

Cabinet had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration prior to a final decision being taken by Cabinet in respect of the resolutions below:

- “(1) **T H A T the contents of the report and accompanying Strategic Outline Case Report attached at Appendix A to the report and Impacts Assessment Report attached at Appendix B to the report, be endorsed.**
- “(2) **T H A T consideration be given to progressing a Stage 2 Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Report for M4, Junction 34 to A48 for the Stage 1 short listed options of: Do-Minimum, a highway route east of Pendoylan, a highway route west of Pendoylan and a parkway station with park and ride facilities and bus integration near to M4, Junction 34.**
- “(3) **T H A T the Stage 2 Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Report, once completed, be presented to Cabinet for consideration in Spring 2018.”**

The Head of Service for Neighbourhood Services and Transport, in presenting the report, advised that the report detailed a Stage 1 report (Appendices A and B) that had been produced by Arcadis Consulting UK Limited (“Arcadis”) using Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) on improving strategic transport links between M4, Junction 34 to A48 and Five Mile Lane.

The report highlighted that Arcadis had been commissioned by the Council in July 2017 to develop and appraise potential options for improving the strategic transport route from M4, Junction 34 to A48 including considering options for a park and ride site at Junction 34. Appendix A to the report provided a Strategic Outline Case which included a map of the study area and Appendix B was an Impact Assessment report.

The Impact Assessment report provided an overview of the study area including information on its location, demographics, employment, environment and land use characteristics.

Ms. Janice Hughes, representing Arcadis, subsequently provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation commencing with a Study Brief which had been commissioned to develop and appraise potential options for improving the strategic transport network encompassing the corridors referred to above, reminding Committee that the schemes needed to come through the WeITAG process in order to be put forward for Welsh Government funding.

Consultation on the proposals had taken place with stakeholders on 7th September, 2017 at the Docks Office, Barry, which had included key employers, public organisations, transport providers and the Local Authority. During that consultation, discussion had taken place in identifying problems, opportunities and constraints, objectives set and potential transport options identified and discussed. On 19th September, 2017, consultation had also taken place with Community Councils and stakeholders, again with the opportunity for Community Councillors to provide feedback on identified options, opportunities and constraints, as well as consideration and suggestions for the objectives and potential transport options. On 21st September, 2017 consultation had been undertaken with the public being afforded the same opportunity to provide feedback on identified options, opportunities and constraints, as well as consideration and suggestions for the objectives and potential transport options.

At the public consultation, a wide range of people and organisations had attended, 41 feedback forms had been received with many being very detailed responses. It was noted that the workshop and public sessions had been engaged with full and constructive discussions.

The transport problems that had been identified were noted as:

- Poor highway infrastructure between M4 Junction 34 and the A48 leading to poor access for local communities and businesses;
- Poor sustainable access to Cardiff Airport and strategic destinations;
- High use of the private car for local and regional trips (e.g. journeys to work);
- Existing congestion issues at M4 Junction 34 and on the A48 which were likely to worsen with the committed developments in the area;
- Environmental issues associated with high use of the car, including adverse greenhouse emissions and noise pollution.
- High local traffic flows led to congestion, capacity issues at junctions, environmental impacts including air quality, noise pollution and unreliable journey times;
- Accessibility for HGVs.
- Adverse road safety conditions along existing routes non-compliant to current Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) highway standards.

The opportunities that had been identified were reported as:

- improved connections to link the airport to strategic opportunity areas (SOAs) e.g. Llantrisant and other regional centres;
- national significance of Cardiff Airport;

- growth of Cardiff Airport and investment in St. Athan Enterprise Zone infrastructure;
- Five Mile Lane upgrade will significantly improve access between the A48 and Cardiff Airport;
- potential to create connections between M4 Junction 34 and A48 to continue Five Mile Lane route;
- northernmost 500m section of route near M4 Junction 34 of good standard with existing bridges over River Ely (SSSI) and mainline railway;
- proposed improvement at Bonvilston end of route, connecting to Sycamore Cross;
- potential for park and ride and bus and cycle connections.

The constraints were noted as:

- high quality study area environment;
- policy context (which is also an opportunity);
- potential need for third party land to deliver improvements;
- funding availability;
- location of existing services and facilities within study area.

The Options Appraisal to assess the long list of options included considering how the options tackled identified problems, how the options met the objectives, assessment of risk, consideration of any adverse impacts, constraints and any dependencies. The options then proposed to be taken forward in the report were as below: location would provide frequent rail service east towards Cardiff and west towards Swansea, with a large park and ride facility allowing for robust integration for passengers.

The options to be taken forward to WeITAG Stage 2, Ms. Hughes advised, were: Option B – the Highway Route East of Pendoyland, Option C – The Highway Route West of Pendoylan and Option G – Parkway Railway Station including park and ride facilities and bus integration near to M4 Junction 34.

A focus group, including stakeholders, had also taken place on 27th November, 2017 to review the report and options being recommended to ensure that any options being taken forward were supported and deliverable by using the group’s knowledge and expertise in their field. The recommendations of the focus group would be fed back to Cabinet at the same time as it received the views of the Scrutiny Committee before a final decision was taken on the options to be progressed.

Following the presentation a question and answer session took place with Members of the Committee:

Question	Response
Would you describe the project as being demand driven and where was the demand coming from?	It was part of the Business Case and would be an important component of it. The whole project was about future demand and growth and regional growth.

<p>Had there been a lot of demand in the area by lobbying to Local Government and the MPs or was it demand driven by Welsh Government?</p>	<p>It was a regional demand driven project. There was however concern in Pendoylan from residents about the amount of traffic on a daily basis. It was considered to be a “rat run”. However, on top of these concerns there were also far wider issues for the Vale as it was about providing employment sites that were able to be effectively accessed.</p>
<p>Could we have more detailed maps in future reports?</p>	<p>Plans had been used for the public consultation but further details relating to the actual highway alignments and the site itself would be shown at Stage 2 of the process, if approved.</p>
<p>How were the plans to be brought forward?</p>	<p>There were two potential possible highway schemes, together with a rail link as an add on. The intention being that the rail link would in the first instance serve local services, with a higher ambition to serve other areas in the future. The officer advised that due to a lack of public transport in the area the locality relied heavily on the Vale of Glamorgan Green Links service.</p> <p>For the future the Head of Service advised that it was important for funding purposes to consider all options, there was a possibility of funding through the City Deal and or private sector investment.</p>
<p>Where did the proposal sit in light of the wider Metro proposals?</p>	<p>There was shortly to be an announcement on the new train franchise and the Council would know more at that point. The Department was engaging in a number of ways with the railway provider and working with Welsh Government to ensure the proposals fitted in with the Metro and the Council’s partners.</p>
<p>What was the view in relation to how it would fit in as there were concerns in relation to green belt issues?</p>	<p>The Stage 2 proposals would look at the preferred bidder option and at that point further additional add ons could be included. The Council looked more</p>

<p>In respect of Option G, would further proposals be detailed at the next stage in terms of what changes would be needed?</p>	<p>easily at highway issues, but there would be a lot of dependencies in relation to the railway network. The green belt issues would depend on where the site was actually sited. The area was quite a constrained area due to the junction, it was on a flood zone and any station proposals would be looked at closely under an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).</p>
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In considering the report, Members agreed that it was important that the proposals were progressed to Stage 2 but that in relation to Option G the Park and Ride scheme was in their view premature as at present with the only benefit they could currently envisage to be for the Cardiff area. Officers were then asked whether the funding issue in relation to the Metro had been discussed at the City Deal Board. The Head of Service for Regeneration and Planning, in response, advised that the project was likely to be part of the City Deal project, but that it was currently going through the WeITAG study which was funded by Welsh Government (WG). He was however, aware that WG had been speaking to the City Region. Although there was a joined up process, no bidding had been established as yet due to the fact that a full stage business case would have to be completed and submitted.

The Chairman, in summing up, stated that there was a lack of detail at Stage 1 and he hoped that answers to queries and further detailed information as discussed above would be provided at Stage 2 of the process. In terms of housing, he queried whether there had been an assessment of key sites and its potential impact on the LDP. The Head of Service stated that these issues would be factored in as the proposals progressed. The LDP itself ran until 2026 and before that period there would have to be a review of that Plan together with the figures for housing demand in the Vale as well as identifying new sites. At the current stage of the process the Department could not say whether a new settlement would be required, but all factors would have an impact if the network or station was in place. Ms. Hughes also advised that the first stage was considered to be a high level document and that Stage 2 would detail the traffic modelling, discussions she said with WG to discuss the strategic model and cost benefit analysis would continue.

Following consideration of the report and discussions at the meeting, it was subsequently unanimously

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the resolution of Cabinet to progress to Stage 2 Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WeITAG) Report for M4, Junction 34 to A48 for the Stage 1 shortlisted options of: Do-Minimum, a highway route east of Pendoylan, a highway route west of Pendoylan and a parkway station with park and ride facilities and bus integration near to M4, Junction 34 be endorsed.

(2) T H A T Cabinet be apprised of the Committee's concerns, as outlined above, in respect of the detail required at the next stage of the process.

(3) T H A T the Stage 2 Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Report once completed be presented to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration when available.

Reasons for recommendations

(1&2) To apprise Cabinet and to endorse the resolution to progress the Stage 2 proposal.

(3) To seek Committee's views on the Stage 2 report once completed."