

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 16th March, 2021.

The Committee agenda is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor Ms. B.E. Brooks (Chairman); Councillor Ms. S. Sivagnanam (Vice-Chairman); Councillors V.J. Bailey, Mrs. P. Drake, V.P. Driscoll, G. John, M.J.G. Morgan, A.R. Robertson, L.O. Rowlands and S.T. Wiliam.

Also Present: Councillor L. Burnett (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration), Councillor P.G. King (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Transport) and Councillor N. Moore (Leader of the Council).

510 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business of the Committee, the Chairman read the following statement:

“May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing.”

511 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 16th February, 2021 be approved as a correct record.

512 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

Councillor V.J. Bailey declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 4 – WelTAG 2 Plus Dinas Powys Transport Study. The nature of the interest was that Councillor Bailey was a member of the Review Group and in the capacity as a Barry Town Councillor. Councillor Bailey remained present at the meeting during this Agenda Item.

513 WELTAG 2 PLUS DINAS POWYS TRANSPORT STUDY (REF) –

Cabinet, on 8th March, 2021 had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

For this item, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport introduced a Mr. Matthew Fry from Acadis who had been asked to provided a PowerPoint presentation to outline the current situation.

Mr. Fry's presentation included an overview of the following:

- Background to the study, with Arcadis commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in 2017 to undertake a WelTAG Stage One and Stage Two transport appraisal, considering transport improvements for the Dinas Powys area.
- The reasons why improvements were needed including the five main objectives and how success would be measured.
- Maps to indicate the alignments for the Pink and Green routes.
- The estimated costs for each of the two routes.
- The Multi-Modal projects being considered.
- On overview of the progress in relation to the four key tasks under the Stage 2 plus process;
 - Task One – Cogan Railway Tunnel Analysis;
 - Task Two – Merrie Harrier junction design concepts 1A and 1B;
 - Task Three – South East Wales Transport Model (SEWTM) strategic modelling by Transport for Wales; and
 - Task Four – Updated Economic Appraisal.
- Appraisals and impacts of the five options including a benefit cost ratio analysis.

Mr. Fry advised that of the five options, Option D (Green route and Multi-modal) had merit in being taken forward for further consideration to a Stage Three WelTAG study. In addition, it had been concluded that:

- A Bypass appeared to demonstrate value for money.
- Pink route alternative may offer longer-term strategic benefits.
- Key junctions would continue to pose a strategic constraint (notably at the Barons Court junction).
- A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be required at Stage Three, including appraisal of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Funding uncertainties remained a key risk to progression.

That concluded Mr. Fry's presentation.

Before the Chairman opened up the debate for questions, she referred to a written submission from a Mr. R. Harrod on behalf of the Barry to Cardiff Link Road Group. This had been emailed to Members of the Scrutiny Committee and tabled as supplementary information.

Councillor A.R. Robertson then queried funding and costs associated with the public consultation should the scheme be agreed for progression by Welsh Government. The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that costs would be expensive in terms of the service's budget which was why consultation required Welsh Government support. Consultation costs were not only around putting out press releases or information online, as specialist technical advice may be needed to respond to comments made. The Committee was advised that the cost for the consultation was in the region of £20k and this would be as part of the dual application.

Councillor Robertson then asked a series of further questions. His first was whether the benefit cost ratios of 2.01 and 1.71 (Green route) had been underestimated because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In reply, Mr. Fry stated that these had been based on the latest and current modelling assessments which included a number of variables. The figures represented the more pessimistic viewpoint, but Mr. Fry agreed to forward more detailed information as the assessment was very complex.

The second query was whether consideration had been given to developing a connection to Lavernock Road. Mr. Fry advised that this had been considered as part of the Pink route to Penarth but discounted because of the location of an ancient monument which represented a physical constraint. In addition, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport advised that there had been a lot of discussion on this within the Review Group and further community consultation on connections could be made at the next stage. Nothing had been ruled out.

Councillor Robertson's third query was in relation to the effect on emissions because of an increase in electric vehicles. Mr. Fry in reply, stated that the analysis had been based upon current modelling which had been forecasted through the SEWTM. This was updated on a frequent basis and would be used for future analysis.

Finally, Councillor Robertson commented that he would expect there to be an economic benefit as a result of capital projects associated with a new by-pass road. Mr. Fry advised that this was a fair point, with the economic benefits something for decision makers to consider.

Councillor V.J. Bailey stated that he was surprised that for Options A to D, each had the same positive scoring when it came to impact on 'access to employment'. Mr. Fry advised that he had looked into the detail and evidence closely, and there had been a balance between the positive and negative impacts. The scorings were representative of a fair reflection. As this was a complex assessment, Mr. Fry agreed to forward further information via email.

Councillor Bailey then referred to the cost of the public consultation exercise, and he made a formal recommendation that if Welsh Government refused the Council's financial bid, that Cabinet should allocate money from the Council's budget to pay for the consultation. This would be around £20k.

Councillor V.P. Driscoll queried whether there was scope to widen the road by the Merrier Harrier junction so that the public house did not have to be knocked down. Mr. Fry indicated this was not feasible as both schemes (1A and 1B) required the public house to be demolished.

Councillor Ms. S. Sivagnanam referred to potential employment benefits, and she asked whether this related to the Vale of Glamorgan or the wider area in general. Mr. Fry responded by stating that it was a bit of both, for example, there would be a benefit to residents in Dinas Powys from improving connections by removing traffic and an increase in trips to and from the Vale of Glamorgan.

Councillor L. Burnett, as local ward member for Stanwell, with permission to speak, stated that the bypass was not in her ward, but wanted to refer to unintended consequences which could cause issues for people travelling from her area. She advised that she had been made aware of concerns of residents in her ward about the increase in traffic at junctions connecting the bypass to Penarth. It was therefore important to look at the impact of a bypass on residents of other parts of the Vale. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that a representative from Penarth Town Council was part of the Review Group so similar concerns had already been raised. She added that if the project proceeded to the next stage, then consultation would be undertaken on a wider basis including Penarth and Barry.

Councillor P. King, as Cabinet Member, with permission to speak, referred to budgetary pressures within Neighbourhood Services and Transport, stating that the project had been using financial reserves since 2016. The consultation costs represented a significant cost for the service which was why a bid for funding had been made to Welsh Government. Councillor King asked the Scrutiny Committee to carefully consider this when determining any recommendations. With regards to a possible new connection at Lavernock, Councillor King issued a word of caution, as the project would not likely proceed if additional connections kept being added. The key was the bypass and this had to be the priority. In response to changes proposed to the Merrie Harrier junction, Councillor King advised that this location was constrained as there was a problem with the levels, and so, the ground and the gradient would have to be “made up”.

There being no further comments and having fully considered the reference it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on the Dinas Powys Transport Network WeITAG Stage Two Plus study be noted.
- (2) T H A T should Welsh Government refuse the funding for the public consultation exercise, Cabinet be requested to find the funding from within the Council’s budget.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To update Members on progress of the scheme.
- (2) To ensure that the public consultation exercise relating to the Dinas Powys bypass be funding, should Welsh Government refuse the bid submitted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

514 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2020 TO 31ST JANUARY 2021 (DEH)

The purpose of the report was to advise the Committee of the progress relating to revenue and capital expenditure for the period 1st April, 2020 to 31st January, 2021.

The revenue position for 2020/21 was challenging with additional pressure for the service both operationally and financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This had impacted both as a result of incurring additional expenditure but also from a loss of income. Funding had been provided by Welsh Government to cover some of the issues.

Following a recommendation by the Chairman and a query from Councillor Driscoll, the Scrutiny Committee agreed for a report on the Council's Streetlighting project to be added to the work programme. This would also include an assessment of areas where night-time restrictions were applied.

The Principal Accountant also clarified that the price for recycled material received by the Council would likely decrease as other local authorities increased their recycling rates.

Subsequently, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the position with regard to the 2020/21 revenue and capital budgets be considered and noted.
- (2) T H A T a report on the Council's Streetlighting project, including an assessment of those areas where night-time restrictions apply, be added to the Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

Reason for recommendation

- (1) That Members are aware of the projected revenue and capital outturn for 2020/21.
- (2) To assess the Council's Streetlighting project.

515 ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN MONITORING REPORT: QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE 2020/21 (MD) -

The purpose of the report was to present quarter 3 performance results for the period 1st April, 2020 to 31st December, 2020 in delivering the Annual Delivery Plan commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

The performance report presented progress at quarter 3 (1st April to 31st December 2020) towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan (2020/21) commitments as aligned to the Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives.

Despite the ongoing challenges of responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic, positive progress had been made in delivering the in-year commitments in relation to the Annual Delivery Plan (2020/21). This performance had contributed to an overall Amber status for the Plan at quarter 3 (Q3).

All four Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives were attributed an Amber performance status at Q3 to reflect the progress made to date. This was positive given the unprecedented challenges that continued to face.

In relation to the planned activities within the remit of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 78% (40 out of 51) were attributed a Green performance status, 6% (3) Amber status and 16% (8) Red status. Of the 9 performance Indicators attributed a Red performance status, the impact of COVID-19 was identified as a contributory factor in the reported slippage. Of the 9 quarterly measures reported, 5 were attributed a Green performance status, 2 Amber status and the remaining 2, CPM/100 (% Council streetlights that are LED) and CPM/111 (reported fly tipping incidents which lead to enforcement activity) Red status. Of the 2 measures attributed a Red status, the impact of COVID-19 was identified as a contributory factor in missing the target in the case of 1 measure, CPM/100 (% Council streetlights that are LED).

The Chairman expressed thanks to Council staff for all their hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Those sentiments were echoed by the Committee.

Subsequently it was

RECOMMENDED –

(1) T H A T the performance results and progress towards achieving the Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21 commitments as aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives within the remit of the Committee be noted.

(2) T H A T the remedial actions to be taken to address areas of underperformance and to tackle the key challenges identified within the remit of the Committee be endorsed.

(3) T H A T the progress being made through our recovery strategy and Directorate Recovery plans in response to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

(1) To ensure the Council clearly demonstrated the progress being made towards achieving its commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan 2020/21 aimed at making a positive difference to the lives of Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

(2) To ensure the Council was effectively assessing its performance in line with the requirement to secure continuous improvement outlined in the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009 and reflecting the requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that it maximised its contribution to achieving the well-being goals for Wales.

(3) To ensure Members maintained an oversight of the recovery issues impacting on the work of the Council and their respective Scrutiny Committees.

516 SERVICE PLANS AND TARGET SETTING TO DELIVER THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN (IMPROVEMENT PLAN PART 1) 2021/2022 (MD) –

The purpose of the report was to seek Members' endorsement of the priority actions as reflected in Service Plans and proposed service improvement targets for the period 2021/2022 that would deliver the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (Improvement Plan Part 1) within the remit of the Committee.

The report presented the service plans and targets within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee. These set out the specific areas of focus associated with the delivery of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan (Improvement Plan Part 1) for 2021/2022 as aligned to our four Corporate Plan Well-being (Improvement).

In progressing the Annual Delivery Plan, it would help meet the statutory obligations under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Both pieces of legislations placed specific duties on the Council in relation to objective setting and reporting. Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Council was required to publish its Well-being Objectives by 31st March each year and to keep those under review. Under the Local Government Measure, the Council also had to set annual Improvement Objectives and publish those as soon as possible at the start of the financial year.

The Local Government and Elections Bill would replace the performance provisions associated with the Local Government Measure and would place similar duties on Local Authorities. The final performance report from the Measure would be published by 31st October, 2021 in the Council's Annual Review of Performance (Part 2 Improvement Plan) 2020/21. As the Bill was still progressing through its approval stages, it was felt prudent to ensure the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) met the existing duties prescribed by the Local Government Measure and the latest guidance associated with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill.

In line with duties under the WBFG Act (and those defined in the forthcoming Local Government and Elections Bill), the relevance of our Well-being Objectives we continually reviewed and the current objectives were agreed in 2020 as part of the development on the Corporate Plan 2020-25. These objectives had been reviewed as part of end of year performance work to produce the Council's Self-Assessment and Annual Review of Performance (Part 2 Improvement Plan

2019/20) as well as in the development of the Council's Coronavirus Recovery Strategy. We had also consulted on our Well-being Objectives as part of the engagement work on developing our Annual Delivery Plan for 2021/22 and overall, majority of respondents agreed with our Well-being Objectives. As a result, going forward into 2021/2022, we were assured that our Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives and the associated commitments outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan 2021/2022 (contained in the background papers appended to the report) were relevant in delivering improved outcomes for Vale of Glamorgan residents and contributed to the national Well-being Goals.

All Scrutiny Committees considered a draft Annual Delivery Plan in December 2020 and their views alongside that of other key stakeholders had informed the final Plan, set for approval by Cabinet on 8th March, 2021 (contained in the background papers appended to the report).

The Annual Delivery Plan and Service Plans detailed the activities that would be undertaken in 2021-22 to deliver the Well-being objectives within the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic and the Council's Recovery Strategy.

The commitments in the Annual Delivery Plan were reflected in the Service Plans attached at Appendix A to the report together with proposed service improvement targets attached at Appendix B to the report to show how individual service areas would contribute to their achievement and overall delivery of the four Well-being Objectives. Scrutiny Members were asked to review and recommend the Service Plans and service improvement targets for endorsement via Cabinet. Progress against those commitments and the Council's proposed service improvement targets would be monitored quarterly.

Having considered the report, it was

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the Service Plans and all planned activities as they relate to the remit of this Committee be endorsed.
- (2) T H A T the proposed service improvement targets for 2021/2022) relating to the remit of this Committee be endorsed.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To ensure that the Service Plans aligned to this Committee's remit are accurate, up to date and relevant and become the main document through which performance against the Corporate Plan's Annual Delivery Plan is monitored and measured during 2021/2022.
- (2) To ensure the Council's Corporate Plan Performance Measurement Framework identifies a relevant set of performance measures and targets against which the Annual Delivery Plan can be monitored and measured during 2021/2022 in line with requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.