



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SPECIAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

23rd SEPTEMBER 2019

URGENT ITEM – NOTICE OF MOTION

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To propose arrangements for scrutiny to progress the Notice of Motion in respect of future rail & metro development in the County, as supported by Full Council held on the 18th September 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:-

- 2.1 Agree for the matter to be included on the forward Work Programme of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
- 2.2 Establish a Scrutiny Working Group to consider the Notice of Motion and the approach to be taken forward as outlined within section 5 of the report; and
- 2.2 Submit their nominations for the membership of the Scrutiny Working Group to progress the work at the earliest opportunity.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need to advise Members of the proposed way forward with the Notice of Motion and to seek expressions of interest in respect of membership for the Scrutiny Working Group.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On the 18th September 2019, Full Council considered the following Notice of Motion to establish progress with regards to future rail development in the County Borough and stood in the names of County Borough Councillors G.Davies, K.Morgan, P.Jarman, D.Grehan, H.Fychan, J.Williams, A.Cox, D.Macey, J.Cullwick, J.Davies,

M.Weaver, S.Rees Owen, L.Jones E.Stephens E,Griffiths, E,Webster, S.M. Evans, and A. Chapman:-

‘With the advent of the approved Metro in 2022; coupled with the aspirations as set out in the Council's proposed Tourism strategy the time is now right to push for future rail development in the County.

This Council therefore calls on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Cabinet and Transport for Wales to commit to extending the Aberdare passenger line to Hirwaun subject to full consultation with the public and other stakeholders on the location of the station so that it is accessible and fully utilised.

This Council further calls on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Cabinet and Transport for Wales to also extend the Treherbert line to Tynewydd. subject to its inclusion in the reviewed RCT Local Development Plan’.

- 4.2 The motion was altered with the agreement of the meeting to refer the subject matter to the Council’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee, for consideration of the wider transportation and planning context.

- 4.3 Council therefore resolved to support the following Motion which read:

“With the advent of the approved Metro in 2022; coupled with the aspirations as set out in the Council's proposed Tourism strategy the time is now right to push for future rail development in the County.

This Council therefore calls on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Cabinet and Transport for Wales to commit to extending the Aberdare passenger line to Hirwaun subject to full consultation with the public and other stakeholders on the location of the station so that it is accessible and fully utilised.

This Council further calls on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Cabinet and Transport for Wales to also extend the Treherbert line to Tynewydd. subject to its inclusion in the reviewed RCT Local Development Plan.

This Council therefore resolves to refer the matter to the Council’s Overview & Scrutiny Committee for further consideration, with a widening of the Motion to include the wider County Borough footprint”

5 APPROACH GOING FORWARD.

- 5.1 In order to advance the matter at the earliest opportunity it is advised that a Scrutiny Working Group is established and that Members submit their expressions of interest should they wish to form part of the Working Group.

- 5.2 Nominations will be taken at the meeting so that an invitation can be extended to those Members, together with the proposer and seconder of the motion, Councillors G. Davies and K. Morgan, and a date for the inaugural meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group can be established.
- 5.3 The work will be undertaken by members of the Scrutiny Working Group with a draft terms of reference and forward timetable to be considered at the inaugural meeting. Any recommendations to arise from the completed work will be reported to a future meeting of Full Council.

6. WIDER TRANSPORT & PLANNING CONTEXT

- 6.1 The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal has committed £734M towards the initial stage of transforming the transport network in south east Wales to create a Metro system, within the £15Bn Wales-wide rail franchise. This 15-year franchise has been let by Transport for Wales to Keolis Amey – operating as Transport for Wales Rail Services.
- 6.2 This initial investment will secure full electrification of the Valley Lines within RCT (and to Merthyr) and, with other track improvements, will enable 4 trains per hour to serve Aberdare and Treherbert stations. Other improvements will accrue from the franchise agreement, such as a new £100M rail depot at Taffs Well, new station at Treforest Estate, numerous station improvements, new trains, etc.
- 6.3 The committed investments toward the creation of Metro are hugely advantageous to RCT and provide a framework on which Metro will grow across the region. This will require further investment, both capital and revenue, in bus and rail infrastructure and services. The City Deal, in conjunction with Welsh Government, has also committed to a £50M programme titled Metro Plus, which will deliver a number of further enhancements across the region, including the creation of the “Porth Hub” in the Rhondda Valley, this programme is scalable, subject to further funding.
- 6.4 Consideration must now turn to the major interventions and investments, beyond those already committed, in developing and delivering the wider Metro. As one of the early major beneficiaries of Metro investment, RCT is well placed to take advantage of the opportunities for adding value to the current investment and that may include, new or extended rail infrastructure and services, trains, trams, bus rapid transit, active travel, etc.
- 6.5 Transport and land use aspirations will need to be aligned. With Cabinet and Council soon to consider matters relating to an impending review of the Council’s Local Development Plan (LDP) there is an opportunity for the working group to consider what land needs to be protected in the LDP review to allow for the further provision of transport infrastructure across RCT.

- 6.6 If and when more detailed schemes are worked up for these extensions then there may also be an ability for the Council to promote these projects for allocation in the emerging Strategic Development Plan for the region

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Equality or Diversity implications will be considered as part of the Working Group's recommendations and any subsequent implementation arrangements.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There are no consultation implications arising, as yet, from this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Financial and resource implications will be considered as part of the Working Group's recommendations and any subsequent implementation arrangements.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 10.1 The work undertaken by the Scrutiny Working Group will allow scrutiny to further embrace the wellbeing goals and five ways of working as identified within *The Act*.