



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

17TH JUNE 2021

NORTH WEST CARDIFF CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION STUDY: UPDATE

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER; THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL; CLLR ANDREW MORGAN

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on 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 from RCT through North West Cardiff towards the city centre.
- 1.2 This report asks Members to note the outcome of the current stage of this study and the way forward to progress the business cases.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the reasons set out in this report, it is recommended that Members:
 - Note the outcome to date of the North West Cardiff Corridor Transportation Study.
 - Note the next stage in progressing this study – WelTAG Stage 2.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Prior to implementing proposals for major infrastructure schemes in Wales, promoters are required to follow a multistage business case process which examines the Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial and Management Cases for implementing a new scheme. 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.

- 3.2 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 proposals drawn-up forward to Stage 2.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In July 2019, Mott Macdonald Transport Consultants were commissioned to undertake a study to investigate which 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, the Welsh Government and Cardiff and RCT Councils jointly commissioned this study.

- 4.2 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 but 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) is experiencing significant traffic congestion which is forecast to worsen.
- 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.

- 4.3 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 new transport infrastructure can support these planned developments.



5. NORTH WEST CARDIFF CORRIDOR – WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 The WeITAG 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 WeITAG 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.
- 5.2 As it can be seen in Appendix A, a shortlist of potential public transport solutions has been identified and these will require further design, development and assessment which will be undertaken as part of the WeITAG Stage 2 process. These include enhancements to the existing heavy rail network, bus related measures and the introduction of tram-train technology.
- 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.
- 5.3 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 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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 also be undertaken to inform 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.

5.6 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.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has not been prepared for the purpose of this report. An EqIA is incorporated in the WelTAG process.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Following completion of the initial stages of the WelTAG process, extensive consultation with the public and key stakeholders will be undertaken at later dates, prior to progressing any potential public



transport solutions for the North West Cardiff Corridor. This consultation will be undertaken in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 These studies have benefited from year on year funding allocations from Welsh Government secured as part of a Regional allocation of Local Transport Fund. Funding has been secured for 2021/22 financial year will enable these studies to continue. These studies are being managed via Transport for Wales.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The activities of the various bodies who have commissioned this transportation study (and related Business Case) are governed by various legal documents and pieces of legislation. These include:

- Wales Spatial Plan 2008
- Wales Transport Strategy 2008 (being updated)
- Local Development Plans
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Planning (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES / FUTURE GENERATIONS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 The development of a sustainable public transport solution for the North West Cardiff Corridor will indirectly support the aims and objectives covering health and prosperity set out in the Council's Single Integrated Plan and emerging Corporate Plan. For example, the planned, new public transport proposals will help address air quality and congestion issues and improve connectivity and access to new employment opportunities.
- 10.2 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.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 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.

- 11.2 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 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.
- 11.3 The next step is the WelTAG Stage 2 process which will be used to inform the final recommendations. However, it should be noted that a proposed transport scheme for the North West Cardiff – Talbot Green / Llantrisant corridor will require further development before any of the transport investment options for serving this area of planned major development can be determined.