



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL JOINT OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny
Committee meeting held virtually on Friday, 26 February 2021 at 10.00 am

**County Borough Councillors - Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny
Committee Members in attendance:-**

Councillor JP Blundell – Bridgend CBC Councillor J Hill - Blaenau Gwent Council
Councillor J Clarke - Newport City Council Councillor V Crick – Torfaen Council
Councillor P Pavia - Monmouthshire Council Councillor A Whitcombe – Caerphilly Council
Councillor G Thomas RCTCBC

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication RCTCBC
Mr R Waters – Service Director Frontline Services RCTCBC
Simon Rhoden – General Manager, Amey Infrastructure Wales
Geoff Ogden – Corporate Services Director, TfW
Councillor Huw David – Chairman Regional Transport Authority
Clare Cameron – Project Development Manager, TfW
Sarah Daniel – Senior Democratic Services Officer RCTCBC

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Darren Roberts (MTCBC) and Cllr Alex Williams (Deputy Member BCBC)

14 Declarations of Interest

None received

15 Minutes

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th December 2020 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting

16 Regional Transport Authority

The Service Director Frontline Services RCTCBC presented the report to members. He advised that the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority is a sub Committee of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Cabinet and is responsible for taking forward the transport elements of the City Deal.

To appraise members of the work of the CCRTA, members were provided updates in respect of the three following areas:

- ULEV Update – this clearly sets out the work being undertaken

by the CCRTA on behalf of the ten local authorities in South East Wales to deliver a regional strategy and programme to enable transition away from petrol and diesel powered vehicles and a move towards 100% electric vehicles, including buses, taxis and private cars. Noting that the Metro transformation is also delivering an electrified rail service across the Core Valley Lines (CVL)

- Metro Plus Programme – this report offers an update on the latest position regarding the delivery of this ambitious programme which sets out to add value to the existing Metro commitments with a £50M programme reaching each and every participating council. It notes the challenges that local authorities are dealing with in delivering this programme and establishes a way forward for dealing with programming and financial issues.
- Local Transport Fund (LTF) Bid 2021/22 – this report provides the information within the bid that was submitted to Welsh Government by Merthyr Tydfil Council, acting on behalf of the region, for LTF and ULEV funding; summing almost £20.8M. The bid requests £6.41M towards delivery of the first phase of Metro+ projects and £3.57M towards the development of a potential second phase of Metro+ projects, together with specific enhancements to the CVL transformation and development of Metro Enhancement Framework corridors. It is noted that the Metro+ programme includes circa £10M of City Deal funding. The ULEV bid seeks to secure £10.817M to build on the progress made with 20/21 ULEV funding as identified in the ULEV report. The ULEV programme (and other transport opportunities) are seeking circa £3M of City Deal funding committed as match funding to influence the programme, maximise the likelihood of successful bids and establish a return on investment through, for example, concession agreements. During 21/22 further bids will be made to OLEV to enhance this programme.

The Rail Programme Director Transport for Wales (TfW) gave a presentation to members on the Transformation on the Core Valley Lines (CVL) He advised members that the CVL Transformation is a Welsh Government programme to improve transport in South East Wales, providing faster, more frequent high quality services. £738m had been secured as part of the City Deal, with contributions from multiple local Authorities, Welsh and UK Governments and European Regional Development Funding, to upgrade the infrastructure in order to deliver a metro style service level throughout the CVL. The CVL transformation will ensure that passengers' key priorities were foremost and will focus on improving passenger experiences by reducing journey times, enhancing public spaces and increasing service frequency.

A member asked how the CCRTA are liaising with Welsh Government and local Council's in relation to the core valley lines at Hirwaun, Rhigos and Penderyn.

He added that those communities had long wanted a connection extended from Aberdare to Hirwaun and asked if there was an update on this

The Service Director Frontline Services RCTCBC responded that these were being taken forward and that the CCRTA had commissioned WELTAG to undertake the work to extend the line, which included the ZIP world facility. He advised that they were not in a position to update just yet but the Committee could be updated on progress if requested. He added that they had also submitted a bid for funding for the next 5 financial years to take this forward.

A member asked if the plans for developments for Monmouthshire could be sent to him and asked for an update on the project plans

The Programme Director Transport for Wales (TfW) advised he would send the information required to the member. He added that the overall programme had encountered some constraints due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Programme initially had approximately 300 staff working at the Treforest hub daily who were now remote working and this had been a challenge, however they had been working hard to mitigate any delays. He added they were currently reprioritising work to secure elements of funding. He reassured members that work had fully commenced and was continuing ahead.

A Member asked for an update on the Abertillery line.

The Programme Director TfW responded that they will be undertaking improvements to increase the frequency to Ebbw Vale but could not give indicative timescales as of yet.

A Member asked if there were challenges as a result of the flooding over last two winters and what mitigation measures had been put in place.

The Programme Director TfW advised that additional drainage measures had been installed. Before the additional drainage measures were in situ it took over a week to clear the flood water, after the measures it was clear in less than 24 hours. He added that they learned that small upgrades to the drainage gave significant benefits. There were a number of drainage works ongoing to make the network more resilient in the event of heavier flooding episodes.

The General Manager Amey Infrastructure Wales added that they have a campaign looking at culverts and drains to clear them and their maintenance teams were doing all they could to alleviate flooding issues.

The Service Director Frontline Services RCTCBC gave members a presentation on the Metro Plus Programme and recommended revisions required to the Metro Plus scheme to address recent challenges in Deliverability, Viability and Affordability. He advised members of the Metro Plus Phase 1 Programme and Objectives. He advised members of the following complex issues of the programme which were:

- All 10 schemes are different – all varying costs and characteristics – no silver bullet solution
- Scheme set out to 'level playing field', but schemes selected vary hugely in cost/scale/ complexity
- These have been local choices and CCR levers to intervene limited
- But, we must navigate way forward together as one region

- Robust appraisal of options – initial discussion with CEXs at Programme Board
- Need to resolve the funding issues, but also the wider challenges mentioned
- As a result, the programme of schemes proposed to be split:
Metro Plus, Phase 1 Wave 1 (To Be Delivered In Full by 31 March 2023)
Metro Plus, Phase 1, Wave 2 (Development Programme to be funded up to 31 March 2023)

He further advised members of the recommendations to the next meeting of the RTA to be considered by Regional Cabinet at its meeting on 15th March 2021:

- 1) Confirms adoption of preferred to advance the Metro Plus programme in order to ensure it is fit for future purpose and capable of delivering for the whole of the region
- 2) Notes the wider issues and challenges set in the report, which includes implementing a new schedule to each approved scheme, to drive the performance culture and the appointment of independent experts, Local Partnerships which will help bring independent rigour to the process and ensure all ten schemes are held to proper account
- 3) Approves an extension of one year for the programme
- 4) Agree the amendment of the delegations approved on 12th September 2019 to allow CCR Director and Chair of RTA to oversee CCR aspects of the programme and hold schemes to account
- 5) To agree an additional allocation of £3m from the WIF to match fund transport initiatives that meet the Metro Plus agenda to maximise new funding and delivery opportunities; and further agree the additional delegations as identified within the report.
- 6) Notes that ongoing monitoring of the programme will be featured within quarterly Highlight Reports and also actively reviewed by Chief Executives via Programme Board

The Project Development Manager, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal gave a presentation to members on Ultra Low Emission Vehicles. She provided members with the following updates:

Taxi Vehicles Update for 2021:

- ULEV – Provision of Taxis for 'Try Before You Buy Scheme' - 3 Year Pilot Project
- 44 wheel chair accessible 100% electric vehicles – funded by WG LTF ULEV fund
- Management company to manage delivery in 2021/22
- Working closely with Cardiff Council Lease Hire Scheme with future aim to expand to Region Lease scheme

Public Chargers:

- ULEV – Provision of Public Use Charging Infrastructure
- 112 sites identified and costed for on-street / car parks / transport hubs
- Bid submitted to WG ULEV fund to deliver in 2021/22

Bus Chargers:

- ULEV – Provision of Bus Use Charging Infrastructure
- 15 sites identified and costed at transport hubs
- Bid submitted to WG ULEV fund to deliver in 2021/22

Other opportunities being considered:

- ULEV – Opportunities
- Regional Package of Supporting Measures - Providing financial incentives to taxi drivers, community transport and bus operators to encourage the uptake of ULEVs.
- Although the total cost of ownership of EVs is generally lower than conventionally fuelled vehicles, the initial capital cost is usually higher and therefore a financial incentive can help to overcome this.

The Chairman of the Regional transport Authority stated that he was proud of the progress made so far and he thought it was really important to have the try before you buy option for taxi operators across the region because we know that the days are numbered for petrol and diesel vehicles as these will be phased out. He added at a Capital Region level we want to ensure that we are ahead of the game to support our communities when this does happen. He stated that the issue was not just about changing vehicles to electric but the infrastructure needs to be in place to support it too. This, he added will be as challenging as changing the vehicles themselves. We have made a really positive and rapid start of this, however, want to continue to build on this at pace, and will continue to look for opportunities wherever they arise for funding from UK and Welsh Government and Private sector opportunities. He reassured members that Infrastructure will be put in place across the region, in every local authority area, valleys, towns and cities which will revolutionise how transport will be provided across the region. He thanked the officers and the Cabinet involved for their commitment and hard work to deliver the initiative.

A Member commented that electric vehicles may be suitable for individual use but not for public transport and what were the officers thoughts on this. Responded that at the moment Hydrogen was favoured for public transport and there was no comparison at the moment. The choice of electric vehicles was widening by the day. They agreed that for public transport a lot more work was needed on the next stages for buses and HGVs for example. The Director Frontline Services RCTCBC commented that they were starting to see the costs of electric vehicles reducing and the longer term cost benefits of running the vehicles were being gained.

A Member asked what has been discussed about the air pollution as some areas are as high as 70%

The Chairperson of the RTA commented that pollution is a killer and we all have a responsibility to reduce the level of pollution. He added that motor vehicles are the biggest culprit and buses that also use petrol and diesel which is why we focussed on this initially. Air quality action zones were being implemented and this would be a significant factor in future decisions.

A Member referred to the different projects that were brought forward but extended a year because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Pontypool rail scheme cost had increased 50%. She asked if officers felt comfortable that given the extension we are likely to come in on target now, and what is likely impact on the schemes?

The Project Development Manager replied that the scheme was heavily risk rated for network rail, as they are working alongside a live railway so the risk factor is driving costs up. She added that other schemes hadn't yet been out to tender but there was always a risk they could come back with similar issues, however, some of the schemes are not as close to the railway which is where

most of the risk is. She further added that this risk factor is considered in the budget planning. The Chairperson RTA added that there were a number of mechanisms in place and they were working with Welsh Government to ensure best value and ensure we deliver as soon as we can.

A Member asked if the projects being brought forward at the Pencoed level crossing meant that we can electrify the main line towards Swansea?

The Service Director Frontline Services RCTCBC advised that this was a Central Government controlled railway and was not delegated to Welsh Government so any funding strategy around this is delegated to the Department for Transport. Unfortunately conversations did not proceed as it was not cost effective and wouldn't improve journey times.

A Member asked how Porthcawl links in to the overall strategy as it was accessible by bus only.

The Chair of the RTA commented that Porthcawl was the biggest borough town and doesn't have railway station. He advised members that the proposal was about strengthening the link to Porthcawl with the nearest station in Pyle. He added that bus links were frequent and there are some rapid bus services between Bridgend and Porthcawl. Across the region we are committed to extending rapid bus links to lots of communities. He added that they were looking at the scheme with a holistic approach to strengthen links between Bridgend, Porthcawl, and Pyle.

A Member asked if Electric Vehicle Charging points would be rolled out to community centres too?

The Project Development Manager advised that a lot of work was undertaken upfront about where best to locate these and it was all public parking places. She advised that the criteria is that it has to be publically owned and accessible at all times so no reason why they couldn't come forward and she reassured members that the list was being extended all the time.

The Chairperson extended his thanks on behalf of the Committee to all officers and invitees that attended the meeting and thanked them for their comprehensive reports and presentations to members.

RESOLVED: Members noted the presentations and reports from officers

17 Forward Work Programme

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the

report to members so they could review and agree its Work Programme and schedule an item for consideration at their next meeting on 30 April 2021.

He also asked for members opinions on how they wished to take forward the meetings of the JOSOC in the future and if they wished to continue on a virtual basis.

A Member stated that given the geographical area that all members covered it would make sense to continue on a virtual basis unless members needed to attend site visits.

A Member asked if an item on the Strategic Development Plan can be explored for possible inclusion on the Work Programme.

18 Urgent Items

None