

**CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL
JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

7 DECEMBER 2023

REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the members of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CCRCD JOSOC) with the opportunity to review the work completed to date on the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and Strategic Development Plan (SDP), per the Regional Cabinet report of 9 October 2023 (**Appendix A**).
- 1.2 For JOSOC to scrutinise and challenge progress to date against the RTP and SDP.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members of the JOSOC:

- 2.1 Review the paper presented to South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC) on 9 October 2023, attached at Appendix A.
- 2.2 Review the agreed position taken at SEWCJC on 9 October 2023.
- 2.3 Consider and determine any other matters that members may wish to scrutinise over the coming period.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The LG and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 established Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) 'more coherent, consistent, simplified and democratically controlled mechanism for regional working'. Welsh Government (WG) has a vision for a strategic approach to both land-use and transport planning in a more joined-up way than has previously been achieved, and aligned tightly to ambitions around economic development.

- 3.2 The subsequent statutory guidance for CJsCs (published on 25 January 2022), outlines new statutory powers for economic wellbeing, spatial planning and regional transport.
- 3.3 The guidance focussed on the statutory and constitutional arrangements for CJsCs, as opposed to specific detail on the functions to be exercised. To that end, the CJC is required to develop a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and Regional Transport Plan (RTP) following the publication of separate guidance specifically for these non-concurrent duties.
- 3.4 CCR submitted a report to SEWCJC on 9 October with an overview of progress to date against these obligations, and an approach to resourcing with a view to the first milestones of each plan.
- 3.5 In the case of the RTP, there has been greater progress, given the relative regional maturity achieved through the work to date of the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA). Detailed RTP Guidance was received from WG on 13 July 2023, which contained a series of milestones for the RTP to be adopted by June 2025.
- 3.6 There is an obligation to achieve the first milestone of submitting a draft RTP Implementation Plan by 31 October 2023. CCR included in the report to Regional Cabinet an overview of proposed key dates and milestones. These were not in alignment with WG's proposed milestones, given the tight timescales. They do, however, align with the adoption date of June 2025.
- 3.7 The report requested that CCR be allowed to develop a draft Implementation Plan based on these high-level timelines and an associated resource plan detailing high-level costs, and a request for funding from WG for the current and subsequent financial year.
- 3.8** In terms of the Strategic Development Plan, this is a more significant undertaking. It is a long-term plan (with a minimum range of 25 years), and it is intended that the SDP will, ultimately, enable a more consistent, cost effective and efficient approach to land-use planning. The SDP will offer the opportunity to better plan and deliver regionally important, strategic growth in a coordinated, cross-border manner, aligned with the Regional Transport Plan.
- 3.9 A draft SDP Manual was issued to all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in autumn 2022. The Manual outlines in detail the context, core principles and SDP preparation process.
- 3.10 The full and final SDP Manual will not be issued until spring 2024, and it is not anticipated that the SDP will be adopted until 2029 earliest. In the interim Local

Development Plans (LDPs) must be kept up to date, ensuring, for example, that investment and sustainable development can continue to take place in a planned way.

- 3.11 To that end, there have discussions with LPA and WG colleagues, to ensure that there is a satisfactory dual track of SDP development and LDP review/renewal, allied to alignment with WG policy.
- 3.12 A report has been commissioned through the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group to demonstrate regional growth ambitions and conformity with the overarching policy framework, Future Wales 2040. The intention is that this will provide an evidence base to keep LDPs on track while the SDP is developed.
- 3.13 An official letter was issued to CJs on 13 January 2023 setting out Welsh Ministers' expectations in relation to the development of the SDP. This includes the first formal milestone - the submission of a Delivery Agreement (DA) to Welsh Ministers by March 2024, and that the CJC demonstrate the commencement of technical work on plan preparation.
- 3.14 The report details a resourcing approach for the first milestones of the RTP and SDP, which was approved by Regional Cabinet. For the RTP, this was to be detailed in the draft Implementation Plan with a request to WG for funding of the plan. For the SDP, the resourcing approach detailed in the report outlines an initial need for a part-time specialist secondment to CCR, in order to understand the resources required to develop the SDP.

4. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 4.1 A key aspect of the discussion at Regional Cabinet was the potentially significant burden of developing the SDP, while observing that the relative maturity of regional transport governance would make the development of the RTP more achievable - albeit there is no surety on how schemes detailed in the plan would be funded in the medium-term. A need was identified for engagement of CCR Leaders with Welsh Ministers on sequencing and resource requirements for the development and delivery of the respective plans.
- 4.2 Per Regional Cabinet's approval, the draft RTP Implementation Plan was submitted on 31 October 2023 and contains a request to WG for £300k in financial years 2023-25 to develop the RTP. The draft Implementation Plan was approved by the Chair of the CCRTA (Councillor Huw David) and shared with the SEWCJC, CCRTA, other CJs, and the Welsh Local Government Association.

- 4.3 This request is dependent upon Transport for Wales' (TfW) ability to fulfil data and other service requirements as identified in the Plan. A detailed quarterly budget is being developed to manage phasing of the funding.
- 4.4 CCR await a formal response to the request (in terms of feedback and approval of funding) and this is anticipated in December 2023. If approved the final RTP Implementation Plan will be submitted to SEWCJC in January 2024.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial implications are detailed in the report. The CJC's 2024/25 Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will highlight the challenges faced by Constituent Councils in balancing their local budgets in a sustained period of real term reductions and increasing demand for services.
- 5.2 The CJC is exploring the 'Options & Choices' available regarding the development of both plans. Central to this will be the ability to secure support from Welsh Government to help deliver the SDP and RTP requirements set out in the report. Therefore, careful planning and sequencing will be required in the coming months to ensure that any commitments the CJC enters into, can be met from within the resource envelope, which the CJC is a position to approve.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The report sets out the legal requirements generally with regards the RTP and SDP. S112 Transport Act 2000 provides that the CJC must have regard to any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers concerning the content of regional transport plans and the preparation of such plans.

APPENDIX A: Regional Cabinet RTP & SDP Cover Report & Appendices