

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

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| Date of Meeting | Tuesday 12 January 2021 |
| Report Subject | Flintshire County Council Response to Welsh Government's Transport Strategy Consultation |
| Cabinet Member | Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside |
| Report Author | Chief Officer - Streetscene & Transportation. |
| Type of Report | Strategic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government's (WG) overarching Transport Strategy sets out the future direction for transport in Wales. The existing Transport Strategy has now expired and WG have now published their new draft Strategy entitled '*Llwybr Newydd – A New Wales Transport Strategy*', with a request for comments from any interested parties by the 25 January 2021.

The implementation of WG's revised overarching strategy will require all Welsh authorities to revise their Joint Local Transport Plans (JLTP) in order to reflect WG's desired direction for transport over the next 5 years. This in turn will instigate the revision of the Council's own Integrated Transport Plan, which will define the Council's own aspirations for transport over the same period.

This report provides Scrutiny with an overview of the content of WG's revised Transport Strategy whilst also sharing details of the Council's proposed response to the formal consultation process for Scrutiny comment and additions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | That Scrutiny recommend Cabinet approve the Council's response to the formal consultation process for WG's revised Transport Strategy. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | BACKGROUND |
| 1.01 | Responsibility for transport in Wales has been devolved to Welsh Government (WG) however, Welsh Councils, Transport for Wales, Network Rail, public and community transport operators and third sector |

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| | organisations all have an interest and contribute to transport provisions and facilities across all modes of transport in Wales. |
| 1.02 | The WG Transport Strategy serves as the overarching document within the hierarchy of transport and sets the direction for transport in Wales in the coming years. Whilst the existing document is currently outdated, in November 2020, WG published the new draft Wales Transport Strategy entitled “ <i>Llwybr Newydd – A New Wales Transport Strategy</i> ” (WTS) which frames WG’s vision and long-term, 20-year ambitions for how transport can contribute to the wider social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being of people in Wales. |
| 1.03 | <p>The WTS is a statutory document required by the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 (the Act), which places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a WTS setting out its policies and how they will be discharged.</p> <p>Covering all modes of transport, the WTS sets WG’s strategic priorities and desired outcomes, providing a link to the wider priorities as well as plans at the local authority level. The Act requires the Welsh Ministers to keep the WTS under review and provides the powers to revise it from time to time.</p> |
| 1.04 | The draft Strategy is currently at the consultation stage with responses being sought by WG by the 25 January 2021. A link enabling Members to view the draft strategy document has been enclosed within the accessible background documents for information. |
| 1.05 | Upon adoption of the revised Strategy, all Welsh authorities will have a statutory duty to revise their Joint Local Transport Plans (JLTP) in order to reflect WG’s desired direction for transport for the forthcoming 5 years. This in turn will instigate the subsequent revision of the Council’s own Integrated Transport Plan in which the Council’s own aspirations for transport will be defined. |
| 1.06 | WG’s revised Strategy aims to provide an accessible, sustainable transport system that is good for people and communities, good for the environment, good for the economy and places in Wales, and good for culture and the Welsh language, contributing to each of the seven national well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. |
| 1.07 | <p>In order for WG to deliver their vision and ambition for an accessible sustainable transport system, the following 5 year priorities have been defined;</p> <p><u>Priority 1:</u> Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by planning ahead for better physical and digital connectivity, more local services, more home and remote working and more active travel, so that fewer people need to use their cars on a daily basis.</p> <p><u>Priority 2:</u> Grow public transport use in Wales by providing services that everyone can use, wants to use, and does use.</p> |

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| | <p>Priority 3: Safe, accessible, well-maintained and managed transport infrastructure that is also future-proofed to support public transport and electrification especially walking and cycling.</p> <p>Priority 4: Making sustainable transport choices more attractive and affordable to more people and businesses, whilst respecting the fact that many people including those in rural areas or disabled people, may not have options, and</p> <p>Priority 5: Supporting innovations that help more people and businesses adopt more sustainable transport choices.</p> |
| 1.08 | <p>A selection of 'mini-plans' detailing WG's vision and priorities for each mode of travel has been detailed within section 7 of the new strategy document. This section of the strategy takes an integrated approach to transport by showing how individual transport sectors and modes can contribute to the shared ambitions and priorities.</p> |
| 1.09 | <p>Following the adoption of a revised Transport Strategy, many of WG's existing guidance and policy documents will need to be reviewed or updated to reflect the ambitions and priorities in Llwybr Newydd. These include TAN (Technical Advice Note) 18: Transport, which was last updated in 2007, as well as WG's guidance on biodiversity, trunk road maintenance standards, the Road Safety Framework and WG's approach to local speed limits.</p> <p>WG also propose to take forward wider reforms designed to improve transport services in Wales, including proposals to reform bus services, road user charging arrangements and practical measures to improve Active Travel, such as pavement parking and lowering local speed limits. It also proposes further devolution of transport powers to Wales.</p> |
| 1.10 | <p>Having reviewed the WTS document, it is evident that WG's approach to transport has evolved from a previously highway dominated focus to the prioritisation of greener, more sustainable modes of travel with an emphasis on Active Travel and Public Transport. This approach is strongly endorsed by the Council's own Integrated Transport Strategy which aims to provide long term sustainable transport solutions through the successful integration of all modes of transport, catering for the demands of each, whilst maintaining and promoting at its heart, a sustainable, affordable and environmentally friendly Public Transport Service, with links to all of Flintshire and the wider region.</p> <p>The Council's own transport strategy forms a key element of the North Wales Metro project and there is little doubt that the Council's holistic approach to integrated and progression of sustainable transport options has helped shape WG's revised Strategy and on this basis the Council welcomes the new strategy and its amended priorities.</p> |
| 1.11 | <p>In order to provide feedback on the current consultation, WG are inviting the views and suggestions of consultees (including local authorities) for which a specified Consultation Response Form has been included within the rear of the draft document. Having reviewed the document, the response form has subsequently been completed and has been enclosed within Appendix 1 for information and comment.</p> |

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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | Continued WG financial support to develop both the Council's own Integrated Transport Strategy and the North Wales Metro project will be necessary, if we are to achieve the aims and objectives of the new strategy. |
| 2.02 | WG are undertaking a concurrent consultation exercise on their proposals to introduce Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). One of the functions the new Committee will undertake is the preparation of the Regional Transport Plan that will replace the JLTP referenced in this report. The Council has prepared a response to these proposals. |

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| 3.00 | IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT | |
| 3.01 | Long-term | Positive – The move to low carbon sustainable transport options (as specified within the WTS) aligns itself with the long term aspirations of The Environment (Wales) Act, The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act & The Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations. The concept is also strongly endorsed within the Council's Council Plan under the priority of a 'Green Council' as well as aligning to the Council's Integrated Transport Strategy. |
| | Prevention | Positive – The development of sustainable transport options (as defined within the WTS) will reinforce the Council's commitment to climate change whilst also facilitating a vision for a zero carbon future as defined within WG legislation. Implementation of the required infrastructure will provide resilience to the County's highway network and also boost the Council's status as a 'key player' within the region thus reducing the risk of public abandonment in terms of tourism, residential and business growth. |
| | Integration | Positive – The continued development and delivery of multi-modal integrated transport options are key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network. |
| | Collaboration | Positive – The continual development of a fit for purpose Integrated Transport |

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| | | <p>Strategy (as defined within the WTS) will enable FCC to work with local authorities across the region in order to standardise the provision of infrastructure.</p> <p>The nature of this approach recognises the importance of strategic cross-border movements to the local economy in terms of commuter movements, business and tourism.</p> |
| | Involvement | <p>Positive – Within the WTS, WG set out the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the area which the body serves. As part of WG's wider commitment to equality WG are committed to meaningful engagement, involvement and co-production. By means of the Consultation, WG are actively engaging with a wide range of people in order to understand their experiences of travel, and why they choose particular transport options.</p> |
| Well-being Goals Impact | | |
| | Prosperous Wales | <p>Positive – The continual development of greener, sustainable transport options within a fit for purpose Integrated Transport Strategy (as defined within the WTS) will boost the Council's status as a 'key player' within the region thus reducing the risk of public abandonment in terms of tourism, residential and business growth.</p> |
| | Resilient Wales | <p>Positive – Adoption of the revised WTS will support the progression of the Council's Integrated Transport Strategy and ability to deliver required infrastructure improvement works (as defined within the Active Travel Act / Road Safety Framework) which is key to the success of a sustainable, integrated transport network and a low carbon future.</p> |
| | Healthier Wales | <p>Positive – The promotion and utilisation of active and sustainable transport modes will provide obvious benefits to air quality through the reduction of Co2 emissions. This will also greatly assist the Council to achieve decarbonisation targets set within Central and WG legislation.</p> |

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| | More Equal Wales | Positive – Improved connectivity through the implementation of required infrastructure (as defined within the WTS) will benefit tourism, residential and business growth. Health benefits obtained from improved air quality and increased levels of exercise will benefit the Council's most deprived communities, often associated with densely populated areas. |
| | Cohesive Wales | Positive – The visible presence of active and sustainable transport options within the County will have a positive effect on public awareness whilst displaying the Council's outward commitment to climate change. |
| | Vibrant Wales | Positive – The continued development and implementation of active and sustainable transport modes will improve the quality and sustainability of the natural environment whilst providing benefits to the local and regional economy in terms of tourism, residential and business growth. |
| | Globally Responsible Wales | Positive – The continual development of Active and sustainable transport options (as defined within the WTS) will reinforce the Council's commitment to climate change whilst also striving to achieve a zero carbon future as defined within Central and WG legislation. |

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| 4.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT |
| 4.01 | With Cabinet Member (Streetscene and Countryside). |
| 4.02 | With Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. |

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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | Appendix 1: Flintshire County Council's Consultation Response Form. |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | Welsh Governments 'A New Wales Transport Strategy' (WTS): https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2020-12/consultation-document-llwybr-newydd.pdf |

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| 7.00 | CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS |
| 7.01 | <p>Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones, Chief Officer, Streetscene and Transportation Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

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| 8.00 | <p>GLOSSARY OF TERMS These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office</p> |
| 8.01 | <p>(1) The Wales Transport Strategy: A statutory document required by the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 (The Act). The Act places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to prepare and publish a WTS setting out its policies and how they will be discharged.</p> <p>(2) National Transport Plan: A statutory document detailing how WG propose to deliver the outcomes set out in the Wales Transport Strategy from 2015 and beyond. The Plan includes all transport interventions financed by the WG.</p> <p>(3) North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan: A statutory document that will sit alongside the Local Development Plans and other policies and plans of each of the local authorities, once adopted. The plan sets out all of the six North Wales local authorities vision to 'remove barriers to economic growth, prosperity and well-being by delivering safe, sustainable, affordable and effective transport networks' and details this Council's specific transport interventions and projects to achieve this aim.</p> <p>(4) Flintshire County Council Integrated Transport Strategy: An integrated strategy aiming to provide long term sustainable transport solutions through the successful integration of all modes of transport, which links to all of Flintshire and the wider region.</p> <p>(5) North East Wales Metro: North East Wales Metro is an investment in all modes to deliver a modern, high quality transport system that is fundamental to achieving sustainability and climate change objectives and delivering economic growth across North Wales.</p> <p>(6) Active Travel (Wales) Act: A statutory document introduced in 2013, its purpose is to enable more people to undertake active travel for short journeys instead of using motorised vehicles where it is suitable for them to do so. An Active Travel route must be within a designated locality in a local authority area.</p> <p>(7) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: This act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It requires public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term; work better with people, communities and each other; look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.</p> |