

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

14 DECEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SCHEMES

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's current and potential future strategic transport projects and seek priorities for schemes to go forward for any future phases of the South East Wales Metro programme or any other funding or delivery mechanism. The projects identified will also form the basis of Bridgend strategic transport priorities in discussions with Welsh Government (WG), Transport for Wales (TFW) and Network Rail (NR).

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-
1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.
- 2.2 The strategic transport proposals will facilitate further public transport use and active travel infrastructure through improved, convenience and usability.
- 2.3 The schemes will therefore contribute to the Council's corporate well-being Objective of 'Supporting a successful sustainable economy' under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by reducing the carbon footprint through the method of encouraging modal shift to sustainable travel and by reducing the vehicular congestion.

- 2.4 The creation of improved accessibility for all modes of travel contributes to 'Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient' by providing greater access to public transport, traffic reduction and associated environmental benefits.
- 2.5 Additionally, the scheme contributes to a 'Smarter use of resources' by improving public transport efficiency as well as providing scope for further rail service frequency enhancements on the wider rail network in the county borough particularly along the Maesteg to Cardiff route, which has been identified as a key transport corridor.
- 2.6 The schemes will also provide an opportunity for future localised regeneration schemes around the project areas with associated economic and social benefits.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) through its Metro programme together with Welsh Government (WG) provide the principal funding mechanism for large strategic transport projects within the region. Current projects include the Porthcawl Metrolink bus facility as well as feasibility and design work on the replacement Penprysg Road/Active Travel Bridge and removal of the level crossing in Pencoed. The Council's active travel programme also represents a substantial investment in strategic transportation. Active travel schemes also rely primarily on WG funding (managed by Transport for Wales) and the programme is prioritised separately as part of the active travel network map approval process.
- 3.2 Other transport infrastructure projects (including active travel and highway improvements) may be funded by developer contributions (through Section 106 planning agreements), by other grant funding initiatives and on occasions support from within the Authority.
- 3.3 It is essential that the Council agrees a list of schemes that may be submitted as part of any current or future transport funding bids as well as identifying recognised projects that could be promoted when seeking developer contributions through Section 106 agreements.
- 3.4 The identified projects would also be promoted with the related public transport bodies i.e., Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, Network Rail, and the UK Government when discussing rail and public transport priorities.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The proposed and existing schemes are listed below in alphabetical order, which should also be read in conjunction with **Appendix 1** providing more detail in terms of the link with national policies, the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 4.2 The prioritisation process of each scheme should be based on the following suggested criteria. These criteria have been used in identifying schemes already included in the approved LTP. Consideration should therefore be given to the impacts that the following schemes will have on delivering local and regional economic, environmental and safety objectives as well as allocation in the LTP, LDP and compliance with national policy aims and objectives.

4.3 Active Travel Programme

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities in Wales to produce existing and future route maps of walking and cycling networks and to deliver year on year active travel improvements along the mapped routes and their related facilities. 'Active travel' is a term used to describe walking and cycling as a means of transport to a destination and not solely for leisure. A pedestrian encompasses those travelling by foot, wheelchair, or other mobility aid. A cyclist includes pedal cycles, e-cycles, adapted cycles, and cargo cycles.

A separate Cabinet report will provide more detail and seek authorisation to submit the revised active travel network map (ATNM) to Welsh Government by the prescribed deadline of 31st December 2021. This will provide the basis for future bids for funding for active travel infrastructure with the aspiration to address any 'gaps' in the current network and service the new communities coming forward through the strategic planning process.

4.4 Brackla Halt Railway Station

This is a longstanding proposal for a new station facility on the South Wales mainline between Bridgend and Pencoed and serving the large residential area of Brackla and Coychurch as well as Bridgend Industrial Estate. It will also serve future land use developments proposed to the south of the A473 as detailed in the Replacement LDP. As well as the station, a new active travel bridge would be essential to link Brackla with Bridgend Industrial Estate, and this can also be pursued through the current active travel programme independent of the station.

It is envisaged that a new station would form part of the South East Wales Metro along with the existing local Pyle, Bridgend and Pencoed stations.

4.5 Bridgend Railway Station enhancement

This will improve access and provide park and ride, active travel enhancements and a bus interchange facility. This is a significant part of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan but could also be considered as a strategic transport project in itself. The project would also look at the feasibility of enhanced bus connections and infrastructure.

4.6 Ewenny Road (Maesteg) Interchange

The Ewenny Road Interchange was identified as part of the WeITAG Stage 2 study into the Maesteg line enhancement project currently undertaken by Transport for Wales. There is also some allocated funding to carry out preliminary feasibility studies to complement the WeITAG (Welsh Government Transport Appraisal Guidance) process. The scheme is expected to include a park & ride facility, electric vehicle charging facility, bus stops, covered cycle parking and taxi rank adjacent to the existing Ewenny Road rail station. The project would take the proposal to design stage but with suitable funding could be fully implemented. Furthermore, the facility, which would have transport benefits to the whole Llynfi Valley, has sufficient critical mass to be pursued independently of any future regeneration plans for the adjoining, former industrial site.

4.7 Ford Branch Line

The branch line opened to serve the Ford Engine factory at Waterton but is no longer in use following the plants closure in 2020. The associated level crossing across the A48 has also been closed.

The track bed remains however, and the reopening of the line as a heavy rail or light rail tram train alternative with connection to Bridgend and Vale Of Glamorgan lines could still be developed. A WeITAG study could be commissioned to explore and appraise how the site could be regenerated.

4.8 Garw and Ogmore Valleys Rapid Bus Infrastructure

Rapid bus systems refer to bus-based public transport, which is designed to have better capacity and be more efficient than conventional bus routes that use the normal highway infrastructure. They typically include roadways that are dedicated to buses, giving priority to buses at intersections/junctions and where buses may interact with other traffic. These systems could be utilised more flexibly in areas that are not well served by rail and provide faster bus journeys from residential to commercial centres and employment bases.

The project would look at feasibility of introducing these systems in the Garw and Ogmore Valleys as part of the South East Wales Metro as well as a review of the current rail stations in the Valley Gateway area that could be utilised for enhanced park & ride and interchange facilities. The emphasis would be on the use of ultra-low emission vehicles to meet carbon reduction targets.

4.9 Junction 36 (M4)

A number of assessments and reports (for example, the Welsh Government 'pinch point' study) have been undertaken over recent years and have evidenced that Junction 36 has reached its operational capacity limit and there are significant queue lengths on all of the six junction approaches during peak periods. A WeITAG Stage 2 report is currently underway which incorporates J35-J37, commissioned by WG.

The efficiency, capacity and congestion issues impact on this key node's ability to perform its strategic function. This will restrict future growth in the north of the county borough and disadvantage those who are most affected by this major constraint to movement.

The provision of a safe, attractive and extensive active travel network will improve local accessibility, giving residents the opportunity to walk and cycle to nearby services and facilities, whilst improved access to public transport services will enable residents to travel to employment opportunities further afield. Whilst these measures will increase sustainable transport use will help release some capacity at J36 they are unlikely to fully resolve the problems due to the current physical constraints and as such major intervention is required.

4.10 Penprysg Road Bridge

This is also a current major strategic transport and Metro funded project involving the replacement of a sub-standard road bridge, closure of Pencoed Level Crossing and a replacement of a fully accessible active travel bridge. This project is a longstanding strategic land use and transport commitment for the Council as evidenced in proposed, current and previous development plans and the LTP. At present there is a moratorium in place on the development of Pencoed north of the crossing due to traffic congestion caused by an inadequate road bridge and the regular closing of the level crossing. The project will also bring economic and environmental public realm enhancements to the centre of Pencoed once the level crossing has been removed.

This scheme is currently at the first level of public consultation, which will conclude WelTAG Stage 2. The project has also been identified for submission as future levelling up transport application.

4.11 Porthcawl Metrolink

This is a current Metro project and comprises a new purpose-built, enclosed bus facility located at the Salt Lake site on Porthcawl sea front linking to the South Wales Metro. The project is well advanced and is planned for completion in March 2023. It is also intended to bid for active travel grant funding to commence a feasibility study into enhanced active travel links between the Metrolink and Porthcawl town centre along Dock Street.

4.12 Porthcawl to Pyle/Bridgend Bus Priority enhancements

This could include dedicated bus lanes and/or bus gates at congested junctions and be developed to complement and enhance the Metrolink bus facility in Porthcawl.

4.13 Pyle Railway Station Relocation and Park and Ride.

The existing station has significant land and infrastructure constraints that impact on current and future park and ride enhancements and therefore a relocation further east will be required if the facility is to be expanded into a strategic regional facility. An initial feasibility study has already been carried out. This scheme will enhance the public transport accessibility profile of the strategic development land at Pyle and existing communities along the Pyle-Porthcawl corridor. Already, there are active travel links being developed in that area and therefore relocating the Pyle railway station would facilitate the integration of land use and multi-modal transport.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect on policy framework or procedure rules at this stage.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies,

strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

- 6.2 Any strategic transport project is subject to detailed assessment and appraisal via the WelTAG process with a full Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on the final preferred option (at WelTAG Stage Three).

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The impact and effect of the strategic transport schemes described above as assessed in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and a summary of the implications relating to the five ways of working is below:

Long-term: The implementation of the proposed strategic transport schemes will provide a comprehensive network of public transport and active travel routes which connect to all major trip attractors. It will therefore allow for greater opportunities for both active travel and a reduction in car dependent transport. This will result in environmental benefits associated with reductions in noise and air pollution; reduction in congestion and other associated economic benefits, promoting greater social inclusion and supporting the boroughs aims of a successful sustainable economy.

Prevention: The proposed strategic transport schemes will help reduce congestion by allowing for more opportunities of active travel, resulting in a positive impact on communities.

Integration: Active travel can provide health benefits associated with increased physical activity; environmental benefits associated with reductions in noise and air pollution; reduction in congestion and other associated economic benefits, promoting greater social inclusion. Connecting communities and providing infrastructure that facilitates low cost modes of public transportation, ensuring equity of opportunity for those without access to a car or who wish to use more sustainable modes. Furthermore, the promotion of active travel supports the work of other public bodies such as the local health board to encourage healthier lifestyles.

Collaboration: The development of the strategic transport schemes will require collaboration with external stakeholders and internally with various sections of the council including local town councils, regeneration, engineering, traffic management, and planning in considering wellbeing objectives.

Involvement: Section 5 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 states: 'A public body must take account of... the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population'. This approach has been evidenced by the extensive engagement undertaken through the LDP, LTP and WelTAG processes.

- 7.2 Further engagement will take place on individual schemes as they are progressed

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The work on the Porthcawl Metrolink project and the Penprysg Road Bridge replacement have so far been funded by the Welsh Government Local Transport Fund which is administered under the Cardiff City Region's Metro Programme.
- 8.2 Any future schemes will be subject to separate funding bids. Potential sources of funding for future technical work and construction include Section 106 planning contributions, Welsh Government grants, UK Government grants, Cardiff Capital Region Metro and City Deal.
- 8.3 The Council will need to fully explore future funding options and at this stage any match funding requirements from the Council on individual projects is unknown. Future reports will be brought to Cabinet with updates on funding bids. Any future capital schemes will need to be presented and approved by Council for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the strategic transport projects as identified above to be included as part of any future Cardiff Capital Region Metro programme or other funding mechanism as well as the basis for discussion with other outside transport bodies on national and regional strategic transport priorities.

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Background documents: None

APPENDIX 1

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SCHEMES – LINKS TO NATIONAL POLICIES, LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Project	Compliance with local and national policy – Future Wales 2040 - The National Plan (FW2040), Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 (WTS), Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11), Local Development Plan (LDP), Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), Local Transport Plan (LTP), Cardiff Capital Region (CCR).	Comment
<p>Active Travel Programme</p>	<p>LDP Policy SP3, RLDP SP5, LTP FW2040 & PPW11 priorities</p>	<p>The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 requires local authorities in Wales to produce existing and future route maps of walking and cycling networks and to deliver year on year active travel improvements along the mapped routes and their related facilities. ‘Active travel’ is a term used to describe walking and cycling as a means of transport to a destination and not solely for leisure. A pedestrian encompasses those travelling by foot, wheelchair or other mobility aid. A cyclist includes pedal cycles, e-cycles, adapted cycles and cargo cycles.</p>
<p>Brackla Halt Railway Station</p> <p>New station facility on the South Wales mainline between Bridgend and Pencoed.</p> <p>A WelTAG study should be commissioned with Metro funding and the project taken up to design stage.</p>	<p>RLDP PLA8 (4)</p> <p>The Scheme is identified in the Bridgend LTP.</p> <p>CCR Passenger Rail priorities – South Wales main line service enhancement</p> <p>Metro Enhancement Framework (MEF)</p>	<p>Long identified by TfW as a proposed new station and shown in the latest TfW media release (October 2021) as an emerging priority to 2029. As well as the station, a new active travel bridge would be essential to link Brackla with Bridgend Industrial Estate.</p>

	<p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 rail mini-plan</p>	<p>As the bridge will bring benefits on its own, it is recommended that bids are made for Welsh Government Active Travel Grant funding in January 2022 to undertake feasibility and preliminary design. This will provide a 'head start' on the active travel bridge, which will inevitably help create a stronger case for Brackla Halt.</p> <p>The car park has already been installed and funded through S106 contributions from adjacent residential development.</p>
<p>Bridgend Railway Station enhancement</p> <p>Improved access, park and ride and bus interchange facility.</p>	<p>Identified in the Bridgend LTP</p> <p>CCR Passenger Rail priorities – South Wales main line service enhancement.</p> <p>Burns report recommendation</p> <p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 rail mini-plan</p>	<p>Part of the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan</p>
<p>Ewenny Road (Maesteg) Interchange</p> <p>Park & Ride facility, bus stops, covered cycle parking and taxi rank adjacent to the existing Ewenny Road rail station.</p> <p>The project would take the proposal to a fully designed scheme. If further funding becomes available for example through a future phase of Metro, it could also be implemented.</p>	<p>RLDP PLA8 (7)</p> <p>The Scheme is identified in the Bridgend LTP.</p> <p>CCR Passenger Rail priorities – Maesteg line service enhancement</p> <p>Included in the Metro Enhancement Framework (MEF)</p> <p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 rail mini-plan</p> <p>Burns report recommendation</p>	<p>Site is part of the wider allocated regeneration site offering transit orientated development but would equally work as a standalone facility servicing the Llynfi Valley.</p> <p>WelTAG Stage 2/3. This station has already been recommended for further investigation as part of the Maesteg branch line WelTAG Stage 1 report commissioned by Welsh Government and is identified by TfW as an emerging priority to 2029</p>

		<p>for the South Wales Metro.</p> <p>Physical ground investigation and survey works being commissioned.</p>
<p>Ford Branch Line</p> <p>The reopening of the existing Ford Branch line as a heavy rail or light rail tram train alternative with connection to Bridgend and VOG lines</p> <p>WelTAG study should be commissioned.</p>	<p>RLDP Policy ENT5, SP5</p> <p>FW2040 & PPW11 priorities</p> <p>Identified in the CCR Passenger Rail Vision document.</p> <p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 rail mini-plan</p>	<p>The infrastructure is already in place and the current track is under the control of Network Rail. It will need major upgrading for continued heavy rail use but lighter alternatives could be investigated.</p> <p>The railhead is located within the former Ford plant. The existing level crossing at the A48 has been de-commissioned and will require substantial investment to bring back to modern standards.</p> <p>The line would significantly enhance the economic prospects of the area.</p>
<p>Garw and Ogmore Valleys Rapid Bus Infrastructure</p>	<p>LDP SP3, LDP PLA7(16), LDP PLA7(24), RLDP SP5, LTP (18)</p> <p>FW2040 & PPW 11 priorities</p>	<p>Enhanced bus corridors to reduce travel times, increase capacity and improve journey comfort. This will require dedicated bus lanes & use of bus gates to give priority to buses at congested junctions such as J36 of the M4. Bus services will need to be regular, reliable and zero-emission.</p> <p>The project would look at the feasibility of introducing these systems in the Garw and Ogmore Valleys as part of the South East Wales Metro as well as a review of the current rail stations in the Valley Gateway area that could be utilised for</p>

		<p>enhanced park & ride and interchange facilities.</p> <p>The scheme will aim to provide an integrated transport network for residents and visitors to the Garw and Ogmore Valleys to ensure that accessibility is enhanced in line with the vision Welsh Government has for the adjacent Maesteg Branch Line infrastructure and service improvements.</p>
<p>Junction 36 (M4)</p>	<p>LDP SP3, PLA5(1,2,3,4,7), LDP PLA7(7), RLDP PLA6, RLDP PLA8, LTP(3)</p>	<p>A number of assessments and reports (for example, the Welsh Government 'pinch point' study) undertaken over recent years have evidenced that Junction 36 has reached its operational capacity limit and there are significant queue lengths on all of the six junction approaches during peak periods.</p> <p>These efficiency, capacity and congestion issues impact on this key node's ability to perform its strategic function. This will restrict future growth in the county borough and disadvantage those who are most affected by this major constraint to movement.</p> <p>Initiatives to increase sustainable transport use will help release some capacity at J36. However, the rail network in the County Borough is limited with no scope to extend into the Garw and Ogmore Valleys which increases reliance on the road network, in particular J36. The provision of a safe, attractive and extensive active travel network will</p>

		<p>improve local accessibility, giving residents the opportunity to walk and cycle to nearby services and facilities, whilst improved access to public transport services will enable resident to travel to employment opportunities further afield. However, active travel measures and improvements to the public transport are unlikely to resolve the problems at Junction 36 due to the current physical constraints and major intervention is required.</p> <p>A WelTAG Stage 2 report is currently underway which incorporates J35-J37, commissioned by WG.</p>
<p>Penprysg Road Bridge</p> <p>Replacement of substandard road bridge over mainline railway, closure of Pencoed Level Crossing and new active travel bridge.</p>	<p>RLDP PLA8 (11)</p> <p>Identified as a specific priority in the Bridgend LTP</p> <p>CCR Metro Plus project</p>	<p>Current Metro Plus project, public consultation Autumn 2021, final design 2023. Future LUF transport fund bid with considerable local and political support.</p> <p>Public consultation taking place during Autumn 2021.</p> <p>This project is a longstanding commitment evidenced through several generations of development plans. There is a moratorium in place on the development of Pencoed north of the crossing due to traffic congestion caused by an inadequate road bridge and the regular closing of the level crossing.</p> <p>There will be significant economic benefits for the sustainable development of land within the</p>

		settlement as well as environmental benefits to the centre of the town if the project were to be implemented
<p>Porthcawl Metrolink</p> <p>New purpose built, enclosed bus facility located at Salt Lake site on Porthcawl sea front linking to South Wales Metro.</p>	<p>RLDP PLA8 (1) and PLA8 (2)</p> <p>Identified in Bridgend LTP</p> <p>Part of the Metro Enhancement Framework (MEF)</p> <p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 Bus mini-plan</p>	<p>Current Metro project, design finalised late 2021 and commence construction 2022 with completion by Q1 2023.</p>
<p>Porthcawl to Pyle/Bridgend Bus Priority enhancements.</p> <p>This could include dedicated bus lanes and/or bus gates at congested junctions.</p> <p>A WelTAG study could be commissioned with Metro funding.</p>	<p>RLDP PLA8 (2)</p> <p>Identified as a project in the Bridgend LTP</p> <p>Metro Enhancement Framework</p> <p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 bus mini-plan</p>	<p>With a new bus interchange at Porthcawl, a new enhanced railway station at Pyle, and the regeneration of Porthcawl waterfront, the benefits of bus priority measures would be significant.</p> <p>These routes are also high priority on the active travel network but third party land acquisition is required to enable construction.</p> <p>If active travel and bus priority proposals were progressed together, it would represent an ambitious programme of 'sustainable travel' corridors that would connect Porthcawl with the South Wales Metro.</p>
<p>Pyle Railway Station Relocation and Park and Ride.</p> <p>The existing site has significant land and infrastructure constraints that impact on current and future park and ride enhancements and therefore a relocation further east will be required if the facility is to be expanded into a strategic regional facility.</p>	<p>RLDP PLA8 (6) & PLA8 (2)</p> <p>CCR Passenger Rail priorities – South Wales main line service enhancement.</p> <p>Metro Enhancement Framework (MEF)</p> <p>In line with Llybyr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 rail mini-plan</p>	<p>The area is identified as a strategic site in the draft replacement LDP, if the strategic development site is allocated in the adopted LDP, it offers a significant opportunity to relocate and enhance access to the new station and transit orientated development built around a transport hub.</p>

<p>WelTAG study should be commissioned.</p>		<p>The development could also provide improved links and potentially a new vehicular access into Pyle Industrial Estate.</p> <p>Given the economic links between Pyle and Porthcawl, an enhanced station would compliment the current Porthcawl Interchange project with a park and ride facility as well as providing a Western Gateway to Bridgend.</p>
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