

## Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

27 November 2023

### Recommendations/Actions

#### Strategic Transport Projects

Following detailed consideration of the report and discussions with Officers and the Cabinet Member, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. The Committee acknowledged that a list of schemes is required to be ready for any current or future transport funding bids, in the event that surplus funding is available from Welsh Government towards the end of the financial year, and for identifying projects for developer contributions through Section 106 planning (S106) agreements. Nevertheless, the Committee expressed some concerns over the process for transport projects, with no form of prioritisation, even with projects that fall under the same strategy, such as Active Travel. Whilst appreciating that funding was controlled by Welsh Government, Members felt the system appeared to be the wrong way round and rather than waiting for funding to become available, a comprehensive table or plan of transport needs, solutions, and priorities within the Borough, to then use to go out and seek funding, would seem a far more effective method.

Furthermore, Members expressed grave concerns over the future maintenance and ongoing costs for the Authority of any transport project, particularly in light of the Council's current financial situation. The Committee therefore viewed it as vital that some form of prioritisation was considered for transport projects taking account of the future financial situation of the Authority and its ability to be able to maintain these going forward.

In light of the above, whilst acknowledging the limitations Officers faced around funding availability from Welsh Government, they still expressed concern that some of the projects could now potentially be inappropriate and moreover were concerned that because of the funding process that is in place, the Authority could find itself bidding for projects, 'just because' the funding is available, rather than because there is a distinct need for it. With a review of the transport projects list scheduled to be undertaken in the near future, for agreement by Cabinet, the Committee recommended that the review take account of the following:

- Whether projects are now out of date given how long they have been on the list;
- Whether there is clear evidence of the 'need' for the project – for example, the benefits for the community, any evidence from similar projects that clearly indicate success in a modal shift;
- How projects could be prioritised, even if just within their own strategy, such as Active Travel routes – could safety be used as a criterion for these projects?
- What are the future financial implications of any project for the Authority in relation to its maintenance liability as well as any potential impact on existing infrastructure? (**JN/JP**)

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2. In addition to this Members expressed concern that due to historical budget cuts, the Authority did not have the staffing resources and internal expertise to support some transport projects, particularly on the ability to estimate or provide any indicative costs of each scheme, which should be required to inform any decision on a project for the list or on which future funding bids to progress. The Committee requested reassurance as to how this could be addressed going forward. (**JN/JP**)
3. Members highlighted that whilst the report did not deal specifically with other aspects such as parking, safety, pavements etc, these were intrinsically linked to transport projects. The Committee therefore requested reassurance that a joined-up approach was being undertaken by the Authority when these projects were considered for funding bids, and that this form part of the evidence provided to the Committee for any future report on this subject. (**JN/JP**)

### **Additional Information**

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee requested:

4. To assist the Committee with future consideration of this subject, Members requested that a diagram or flowchart be provided to illustrate how the various transport projects fit under their own plans or strategies and how they then fit together. (**JN/JP**)
5. The Committee requested that the Democratic Services Manager explore whether it has been previously reported by Officers that there was a direct link between the Pyle Park and Ride scheme and the Porthcawl Metrolink project, as this was the Committee's understanding. (**JN/JP**)