

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **23rd January 2020**
Report Subject: **Transport Strategy**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration & Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17.12.19	07.01.20	13.01.20			23.01.20	11.03.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Members views on the content and scope of the proposed transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The transport strategy is to take into account the local needs of the community around existing and new developments of housing, business and employment, and Town centres; but also have in mind the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in terms of helping to support a:

- Resilient Wales
- Healthier Wales
- More equal Wales, and
- A Wales of more cohesive communities

The strategy will also have a close alliance with the Local Development Plan (LDP) and its policies relating to transport and connectivity.

- 2.2. The scope of the strategy should include elements on:

- What our integrated local transport services would look like with 4 trains per hour and 2 trains per hour – including taxis, responsive community transport, etc.
- How do we assist more people to get to work?
- The purpose of the Council's subsidy – should it be for people to access work or access services, or both?
- Consider the wider transport links to other local authority areas
- Working with service operators' future plans, and other partners e.g. third sector
- How active travel fits and how we promote it
- How we achieve this with a low, or zero carbon approach

There has been some work undertaken on good practice in transport strategies and this has given some clear guidelines in how to approach developing and implementing a clear and robust strategy.

- 2.3. Some of the main strategic recommendations that we need to consider are around developing a long term vision for the strategy that commits to long-term planning, including:
- the recognition of the inter-dependencies between local, regional and national transport strategies and Transport for Wales Metro proposals;
 - recognition of how transport contributes to broad social, economic and environmental goals;
 - referencing how the local and regional transport underpins the Welsh Government's approach to their strategy delivery with clear allocation and division of responsibilities between WG, other agencies and local authorities;
 - clear links to other policy frameworks like spatial planning and economic development; clear identification of the transport problems and issues facing the local citizens both currently and in the future;
 - a set of overarching policy objectives with the specific transport sub-objectives framed within these to enable real solutions to be developed rather than retro-fitting a solution as an objective;
 - Use of analytics to understand how transport demand and conditions might change in the future and to appraise/prioritise components of the strategy;
 - Consensus building through participation of key stakeholders.
- 2.4. Alongside the policy considerations there are operational improvements and new opportunities that can be explored and utilised:
- The Welsh Government White Paper proposals for the new joint implementation arrangements;
 - Recognition of the growing role of all modes of transport, active travel, and their interdependencies;
 - Opportunities to improve efficiency and visibility of operations through better digital connectivity and emerging technical solutions;
 - Aspirations for improvements in operations, maintenance, and infrastructure;
 - Gradual implementation of the strategy, allowing public support to be generated and maintained;
 - Recognition of risks in delivering the strategy and mechanisms for providing early warning signs and managing those risks;
 - Recognising we need to assess progress by drawing on robust evidence and data to modify our implementation accordingly.
- 2.5. The WelTAG assessment work that is currently being undertaken by Transport for Wales and Welsh Government will inform the interdependencies between the national, regional and local service provision in terms of rail and bus interchange needs. Once the main rail options are identified there will be another stage of more detailed studies by TfW and the local transport strategy will be an important reference document.

- 2.6 In a similar way to the skills strategy consultation, the transport strategy will consult with groups of stakeholders across the County Borough at various stages in its development.
- 2.7 A future, regional (CCR) transport strategy to cover South East Wales post 2020 with our neighbouring authorities is a probability that has not been confirmed yet, but one we are expecting. We will need to compete our local transport strategy with a knowledge that a higher level regional plan would sit above it as transport is linear and connective understanding movements between other neighbouring local authority areas and regional trip attractors like hospitals and other destinations is key.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 – to await the WeITAG clarity and begin the local transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent

That the local transport strategy is started in 2020 following the publication of the direction for local rail travel and ties in with the Wales Transport Strategy and future CCR Transport Strategy.

3.2 Option 2 – to not undertake work to a Blaenau Gwent transport strategy.

That we do not undertake a local transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent but await the regional transport strategy when that is undertaken.

Preferred Option

Option 1 – to proceed writing the strategy for BG.

4. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

4.1. This topic supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in the following area:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities

This strategy will support policies in the Local Development Plan (LDP)

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1. *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)*

The budget for the Transport Strategy will be from the Local Transport Grant and costs could be shared with other local authorities.

5.2. *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

There are no risks directly associated with this report

5.3. *Legal*

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4. ***Human Resources***

There are no additional implications for human resources at this point.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. ***Performance Information and Data***

N/A

6.2. ***Expected outcome for the public***

Improved economy and community benefits subject to the strategy outputs and take up of resulting services

6.3. ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The strategy and action plan is designed to be a method to organise support to target areas of need identified

6.4. ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Potential for collaboration and stakeholder engagement

6.5. ***Integration (across service areas)***

Potential for integration across service areas.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

To be agreed

Background Documents /Electronic Links

None