

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 26TH APRIL, 2021

REFERENCE FROM ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE: 16TH MARCH, 2021

“513 WELTAG 2 PLUS DINAS POWYS TRANSPORT STUDY (REF) –

Cabinet, on 8th March, 2021 had referred the report to the Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

For this item, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport introduced a Mr. Matthew Fry from Arcadis who had been asked to provide a PowerPoint presentation to outline the current situation.

Mr. Fry's presentation included an overview of the following:

- Background to the study, with Arcadis commissioned by the Vale of Glamorgan Council in 2017 to undertake a WelTAG Stage One and Stage Two transport appraisal, considering transport improvements for the Dinas Powys area.
- The reasons why improvements were needed including the five main objectives and how success would be measured.
- Maps to indicate the alignments for the Pink and Green routes.
- The estimated costs for each of the two routes.
- The Multi-Modal projects being considered.
- An overview of the progress in relation to the four key tasks under the Stage 2 plus process;
 - Task One – Cogan Railway Tunnel Analysis;
 - Task Two – Merrie Harrier junction design concepts 1A and 1B;
 - Task Three – South East Wales Transport Model (SEWTM) strategic modelling by Transport for Wales; and
 - Task Four – Updated Economic Appraisal.
- Appraisals and impacts of the five options including a benefit cost ratio analysis.

Mr. Fry advised that of the five options, Option D (Green route and Multi-modal) had merit in being taken forward for further consideration to a Stage Three WelTAG study. In addition, it had been concluded that:

- A Bypass appeared to demonstrate value for money.
- Pink route alternative may offer longer-term strategic benefits.
- Key junctions would continue to pose a strategic constraint (notably at the Barons Court junction).

- A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would be required at Stage Three, including appraisal of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Funding uncertainties remained a key risk to progression.

That concluded Mr. Fry's presentation.

Before the Chairman opened up the debate for questions, she referred to a written submission from a Mr. R. Harrod on behalf of the Barry to Cardiff Link Road Group. This had been emailed to Members of the Scrutiny Committee and tabled as supplementary information.

Councillor A.R. Robertson then queried funding and costs associated with the public consultation should the scheme be agreed for progression by Welsh Government. The Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that costs would be expensive in terms of the service's budget which was why consultation required Welsh Government support. Consultation costs were not only around putting out press releases or information online, as specialist technical advice may be needed to respond to comments made. The Committee was advised that the cost for the consultation was in the region of £20k and this would be as part of the dual application.

Councillor Robertson then asked a series of further questions. His first was whether the benefit cost ratios of 2.01 and 1.71 (Green route) had been underestimated because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In reply, Mr. Fry stated that these had been based on the latest and current modelling assessments which included a number of variables. The figures represented the more pessimistic viewpoint, but Mr. Fry agreed to forward more detailed information as the assessment was very complex.

The second query was whether consideration had been given to developing a connection to Lavernock Road. Mr. Fry advised that this had been considered as part of the Pink route to Penarth but discounted because of the location of an ancient monument which represented a physical constraint. In addition, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport advised that there had been a lot of discussion on this within the Review Group and further community consultation on connections could be made at the next stage. Nothing had been ruled out.

Councillor Robertson's third query was in relation to the effect on emissions because of an increase in electric vehicles. Mr. Fry in reply, stated that the analysis had been based upon current modelling which had been forecasted through the SEWTM. This was updated on a frequent basis and would be used for future analysis.

Finally, Councillor Robertson commented that he would expect there to be an economic benefit as a result of capital projects associated with a new by-pass road. Mr. Fry advised that this was a fair point, with the economic benefits something for decision makers to consider.

Councillor V.J. Bailey stated that he was surprised that for Options A to D, each had the same positive scoring when it came to impact on 'access to employment'. Mr. Fry advised that he had looked into the detail and evidence closely, and

there had been a balance between the positive and negative impacts. The scorings were representative of a fair reflection. As this was a complex assessment, Mr. Fry agreed to forward further information via email.

Councillor Bailey then referred to the cost of the public consultation exercise, and he made a formal recommendation that if Welsh Government refused the Council's financial bid, that Cabinet should allocate money from the Council's budget to pay for the consultation. This would be around £20k.

Councillor V.P. Driscoll queried whether there was scope to widen the road by the Merrier Harrier junction so that the public house did not have to be knocked down. Mr. Fry indicated this was not feasible as both schemes (1A and 1B) required the public house to be demolished.

Councillor Ms. S. Sivagnanam referred to potential employment benefits, and she asked whether this related to the Vale of Glamorgan or the wider area in general. Mr. Fry responded by stating that it was a bit of both, for example, there would be a benefit to residents in Dinas Powys from improving connections by removing traffic and an increase in trips to and from the Vale of Glamorgan.

Councillor L. Burnett, as local ward member for Stanwell, with permission to speak, stated that the bypass was not in her ward, but wanted to refer to unintended consequences which could cause issues for people travelling from her area. She advised that she had been made aware of concerns of residents in her ward about the increase in traffic at junctions connecting the bypass to Penarth. It was therefore important to look at the impact of a bypass on residents of other parts of the Vale. In reply, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and Transport stated that a representative from Penarth Town Council was part of the Review Group so similar concerns had already been raised. She added that if the project proceeded to the next stage, then consultation would be undertaken on a wider basis including Penarth and Barry.

Councillor P. King, as Cabinet Member, with permission to speak, referred to budgetary pressures within Neighbourhood Services and Transport, stating that the project had been using financial reserves since 2016. The consultation costs represented a significant cost for the service which was why a bid for funding had been made to Welsh Government. Councillor King asked the Scrutiny Committee to carefully consider this when determining any recommendations. With regards to a possible new connection at Lavernock, Councillor King issued a word of caution, as the project would not likely proceed if additional connections kept being added. The key was the bypass and this had to be the priority. In response to changes proposed to the Merrie Harrier junction, Councillor King advised that this location was constrained as there was a problem with the levels, and so, the ground and the gradient would have to be "made up".

There being no further comments and having fully considered the reference it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the progress made on the Dinas Powys Transport Network WeITAG Stage Two Plus study be noted.
- (2) T H A T should Welsh Government refuse the funding for the public consultation exercise, Cabinet be requested to find the funding from within the Council's budget.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To update Members on progress of the scheme.
- (2) To ensure that the public consultation exercise relating to the Dinas Powys bypass be funding, should Welsh Government refuse the bid submitted by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.”