

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meeting –

Tuesday, 16th March 2021 at 6pm

Supplementary Information – Agenda Item 4

**Dinas Powys Transport Network WelTAG Stage Two Plus Outline
Business Case study.**

Dinas Powys bypass alternatives

Councillors, for ease and accuracy, rather than a ‘three minute’ verbal presentation that would include numerous facts and figures we’d like to offer this written perspective.

We’d like to emphasise that, regardless of anyone’s politics, our concern and intent from the outset is 100% community driven.

We didn’t start out aiming for other than the Green Route – the Route that was reserved by successive Councils. A map of it even hung in the foyer of the Docks Building for generations – but never got further than that. The first reference to a by-pass was in 1928.

From the outset of our campaign we attempted to follow the rules of WelTAG, seeking what might best benefit the Eastern Vale in every way:

- WelTAG is designed to be used by people who have local knowledge of the particular issues - that have prompted the desire to consider improving the transport system. These may be central or local government officers, politicians, local community groups or members of the general public. Page 2 Para 1*
- The WelTAG process must be applied to all transport projects funded in part or in full by the Welsh Government. Page 3 Para 4*
- During the more detailed design and assessment of short-listed options, engagement with the public and other stakeholders will*

assist in gathering evidence on the impacts of each of the proposed options and the consequences of doing nothing. Involving people affected by decisions in the process is a requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act... and often facilitate the identification of new solutions which would bring most benefit to the seven well-being goals. Page 6 Para 2

- The WelTAG process is designed to share understanding between those involved in making the decisions and those affected by those decisions. This (It) underlies the importance of stakeholder involvement and public consultation in the gathering of evidence of the need for an intervention, the setting of the criteria against which proposed options will be assessed, and the likely impacts of each option. Page 6, Para 4*
- WelTAG is a process that leads to the development of better solutions. Page 6, para 5.*

We didn't look for the most expensive and longest or the cheapest and shortest route. Not something that only had the greatest economic or employment benefits – but an option that could most benefit the biggest number of the electorate and area for future Generations. A road that doesn't just convey people from 'A' to 'B' but a scheme that has the potential to open up and engage with the area in total. After all, whatever is built is meant to last and serve the community for many, many decades.

PARAMETERS

Following the instruction of Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS Officers of his Department together with their opposite numbers in the Vale Council were tasked with finding a solution that 'must be fully funded' to the traffic problems through Dinas Powis.

At the outset of Stage 1 of WelTAG Officers defined parameters between the Merrie Harrier and the Biglis Roundabout on the A4055 at Barry. At that time Cllr Liz Burnett expressed extreme concern that the proposals only moved the problems and potential log-jams to the extremities – Merrie Harrier / Biglis.

The Green Route proposal presented to the Vale Cabinet on 6th March 2021 gave potential to extend the Merrie Harrier to Baron's Court (no extra cost was mentioned) , no such equivalent has been proposed at the Biglis end.

With the recommendation of WelTAG and the advice of Penarth architect [REDACTED] we engaged the *pro bono* help of top Civil Engineering Consultants, Mott MacDonald and major Welsh architects, RIO to advise on what we believe to be an all-encompassing concept for the transport corridor between Barry and Cardiff.

We have had provisional talks with both the Cardiff and Vale Health Board, (pre-take-over) Brains' Brewery, property owners and developers. All are eager to open discussions with the Vale with considerable financial support potentially available for the remodelling of the Merrie Harrier.

At every stage we conferred with and presented our findings to both Vale Councillors and Senior Officers. Both our professional and community-led associates worked from a totally non-political platform.

In order to reach a true comparison and a value of all alternatives as required by WelTAG the likely impact of each available option needed to be assessed. That's what was expected.

Unfortunately, that is not what happened.

At the March 2019 Environment and Regeneration Committee a single local Councillor tabled that he felt one of the three options – the Blue Route - that had been defined should be thrown out at that point for economic reasons.

All three routes – GREEN, PINK and BLUE were documented but no evidence of comparison of the Blue Route was given by the promoter of what, in effect, meant a 'Hobson's Choice' of the GREEN ROUTE.

After minimal discussion the matter was referred back to Cabinet **without a vote being taken.**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Several weeks later the then Leader of the Council, Cllr John Thomas affirmed the final selection of options could be changed after the planned Public Consultation. Nearly three years, and a number of postponements later, there has not been a Public Consultation. It is now planned for 'later this year.'

To date the public has only been informed by meetings held by our group. Their response was easily judged by a petition of 3,300 signatures lodged with the Welsh Assembly Government Petitions Committee.

N.B. A Public Consultation held by the Vale Council for WeITAG Stage 1 in March 2017 produced a result of 94% in favour of a By-pass to solve the traffic problems.

- In December 2020 all four Dinas Powis County Councillors were invited by Cllr Peter King and Ms Emma Reed to brief them on the content of Dinas Powys Transport Network WeITAG Stage Two Plus Outline Business Case study. But the meeting and information were declared 'Confidential' and so the Electorate were not made privy to the report.
- In January 2021 a Review Group Meeting was called by Ms Emma Reed (Chair). The Dinas Powis officially appointed representative on the Review Group, Mr P [REDACTED] informs he was not invited. Once again it's understood the meeting was referred to as 'Confidential' although comments and opinions made by those present have, we're informed, been added into the Stage 2 Report before it was presented to Cabinet on 6th March 2021.

N.B. Cllr Vince Driscoll and Cllr Robert Crowley were present as 'observers.'

N.N.B. At the March 2019 Vale Steering Group meeting Ms Emma Reed stated that Public Consultations would need to be held also in adjoining areas: Sully, Penarth, Llandough and maybe East Barry as well as Dinas Powis. It's understood representatives of both Barry and Llandough were present at the January Review Group, but not Dinas Powis.

COUNCIL STATEMENT

In late July 2019, after a change in Council Leadership, a Council Spokesperson issued a statement regarding the comments made at the March Scrutiny Meeting: *“These comments seem to reflect the view of a few members of the committee during discussions and do not reflect the rationale of a final decision.*

CHANGES

In the interim there have been a number of changes of circumstances that could effect for the proposal for better or worse, and certainly the choice of route of a by-pass. But they are not reflected in the report.

Blue Route

From Cross Common Road this route continues near Sully Road until dipping down under Sully and the new 540 house Cog Estate (above Water Treatment Works) to the small Sully roundabout joining Sully Moors Road, Sully Road and Hayes Road. It will continue over and along Hayes Road to Bendricks roundabout, then take a right to join Wimbourne Road over Barry Docks (owned by ABP – who have been approached) to join up with Ffordd-y-Mileniwm.

...advantages over Green Route:

- avoids all log-jams on the A4055 and creates ease of access for any commercial or residential development along this route.
- smooth, continuous run with access (including cycle / walkway from Barry, Dinas Powis and off-shoots from Sully / Cosmeston to Cardiff.

*N.B. 1,750 more homes planned along B4267 in next five years will add a further **6.300** road trips a day (counting both ways) to this road through Sully, Cosmeston and Lower Penarth to the Merrie Harrier.*

FINDING FUNDING FOR ONE BY-PASS IS – ESSENTIAL; BUILDING TWO WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. THE GREEN ROUTE WOULD NOT SOLVE THE SITUATION.

- opens up dock area for economic and employment development for projected:

- **5,000 new jobs with £200 million Gross Direct GVA p/a on nearly 200 acres of Brown Field land not accessible from Green Route.**
- **Leisure / education / training option**
- adopting the Blue Route (still leaving the A4055 and B4267 for local traffic, access / egress points can be made along the route into Sully / Cog Cosmeston and Dinas Road, Penarth as well as Cross Common and the Murch.
- Improved strategic road access to Barry Docks. This should aid application for **Free Port** (currently none on Bristol Channel but Newport applying).
- Water Park on Cog Moors site with possibility of Hotel / Leisure facilities.

Green Route

Without stipulating where traffic will enter and leave the A4055 Biglis roundabout the scheme must be dead in the water. Already at peak times the A4055 is near log-jam. Vale Council consultants estimate a further 35% traffic will be added to this road by 2026.

The promoters of this route claim the majority of traffic causing hold-ups through Dinas Powis enter or leave the A4055 via the A4231 Barry Link Road.

This is not correct. Three studies in the last seven years (two commissioned by the Vale Council plus one for Taylor-Wimpy) put the figure around 14%.

There have also been several major planning applications in recent years at this junction. All have been rejected particularly associated to flooding on the Sully Moors side and possible subsidence.

N.B. 1,750 more homes are planned at Barry Waterfront adding a further **6.300 vehicles a day** (counting both ways) to the A4055 from Ffordd-y-Mileniwm to Biglis Roundabout

Pink Route

This follows the exact same line as the Green Route except for a roundabout being added to allow access near the new Scholars Estate at the Murch. The possibility of adding a further junction to Penarth via Dinas Road (as intended for generations) has been discounted by Officers because of the existence of minimal historical sites that are not accessed.

It is therefore not an 'option' of another route but a 'variation' on the Green Route.

FUNDING

In addition to usual avenues of Public Sector Funding from the Welsh Government the Westminster Chancellor announced the £4 Billion Levelling-up Fund in the recent Budget. This is to replace the EU Structural Fund, with £800 million allocated between Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It will be administered by Local Authorities with advice taken from the Welsh Government working with the Local Member of Parliament.

Bids above £20m and below £50m will be accepted for transport projects only, such as road schemes, and can be submitted by any bidding local authority.

Discussions have been held at an exploratory-level with several major developers to establish their interest in possibly joint projects with the Vale Council. All were positive – including the Merrie Harrier and former Tank Farm sites but we must stress our involvement would be purely at introductory level which is unlikely to be needed.

Many suggestions have been made over the generations to improve and make safer journeys with better air quality and noise pollution through Dinas Powis. But, apart from the old acorn of 'no money' (it will never get any cheaper!) there is the realisation that no road calming installations or speed slowing can be imposed on the A4055 Cardiff

Road while it has the 'A' Road status. Only when an alternative route (via a by-pass) is in place can changes be made to the A4055.

We trust this document is of use in your deliberations.

Rod Harrod

For Barry to Cardiff Link Road Group

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