
TRANSPORT DELIVERY SUB-GROUP

7 December 2020

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors - David Bithell (Wrexham County Borough Council), Robert G. Parry (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Greg Robbins (Conwy County Borough Council), Gareth Wyn Griffith (Gwynedd Council), Brian Jones (Denbighshire County Council) and Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire County Council).

Officers present – Darren Williams (Wrexham County Borough Council), Huw Percy (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Geraint Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council), Stephen Jones (Flintshire County Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council), Emlyn Jones (Flintshire County Council), Dafydd Wyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Iwan G D Evans (Monitoring Officer – Lead Authority), Peter Daniels (Flintshire County) and Einir Rh Davies (minutes – Lead Authority).

Others invited - Iwan Prys Jones (North Wales Economic Ambition Board), Lee Robinson (Transport for Wales), Dewi Rowlands (Welsh Government), Claire Germain (Welsh Government), Kate Clark (Welsh Government) and David Willis (Welsh Government)

1. APOLOGIES

It was noted that Councillor David Bithell and Darren Williams were having difficulty in joining the meeting due to technical issues. Councillor Robert G Parry took the Chair for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received for discussion.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 14 September 2020, were accepted as a true record and were proposed and seconded.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE CONSULTATION

The item was submitted by Iwan G D Evans - Host Authority Monitoring Officer.

DECISION

RESOLVED to accept the information in the paper, as this was a paper informing the Sub-Board of the consultation that was underway.

DISCUSSION

The Monitoring Officer noted that the purpose of the item was to inform the Sub-Board of the consultation that was underway.

The Monitoring Officer referred to the paper he had prepared which noted that Welsh Government was currently undertaking a consultation on proposals to establish Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) in the four areas of Wales based on footprint (North Wales, Mid Wales, South-West Wales and South-East Wales).

Within the Bill, there were two categories of CJC: CJCs by Regulation and CJCs by Request. The possible areas for a CJC by Regulation are limited to four, namely improving education, transportation (Regional Transportation Plan), the function of preparing a Strategic Development Plan and the economic well-being function.

It was confirmed that the CJCs were separate corporate bodies, established through Councils - i.e. were corporations in their own right, and operated semi-independently from the Councils.

In terms of the transport field, the mandatory membership for the six Leaders of North Wales Councils (with the right to co-opt) was confirmed. It was noted that there would be an option here to establish Sub-committees.

In terms of finance and funding matters, it was confirmed that the Councils funded the CJCs by agreement, along with arranging scrutiny and audit matters, again by agreement.

The following questions arose from the discussion:

- What would the formal relationship be with the Authorities?
- In terms of matters such as scrutiny, code of conduct etc., under what arrangement would these matters fall?

Gratitude was expressed for the report and the following observations were received:

- The CJCs would take powers from the Councils. It was noted that Welsh Government officers had already contacted some members of the Sub-Board, noting that this was a vehicle for Local Government to shape and build on the work that has already been done.
It was reiterated that the intention was to strengthen the situation and include Members, giving them an opportunity to share their views fully and with honesty on these draft regulations.
- How did Transport for Wales and the Trunk Road Agency fit in?
Appointing officers was a matter of concern, especially in reading that the roles would take up 1-5 days of an officer's time.
Was there a misconception here that this would save money? Councils did not now have officers duplicating work.
How were they to be funded?
Giving Local Authorities the power to run their own bus transportation was very difficult without local expertise.

Concerns were also noted relating to governance matters.

A Welsh Government Officer responded, confirming that the only function being transferred to the CJC was the Local Transportation Plan, that the activities around buses remained with the Local Authorities, and that transferring other functions would be optional.

In terms of Transport for Wales, it was confirmed that this was a delivery body, and that it would fit in wherever the CJC wished for it to fit in.

The Transport for Wales Officer noted that Transport for Wales had agreed to a set of principles and that they sat with Arriva for agreement. He confirmed that Transport for Wales' role in a CJC would be to support the CJC, to plan networks and to deal with contactless payment matters etc.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Trunk Road Agency covered two CJCs.

Furthermore, there would be a need for a discussion regarding the need for officers and how they would be transferred.

In addition to this, in terms of the role and functions of a CJC, it was possible for councils to request the transferral of some other things, but what was not unclear at this point was the right and ability to develop a CJC in the future.

Attention was drawn to the following:

The consultation was to close in early January 2021, and the intention was for the first CJC to be operational by September 2021. Some Local Authorities had already arranged workshops to update their members.

The six Leaders who were to sit on the CJC would have the right to appoint others to the Committee.

It was agreed that there was a need for regional feedback from the individual authorities along with any observations, and that this should be referred by e-mail to Iwan Prys Jones and David Bithell.

Cabinet Members were asked for any further observations before moving on:

- It was felt that there was a need to work towards a CJC or a formal regional arrangement with Transport for Wales above, and under the same umbrella: there was a need to find the way forward. It was felt that there was an opportunity here to protect the rural aspect should everyone co-operate.
- The concern that the CJC would take work away from the Local Authorities was noted, but it was felt that there was little choice but to move forward
- One individual expressed that they were not in favour of the CJC, but if it had to be done, then it should be done on the most favourable terms.
- Another Cabinet Member noted that he was not too happy with how information was being rolled out, and as a result, he was concerned that there was no clear picture to be had of the essential matters. He noted that he did not feel that it was clear how the CJC was to be funded. He expressed that he was unhappy with the process, and that the time schedule with a deadline at the start of January 2021 was disappointing.

A question was also raised as to how much input Transport Wales would have in this.

Should funding not be allocated on a per head basis?

Would one Authority be leading?

In addition to this, an enquiry was made as to the availability of funding to develop a Strategic Plan

To close, the exact membership and voting rights were questioned.

It was agreed that Iwan Prys Jones would gather the points raised, and circulate them to Cabinet Members as soon as possible as this consultation was underway.

The Welsh Government Officers were thanked, and Local Authorities were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

The Welsh Government Officers took the opportunity to give a presentation on the new Wales Transport Strategy, and in particular, developments in technology. It was confirmed that COVID had presented many challenges and as a result, a new way of looking at delivering transportation in Wales.

Reference was made to environmental matters, places and the economy, transportation, people and communities and culture and the Welsh language, as well as emissions in the context of the environment.

In terms of the challenges and opportunities, matters noted were COVID-19, active travel, rural/urban, electric vehicles, maintenance backlogs, planning and transportation, and accessibility and confidence.

The sustainable transportation hierarchy as well as an on-page strategy were also mentioned.

In terms of the vision, the need for a sustainable and accessible transportation system was noted, along with four long-term goals

- Overcoming challenges
- Being environmentally friendly
- Innovation in operating
- Culture and the Welsh language

The short five-year plan was also referred to, in which it is intended to:

- Plan for improved connectivity
- Increase use of the public transport system
- Create a safe and accessible transport infrastructure which is well managed and maintained
- Make sustainable transport choices
- Support innovation

It is intended to measure

- Impact on people and communities
- Impact on the environment
- Impact on places and the economy
- Impact on culture and the Welsh language

It is intended to deliver by

- Making better investment decisions
- Delivery programmes and thematic work

- Working in partnerships
- Updating policies and legislation
- Holding ourselves and our partners to account

Reference was also made to the Nine Small Plans

- Active Travel
- Buses
- Railway
- Roads, Streets and Parking
- Third Sector
- Taxis and CHP
- Loads and logistics
- Ports and maritime
- Flight

All were discussed in the context of the Five Ways of Working included in the Well-being of Future Generations Act

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

Following the presentation, Local Authorities were encouraged to respond to the Consultation by 25/1/21.

Gratitude was expressed for the presentation

7. REGIONAL BUSES UPDATE

Lee Robinson of Transport for Wales presented the update

DECISION

RESOLVED to accept the information updating Members on recent developments in relation to the proposals for a Regional Bus Network and the continued funding of the Emergency Scheme for the Bus Sector in relation to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

DISCUSSION

It was confirmed that due to COVID, Transport for Wales was working with bus providers to look at new ways of funding and considering which routes they ran. He also referred to the Emergency Scheme for the Bus Sector, confirming that a discussion with providers had been arranged for 8/12/20, but that there were time restrictions due to COVID.

Reference was made to the Partnership Agreement to discuss routes and the carbon agenda, but he confirmed that the providers saw the discussion as being one sided.

The Officer gave a presentation on the Amendment and Design of the Bus Network, confirming that they would be working across four regions; North Wales, Mid Wales, South-East Wales and South-West Wales.

He reminded the Sub-Board that it had commissioned a piece of work to look at eight specific matters for the region, and agreed to share the presentation.

Cabinet Members were asked for any further observations before moving on:

There was a difference between rural and urban, but each County present here was different. Tourism was very important, and there was a need to convey that message. It had been noticed that work was focussed around urban metro hubs - it was possible for some core routes to be urban to urban, and an enquiry was made as to where this worked, and how it was possible to measure social value and economic value. Transport for Wales was requested not to forget the older population when undertaking any consultation work, bearing in mind that we were not living through a normal, representative time.

It was also requested that there should be consideration given to how this connected to the financing of education, as well as the financing of social health care.

A Welsh Government Officer noted that he encouraged rural matters in the community, as well as the importance of considering people within communities when planning the network.

It was agreed that Iwan P Jones, in preparation for the meeting arranged for 18/1/21, would get in touch to gather views on matters regarding buses.

8. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION:

Iwan Prys Jones presented the reports

DECISION

RESOLVED To accept the reports for information, which gave an update on ongoing work across the region, looking at how the public sector fleet could be transferred to an ultra-low emissions fleet.

DISCUSSION

No discussion was held

The meeting commenced at 10:10 am and concluded at 12:05 pm