JOINT TRANSPORT PLAN FOR SOUTH WEST WALES

Introduction
Local Authorities in Wales are required to produce a Local Transport Plan (Appendix 1) for submission to the Welsh Government by 31 January 2015. Subject to Welsh Government approval, the new plans will be live from April 2015 and will provide a strategic framework for:

- improving transport access and connectivity for the period 2015 – 2020
- future funding bids for transport and road safety schemes requiring capital grant funding from Welsh Government and European funding sources.

Joint Transport Plan
In January 2014, the Minister for Economy, Science & Transport wrote to the Local Authorities to advise that revenue support for regional working was to cease, and that the Regional Transport Plans would be replaced by Local Transport Plans for the next term. Despite this, the Local Transport Plan guidance makes clear that collaboration on joint plans is still possible. The four Councils within the Swansea Bay City Region have chosen to prepare a joint plan.

The four Councils of South West Wales (Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot), which had formerly worked together as SWWITCH (South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium), have agreed to continue joint working in the preparation of the Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2020. Whilst the policy and strategy element of the Plan is a joint document which covers the four local authority areas, it was decided that the programmes, which contain the projects to be delivered under the Plan, would be specific to each Local Authority.

Section three of the Joint Transport Plan includes the programmes of work developed to deliver improved connectivity to the City Region and includes:

- A City Region five year programme
- Individual Local Authority prioritised programmes

The Welsh Government requires that the programme is prioritised, and as a consequence it is important not to overburden the programme in order to ensure its deliverability. There will also be future opportunities to add schemes to the programme on an annual basis.
The previous Regional Transport Plan was subject to a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment in order to advise on the potential environmental impacts of the schemes included in the programme. The short timescales and lack of funding for the development of the Joint Transport Plan has meant that it was not possible to undertake a full SEA on this occasion; therefore, an SEA Addendum is under preparation. This will not be completed until January 2015 and will not affect the direction and thrust of the Plan but will flag up potential issues to be examined as Plan projects are delivered in future years.

Furthermore, aspirations for Trunk Roads, Rail, transport by Sea and Air together with Revenue support for services, will be identified separately by the four Local Authorities in a letter to Welsh Government. This is because they are areas which the Welsh Government has responsibility for or where responsibility is retained at a UK wide level.

Attention is drawn to the Minister’s recent announcement to seek renewed consideration of the dualling of the A40. Section 2 of the joint LTP sets out high level aspirations for Trunk Roads. The separate letter, which is in draft format at this stage, is attached at Appendix 2 and shows the full 5-year Trunk Road aspirations, including the case for full dualling. Bearing in mind the Minister’s statement, the wording of this aspiration will be re-examined and strengthened.

**Consultation**

To ensure that the emerging Joint Transport Plan was influenced by the views of key stakeholders and interest groups, a regional consultation workshop was held in July 2014 in order to explain the change in transport policy governance, and what impact this would have upon the Local Transport Plan. The views of key stakeholders were gathered and incorporated into the emerging Joint Transport Plan.

A second consultation was undertaken in October 2014 when a draft plan was issued to all Local Members in Pembrokeshire together with over 70 groups across the region. This was to allow Members and key stakeholders to provide their views on the final draft Joint Transport Plan.

This consultation generated several Pembrokeshire focussed responses. A query relating to the Cleddau Bridge and trunking of the A477, is particularly highlighted: this matter will be included in a letter to Welsh Government highlighting Trunk Road priorities.

**Next Steps**

The Joint Transport Plan will be passing through the approvals process in each of the four Councils of South West Wales between November 2014 and January 2015. The Plan will also be put forward for Swansea Bay City Region endorsement as required by Welsh Government, as soon as a new cycle of meetings is organised. The Joint Transport Plan will then be submitted to the Welsh Government prior to the deadline of 31 January 2015.
Cabinet considered the report on 1 December 2014 and made the following recommendation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council be recommended that the Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015 – 2020) be adopted.

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**Background Documents:**

Welsh Government Guidance on the Local Transport Plan