



## CABINET – 19TH FEBRUARY 2013

**SUBJECT: TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS SERVICES FOR WALES**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines the consultation of the Strategic Programme for Change Report (SPfCR) published in December 2012.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Simpson Report published in March 2011 made recommendations to move forward the planning, management and delivery of strategic highway services on a regional basis as well as promoting joint working to deliver engineering services.
- 2.2 The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Welsh Government (WG) jointly negotiated a "Compact" which represents a statement of commitment from the Welsh Government and Local Government to prioritise actions that will form the basis of public service reform.
- 2.3 In addition to these "Compact" commitments the Minister has also sought to bring forward projects that can be implemented by the Regional Transport Consortia (in South East Wales this is the South East Wales Transport Alliance (Sewta)) as "Quick Wins".
- 2.4 Evidence has been gathered by a WG led Compact Steering Group to review the existing transport arrangements in Wales and an assessment made of the potential opportunities for further transport collaboration. The findings of this exercise are set out in its Transport High Level Review document.
- 2.5 The Transport High Level Review Document outlines the good work currently being undertaken in the transport field in Wales but also identifies issues with the existing arrangements. The High Level Review Document has been used for the preparation of the consultation SPfCR, which can be referenced as follows: -

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/publications/transervices/;jsessionid=303C8947ADF8481E8D3BE44606E595C9?lang=en>

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report links directly to Objectives 6 and 15 of the Council's Community Strategy; namely: 'Encourage the improvement of town and village centres as a focus for community pride, with accessible services and activities for all' and 15 – 'Develop integrated, efficient local and regional transport systems including public transport, cycling and walking networks'.

## 4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 On 20th December 2012, The Minister for Local Government and Communities and the WLGA Spokesperson – Roads, Infrastructure and Transport jointly sent a letter to update Local Authorities on the progress with the Highways and Transportation Compact commitments and advised that work on the "Compact" had moved to the next stage which is the SPfCR. The consultation SPfCR was enclosed with this letter, as well as seeking this Council's views on the report and the workstreams and phasing.
- 4.2 Close to the response deadline, WG's Director for Transport (Frances Duffy) circulated a letter dated 25 January 2013, which provided further information. It referred to the Transport Compact Steering Group providing further information on proposed workstreams, timescales and resource requirements. Consequently, attached to it were draft workstream project briefs and a proposed programme timeline.
- 4.3 Local authorities have been asked to comment on the consultation SPfCR by 31st January 2013 to enable the report to be finalised and reported to the WLGA Council meeting on 22nd February 2013. This response is in Appendix A. At that WLGA Council meeting, endorsement of the final SPfCR will be sought, as well the workstream scoping programme plans and resource requirements. Therefore it has been requested that local authorities consider the report prior to the 22nd February 2013 thereby enabling the Leader of each Council to be in a position to endorse the report at the WLGA Council meeting. It appears that there will not be any further opportunity for individual authorities to formally sign up to the Document, rather endorsement will be at the WLGA Council meeting.
- 4.4 The 10 workstreams which have been identified as a result of the Transport High Level Review and which the Council is being asked to comment on, will be led by either WG officials or Local Authority Directors, supported by a project team drawn from WG, Local Authorities and RTC.
- 4.5 The suggested workstreams based on the evidence gathered in the Transport High Level Report are as follows:
- 4.5.1 Leadership/Governance:
- WS1 – Strengthen Governance Arrangements for regional collaboration
  - WS2 – Establish a planning framework for the next round of transport plans (covering national and regional)
  - WS3 – Re-define the status of the roads making up the Welsh highway network
  - WS4 – Re-allocate responsibilities for the various categories of the highway network
- 4.5.2 Efficiency:
- WS5 – Develop business cases for further collaborative working on a national, regional or sub-regional basis
  - WS6 – Introduce arrangements for Welsh Government and local authorities to share their professional skills
  - WS7 – Introduce a programme to roll out procurement processes that have secured efficiency savings at national, regional, sub-regional and local level
- 4.5.3 Effectiveness/Innovation:
- WS8 – Establish minimum operational and maintenance standards and policies and rationalise specifications for the network

WS9 – Increase resilience to deliver planned and non-planned events

WS10 – Introduce a requirement and system to produce, record and compare outcomes and outputs against investment.

The Consultation Document advises that each of the workstreams will generate options and then the preferred and possible options to support new working arrangements will be further development and if approved further refined into a full business case.

- 4.6 The Consultation Document also outlines the economic, financial, management implications of these workstreams.
- 4.7 The principle of undertaking this work should be supported, however, it must be recognised that potentially this work could cause local authority officers that work on transport matters significant extra work and could result in far reaching changes to the way transport services are delivered by this Council and in Wales as a whole.
- 4.8 At this stage, as far as can be established, local authorities are not being asked to sign off any changes to the planning, management or delivery of highway and transportation services. Supporting the SPfCR only gives approval to continue work on the 10 identified workstreams as detailed in 4.5. It is understood that changes to existing transport arrangements in Wales will not take place without approval from local authorities. It is not clear at this stage whether such changes would operate on a majority approval decision or whether approval to proceed would be needed from all 22 local authorities in Wales.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no equal opportunities implications directly arising from this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 As a result of the continuation of this work, the Council may be approached to commit staff resources to these workstreams. There are also likely to be opportunities to bid for additional funding to sufficiently resource this work and therefore workstream leads are currently scoping the resources required. Notwithstanding the above, it needs to be recognised that progressing the collaboration agenda is hugely resource intensive particularly in terms of staff time being devoted to the issue. This is particularly important given that progressing and developing shared service initiatives is currently taking place alongside work priorities, commitments and demands within individual authorities at a time of diminishing resources.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None at this time.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 As listed below and all comments have been incorporated in to this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That the 10 workstreams outlined in the Consultation Strategic Programme for Change Report are supported in principle and CCBC's response letter to Welsh Government to the deadline of 31st January is noted.

- 9.2 That the timetable and process for the progression of the draft Strategic Programme for Change Report document is noted.
- 9.3 Should the contents of the final Strategic Programme for Change Document be significantly changed, that a further report is presented to Cabinet.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To advise the Welsh Government of the views of Cabinet on the Strategic Programme for Change Report.
- 10.2 To note the timetable and process for the agreement of the Document.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 The Highways Act 1980 and the Road Traffic Act 1988.

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### Background Papers:

Transport and Highway Services for Wales: Strategic Programme for Change Report (SPfCR) Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association: A Joint Response for Change December 2012 and cover letter dated 20 December 2012.

### Appendices:

Appendix 1 CCBC Letter response to Welsh Government (31/01/13)