



## CABINET – 27TH NOVEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SOUTH EAST WALES:  
DELIVERING A FUTURE WITH PROSPERITY AND CARDIFF CITY  
REGION PROGRESS**

**REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To receive and endorse the publication “Delivering a Future with Prosperity” as recommended by the South East Wales Regional Partnership Board.
- 1.2 To update Members regarding progress towards delivery of regeneration, transport and planning at City Region level.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Unitary local authorities of South East Wales have been working together over the last 18 months to set out a vision and strategy for the economy of South East Wales. This has been done under the leadership of the Regional Partnership Board – the 10 local authority Leaders and Chief Executives/Managing Directors with the Welsh Local Government Association – this document has now been accepted and recommended for endorsement by each individual local authority.
- 2.2 Moreover, progress on delivering transport and planning at a SE Wales (City Region) level has been made and this report updates members on the latest position.

### 3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Prosperity is a key theme in the Council's Regeneration Strategy, the Single Integrated Plan and Welsh Government's Regeneration Framework 'Vibrant and Viable Places'.

### 4. THE REPORT

#### **Background**

- 4.1 In December 2011, the South East Wales Regional Partnership Board asked the Directors of Environment and Regeneration of the ten local authorities comprising South East Wales to form a Task and Finish Group to advise on the essential components to realise the vision:

***South East Wales: a thriving nation, visible internationally and distinctively Welsh***

- 4.2 Since that time the Directors and other Council representatives have provided regular updates to the Board who have steered the work being progressed in relation to the priorities, and in the context of the city regions development.

- 4.3 Welsh Government and its delivery partners have raised the need for greater regional coordination, especially if we are to concentrate limited resources to deliver fewer things, but still achieve regional impact. This need for prioritisation was also highlighted in the recent independent “Guilford Review” which also recognised the work underway to develop regional strategies, particularly in terms of securing European funding. A range of different policies, programmes, and projects are seeking a more regional focus, and there is a need to ensure these are brought together and do not duplicate effort and activity. North Wales, Central, and South West Wales have already published their strategies and have been able to put forward their proposals to Welsh Government. South East Wales is the last region to take this step, however, this work has now been completed using the knowledge, experience, and talent within the region.
- 4.4 At the meeting of the Regional Partnership Board on 14<sup>th</sup> October the following recommendations were approved:-
1. That the Regional Board approves “Delivering a Future with Prosperity”, the South East Wales Regional Strategic Framework developed on its behalf by the Directors of Environment and Regeneration.
  2. That the Board instruct the South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration to commence discussions with Welsh Government and WEFO to ensure that the strategic priorities identified feature within the economic prioritisation framework for Wales and the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan pipeline projects.
- 4.5 Based on the endorsement of this document by all 10 individual authorities the Regional Board wish to commence discussions with Welsh Government about the next stages for this work, and how it supports Welsh Government priorities, and how local government’s priorities for South East Wales support and relate to the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan and the future European programme 2014 to 2020.
- 4.6 To underpin this strategy another piece of work has been developed which is a matrix of work in development in each of the local authorities, and the collaborative projects in development and proposed. This will continued to be refined and prioritised, and will underpin this strategic framework.
- 4.7 The Strategic Framework is linked to the movement towards regional delivery and collaboration and the recommendations of the report on a South East Wales (Cardiff) City Region which was published in July 2012.
- 4.8 Other areas where delivery of services at City Region level are being progressed are Transport and Planning. In terms of transport the Regional Transport Consortia themselves recognise the need for their governance arrangements to evolve and they recognise the opportunities that arise from having a more ‘rounded’ approach to transport, economic development, housing and land use planning. For example in South East Wales the report of the Task Force that looked at the SE Wales Metro proposals recommended a Joint Delivery team be established involving SEWTA, Welsh Government and the private sector to drive the initiative forward.
- 4.9 SEWTA have a Board resolution accepting the need for change and for the relationship with the City Region Board to be developed. Importantly, though there is a strong view across all the regions that any change would need to be smooth and phased in over a period rather than introducing sudden changes that could disrupt detailed planning processes. A transition period would ensure effective delivery of programmes and projects during a period of change and help to avert cost overruns.
- 4.10 In terms of land-use planning, a new Planning Reform Bill for Wales is being prepared and a White Paper will be released for consultation before Christmas. Consultation will be open in March 2014 with the intention being to adopt the initial legislation by the end of 2014.

- 4.11 The Bill is being informed by a report produced by an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) which was prepared for Welsh Government in June 2012, entitled "Towards a Welsh Planning Act: Ensuring the Planning System Delivers".
- 4.12 The Bill looks likely to cover areas such as:
- A National Plan for Wales
  - The introduction of Strategic/Regional Planning – at City Region level
  - The Planning Application process – to streamline this and make it more efficient.
- 4.13 Members will be asked to consider the implications of the Planning Reform Bill and respond to the consultation early in the New Year, especially since the changes mooted will require alterations to the Council's Constitution.

### **Conclusion**

- 4.14 The benefits from the local authorities combining to work under the strategic framework and identification of these key strategic projects we all support will mean that in areas of the vital infrastructure in both transport and digital, the collaborative work we need to identify the business growth sectors, and enhancing the work we have started with further and higher education in terms of co-ordinating pathways for skill, training, and development (albeit very early stages) there is much greater strategic co-ordination amongst the local authorities in taking forward the prospects for the growth of our economy.
- 4.15 Moreover, changes to the delivery of transport and planning are likely to impact on local authorities who will either have to second/TUPE staff to a regional body or set up 'virtual' teams to address the regional issues.
- 4.16 As City Region Structures now appear inevitable, Caerphilly County Borough Council should endeavour to make its voice heard at Senior Officer and Member level to ensure that residents of the county borough benefit from the opportunities which this may bring.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no Equality Impact Assessment Implications as a result of this work.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications as a direct result of this report.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 All consultees' comments have been incorporated in the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To endorse the Regional Framework as set out in the body of this report.

- 9.2 To continue to engage with the Regional/City Regional agenda at Senior Member and Officer level and agree to receive further updates on the implications for delivery of transport and planning.

## 10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that Elected Members understand the implications of regional delivery of regeneration, transport and planning and can make informed decisions for staff and residents.

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Consultees:

Stuart Rosser – Interim Chief Executive

Sandra Aspinall – Acting Director of the Environment

Terry Shaw – Head of Engineering Services

Jan Bennett – Group Manager (Business Enterprise Support)

Antony Bolter – Group Manager (Strategy and Funding)

Tim Stephens – Development Control Manager

Rhian Kyte – Team Leader (Strategic & Development Plans)

Councillor K. James – Cabinet Member (Regeneration, Planning & Sustainable Development)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - South East Wales Regional Strategic Framework “Delivering a Future with Prosperity”