

APPENDIX 1

REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN (RTP)

Progress to date:

As set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Corporate Joint Committee (Transport Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2021, one of the statutory functions of a Corporate Joint Committee is to develop a Regional Transport Plan.

Arup was appointed by Ambition North Wales on behalf of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 25 March, 2024 to provide consultancy support on their Regional Transport Plan and Strategic Development Plan.

Arup highlighted their robust track record in both local and national plan evidence base preparation. Their proposal showcased their strength and credibility in supporting the CJC to fulfil its statutory duties and ensure strong synergies between its plans. This builds on their work with the North Wales Transport Commission, Local Area Energy Planning, and strategic development sites. Additionally, they have assisted the Welsh Government in drafting the Regional Transport Plan Guidance, informed the National Development Framework, and developed thematic papers for the Wales Transport Strategy. They also provided advice on the latest version of WelTAG and acted as the technical advisor to the Place Based Development Advisory Group, co-chaired by Cllr. Llinos Medi.

To date, Arup's completed work includes a comprehensive review of plans, data, and evidence, providing methodology advice papers, conducting initial option development and assessment, undertaking early stages of statutory impact assessments, and engaging stakeholders through officer and member workshops. Working jointly with Transport for Wales, and regional transport leads, Arup have collated relevant information and tested initial ideas around methodologies and options for interventions to be included in the Regional Transport Plan.

The deliverables Arup provided as part of the original commission included:

1. Requirements and gap analysis
2. Assessment methodology advice paper
3. Carbon assessment methodology advice paper
4. Impact Assessment methodology advice paper
5. Department for Transport Accessibility Tool advice paper
6. Background data and research paper
7. Development Plan review
8. Scheme development and options paper
9. Initial Integrated Wellbeing Assessment
10. Initial Emission Assessment Report
11. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Draft Scoping Report
12. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Draft Pre-Screening Report
13. Geographic Information System (GIS), mapping and visuals pack
14. Stakeholder engagement - workshops pack

Next phase of work:

The next phase of work will comprise:

1. Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping
2. Habitats Regulations Assessment Pre-Screening
3. Review and synthesis of regional stakeholder comments on the draft policies, programmes

4. Granular project plan, building on the original North Wales RTP Implementation Plan to set out a detailed timeline to completion of the RTP
5. Produce a Stakeholder Engagement Plan
6. Demonstration of Fuse digital dashboard (this is an online web-based library and dashboard of project data for sharing documents, GIS, maps, and information, with the capability of an Artificial Intelligence function)

This phase of work is due to conclude by mid-July.

Following approval by Welsh Ministers, it is anticipated that both the final Integrated Well-being Assessment and the Regional Transport Plan will be published in late Summer 2025. This will happen following public consultation on a draft plan and statutory assessments in Autumn 2024.

We intend to continue to work with Arup to progress the RTP and associated requirements up to completion by Spring 2025.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)

There is a requirement to submit a Delivery Agreement (DA) to Welsh Government in late 2024. The DA is made up of two parts:

- A timetable for SDP preparation
- A Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)

The DA is an important document as it sets out the timetable for plan preparation and identifies who can engage in the process, at what stage and the methods of consultation. It also explains how responses to consultations on the plan will be considered.

While the work to develop the Regional Transport Plan has been prioritised, there is significant opportunity to take insights from the RTP development into the SDP and ensure that both develop as strategic plans together.

INVESTMENT ZONE – FLINTSHIRE AND WREXHAM

Investment Zones are designed to provide a set of tools that can be deployed with flexibility and autonomy to boost the United Kingdom's innovation potential, to grow strengths in key industries and to drive growth, and level up communities across the country.

In November 2023, the HM Treasury's Autumn Statement announced that Flintshire and Wrexham is designated as an Investment Zone and the proposal should be co-developed between UK Government, Welsh Government and the Local Authorities and delivered by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC).

Current position:

The North Wales CJC is seeking to procure experienced consultancy support focused on guiding and providing hands-on support to the Flintshire and Wrexham Local Authority partners to satisfy the HM Treasury's Gateway process and produce a proposal that unlocks the Investment Zone funding opportunity totaling £160m over a 10-year period.

During the pre-election period the formal process of co-development with UK Government cannot proceed formally, however, officers will continue to progress the work with consultancy support in preparation for submitting when a new UK Government has been formed.

TRANSFER OF ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD FUNCTIONS TO THE CJC

A CJC Project Implementation Board has been established, consisting of senior officers and workstream leads from the Portfolio Management Office and Gwynedd Council. This project board oversees four independent workstreams that have been established to enable the transfer of functions from the Economic Ambition Board, including the Growth Deal and the Portfolio Management Office to the CJC. The project board meets weekly to oversee the workstreams and ensure key milestones are achieved with key risks identified and managed.

The four workstreams comprise of:

- **Legal and Governance** - To ensure that the necessary agreements and consents needed to achieve the transfer are secured and agreed. To ensure the necessary governance arrangements and agreements are put in place within the CJC for the delivery of the Growth Deal, including the role of advisors within the Economic Ambition Board.
- **People and HR** - Take forward TUPE process including consultation with staff, ensure that staff policies and protocols are in place to ensure a successful transition to the CJC.
- **Finance, Process and Systems** - To enable the transfer of Growth Deal funding and project funding arrangements as well as ensuring that all operational processes and systems are in place for the transfer of the PMO to the CJC.
- **Communications and Engagement** - Ensure staff and key stakeholders are communicated with and engaged throughout the process.

The 1 of July was set as a provisional target date for the transfer of functions from the Economic Ambition Board into the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. However, this date was provisional on the basis that it may be impacted by several factors, including the need for partner and government agreement to the transfer of the Growth Deal; decision making requirements and timescales; internal capacity constraints and TUPE considerations.

Good progress has been against all workstreams, however, the timetable to secure approvals from all Economic Ambition Board partners and UK and Welsh Governments mean the original target date of 1st July is unachievable. A revised target date of 1st November has been set.

Staff within the PMO have been made aware of the postponement, as the TUPE transfer cannot be completed ahead of the transfer of functions. No major concerns were raised by staff during the original TUPE consultation which was due to end on the 24th July, and staff were broadly positive of the transfer. The TUPE consultation will remain open until the new transfer date has been confirmed.

CJC - STATUTORY DUTIES AND FUNCTION

Welsh Language Standards

All Local Authorities in Wales and the four CJC's are required to comply with The Welsh Language Standards. Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) are public bodies established by Regulations made under Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. They are liable to comply with applicable and relevant Welsh Language Standards in the areas of service delivery, policy making, operations, promotion and record keeping.

Current position:

The Welsh Language Commissioner has issued the North Wales CJC with its notice of consultation on the draft compliance notice under Section 47 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The draft compliance notice will be discussed as a separate item at the CJC meeting.

Other statutory duties and functions:

All public sector bodies in Wales, including the CJC's need to comply with duties to public sector bodies, they are core in how public services in Wales work. Therefore, work is in progress to promote and facilitate the standards of duties including the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015, the Socio-economic Duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty.

The following statutory requirements all fall into the scope of work for the Corporate Joint Committee and are part of the forward work plan.

- Establish Governance & Audit Sub-Committee
- Establish the Standards Subcommittee
- Establish an Equality policy
- Establish the arrangements for the performance duties, under Part 6 of the 2021 Act
- Plan and Publish - Environment (Biodiversity) policy/report
- Plan and publish an: FOI policy
- Publish a Petition Scheme
- Implement Public Participation Duty