

Board	Minutes
28th March 2014	Location: Torfaen County Borough Council. Council Chambers, Civic Centre, Pontypool.

Part One

1a. Exemption Certificate

Access to Information

Recommendation: That pursuant to the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Board approved the recommendation.

1b. Sewta Business Plan 2014-15

Cllr Phil White (Chair) gave an overview of business planning issues for 2014-15. JD provided an update on progress and outlined current issues.

Members agreed the following resolutions:

That Councillors Phil White, Ralph Cook and Andrew Morgan, represent the Regional Transport Cabinet Members in a meeting with the Chair, Vice Chair and Transport Lead of the Regional Directors Group, to establish effective, two way lines of communication, and to allow Cabinet Members to highlight their thoughts and priorities to the Directors.

That the Regional Transport Cabinet Members review arrangements for continuing liaison.

Part Two

2. Minutes of Sewta Board meeting on 6th December 2013 and any matters arising

2.1 Members agreed the minutes with no matters arising.

3. Sewta Business Plan 2014-15

- 3.1 JD said that Members will be aware that there have been a number of recent announcements by the Minister to change the way that transport is delivered in the region. They also have the potential to change the way Transport Planning is undertaken. The thrust of these changes represents a move to more centralised control of transportation and in particular prioritisation by Welsh Government.
- 3.2 Other factors are also affecting transport issues across South East Wales, two of which are the South Wales Metro, and a proposed Strategic Development Plan for the Cardiff Region. These conversely have the potential to drive a more regional collaborative approach.
- 3.3 These changes for the new financial year have a significant impact on the functions of this board, as it will no longer be taking an active role in managing grant funding, project coordination or prioritisation. In addition, the Board's role related to regional transport planning appears to be diminished by proposed changes to the system. The recommendations contained in this report propose the closing down of the Sewta Board and officer working arrangements.
- 3.4 If Members accept these recommendations, there will be a number of activities required to be undertaken in the next financial year to close Sewta business. It is important to note that this Board will need to meet in September to close the 2013/14 accounts.
- 3.5 A provisional budget for 2014/15 was tabled at the meeting, although it was noted that this was dependent on reserves, and could not be confirmed until the out-turn of the 2013/14 budget was known. There were also recommendations related to the delegation of the closing of other Sewta business.
- 3.6 JD proposed amendments to the recommendations as detailed in the report. The Board agreed to the amended recommendations.

The recommendations were agreed that:

Following its September 2014 meeting to agree accounts, the Sewta Board ceases to meet;

Sewta officer working arrangements, apart from the Bus Funding Project Board, cease as of 31st March 2014;

The Board, in accordance with the joint agreement, delegates responsibility to Newport City Council to deal with any outstanding Human Resource and administrative issues;

The Board, in accordance with the joint agreement, delegates responsibility to Torfaen County Borough Council to deal with any outstanding financial issues, including the closing of 2013/14 accounts;

Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council liaise to ensure that Sewta business is dealt with effectively;

The Board delegates responsibility to the Transport Management Team to continue to progress the regional transport agenda.

4. Bus Funding

- 4.1 MB said that this report is to update the Board on bus funding issues, and to seek approval for the revised role for the South East Wales Bus Funding Project Board. MB drew members attention to the report's appendices which were tabled at the meeting, and said that the bus operators receive their final tranche of 2013/14 payments in August 2014 after their final mileage data has been submitted. Those final figures will then be reported at the Sewta Board meeting in September 2014.
- 4.2 The Minister has announced a new stream of funding. Therefore the Regional Transport Services Grant (RTSG) will be replaced in 2014/15 by the Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG). The grant will be allocated directly to individual Local Authorities to deliver the Regional Bus Strategy. However, it has been agreed that an authority will take a lead role and will deliver the grant regionally. Monmouthshire County Council has agreed to take the lead role.
- 4.3 From 1st April 2014/15, the concessionary fares reimbursement claims will no longer be coordinated regionally, and will revert to being submitted to the Welsh Government by the individual local authorities. The Welsh Government have announced a three year package on funding, and over the next three financial years the indications are that there will be a reduction of eleven percent in comparison with the level of funding over the past three years. This is likely to lead to further reductions in bus service provision, and some bus operators have already given an indication of what those services are likely to be.

The Board agreed that it:

- **approves the steps proposed to ensure close-out of 2013/14 RTSG by September 2014;**
- **agrees to regional delivery of the BSSG in 2014/15 as proposed, for Monmouthshire CC to act a lead authority through which to channel the funding to the operators and other local authorities;**
- **endorses the draft Project Brief, and gives authority to the Bus Funding Project Board to finalise the Project Brief and deliver the project.**

5. North West Cardiff / Rhondda Cynon Taff Corridor Study

- 5.1 RW said that the report presents the conclusions of the North West Cardiff –

Rhondda Cynon Taff Corridor Study undertaken by Arup on behalf of Sewta. This report is one of three reports commissioned, the first report concentrates on the environment around Cardiff, the second report looks at the wider strategic issues, and further into RCT plus the potential modes for those services, and the third report will provide an evidence based report to compliment the two previous reports.

The Board agreed:

That the North West Cardiff – Rhondda Cynon Taff Corridor Study is accepted as an important contribution in developing the evidence base for future transport investment in this key strategic corridor.

6. RTP Five Year Programme 2013-14

- 6.1 ER said that this report outlines the current position and sets out the details of the progress of spend in the Capital Programme (2013/14), up to the end of Jan 2014, in relation to each of the funded schemes. The expectation is that we will achieve a full outturn.

The Board agreed:

That the progress in this year's capital programme be noted and endorsed.

7. Partner Updates

7.1 Passenger Focus

Members noted the report.

7.2 Arriva Trains Wales (ATW)

Members noted the report.

7.3 First Great Western (FGW)

JP had nothing further to add to the report circulated.

Members noted the report.

7.4 Bus Users UK (BUUK)

ME said that she received good news that BUUK will receive funding for 2014/15. ME also advised that she has been asked to sit on the Bus Policy Advisory Group.

Members noted the report.

7.5 Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) Wales

JP said that he felt the dialogue between the operators, politicians and officers had vastly improved since the set up of the Regional Consortia, and thanked Sewta on behalf of CPT & FGW for the opportunity of taking part in the meetings. He also commented that whatever may take the place of Sewta, CPT and FGW hoped that they would be invited to participate in that group.

Members noted the report.

8. Sewta Corporate Budget 2013-14-Quarter Three

- 8.1 SJ said that the report is to inform the Board of the quarter three position of the Sewta corporate budget 2013-14. However, as mentioned in the Business Plan report, bus funding will carry on into the next financial year, and there will be some contingencies. Overall, financial performance indicates a full spend.
- 8.2 On the revenue budget, spend is also well below profile. This is in part due to delayed invoice approvals and claims beyond the end of the quarter. However, the approved budget allocation for the year includes £77k in contingencies, mainly related to bus funding, and current indications are that there will not be a need to draw on these. Moreover, the approved budget estimate is based on the need to draw on reserves to the value of £41k. Current projections indicate that this will not be needed, and with these exceptions that an out-turn consistent with the budget estimate can be achieved.
- 8.3 With bus funding administration in 2013/14 supported by the broader corporate budget, it is proposed that the bus funding earmarked reserves of £54k carried forward from 2012/13 will now be transferred to the general reserves. However, the bus funding earmarked reserves will be replenished to the value of £59k, which remains available from the 2013/14 bus funding contingency. This will cover the costs of administering the final round of bus funding payments for 2013/14, which will be completed in August 2014, and the closure of accounts by September 2014.

The Board agreed to endorse the report.

9. Chairs Statement

- 9.1 Cllr P White (Chair) said that Sewta Members and Officers have worked admirably together to deliver regional schemes over a number of years. He thanked everyone for their contribution, and hoped that collaboration between the local authorities, transport operators and user groups would continue in some form in the future.

10. Date of next Board Meeting

- 10.1 Friday 18th September 2014– Hosted by Caerphilly Council, Council Chambers, Ty Penallta, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach.

Meeting attended by:		
Councillor G Bartlett		Blaenau Gwent
Councillor D White		Blaenau Gwent
Councillor P White		Bridgend (Chair)
Councillor D Carter		Caerphilly
Councillor Ralph Cook		Cardiff (Vice Chair)
Councillor David Jones		Merthyr
Councillor Bryan Jones		Monmouthshire
Councillor K Critchley		Newport
Councillor Andrew Morgan		Rhondda Cynon Taff
Councillor Maureen Webber		Rhondda Cynon Taff
Councillor J Cunningham		Torfaen
Alun Evans	AE	Blaenau Gwent
John Duddridge	JD	Bridgend
Kevin Mulcahy	KM	Bridgend
Terry Shaw	TS	Caerphilly
Jeremy Morgan	JM	Merthyr
Richard Cope	RC	Monmouthshire
Mark Youngman	MY	Monmouthshire
Carl Jones	CJ	Newport
Malcolm Lane	ML	Newport
Roger Waters	RWa	Rhondda Cynon Taf
Stephen Jarrett	SJ	Torfaen
Emma Reed	ER	Vale of Glamorgan
Clare Cameron	CC	Vale of Glamorgan
John Pockett	JP	FGW & CPT (Part two onwards)
Margaret Everson	ME	BUUK (Part two onwards)
Peter Curtis	PCu	Giraffe Communications
Martin Buckle	MB	Sewta
Sian Isgrove (minutes)	SI	Sewta
Apologies received from:		
Councillor M Gregory		Bridgend
Councillor Tom Williams		Caerphilly
Councillor G Hinchey		Cardiff
Councillor Gretta Marshall		Cardiff
Councillor T Lewis		Merthyr Tydfil
Councillor Giles Howard		Monmouthshire
Councillor J Richards		Newport
Councillor R Curtis		Vale of Glamorgan
Councillor L Burnett		Vale of Glamorgan
Clive Campbell		Caerphilly
Mike Vaughan		ATW
Jane Lorimer		Sustrans
David Beer		Passenger Focus
Christian Schmidt		Sewta