

## MINUTES OF THE SWWITCH

### HELD AT THE BEACON – CENTRE FOR ENTERPRISE – DAFEN, LLANELLI, ON FRIDAY, 28 MARCH 2014 AT 1.30 PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor Colin Evans (Chair) (Carmarthenshire County Council)  
presided

#### **Voting Councillors:**

Robert Lewis	–	Pembrokeshire County Council
June Burtonshaw	–	City and County of Swansea
Eddie Jones (Pro tem)	–	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

#### **Non-Voting Councillors:**

Paul Lloyd	–	City and County of Swansea
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#### **Officers:**

Richard Workman	–	Carmarthenshire County Council
Steve Pilliner	–	Carmarthenshire County Council
Simon Charles	–	Carmarthenshire County Council
Ian Westley	–	Pembrokeshire County Council
Darren Thomas	–	Pembrokeshire County Council
Ceri Rees	–	Pembrokeshire County Council
John Flower	–	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Brian Biscoe	–	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cath Swain	–	City and County of Swansea
Ben George	–	City and County of Swansea
Sue Miles	–	SWWITCH Co-ordinator
Jeremy Parkhouse	–	City and County of Swansea

#### **Partners:**

David Beer	–	Passenger Focus
Michael Vaughan	–	Arriva Trains Wales
Ryland Jones	–	Sustrans

#### **Also Present:**

Hatti Woakes (observer)	–	North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum
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1 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES.**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the Beacon, Centre for Enterprise and commenced proceedings. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sandra Miller - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Councillor Ted Latham - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Councillor David Williams - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Councillor Paul Meara - City and County of Swansea, Phil Roberts - City and County of Swansea, Tim Peppin - WLGA, Margaret Everson - Bus Users UK, Betsan Caldwell - Community Transport Association and John Pockett - First Great Western.

2 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SWWITCH HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2013.**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the SWWITCH Joint Committee Meeting held on 6 December 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

3 **MINUTES OF THE SWWITCH SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2013.**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the SWWITCH Sub-Committee Meeting held on 6 December 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

4 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SWWITCH MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2013.**

**SWWITCH Rail Strategy**

The Joint Committee resolved that the approved strategy be circulated to relevant parties. As well as each individual local authority receiving hard and electronic copies of the strategy, copies have been forwarded to:

- Welsh Government.
- Network Rail.
- Passenger Focus.
- Arriva Trains Wales.
- First Great Western.

The Executive summary was also available from the SWWITCH website.

**City Regions and the Role of SWWITCH**

The Joint Committee resolved that a briefing note be prepared for Leaders attending the Ministerial Meeting planned for 20 January 2014. The briefing note was completed and forwarded, however, early in January the Minister's Office cancelled the meeting.

## **Consultations**

The Joint Committee resolved that the draft response to the M4 Consultation be approved and submitted. That action was completed prior to the closing date for responses.

The Joint Committee also delegated to Management Group responsibility to approve a response to the Active Travel Consultation. That action was completed and a copy of the SWWITCH Response as submitted was provided.

## **5 THE FUTURE OF SWWITCH AND THE SWANSEA BAY CITY REGION.**

Richard Workman, Carmarthenshire County Council and Sue Miles, SWWITCH Co-ordinator provided a summary of developments with regards to the future of SWWITCH and the Swansea Bay City Region. It was reported that the Minister had written to the Chairs of each Transport Consortium and to all the Council Leaders and issued a Statement on the Future of Transport Planning in Wales. A copy of the Minister's letter to the SWWITCH Chair and her Statement were attached at Appendices A and B of the report.

Following the Statement, SWWITCH Directors held an emergency meeting in order to plan a way forward, especially in view of the staffing implications implicit in the withdrawal of revenue funding for SWWITCH. It was seen as a priority by all four Directors to continue work collectively on the bus funding and so the Regional Bus Funding Officer post was maintained.

The Chair responded to the Minister on 28 January 2014 and confirmed the SWWITCH support for and willingness to work with, the City Region Board and in particular in terms of providing advice on transport issues. A copy of the Chair's letter was provided at Appendix C of the report. It was added that with the exception of the Travel Plan Co-ordinator and the Regional Bus Officer, the remainder of the SWWITCH Team were given formal notice.

Details were also provided of the changes in the last two months, including the involvement of officers with the Swansea Bay City Region Board. It was explained that the Board had endorsed the report on Future Arrangements for Transport in the City Region which included the Draft 2014/15 Programme. It was added that the Notice served on the SWWITCH Co-ordinator was rescinded and the Co-ordinator will provide advice on strategic transport issues to the City Region from 1 April 2014.

The Co-ordinator also provided a verbal update from the City Region Board Meeting held on 25 March 2014. It was explained that the main item discussed was the Regional Economic Strategy and the key message was that the Board needed to have a clear output focus.

The Committee considered the options available for Joint Committee, the options at SWWITCH Officer Level Groups and the SWWITCH name, logo and branding .

**RESOLVED that:**

- (1) the withdrawal of functions and funding from the Consortium with effect from 31 March 2014 and the implications on the SWWITCH Team be noted;
- (2) the utilisation of the SWWITCH Co-ordinator to provide strategic transport advice to the City Region Board and thus retain a strong link with the four Authorities in the region be supported;
- (3) Regional Officer Working Groups are retained where a clear role and benefit is evident;
- (4) the name, logo and branding associated with SWWITCH is withdrawn as proposed;
- (5) the Joint Committee agrees to meet quarterly per annum as a Regional Transport Forum for South West Wales and this decision be recommended to each individual Council subject to the Legal Agreement.

6 **BUS FUNDING UPDATE.**

Steve Pilliner, Carmarthenshire County Council provided an update on bus funding. It was explained that the Welsh Government had made a number of announcements regarding further changes to bus funding and organisation in Wales as follows:

- The Regional Transport Services Grant will be replaced by a Bus Services Support Grant and the new grant will be administered by Local Authorities.
- Changes to the concessionary fares reimbursement scheme. The Government had required Authorities to notify operators of the new arrangements in order that the changes to the rate can come into effect on 1 July 2014.

The Committee were provided with updates regarding the Regional Transport Services Grant, Bus Services Support Grant and concessionary fares.

The Committee expressed concern regarding the delay in confirmation of the Bus Services Support Grant from Welsh Government, particularly as there are ongoing contracts involving each of the four Local Authorities. Concern was also expressed regarding the future provision of routes to rural areas.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) the further changes that are being made to bus funding in Wales be noted;
- (2) the decision made to redistribute a small amount of the grant direct to the four constituent Local Authorities to help mitigate the impact of service reductions be endorsed;
- (3) the proposal that the four Authorities continue to work together to manage the further and continued period of change on a collaborative basis be supported.

This process will be managed by the current Passenger Transport Working Group which is chaired by a Head of Service, with funding distributed by the City and County of Swansea as the host Authority;

- (4) the Chair writes to the Minister if no confirmation regarding Bus Service Support Grants has been received by 1 April 2014.

7 **PRESENTATION - REGIONAL ROAD SAFETY UPDATE.**

Darren Thomas, Pembrokeshire County Council provided a presentation on Road Safety Update. Details included in the presentation were as follows:

- Current Approach - Regional Road Safety Working.
- Regional Participants.
- Regional Structure.
- Road Safety - Performance.
- Total KSI, Motorcyclist KSI, Young People 16 to 25.
- ETP - Schemes and Outcomes.
- Engineering (Capital) including the examples.

The Committee discussed the information included in the presentation.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the presentation be noted.

8 **2013/14 PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATE.**

Sue Miles, SWWITCH Co-ordinator provided the 2013/14 Programme update on the delivery of the 2013/14 Regional Transport Consortia Grant Application of £6.882M. The details provided in the report included the spend up to the end of February 2014 and also included details of virement during the last two months.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the position with respect to Regional Transport Consortia Grant spend at the end of February 2014 and the end of year claims process and timescales be noted;
- (2) the virements proposed by SWWITCH Programme Management Group be approved.

9 **LOCAL TRANSPORT FUND AND ROAD SAFETY GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR 2014/15.**

Sue Miles, SWWITCH Co-ordinator reported a for information report on Local Transport Fund and Road Safety Grant Applications 2014/15. The report outlined the changes to the bid process and the Local Transport Fund - Guidance to Applicants 2014/15 was provided at Appendix A to the report. Furthermore, an updated South West Wales Local Transport Fund Bid Summary was tabled at Appendix B.

10 **PARTNER UPDATES.**

The Joint Committee received updates from the following partner organisations:

- Arriva Trains Wales.
- Welsh Local Government Association.
- Bus Users Cymru.
- Community Transport Association.
- Passenger Focus.
- First Great Western.
- Sustrans.

11 **SWWITCH NEWSLETTER - FOR INFORMATION.**

The SWWITCH Newsletter for March 2014 was provided for information.

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

**SWWITCH**

The Chair, on behalf of the Joint Committee, thanked all present for their contribution to SWWITCH since 2005 and in making SWWITCH a success. He expressed best wishes to Richard Workman, John Flower and Reena Owen who were due to retire this year. He also thanked officers and partner organisations involved in SWWITCH for their positive contributions. Finally, he paid tribute to Sue Miles, SWWITCH Co-ordinator for her dedication, commitment and personal support to the Chair over this and many years.

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm

**CHAIR**