

**Minutes of the Meeting of the SWWITCH Joint Committee held at
Llanelli Town Hall, Carmarthenshire - Friday 6 December 2013**

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

Voting Councillors:

Robert Lewis - Pembrokeshire County Council
Sandra Miller - Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Paul Lloyd (Pro tem) - City and County of Swansea

Non-voting Councillors:

Paul Meara - City and County of Swansea

Officers:

Steve Pilliner - Carmarthenshire County Council
Simon Charles - Carmarthenshire 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
Ceri Rees - Pembrokeshire County Council
Sue Miles - SWWITCH Co-ordinator
Jeremy Parkhouse - City and County of Swansea

Partners:

Justin Davies - First Cymru Buses Ltd
Margaret Everson - Bus Users UK Cymru
Barclay Davies - Bus Users UK Cymru

Also present:

Hatti Woakes (observer) - North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum
Craig Bell - AECOM
Ian Mobbs - AECOM

1. **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to Llanelli Town Hall and commenced proceedings.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor June Burtonshaw (City and County of Swansea), Councillor Ted Latham (Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council), Councillor David Williams (Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council), Richard Workman (Carmarthenshire County Council), Ian Westley (Pembrokeshire County Council), John Pockett (CPT and First Great Western), Mike Vaughan (Arriva Trains Wales), Tim Peppin (WLGA), David Beer (Passenger Focus), Betsan Caldwell (CTA Cymru), Lyndsey Curtis (Sustrans) and Chris Vinestock (City and County of Swansea).

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the SWWITCH Joint Committee Meeting held on 6 September 2013 and the Special SWWITCH Joint Committee Meeting held on 8 November 2013 be agreed as correct records.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were none.

5. **PRESENTATION - SWWITCH RAIL STRATEGY**

Ian Mobbs and Craig Bell of AECOM provided a detailed presentation and responded to questions on the SWWITCH Rail Strategy. Details included in the presentation were as follows:

- Background to the Study.
- Current Problems and Issues - Timetable Characteristics/ Supplementary Topics/Freight.
- Understanding Future Growth.
- GWML Electrification - Understanding the Impact.
- Short Term Interventions (to 2018).
- Medium Term Interventions (2018-23) - Timetable Framework.
- Long term interventions (2023 onwards).
- Aspirational but Achievable Strategy.

Discussions followed in relation to the content of the presentation and questions were responded to accordingly.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Rail Strategy be approved;
- (2) the final strategy be circulated to all relevant parties.

6. **CITY REGIONS AND THE FUTURE ROLE OF SWWITCH**

John Flower, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council reported that since the last meeting there had been two major events associated with the Swansea Bay City Region. These including the Conference on Highlighting the Growth Potential of the City Region on Friday 18 October 2013 and a workshop on the Development and Prioritisation of Projects and Actions for the Swansea Bay City Region held on 3 December 2013. Membership of the City Region Board was also provided and some of the issues surrounding governance of the Board were highlighted.

The possible future of SWWITCH and potential options available were discussed. It was added that the WLGA had organised a meeting with the Minister, Edwina Hart AM and two Council Leaders from each region. The meeting had been scheduled for 20 January 2014 and Councillors Jamie Adams (Pembrokeshire

County Council) and Ali Thomas (Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council) will represent the SWWITCH Region. It was proposed that SWWITCH prepare a briefing note for the two Leaders prior to their attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the continuing development of the Swansea Bay City Region be noted and supported;
- (2) a briefing note be prepared for the Leaders attending the ministerial meeting on 20 January 2014;
- (3) a further report on the future options for SWWITCH be discussed at the next Joint Committee meeting, by which time there should be more clarity on the City Regions Governance Structure.

7. **BUS SERVICES FUNDING REVIEW AND REGIONAL NETWORK STRATEGY**

Steve Pilliner, Carmarthenshire County Council provided an update on the 2013/14 Regional Transport Services Grant distribution and the progress of the final draft Regional Network Strategy. He also provided information on changes to All Wales Concessionary Fare Scheme Reimbursement of Bus Operators from April 2014 onwards.

It was explained that SWWITCH had received the third tranche of Regional Transport Services Grant (RTSG) from the Welsh Government in October and the payment of £959,378 was equivalent to 18.75% of the total annual SWWITCH allocation. The payment had enabled SWWITCH to meet commitments to bus operators to make third quarter payments by the middle of November 2013. It was added that all payments were now based on actual mileage (including reductions for lost mileage where applicable) and all except one operator had submitted claims and invoices for Quarter 3 funding. Community transport organisations had been slower to claim funding and some were yet to claim funding due from Quarter 2 (July-September 2013) and only half of operators had claimed the Quarter 3 funding to date.

A full time (fixed term) Regional Transport Support Grant Officer had been appointed and the post holder will be to help ensure that RTSG claims are closely monitored and kept up to date.

It was confirmed that all four Councils had approved the Regional Network Strategy thus allowing the SWWITCH adoption of the Regional Network Strategy in time for submission to the Welsh Government by 17 January 2014.

It was outlined that there was likely to be a significant reduction in the reimbursement paid to bus operators with regards to the All Wales Concessionary Fare Scheme. Discussions between the Welsh Government, Bus Operators and consortia are ongoing and at the time papers were written it appeared that the modifying factor for reimbursements to operators would be moving from 73.6% to 56.3%. In practice it would result in a reduction of approximately £17m

in the concessionary fares reimbursement across Wales from the next financial year which will have a significant impact on the bus network of Wales. However, it does appear as if there may be some flexibility and discussions are still continuing.

Members discussed the information contained within the report and expressed concern, particularly in relation to the All Wales Concessionary Fare Scheme proposals.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the ongoing progress in the management of the Regional Transport Services Grant Funding be noted;
- (2) the SWWITCH Regional Network Strategy is adopted and submitted to the Welsh Government by 17 January 2014;
- (3) the reduction in the overall concessionary fare reimbursement rate and the potential impact on the bus network in SWWITCH be noted;
- (4) a further report be made to the next scheduled Joint Committee Meeting.

8. **SWWITCH WALKING AND CYCLING GROUP**

Simon Charles, Carmarthenshire County Council provided an update report on the work of the SWWITCH Walking and Cycling Group. It was stated that the quick wins proposed in the outline business case and summarised at Appendix A of the report were achieved, except to note that the mapping of processes for safer routes were superseded by the project terms being broadened to focus on walking and cycling in the round.

Outcomes achieved on the quick wins were detailed as follows:

- Regional map of walking and cycling routes had been produced.
- Support was provided by the Group to the 2013/14 SWWITCH Delivery Plan.
- The Group were able to advise on contribution towards consultations on the Active Travel Bill followed by proposals for a SWWITCH Prioritisation Process were being developed.
- A view on baseline data had been produced.
- A view on standards had been taken, with recommendations provided.

It was added that the Group had learned valuable lessons from cross-boundary working and collaboration and had produced a number of recommendations on longer term improvements. It was proposed that in order to recognise the work of the Group to date, that it be formally accepted as a sub-group within the "SWWITCH family".

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the work of the Walking and Cycling Group to date be noted and the recommendations of the Walking and Cycling Group report be supported;
- (2) a SWWITCH Walking and Cycling Group be formally established.

9. **SWWITCH PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT**

Sue Miles reported on the progress on spend and delivery of the Regional Transport Consortia Grant to date and looked at forward planning for the 2014/15 financial year. SWWITCH expenditure to 31 October 2013 was provided at Table 1 of the report and it was outlined that the SWWITCH Programme Management Group had confidence that full spend and delivery as proposed will be achieved and the Programme Management Group continued to meet monthly in order to ensure ongoing scrutiny of the Regional Programme. The Programme Management Group also monitors progress of projects flagged as “amber” or “red” by Programme Managers in each Council which provides help and support on specific issues and also minimises the risk to the overall programme.

The new procedures introduced for virement by the Welsh Government were outlined and to date three requests for virement from SWWITCH had been forwarded to the Minister for approval and these were provided at Table 2 of the report.

It was explained that to date no confirmation from Welsh Government had been received as to whether there is going to be any Regional Transport Consortia Grant allocation for the next financial year and if there is, when guidance and indicative allocations might be shared with consortia. At the last All Wales Programme Management Group Meeting in October 2013, Welsh Government officials could give no indication on either issue and neither could they share with Consortia when they might be able to share any intelligence on proposals for 2014/15.

SWWITCH Management Group has therefore charged the Programme Management Group with proposing a delivery plan programme for 2014/15 based on the City Regions principle, as approved at last Joint Committee Meeting. Work is therefore ongoing and the assumption that the likely budget for the region will be approximately £5m to £6m in total (across all elements) and also that there may be some ring-fencing for Active Travel Bill schemes, but not to the same extent as for the current financial year, where 30% was ring-fenced. As deadlines for submission were likely to be prior to the next Joint Committee Meeting, it was proposed that the final decision on the projects to be included in the 2014/15 Delivery Plan be delegated to the SWWITCH Management Group.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) progress made to date on delivering the 2013/14 Delivery Plan be noted;
- (2) the virements proposed by the Programme Management Group be approved;
- (3) responsibility to approve the 2014/15 Delivery Plan be delegated to SWWITCH Management Group.

10. **CONSULTATIONS**

Ceri Rees, Pembrokeshire County Council reported that since the last Joint Committee Meeting a number of responses had been approved by the Management Group, submitted on behalf of the region.

The following consultations had been responded to since September 2013:

- Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership.
- Draft Noise Action Plan for Wales.
- Llandeilo Air Quality Management Area Draft Action Plan.

Details of these responses were provided at Appendices A to C of the report.

Furthermore, it was reported that the Welsh Government is currently consulting on the M4 corridor around Newport and a copy of the consultation leaflet was provided at Appendix D of the report. This is the second consultation on the M4 this year and SWWITCH responded to the original consultation in July 2012 and a copy was provided at Appendix E of the report.

The SWWITCH Officer Working Group had prepared a draft response on the M4 corridor consultation for consideration by Joint Committee and was provided at Appendix F of the report.

Furthermore, a further consultation on where the Active Travel Bill will apply in Wales was issued in November 2013. The consultation document was provided at Appendix G of the report with a closing date of 28 January 2014. It was proposed that Joint Committee delegates responsibility to the Management Group to approve a response to this consultation.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the responses to consultations submitted on behalf of SWWITCH be noted and endorsed;
- (2) a response to the M4 consultation be approved;
- (3) responsibility be delegated to SWWITCH Management Group to approve a response the Active Travel consultation.

11. **PARTNER UPDATES**

Joint Committee received updates from the following partner organisations:

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

12. **FORWARD MEETING DATES**

RESOLVED that the forward meeting dates by approved as follows:

Date	Lead Authority	Venue
Friday 28 March 2014	Carmarthenshire County Council	Llanelli Town Hall
Friday 13 June 2014	Carmarthenshire County Council / City and County of Swansea	To be confirmed
Friday 12 September 2014	City and County of Swansea	To be confirmed
Friday 12 December 2014	City and County of Swansea	To be confirmed
Friday 27 March 2015	City and County of Swansea	To be confirmed
Friday 12 June 2015	City and County of Swansea / Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	To be confirmed

13. **SWWITCH NEWSLETTER**

The SWWITCH Newsletter for December 2013 was provided for information.

14. **SWWITCH ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

The SWWITCH Annual Progress Report 2012/13 was provided for information.

15. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Date, time and venue for next meeting

RESOLVED that the next Joint Committee Meeting be scheduled for 1.30 p.m. on Friday 28 March 2014 at Llanelli Town Hall, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire.

PTI Cymru Limited

It was reported that proposals had been circulated regarding a change in the corporate structure for PTI Cymru Limited.

Bus Users UK Cymru

Margaret Everson reported that Bus Users UK Cymru would be launching their awards early in the new year and categories will be circulated.

SWWITCH Sub-Committee

It was proposed that a SWWITCH Sub-Committee be formulated to discuss the SWWITCH Capital and Revenue Funding. Membership would include elected

Members from each Authority and Officers from each Authority, and the Sub-Group would meet immediately following closure of the Joint Committee Meeting.

RESOLVED that the SWWITCH Sub-Committee be formulated as proposed.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.

CHAIR

S: SWWITCH Joint Committee - 6 December 2013
(JEP/KL)