

ES15.2



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Local Development Plan

Hearing Session 15: Transport

Thursday 5 July 2012

Examination 2012

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Submission

Examination Statement Reference No:	ES15.2
Submission date:	15th June 2012

SESSION 15 TRANSPORT

Introduction

This Statement has been prepared by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in order to help facilitate appropriate discussion at the Transport Hearing Session. The Paper provides a response to the questions set by the Planning Inspector (Mr Vincent Maher).

Where the Council does not intend to provide any additional written evidence the Inspector's attention is directed to the relevant part of the Evidence Base, which in the view of the Council addresses the matters raised. The paper will not repeat evidence previously submitted for consideration.

The Council's detailed responses to the representations received on Transport are contained in the Report of Representations (**SD07b**).

Council Response to Inspector's Questions (questions in bold)

- 1. Which of the various transport projects in the Plan are aspirations and which ones have a realistic chance of being delivered over the lifetime of the Plan*? Which transport projects are critical to the delivery of the spatial strategy and the other targets in the Plan? Are there robust plans in place to deliver them? When will they be delivered?**

Policy Number	Proposal	Completion / Start Date	Funding Pledged	Delivery Agent
T1.1	HoV Route linking Nine Arches Tredegar to Brynmawr	Completed		BGCBC
T1.2	Link from HoV to Rassau Industrial Estate	Will be completed as part of HoV dualling scheme 2012-2014	WG - funding confirmed as part of dualling	WG
T1.3	HoV to Ebbw Vale and Cwm	Completed		BGCBC
T1.4	Cwm to Aberbeeg	Money allocated for scheme development 2011-2012 and 2012-2013	RTP	BGCBC
T1.5	Link from HoV to Trefil	Improvement of existing path	S106	BGCBC
T1.6	Links from HoV to Tafarnaubach Industrial Estate	This route is identified in the RTP as part of the existing programme but		BGCBC

Policy Number	Proposal	Completion / Start Date	Funding Pledged	Delivery Agent
		can be delivered within the existing highway		
T1.7	Bedwellty Pits, Tredegar to County Boundary	Money allocated for scheme development 2010-2012	WG & Convergence	CCCBC
T1.8	Hilltop to Ebbw Vale to Manmoel	Upgrade of existing route on highway		BGCBC
T1.9	Brynmawr to Blaenavon	Completed		BGCBC
T1.10	Extension of Ebbw Fach Trail from Abertillery to Aberbeeg and completion of missing section through Blaina	Completed		BGCBC
T1.11	Link to Cwmtillery Lakes	Upgrade of existing route on highway		BGCBC
T1.12	Aberbeeg to Royal Oak	Aberbeeg to Llanhileth Completed Llanhileth to Royal Oak 2011/2012 feasibility study 2012/2013 further feasibility study	RTP & Convergence	BGCBC
T1.13	Royal Oak to Swffryd	Implementation 2012/2013	RTP and Convergence funding (Crumlin to Pontypool)	BGCBC
T2.1	Extension of rail link from Parkway to Ebbw Vale Town	Commitment to appraise the feasibility of a new rail station in Ebbw Vale between 2012-2015	Ongoing funding commitment by WG	WG
T2.2	Provision of new station and public transport interchange at Ebbw Vale	Commitment to appraise the feasibility of a new rail station in Ebbw Vale between 2012-2015	Ongoing funding commitment by WG	WG
T2.3	Provision of new station at Cwm	Feasibility study completed	Unlikely to be funded by 2021	Sewta
T2.4	Extension of rail link to Abertillery	Feasibility study completed. Forms part of SEWTA Rail Strategy Proposal developed to the status of network rails grip stage 3 (selection of	No commitment from WG at this stage	Sewta

Policy Number	Proposal	Completion / Start Date	Funding Pledged	Delivery Agent
		options).		
T2.5	Provision of new station and Park and Ride at Abertillery	Feasibility study completed. Forms part of SEWTA Rail Strategy Proposal developed to the status of network rails grip stage 3 (selection of options).	No commitment from WG at this stage	Sewta
T2.6	Rail freight provision at Marine Colliery	Dependent on development of Policy M4.3	Private Sector	Private Sector
T4.1	Bus Priority Scheme along the Brynmawr to Newport Bus Corridor	Identified in the RTP bus strategy as a corridor for improvement	RTP	BGCBC
T4.2	Bus Interchange improvement at Brynmawr	Acquired and demolished building in 2011/12; funding for enhancement 2012/2013	RTP Funding pledged	BGCBC
T4.3	Bus Interchange improvement at Ebbw Vale	Development work currently being undertaken for implementation in 2014	WG & Convergence Funding pledged	BGCBC
T5.1	Construction of a Peripheral Distributor Road through 'The Works'	Development work currently being undertaken for implementation in 2014	WG Funding pledged	BGCBC
T5.2	Online improvements between the Peripheral Distributor Road and the A465	Libanus Rd – under construction. Mountain Rd / Rhyd Blew phase 1 under construction. Phase 2 (A4046/A4047 junction) - development work currently being undertaken for implementation in 2014. Cemetery Road - development work currently being undertaken for implementation in 2014.	RTP / WG funding pledged	BGCBC
T6.1	Dualling of the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road (Tredegar to Brynmawr)	Due to commence on site Nov 2012 for completion 2014	WG funding confirmed	WG
T6.2	Online improvements to the A4046 south of Cwm	Online upgrade of existing highway route	No funding pledged at present	BGCBC
T6.3	Online improvements to the A4048	Online upgrade of existing highway route	No funding pledged at	BGCBC

Policy Number	Proposal	Completion / Start Date	Funding Pledged	Delivery Agent
			present	
T6.4	Online improvements to the A467 south of Abertillery	Online upgrade of existing highway route	No funding pledged at present	BGCBC

The transport projects which are critical to the delivery of the spatial strategy and other targets in the Plan are:

T1 Cycle Routes

The following cycle routes have already been completed: T1.1, T1.3, T1.9, T1.10 and T1.13. In addition T1.2, T1.4, T1.12 and T1.13 have funding committed and are likely to be completed soon.

This leaves T1.5, T1.6, T1.7 T1.8 and T1.11 to be developed over the remainder of the Plan period. With the exception of T1.7, the schemes are on the existing highway and only require signposting and minor improvements and should therefore not be deleted from the Plan on grounds of funding not being available.

Funding to implement T1.7 (joint scheme with Caerphilly CBC) was available in 2010-2013 but due to route alignment issues the scheme could not be completed. However, the development work has produced a comprehensive study of possible route alignments and it is considered that the one currently identified in the Plan (**SD01**) is the only feasible option. A bid for further implementation monies via European structural funding is currently being developed for this important core route link between Caerphilly County Borough and Blaenau Gwent.

T2 Rail Network and Station Improvements

Policies T2.1 and T2.2 are critical to the delivery of the spatial strategy as they are key to promoting Ebbw Vale as a regional public transport hub. WG agree that there is a commitment to proceed with these schemes and therefore they should remain in the Plan. The scheme is included in the National Transport Plan and construction is planned from 2015.

Policy T2.3 will increase accessibility to public transport but is not critical to the strategy. As funding is not considered to be forthcoming in the lifetime of the Plan then it is agreed that this scheme needs to be deleted from the Plan.

Policies T2.4 and T2.5 are critical as they increase accessibility and enable an increased frequency of service. The link to Abertillery will provide access to a rail service for a significant population catchment along the Ebbw Fach. The development of this line, alongside existing Welsh Government proposals to link Ebbw Vale to Newport, will provide two trains from Blaenau Gwent to

Cardiff and one train to Newport every hour. The assessment work undertaken on this line is very positive and Blaenau Gwent considers that funding for the further development of the proposal is likely to be identified within the plan period. The SEWTRA board meeting of the 16th December 2011 (Item 7) identifies the implementation of this line as 2019-2024, a copy of which is attached at appendix 1.

Policy T2.6 is critical to the development of the delivery of the Preferred Area for quarrying at Land South East of Cwm, Ebbw Vale (M4.3) but is not critical to the strategy.

Policy T3 Safeguarding of Disused Railway Infrastructure

Policy T3 is a protection policy and does not require funding.

T4 Improvements to Bus Services

Funding is already in place for the improvements to the Bus interchanges at Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale (T4.2 and T4.3).

The bus priority scheme identified in policy T4.1 is key to objective 4 which aims to increase the use of sustainable modes of transport. It also assists in improving connectivity, as identified in policy SP6 criterion 1. Whilst no specific funding is confirmed at present, it is identified as a key priority corridor in Sewta's Regional Bus Strategy and is likely to be funded in the Plan period.

T5 New Roads to Facilitate Development

The Peripheral Distributor Road (Policy T5.1) is critical to the proper functioning of 'The Works' Site (Policy MU2) and to proposals to improve Ebbw Vale Town Centre (AA1.1 and AA1.2) which rely on the downgrading of the road. Thus it is critical to the strategy of the Plan in terms of SP1(b) promoting Ebbw Vale as the principal hub for Blaenau Gwent, and SP1(c) delivering the strategic sustainable flagship scheme at 'The Works'. As identified in the table above there is funding pledged to deliver this scheme.

On line improvement works between the Peripheral Distributor Road and the A465 (Policy T5.2) is critical to the proper functioning of the road network, the delivery of 'The Works' (Policy MU2) and proposals for Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor (Policy MU1). Again the road is critical to the strategy of the Plan in terms of (Policy SP1(b)) promoting Ebbw Vale as the principal hub for Blaenau Gwent, and (Policy SP1(c)) delivering the strategic sustainable flagship scheme at 'The Works' and Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor. As identified in the table above there is funding pledged to deliver this scheme.

T6 Regeneration Led Highway Improvements

Dualling of the Heads of the Valleys Road (Policy T6.1) is critical to the regeneration and growth strategy of the Plan it not only provides improved connectivity (Policy SP6 criteria 1(a) and (b)) but is seen as a catalyst to

generate new and sustained economic activity and investment. This road is key to supporting housing and economic growth as well as providing a critical cycle connection. As identified in the table above there is funding pledged to deliver this scheme.

On line improvements to the A4046, A4048 and A467 (Policies T6.2, T6.3 and T6.4) are important to improving connectivity with other key settlements in the South East Wales Region and between the hubs (Policy SP61(a) and 1(b)). Funding will be found for improvements where appropriate.

Regional Transport Plan funding is sought from WG on a year on year basis so it is very difficult to programme future funding delivery. Identification of schemes within the LDP assists in supporting grant bids, therefore, wherever possible, schemes should be retained within the Plan.

The Council has been successful to date in bidding for European Structural Funds to deliver schemes within the Borough. The Council will continue to have access to European funding from 2014-2020 and the Inspector is asked to take this into consideration.

The Inspector's attention is drawn to **ED.3** the Council's response to previous questions on Transport.

2. Does the Plan give sufficient emphasis to the desire/ need to promote sustainable forms of transport including cycling?

Policy SP6 sets out how the Council and others will work together to create a sustainable transport network.

It is accepted that more emphasis could be placed on the desire to promote sustainable forms of transport within Policy SP6. It is suggested to the Inspector that Policy SP6 could be improved through reference in criterion 1 to bus, **cycle** and road links.

An additional criterion could also be added to Policy SP6 to reflect the plans objective to increase the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Policy DM1, criterion 3b, seeks to ensure that new access roads within developments are designed to an appropriate standard that prioritises the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport before the private car.

It is suggested that this Policy could be improved.

3. How will Policy SP6 be implemented?

Policy SP6 will be implemented through assessing applications against policies and the implementation of transport allocations identified within the

Plan. Chapter 9 of the Plan identifies the phasing, funding and who is responsible for the delivery of these allocations (**SD01**, pages 126-130).

Criterion 1 seeks to increase connectivity, this will be achieved through the implementation of Policies (T1), (T2), (T4), (T5), and (T6).

Criterion 2 identifies that the transport schemes identified will be required to protect the built and natural environment and local communities. This will be achieved through assessing new transport schemes against policies (DM1), (DM2g), (DM3), (DM4), (DM12), (DM14), (DM15), (DM16), (DM17) and (DM18).

Criterion 3 seeks to promote Ebbw Vale as a regional public transport hub. This will be implemented through the delivery of proposals (T1), (T2.1), (T2.2) and (T4.3).

Criterion 4 identifies that the Plan facilitates an integrated cycle and pedestrian route connecting settlements with employment areas and town centres. This will be implemented through Policies (DM1), (DM4) and the delivery of cycle routes (T1.1- T1.13).

Criterion 5 identifies that the Plan will facilitate the transportation of freight on the core network whilst encouraging the use of rail this will be implemented through Policies (DM1), (DM19), (DM21) and the delivery of proposal (T2.6).

Criterion 6 seeks to secure appropriate provision for people with special access and mobility requirements. This will be implemented through Policy (DM1.3.c).

4. In the absence of an adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance note, how would the Council secure appropriate levels of on site car parking, cycling and the facilitation of public transport that might be associated with new development?

The Council intend to adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance note before the Local Development Plan is adopted. If this is not possible the draft version will be used to guide decisions.



Report To:	Board 16th December 2011	Item 7
Report Subject:	Sewta Rail Studies Chepstow Line – Frequency and Interchange Improvements Ebbw Valley Line – Abertillery Spur	
Report by:	Mark Youngman, Chair, Sewta Rail Working Group	

1. Purpose

This report informs the Board of the conclusions of two rail studies commissioned by the Sewta Rail Working Group on the Chepstow and Ebbw Valley Rail Lines, and seeks endorsement of the reports for wider consultation.

2. Background/Present Position

- 2.1 The first Sewta Rail Strategy published in 2006, and the Sewta Rail Strategy Prioritised Investment Programme of 2007 identified service enhancements for the Chepstow Line, and the proposals were included in Sewta's Regional Transport Plan 2010. Further work on the line was commissioned in the 2010-2011 financial year, and the conclusions are detailed below.
- 2.2 Following the Ebbw Vale Future Phases Report which was presented to the Board in September and agreed in December 2010, it was confirmed that the Rail Working Group be asked to take forward development of two proposals. The first, in relation to new stations at Crumlin and Pye Corner, has previously been reported to Board. The second involves the proposal for a further frequency enhancement on the line, terminating on a new spur at Abertillery.
- 2.3 Both sets of proposals have also been previously endorsed in principle by the Board through the review of the Sewta Rail Strategy, which was agreed by the Sewta Board in September 2011.

3. Proposal for Action

- 3.1 For the Chepstow line the recommendations from the current study have been endorsed by the Sewta Rail Working Group. These involve the further development of proposals for improved interchange and parking at both Severn Tunnel Junction and Chepstow Stations (including a disabled accessible footbridge at Chepstow), the future provision of a station at Llanwern, and the provision of an infill local Cardiff to Cheltenham service, in addition to Arriva Cross Country services stopping at Chepstow. (The latter has been partially implemented from the May 2011 timetable and continues into the 2012 timetable.)
- 3.2 On the Ebbw Valley line the study developed proposals to the status of Network Rail's Grip 3 (selection of options) on the Abertillery spur, and at Abertillery Station. The recommendation put forward was for further design work to take them to the stage of Network Rail Grip 4 (final preferred design). Work is currently underway to

refine the options further, using approved funding from the Sewta Rail Working Group.

- 3.3 The Rail Strategy Review identifies the additional service on the line and the spur to Abertillery for implementation in the period 2019-24, with a 4 to 5 year lead in period. However, a key issue highlighted in the Abertillery report is the land needed for the new station. The whole of the line is already in the ownership of Blaenau Gwent CBC. However, at the moment, the majority of the land for the station is in third party ownership, but currently up for sale. Blaenau Gwent CBC are currently in negotiations with the land owners over the land, and have opened discussions with the Welsh Government and Sewta over identifying potential sources of funding.
- 3.4 There will be a need now for both sets of studies to be open for wider consultation, to ensure widespread public and stakeholder support.

4. Financial Implications

This report has no direct financial implications. The Sewta Rail Working Group will review the timing of the further work proposed for both lines, and the resources available for progressing it. The detailed preparation and implementation of individual schemes at Severn Tunnel Junction and Chepstow stations will need to be considered by Sewta within the context of the annual roll forward of the capital programme, and by the Welsh Government in the prioritisation of the National Transport Plan, and future updates to it, and through the M4 Corridor Enhancement Measures and Wales Rail Forward Programmes.

5. Staffing / Personnel Implications

This report has no direct staffing implications. Progress on taking forward the recommendations of these studies will continue to be led by the Sewta Rail Working Group, with the support of the Sewta Central Support Unit.

6. Recommendations

1. That the progress on the Chepstow and Ebbw Valley line studies be endorsed, and be referred for wider consultation.
2. That the Sewta Rail Working Group be requested to consider taking forward the further development work required.