



Karen Jones  
Chief Executive  
South West Wales CJC

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13 January 2023

Dear Karen

Thank you for the letter of 21 December 2022, reference CJC/LlwyCymru/Rhag22/1, on behalf of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) in relation to the duties to prepare a Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

We are very grateful to colleagues in your region for engaging constructively with Welsh Government about how these important regional planning duties can be discharged. The clarity you have requested about Welsh Ministers' expectations in relation to these duties will clearly be of interest to all regions. This response is therefore copied to the Chief Executives of all four CJs.

As you know, Welsh Ministers are clear CJs provide a consistent and accountable mechanism to support regional collaboration where it makes sense to do so. Aligning economic development, transport and land use planning approaches in the CJC provides an opportunity to consider and capitalise on the interdependencies between them. Therefore, whilst there are separate arrangements for producing both RTPs and SDPs, it is clearly vital we also consider the strategic correlation between these plans within the CJC.

We fully understand and acknowledge the challenge CJs face in developing these Plans amidst stretched budgets and limited resources. It is intended that working on a regional scale will lead to efficiencies in their development that minimises demands. As well as the development of the Plans themselves, the interventions they suggest must also be reflective of the limited capital and revenue budgets we all have for the near future. We must cut our cloth accordingly and maximise value for money against shared regional objectives that meet both local needs and national policies.

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Whilst recognising the CJs own, and lead on, the Plans the Welsh Government is keen to provide support. We are developing RTP guidance and wish to discuss a draft with you on the 13<sup>th</sup> (and other CJs around this time), we seek to develop the guidance collaboratively. The guidance will set out the requirement as well as illustrative plan of activities

In parallel with finalising the guidance we need to agree with you what role the Welsh Government, and Transport for Wales, should play in RTP development.

For example, we consider the Welsh Government should provide advice on its policies and likely future funding streams. Welsh Government should also provide timely feedback during plan development to increase the likelihood of the Plan being swiftly accepted and progressed to implementation.

Transport for Wales are well positioned to provide technical advice to all layers of government in Wales. We are confident that they can assist in providing a good evidence base for developing the Plans. For example, through use of the regional transport models to provide data on the origin and destination of trips, and to test options. They could also help in scoping, procurement and management of the numerous environmental and other appraisals that are required for the plans, avoiding duplication of effort across other CJs and perhaps finding further efficiencies and economies of scale. We welcome discussion on the specific needs for each region.

RTP guidance has been co-created in liaison with the Welsh Local Government Association and representatives from each region. We confirm we will not finalise the guidance until we have discussed matters with each of the CJs directly so that your views are taken into account. On this basis we think a more formal consultation process isn't necessary.

The first activity RTP guidance will suggest is the production of an Implementation Plan. Doing so will provide a platform for us to discuss and agree matters including the programme, activities to produce the RTP and the support and involvement of Welsh Government and Transport for Wales. This can then set as path for other activities in 23/24 towards implementation on the first plan in 2025.

In August 2021 Planning Directorate issued two Advisory Notes suggesting firstly how governance arrangements for preparing an SDP could be achieved. This was not prescriptive, reflecting the flexibility in the forthcoming LGEW Act, but providing stimulus to discussions. Secondly was an explanation note of the process for preparing an SDP. Following this, in February 2022 Regulations were laid enabling the preparation of an SDP following the CJs ability to exercise the function on 30 June. These Regulations set out the statutory legal process. Lastly, on the 9 September 2022 an informal SDP Draft Manual, setting out the scope and range of an SDP was issued to all 25 LPAs across Wales, including the WLGA. It is unfortunate that CJs were not copied in at this point, as the contact details were unknown. Having a coordinated contact approach will avoid this situation in the future.

A formal consultation on the SDP Manual will take place this summer with publication anticipated by the end of 2023. From a planning perspective there is no impediment to preparing an SDP from the date the duty commenced, 30 June 2022. Planning officials will, as in the past with LDPs, directly engage with CJs to provide technical and expert support when preparing an SDP.

We expect the CJs to submit a Delivery Agreement (DA) for SDPs to the Welsh Ministers in 2023/24 and, following agreement, demonstrate the commencement of technical work on plan preparation.

For both RTPs and SDPs, we ask that all CJsCs identify the person and officer teams to lead on this work, whether that be one individual/team leading on both or two teams. This will allow us to match up good lines of communication to our teams.

The Welsh Government is keen to work with CJsCs to consider how we can provide practical support about how your planning functions are discharged. We are also keen to support regions in considering how they can best share planning expertise and resources.

We do not underestimate the challenges partners face given the challenging economic and fiscal position, or the implications this has for the ongoing implementation of CJsCs. The ongoing support for CJsCs, through the contributions made by constituent local authorities, is however one of the factors considered in determining the overall quantum of the RSG in budget considerations. The cost of producing both regional plans should therefore be met from within existing local authority budgets through the contribution to the CJC budget requirement.

The RTPs and SDPs can play a vital role in delivering our collective response to both the climate emergency and the wider needs of our citizens, but they will only be successful through collaborative working between Welsh Government, the CJsCs and our supply chains, including Transport for Wales.

We are working closely together within Welsh Government to deliver the strategic objective of supporting regional collaboration via CJsCs. The following colleagues in the Local Government Performance and Partnership Division are responsible for coordinating this work and will be well known to you:

- Deputy Director – Claire Germain - [Claire.Germain@gov.wales](mailto:Claire.Germain@gov.wales)
- Lead Official – Chris Stevens – [Christopher.stevens@gov.wales](mailto:Christopher.stevens@gov.wales)

In the same way local authorities do, CJsCs will however clearly need to engage with different parts of Welsh Government in relation to their different functions and duties. We agree it will be beneficial for direct lines of communication to be established between the CJsCs and policy officials with specific responsibility for transport planning and land use planning.

#### **Transport:**

- Deputy Director – Rob Kent-Smith - [Robert.Kent-Smith@gov.wales](mailto:Robert.Kent-Smith@gov.wales)
- Lead Official – Matt Jones - [Matthew.Jones@gov.wales](mailto:Matthew.Jones@gov.wales).

#### **Land Use Planning:**

- Deputy Director – Neil Hemmington – [Neil.Hemmington@gov.wales](mailto:Neil.Hemmington@gov.wales)
- Lead Official – Mark Newey - [Mark.Newey@gov.wales](mailto:Mark.Newey@gov.wales)

An event being held on the 17<sup>th</sup> January will provide an opportunity for policy colleagues in Welsh Government with responsibility for each of these two duties to set out Ministerial objectives and expectations. More broadly this discussion will enable us to consider how these planning duties will align within the CJsCs. Rob and Matt are also meeting with you on 13 January specifically to discuss the development of your RTP.

Yours sincerely,

**Rob Kent-Smith**  
**Deputy Director, Transport Strategy and Policy Division**

**Neil Hemmington**  
**Deputy Director, Planning Directorate**

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