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Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P-KS-6873-16

Nick Ramsay AM
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Cardiff Bay
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30 September 2016

Dear Nick

Public Accounts Committee Report – Value for money in Motorway and Trunk Road Investment – Update

I have pleasure in enclosing an update on the Welsh Government response to the above mentioned report.

Yours sincerely

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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.

Public Accounts Committee Report – Value for Money of Motorway & Trunk Road Investment – Update October 2016

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
1	<p>The Committee recommends that the WG engage with the industry to understand its needs and ensure that info provided on the TR project pipeline is accurate and up to date.</p>	<p>The WG will maintain a rolling programme of bi-annual supplier events to ensure the construction industry supply chain has access to accurate and up to date info on its pipeline of transport projects. Supplier events will be used to provide updates on procurement policies and in turn receive feedback on current practices. WG will establish regular engagement with representative bodies such as the Civil Engineering Contractors Association and the Association of Consulting Engineers.</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>Supplier events were held in both north & south Wales in early December 2015. These were very well attended and will continue this year.</p>	Complete
2	<p>The Committee recommends the WG should publish a clear prioritised list of all trunk road projects, with indicative dates. This list should include information on the current status of the projects and should be refreshed regularly, with reasons given for any change in status and priority.</p>	<p>A delivery schedule is set out in the National Transport Finance Plan and reflects the current assumptions about the delivery profile of each scheme. The Schedule notes these may be subject to change, recognising that statutory processes that must be completed and the need to be responsive to changing circumstances. The plan contains an annualised delivery period for each year for the first five years. The delivery schedule will be regularly reviewed and updated as the delivery profile for specific schemes become clearer.</p>	Complete
3	<p>The Committee recommends the WG publishes details of the scope approach and timetable for the review of the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WEITAG), including the approach to consultation, and publishes the outcome of review once completed.</p>	<p>WG are currently undertaking a thorough review of all areas covered within WeITAG in the light of the experience of its use since 2008, the major revisions in the complimentary DfT guidance now known as WeITAG 2, the Aqua book recently published by HMT and the forthcoming revision to the HMT Green book.</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
3 cont	<p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee would welcome further detail on how the Welsh Government meets the exportations. For example, we felt that a more specific commitment on the timetable of completion of the WelTAG consultation process and exactly when it is expected that the revised guidance will be issued and implemented.</p>	<p>This approach will ensure that the guidance sets out clearly a thorough process for the appraisal and evaluation of transport interventions, including qualitative and quantitative analysis where appropriate of social, environmental and economic impacts. The draft guidance will be produced by end of 2015. Consultation would follow in 2016.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The draft guidance will be produced by the end of 2015. A twelve week consultation will follow in the spring of 2016 with a view to implementing the revised guidance later in 2016 following consideration of the responses received to that consultation.</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>The WelTAG guidance is shortly due to go out for consultation.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>Welsh Government will issue a draft for public consultation in early Autumn 2016</p>	
4	<p>The Committee recommends the WG undertake a review to understand the factors leading to cost overruns on lower value projects and consider whether ECI or the principles of ECI</p>	<p>WG will undertake a review of lower value construction contracts to investigate opportunities for the optimum use of ECI principles. The review will be complete by the end of 2015 and the roads procedures guidance</p>	Complete

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
4 cont	<p>might improve performance on projects with a value of under £18m.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee would welcome an update on the outcome of the review of lower value contracts to investigate opportunities for the optimum use of ECI principle early in 2016.</p>	<p>updated where appropriate.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The review has concluded that there are benefits to early engagement of the supply chain and that lower value contracts could benefit from early engagement with contractors. As a result, guidance will be amended such that early contractor involvement procurement route should be considered for construction contracts independent of value.</p>	
5	<p>The Committee recommends the WG explores all possible avenues to improve engagement with statutory undertakers, including legislative tools and further engagement with the UK government. We ask the WG report back to the Committee in the autumn term on how its work in this area is progressing.</p>	<p>The mechanisms for scheme delivery are covered in New Roads and Streetworks Act (NRSWA) 1991 and Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004. The major obstacle to successful co-ordination is the failure of some highway authorities to notice their own works. This is being addressed and WG encourages all local highway authorities to notice their own works and this is written into the draft streetworks strategy. WG will write to all local highway authorities to instruct them to do this in compliance with the TMA by the end of September. All works are discussed at the regional co-ordination meetings, which are generally well attended. WG will investigate other tools to enhance the co-ordination of all works, e.g., websites. For major projects, the utilities have 5 year plans which are available and they already submit forward planning notices which identify these schemes in the co-ordination mechanism. In future and where possible WG still submit forward planning notices to alert utilities to proposed schemes. The committee will be provided with a report on progress in the autumn.</p>	Complete

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
5 cont	<p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee noted that you will provide a further update later in the autumn on the street work's strategy which is scheduled to be published in 2015. The response did not address the Committee's concern about the pace of development of the strategy and remains unclear as to the extent to which the draft strategy covers issues relevant to major projects on the trunk road network.</p>	<p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The pace of development of the Street Works Strategy has been proportionate to the task of engaging stakeholders and identifying all the issues that need to be addressed. Those relevant to major projects are covered but there are others of equal importance.</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>The draft document is out to consultation and finished at the end of January 2016.</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>Street works consultation completed and currently we are assessing the responses. TRA are both working on IRIS.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>Launched the National Approach for Roads and Street works in Wales on 30 June 2016. By working in partnership with both statutory undertakers and highway authorities through the Welsh Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee (WHAUC), significant improvements can be made to the way road and street works are managed for the benefit of Wales within the existing legislative framework.</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
5 cont		<p>Improvements in 5 key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the planning, coordination and implementation of road and street works • the delivery of major road projects • communication with the public and business • skills and training • fostering within the road and street works community a culture of cooperation and continuous improvement. <p>The National Approach for Road and Street Works in Wales is of particular relevance to achieving the goals of a prosperous and resilient Wales set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>In carrying out works on the highway it is inevitable there will be some congestion. However there are still incidences of traffic disruption being greater than necessary due to over running or conflicting works. Addressing the 5 key areas for improvement will significantly improve the way road and street works are managed, ensuring that while communities have the services and well-managed infrastructure on which they rely.</p>	
6	We are concerned that the current balance between planned and reactive maintenance may not be appropriate, and note SWTRA's comments regarding the impact of financial	Officials continually monitor the condition of the motorway trunk road network through an annual programme of condition surveys and inspections. This data is used to identify sections of the network requiring	

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6 cont	<p>constraints on both the deterioration of the condition of the road network and the number of unplanned repairs leading to inefficient use of resources. The Committee recommends that the WG clearly identify the reasons for the recent deterioration of the trunk road network and publish a plan to address these issues and reverse the deterioration within a defined time period.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging that the Welsh Government has a programme in place to monitor the condition of the motorway and trunk road network, the Committee wishes to receive more detail on the reasons for the deterioration of the motorway and trunk road network and confirmation of expectations regarding the Welsh Government's plans to improve the condition of the network, for example, with regard to the annual programme of work. The Committee was disappointed to learn that the number of defects identified on trunk roads has dramatically increased and that your stated target of not more than eight per cent of the network length requiring maintenance since 2010 has not been met and wishes to receive your comments on this.</p>	<p>maintenance and establish the cause of the deterioration. This then informs the development of a forward programme of work to achieve the WG target of not more than 8% of its network length requiring maintenance. The maintenance programme of 2015/16 is currently underway and the programme for 2016/17 will be finalised by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>Whilst the target of not more than 8 per cent of the network requiring maintenance has not yet been achieved, there is evidence that the Welsh Government's strategy of close monitoring and targeted investment is effective. The percentage of trunk roads requiring maintenance fell from 14.3 per cent at the end of 2013 to 10.2 per cent at the end of 2014. It is too early to predict whether the additional £10M investment made by the Welsh Government in the current year will result in the target being met (the pavement condition model will be re-run at the end of the financial year once all maintenance work has been completed). However, the trend is now heading in the right direction.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>No change</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
7	<p>The Committee recommends that, in preparing the plan recommended above, the WG should set out clearly how it will achieve an effective balance between planned and reactive maintenance, and between major projects (new roads or major improvements) and maintenance of existing trunk roads, in the future.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee was unclear on how the Welsh Government's proposed action will address this recommendation and similarly the future prioritisation of expenditure is not clear. I have written to the Chair of the Enterprise and Business Committee asking that that Committee considers this issue as part of its budget scrutiny.</p>	<p>To assist with identifying and prioritising future road improvements, we will set out service standards and performance for the trunk and motorway network based round a corridor approach, and develop an assessment criteria that considers the whole life costs of the network. This work will be completed in early 2016.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The comparison of the relative contribution that maintenance compared to improvement can make to the required performance of a transport corridor provides a way of informing the balance of investment between each</p> <p>May 2016</p> <p>As above</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>A prioritisation programme of maintenance and improvement is in place across all asset types. Going forward a cross asset investment and cross asset prioritisation methodology will be developed to ensure the motorway and trunk road service is delivered at minimum whole life cost.</p>	
8	<p>The Committee recommends the WG ensure that there is consistency between the policies of the NW and SW TRA.</p>	<p>Officials are already working to develop all-Wales policies. The overriding aim is to have all-Wales documents with, where appropriate, local variations to cover specific matters by the end of 2016/17. All Wales</p>	

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8 cont		<p>service level agreements (SLAs) are being developed for use by the TRA in procuring the services of their suppliers. The SLAs will be in place by the start of the new financial year.</p> <p>January 2016</p> <p>This work is still in progress and is on track for introduction in April 2016.</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>A uniform service delivery agreement is in place that will now enable the comparison of costs on a like for like basis across regions and delivery organisations.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>As above, SDAs are in place – comparison exercises underway.</p>	
9	<p>The Committee recommends that, as part of the on-going review of TRA, WG should consider the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a single TRA and whether this could provide a more consistent approach to delivery of functions across Wales and improved vfm.</p>	<p>January 2016</p> <p>The TRA review considered the current two agent model be the optimum arrangement subject to the delivery of the cost savings £14M cost savings identified. The delivery of savings will be independently audited by cost consultants. If the performance of the current model does not meet expectations then further changes may be necessary.</p> <p>May 2016</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
9 cont		<p>As above – cost savings are to be delivered over the next two financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>As above – cost savings are to be delivered over the next two financial years 2016/17 and 2017/18</p>	
10	<p>The Committee recommends that accountability for the planning and delivery of minor improvement schemes via TRA and their local authority and other organisational partners be clarified and publicised so that it can be clearly understood by members of the public.</p>	<p>January 2016</p> <p>WG will provide information on accountability for the planning and delivery of minor improvement schemes on the trunk roads. This will include clarity on legislative responsibilities and delegations, details of agreements and of contractual arrangements. This information will be in place by the end of 2016.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>The information will be in place by the end of 2016.</p>	
11	<p>The Committee recommends that options for longer-term funding periods to allow better planning of maintenance works should be considered as part of the review of TRA. WG should monitor the effectiveness of the 5 year budget cycles used to fund Highways England.</p>	<p>Options for longer term funding periods include monitoring of the effectiveness of the Highways England funding model will be taken forward in parallel to the TRA review with the objective of implementing interim recommendations from 2016/17. Any final recommendations will be implemented from 2017/18 after sufficient time has passed to properly evaluate the outcome of the Highways England approach.</p>	Complete
12	<p>The Committee recommends the WG explores</p>	<p>WG approach to freight is to increase modal shift to rail</p>	Complete

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
12 cont	<p>alternative methods of funding, including private investment, in schemes which offer the use of priority or freight lanes in congested areas. Any schemes considered by the WG should be subject to robust business planning, including a full cost benefit analysis.</p>	<p>while recognising that road freight will retain a significant role. Investment in transport projects will take place where there is a sound and robust business case and will draw on a number of funding sources. Sources available are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WG transport department capital and revenue budgets WG central capital, in support of the Wales infrastructure investment plan. Joint funding with the wider Economy Dept or wider WG borrowing, including early access to borrowing. Innovative finance (including use of the non-profit distributing (NPD) investment model) European Structural Funds Other European funding sources, local government or other public sector bodies. Enabling local government borrowing UK Government funding for non-devolved areas of transport, research councils, universities, the transport catapult and others. Private Sector Investment, National Lottery and other sources of funding Income from land or commercial developments. The relevance of the various potential funding sources will vary depending on the nature of the specific scheme. 	
13	<p>The Committee recommends that the WG response to this report sets out clearly the steps remaining for the implementation of an effective information management tool for trunk road improvement projects, management of maintenance programmes and monitoring of network condition. This should include the timeframe for each step and the deadline for full implementation.</p>	<p>WG will work to host its current information management tool for major road projects on WG IRIS information management system. This will be available to trial and fully implement in the 2016/17 financial year.</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
13 cont	<p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee wishes to seek clarification as to why the Welsh Government partially accepted this recommendation.</p>	<p>January 2016</p> <p>This was only partially accepted because an effective information management tool for trunk road improvement projects has already been implemented. However, as previously indicated, this will now be brought into the Welsh Government's Integrated Road Information System (IRIS) along with all the other systems for managing and maintaining the motorway and trunk network.</p> <p>May 2016</p> <p>The IRIS system is substantially complete and is being used to manage the condition of existing assets and to store data for new highway projects. Developments and improvements to the system are ongoing.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>As above</p>	
14	<p>The Committee recommends the WG undertakes an industry wide capability and competence audit across the private and public sector in Wales and sets out its approach to addressing any gaps identified.</p>	<p>A detailed study of known construction companies in Wales is proposed to identify any construction skill gaps. A quantitative assessment of the capability of the sector across all trades will be reviewed against the announced projects in Wales. A labour forecasting tool will be developed in conjunction with CITB for major transport and energy related infrastructure. CFW is designed to improve the performance and sustainability of Welsh construction companies. Companies involved in major projects in Wales will be identified and supported to develop their capability, capacity and their skills base.</p>	Complete

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
14 cont	<p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee was pleased to learn of the commitment made to a study looking at the capability and competence of the construction sector. However, we would welcome confirmation that the study will also consider the wide range of non-construction specialist skills require for major projects and maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network. In addition, it was unclear as to whether the work described would also consider the public sector perspective referred to in the recommendation.</p>	<p>Construction apprentice opportunities can be supported through WG CFW partners, the CITB. This will be completed by summer 2016.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>We can confirm that the study will also consider a range of non-construction specialist skills and consider the public sector perspective.</p> <p>Jan 2016</p> <p>A strategy is being developed to formally capture the current skills gap within the industry and identify training needs to address this. The strategy will involve a co-ordinated approach between the construction sector, Schools, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Divisions within Welsh Government.</p> <p>It is anticipated that we will begin engagement with construction companies as well as higher and further education bodies in February 2016.</p> <p>In the meantime, we are continuing to support construction apprentices through working with our</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
14 cont		<p>supply chain on existing major transport projects in Wales. For example on the A465 projects we have seen our contractors set up National Skills Academies for Construction in partnership with CITB, as well as the establishment of the Technical Apprentice Academy. Social clauses are included in these construction contracts requiring contractors to make formal commitments to local employment, training and engagement with the local supply chain.</p>	
15	<p>The Committee recommends the WG develop a means of monitoring and reporting on performance in co-ordination, communication etc. of road works and management of incidents to allow the effectiveness of the approach taken to be understood. This should include regular reporting on the volume of complaints and publication of such data in the public domain.</p>	<p>Much of this data is collected as a matter of routine business. WG officials will make recommendations on the publication of the data in formats suitable for the public to digest. This data will be placed in the public domain. Configuration of the data will require some system additions and these will be designed this year with implementation in 2016/17.</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>Recommendation from the Street Works Strategy is that Wales participates in the nation Quality Performance Scorecard to measure the performance of co-ordination, and does not produce its own performance measures</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>Over 1/3 of Welsh Local Authorities are now submitting data to the nation Quality Performance Scorecard and the Welsh Government will continue to encourage participation and raise this at the next Welsh HAUC meeting in November.</p>	Complete

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
16	<p>The Committee recommends the WG continue to monitor the trial of screens on the M4 toll gates to Junction 35 to maintain the integrity of crash sites and mitigate against drivers trying to view the aftermath of a traffic accident and report back to the committee on their success.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee felt that it would be sufficient for its successor Committee to receive a single update following the conclusion of the anticipated three-year trial. In addition, the Committee would welcome an explanation of the policy change on undertaking a trial to erect screens on the A55 following accidents.</p>	<p>The trial will continue. Since the trial began there have been no incidents where the use of the screens would have provided benefit. A set of screens is also to be deployed to the A55 as a trial. The screens for the trial are on loan from Highways England and thus the length of the trial is dependent upon continued loan. Officials envisage the trial to be 3 years such that sufficient data can be gathered in terms of the number of times the screens have been deployed. A report will be sent back to the committee at the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The trial of incident screens has been an all-Wales trial, not specific to the A55. No policy change has driven this trial, more an operational opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of such devices which are being provided by Highways England. With regards to the A55, the trial will coincide with the implementation of emergency crossing points and hardened verges, all aimed to increase the resilience of the network.</p> <p>January 2016</p> <p>The trial is ongoing, the screens have been deployed 3 times, allowing the road to remain open whilst work on scene continues. Positive feedback from the Emergency services. Invaluable following fatal collision on the M4 at J28 (14/12/15) – without the incident screens, a full closure of the Motorway would have been required through an AM peak in Newport.</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
16 cont		 <p>M4 Collision 14/12/15</p>  <p>M4 Collision 22/11/15</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
16 cont		 <p>A40 Collision 06/11/15</p> <p>A set of screens have been provided for North Wales (primarily the A55) – but as yet no incident to warrant their use has occurred.</p> <p>April 2016</p> <p>As previous, incident screens are in place for both NMWTRA and SWTRA areas. However, no incidents have warranted their use since the last update. The extension of the South Wales Traffic Officer service to J49 of the M4 will likely increase the incident screen utilisation for incidents in the congested Swansea/Port Talbot area.</p> <p>August 2016</p> <p>Incident screens deployed once in south Wales since last update. There are now a total of 4 sets in south Wales ready for use (Ynysforan, Pencoed, Coryton and</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
16 cont		Malpas), 1 set in north (Alltami) and a further set due for deployment by September in Conwy.	
17	<p>The Committee recommends the WG engages with road users and their representative organisations to better understand and address concerns about communication and co-ordination of local road works and management of incidents.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The Committee wishes to receive further details on how the Welsh Government intends to engage further with road users and clarification on the implication that you intend putting in place arrangements to replicate the work of Transport Focus in England.</p>	<p>WG will engage further with road user representative organisations. We will also review the role of Transport Focus in England and monitor its outcomes and will implement them as appropriate, by the end of the current financial year.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p> <p>The traffic Wales service is being used to provide further proactive works information (A55 tunnel refurbishment as an example) and maintain an information line, email and twitter accounts to provide engagement with road users in line with the original recommendations. There will be on going engagement with users, passengers and characteristic groups through a number of means such as the Public Transport Users' Advisory Panel.</p>	Complete
18	<p>The Committee recommends that WG improves its communication and co-ordination with Highways England regarding road works and schemes that have an impact on both sides of the border and ensure information is made available to the public.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p>	<p>WG officials will develop existing relationships with the Dept of Transport and Highways England to ensure there is an effective communication FW to co-ordinate cross border transport matters. Relationships will be developed via existing forums at which WG presence has been restricted of late. Officials will also ensure attendance at specific area based cross border meetings and at scheme specific meetings. Any information will be placed in the public domain.</p> <p>Oct 2015</p>	Complete

No.	Recommendation	Status	Target date
18 cont	The Committee wishes to learn as to why the Welsh Government's presence at the exiting forums has been restricted of late.	Officials have been and will continue to meet with officials from other organisations to plan and coordinate works. Attendance at forums is assessed for relevance and value for money.	