

PAPER TO THE ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE TRANSPORT PLANNING AND FUNDING

Introduction

1. Following my Written Statement on transport planning and funding, the purpose of this paper is to set out written evidence for the Enterprise and Business Committee.

Background

2. My Written Statement of 17 January 2014, which is attached as an Annex to this evidence paper, set out my plans in relation to transport planning and funding.

Updates on new funding arrangements

3. Guidance and details of the application process for the new grants have now been issued:
 - Road Safety Grant guidance issued on 3 February 2014 and closing date for applications was 28 February 2014
 - Local Transport Fund guidance issued on 4 February 2014 and closing date for applications was 28 February 2014
 - Bus Service Support Grant guidance has been developed in conjunction with local authorities and it is intended that it should issue shortly.
4. Local authorities submitted the following applications:
 - Road Safety Grant (capital) – applications have been received from 20 local authorities for 68 individual projects totalling over £6m
 - Road Safety (revenue) – applications setting out proposals for the use of their revenue allocation received from all local authorities
 - Local Transport Fund – applications have been received from all local authorities with a total of 96 applications for schemes in total for schemes totalling over £34m
5. Bus Service Support Grant – it is intended that the new arrangements should reflect the support provided in the previous financial year

Update on transport planning

6. Work on the National Transport Plan is progressing, building on the priorities that have already been identified. My officials have been drawing together data from a range of sources to identify the key issues that the Plan needs to address. They are also making the link with Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process.
7. Guidance for local authorities in exercising their statutory duties in relation to transport planning is being prepared for consultation.

Next steps

8. I will keep the Committee updated on progress.

**PAPER TO THE ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE
TRANSPORT PLANNING AND FUNDING**

Annex

Written Statement - Transport Planning and Funding

Edwina Hart, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport

I have always recognised the important role transport plays to serve the needs of businesses, people and communities and the need for an efficient and effective transport planning and delivery arrangement to take forward this Government's priorities.

In my discussions with business groups, transport groups and local government representatives, concern has been expressed about the current planning and delivery arrangements. This concern extended to the capacity, both within Welsh Government and in other bodies, to cope with transformational projects on the scale of Metro and to manage possible significant additional responsibilities in relation to rail.

The need to change the way we plan and deliver transport services was evidenced in the recommendations of the High Level Review of Highways and Transport Services document jointly published by Welsh Government and local government last year and in the 2009 report by the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Economy and Transport. The need for change is supported by the evidence from Dr Elizabeth Haywood in her report on the Dee Region Cross-Border Report published last year.

I have considered this evidence and have concluded that change is needed to the way we plan and deliver transport services and improvements. Our focus must be to drive better value for money, manage the challenge of reducing budgets and bring greater benefit from our future transport investments in Wales.

I am therefore proposing to introduce changes to the way we undertake transport planning and target our investments.

I have already confirmed my intention not to review the Wales Transport Strategy and to publish a new National Transport Plan by end of March 2015. It is my intention to re-define the National Transport Plan to include regional priorities and establish a transport framework that integrates local, regional and national transport planning.

Identifying regional priorities for transport is clearly still important and I will be looking to the City Region Boards to highlight the priorities in their areas and to provide the governance structure that will advise me as the new Transport Plan takes shape.

I will shortly be issuing guidance to local transport authorities on meeting their statutory duty in relation to transport planning.

We will have one transport plan for Wales and our focus will be on delivering improvements rather than on a long drawn out planning process.

As from April this year, the Regional Transport Consortia Grant and Regional Transport Services Grant managed by the Regional Transport Consortia, will be replaced by a Road Safety Grant, Local Transport Fund and Bus Services Support

PAPER TO THE ENTERPRISE AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE TRANSPORT PLANNING AND FUNDING

Grant. These will be allocated directly to local authorities and some on a competitive basis. Local authorities will be able to work collaboratively to submit joint applications.

It is also my intention to continue to review ways of further improvements to transport planning and delivery and I will be looking to the City Region Boards and the Ministerial Task Force for North Wales Transport to assist with this work.