

Transport Background Paper

Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.

January 2020

Transport Background Paper

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Carmarthenshire County Council is in the process of preparing the Revised Local Development Plan (LDP) for its area (excluding that part contained within the Brecon Beacons National Park). Once finalised (adopted), the Revised LDP will supersede the current adopted LDP with decisions on planning permissions primarily based on its content.

1.2 The LDP will set out a vision of how land uses will be distributed, to achieve sustainable development and support the goals set out in the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. It is the role of Development Management to deliver that vision; guiding public and private investment to suitable locations using national and local policies to provide the jobs, homes and infrastructure required to meet existing and future needs.

1.3 The purpose of this Transport Background Paper is to provide supporting information for the Revised LDP, outlining the issues and challenges that will need to be addressed as well as possible policy approaches to be incorporated in the plan. It is also intended to provide an early opportunity for stakeholders and the public, through formal consultation channels, to have input to the plan.

1.4 This Transport Background Paper has been compiled using evidence sources available from current and historic studies and reflects comments received from the Welsh Government's Network Management Division (as highway authority for the trunk road and motorways in Wales) on the candidate sites considered for inclusion in the Revised LDP.

1.5 This Transport Background Paper will be updated as the development process for the LDP progresses.

1.6 The structure of this Transport Background Paper is as follows:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction.
- Chapter 2 – Background Context.
- Chapter 3 – Key Development Areas and Requirements.
- Chapter 4 – Conclusions and Next Steps.

2. Background Context

Carmarthenshire County Council

2.1 With an extensive 3,487 kilometres road network, the second longest in Wales, Carmarthenshire has the third highest level of traffic flow in Wales. Carmarthenshire is also a very important freight route providing access to and from the ports in West Wales with the A48 and A40 west of Carmarthen forming part of the Trans European Network. Within the County significant focus has been applied to local rural connectivity and accessibility to employment through bus routes improvements and walking and cycling strategies. Carmarthenshire has also worked hard with key rail stakeholders to improve the attractiveness of services and develop better stations, Park and Ride facilities and service timetables. Transportation services and infrastructure are the prime enablers that underpins other sectors of the economy. Strategic and local infrastructure has been developed to promote economic growth and activity by building better connections.

2.2 As set out in the Local Transport Plan, there are four principles that Carmarthenshire adopts in its transport infrastructure developments:

- Improve access between key settlements and employment sites,
- Enhance international connectivity,
- Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts from transport; and
- Increase safety and security.

2.3 Transport and infrastructure investment in Carmarthenshire to date is there for all to see and enjoy. Increased collaboration across the Swansea Bay City Region once again has facilitated further investment in six key infrastructure projects within the County:

- Cross Hands Economic Link Road – derived from the transformational project at the Cross Hands Growth Zone, a 3-phased transport project opening up access to key strategic employment sites and the wider Cross Hands area including Penygroes and the Gwendraeth Valley.
- Carmarthen West Link Road – the link road traverses from Travellers Rest on the A40 into the new academic and media quarter at College Road, Carmarthen Town, opening up access to the forthcoming S4C investment.
- Ammanford – improvements to the Tir Y Dail Lane / A483 trunk road junction in Ammanford to relieve traffic pressures in the town and opening up the wider Ammanford road network and town centre.
- Llandeilo By-pass – a long awaited by-pass for the Towy Valley town of Llandeilo is scheduled in the Welsh Government Capital Programme to start within the next FIVE years and will significantly improve environmental well-being in the town.
- Rural Connectivity – connectivity to the County's market towns and rural conurbations is critical to the lifeblood of Carmarthenshire. Collaboration with Traveline Cymru and other key stakeholders will ensure the continuation of

Bwcabus – the Transportation Model for Rural Wales in Carmarthenshire providing access into neighbouring Powys and Ceredigion.

2.4 Walking and Cycling Linkages – as part of the obligations under the Active Travel Act a series of walking and cycling linkages to offer sustainable travel options to access employment sites, schools and tourism attractions including the developing Tywi Valley Path. Whilst the above projects provide significant benefits, both in terms of addressing existing constraints and facilitating economic growth and activity, further improvements will be required to appropriately accommodate Carmarthenshire County Council's Revised LDP.

2.5 Carmarthenshire County Council have developed a Highway Design Guide setting out its expectations for new development in the County. The Highway Design Guide provides guidance on preparing transport proposals and providing transport infrastructure and services to support new development. It also sets out the associated requirements during planning and construction.

2.6 Planning submissions should be accompanied by appropriate plans and information to ensure recommendations on the acceptability of a development from a transport perspective is based on a robust evidence base. Further information on key design considerations and supporting information requirements, including Transport Assessments and requirements to consult with the Welsh Government's South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA), is provided in the Highway Design Guide.

2.7 A Transport Assessment or Transport Statement may be required to review the potential impact of the scheme on the surrounding transportation network. Reference should be made to the Carmarthenshire County Council document: 'Transport Assessment Guidance for Developments in Carmarthenshire', in addition to TAN 18.

2.8 Carmarthenshire County Council's 'Transport Assessment Guidance for Developments in Carmarthenshire' and Annex D of TAN 18 provide guidance on the required structure and content of both Transport Assessments and Transport Statements. They also set out the typical thresholds for developments which require assessment. Whilst Carmarthenshire County Council will confirm whether a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement is appropriate for a new development on a case by case basis, in addition to specifying the scope of the assessments required, the following chapter provides initial guidance on the key strategic issues that should be considered.

Swansea Bay City Region

2.9 Carmarthenshire County Council is one of the four regional Local Authorities leading the Swansea Bay City Deal. The Swansea Bay City deal has identified £1.3 billion investment in 11 major projects across the region, with an intention to boost the regional economy by £1.8 billion through the creation of 10,000 new jobs.

2.10 Alongside the Swansea Bay City Deal, Carmarthenshire County Council are collaborating with the other three Local Authorities in the region to deliver what is being termed as the South West Wales METRO. The South West Wales METRO is a set of multi modal infrastructure and service enhancements to improve transport provision

and integration across the region, facilitating a shift to sustainable modes of travel. Through implementation of the South West Wales METRO, it is intended new developments will be required to contribute towards the scheme, increasing inward investment into Carmarthenshire.

2.11 In order to assist in assessing and quantifying the impacts of new proposed developments and wider schemes (inclusive of the South West Wales METRO), a new regional multi-modal transport model is being developed by Transport for Wales for the south-west Wales region. Carmarthenshire County Council support development of the model, which will also assist in identifying transport improvements necessary to facilitate / unlock future development.

3. Key Development Areas - Transport Issues and Opportunities, Available Assessment Tools and Potential Improvements Schemes

3.1 The main urban centres of the County include Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford / Cross Hands. Carmarthen due to its central geographic location typically serves the needs of the County's rural hinterland as well as the wider region in aspects such as retailing. Both Llanelli and Ammanford / Cross Hands have a rich industrial heritage but remain important contributors to their wider communities acting as focal points for employment and homes.

3.2 Carmarthen Town is confirmed as one of three LDP 'Growth Areas' alongside Ammanford / Cross Hands and Llanelli within the settlement hierarchy for Carmarthenshire.

3.3 With over 60% of Carmarthenshire's population living in rural areas, the Council have unveiled aspirations to regenerate its rural communities; focusing on the following 10 Rural Market Towns:

- Llandovery
- Llandeilo
- Cwmamman
- Newcastle Emlyn
- Llanybydder
- St Clears
- Laugharne
- Whittland
- Kidwelly; and
- Cross Hands

3.4 The rural town initiative will ensure the selected towns are more economically, socially, environmentally and culturally sustainable, whilst also ensuring a co-ordinated approach to developing transport provision strategically across the county.

3.5 This chapter provides a transportation overview for the main urban centres of the County and is structured as follows:

- Transport Issues and Opportunities,
- Potential Improvement Schemes; and
- Available Assessment Tools.

3.6 The information provided within this chapter outlines Carmarthenshire County Council's initial expectations in terms of the strategic issues that need to be considered and addressed when developing proposals for allocations within the County's main urban centres / growth areas. Local issues will need to be considered as individual proposals are developed further and where specified the cumulative impact of development clusters will need to be considered to ensure appropriate mitigation and infrastructure can be secured.

Llanelli

3.7 Traffic conditions in Llanelli are not dissimilar to those experienced in other large towns of similar regional significance. Traffic flows freely during large periods of the day but during peak periods traffic volumes spike leading to congestion on key routes and junctions. The town centre along with its A484 and A476 approaches form part of the Llanelli Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

3.8 The A4138 and A484 corridors form the spine of the road network within Llanelli and both these corridors experience peak period congestion; particularly around the town centre, the A484 Sandy Road, the Trostre and Parc Pemberton Retail Parks and around Junction 48 of the M4. The following junctions / links have been identified as transportation pinch points:

- A4138 Pontarddulais Road and M4 Junction 48,
- A4138 Talyclun Traffic Signals,
- A4138 Half Way and Morrisons Traffic Signals,
- A4138 / A484 Trostre Roundabout,
- A484 Gelli Onn and Thomas Street Traffic Signals,
- A484 Sandy Roundabout; and the
- A484 Sandy Road / Is-coed Road Traffic Signals.

3.9 Options to improve the A484 and A4138 have recently been developed with work progressing to determine preferred schemes. The improvements aim to address existing capacity constraints whilst also facilitating economic growth within Llanelli and its immediate surroundings. The impact of LDP developments on key junctions will need to be considered both on an individual and cumulative basis; with contributions being sought towards improvements as required.

3.10 Carmarthenshire County Council's Highways department hold a series of traffic modelling tools that can be made available (subject to agreement) when assessing a development's impact within the Llanelli area. These include:

- Llanelli Town SATURN Model,
- A4138 Microsimulation and Junction Models
 - A4138 Talyclun to J.48
 - Halfway Signals / Morrisons Signals to Trostre Roundabout; and
- A484 Microsimulation and Junction Models – Sandy Roundabout, Is-coed Road Traffic Signals and Denham Avenue Mini Roundabout

3.11 Potential Improvement Schemes (to which contributions may be required) include:

- Sandy Road Corridor Improvements (Short and Long Term Measures),
- Halfway and Morrisons Signal Improvements,
- Signalisation of the Trostre Roundabout,
- South West Wales Metro (forthcoming),
- Additional A4138 junction improvements (to be determined),
- Llanelli Active Travel Masterplan (including INMs) ; and
- Public Transport service and Infrastructure enhancements.

Ammanford / Amman Valley / Tycroes

3.12 The main roads leading to and running through the centre of Ammanford are the A483 trunk road and the A474. The A483 links the M4 at Pont Abraham to the A40 at Llandeilo. It is a strategically important route forming part of the Swansea to Manchester trunk road and linking Mid-Wales with the M4 in the south. It runs in a north-easterly direction from Tycroes, through the centre of Ammanford, where, at the junction with High Street it heads in a northerly direction towards Llandybie.

3.13 The A474 connects Ammanford with the A4069 at Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen in the west and links Ammanford with Neath via Pontardawe in the south-west. It starts at the recently constructed Wind Street / Tir y Dail Lane Roundabout with the A483 and runs in a south-easterly direction initially to the Tesco Supermarket Roundabout. It then turns runs in a north-easterly direction towards Glanamau.

3.14 The A483 trunk road carries the vast majority of traffic entering and exiting Ammanford. Whilst peak flows along the A483 fall within the expected flow threshold for a road of this type, the following junctions have traditionally experienced congestion at peak times and represented significant highway constraints with regards to future development within the town:

- A483 Wind Street / Tir y Dail Lane / A474 Inner Relief Road Junction – converted from a signalised junction to a roundabout in 2019; and
- The Square (High Street / A483 College Road / A483 Wind Street) – existing signalised junction.

3.15 Strategically, these junctions are recognised as the most important in Ammanford; with these junctions controlling a significant proportion of traffic movements in the town. The recent improvements to the Tir y Dail Lane Roundabout on the A483 appear to have significantly improved traffic conditions within Ammanford. Nevertheless, further analysis is required to quantify the longer-term benefits accrued and whether further intervention measures are required. Further intervention measures would include Phase 2 of the Ammanford Distributor Road with various route options (between Ammanford, Tycroes and Coopers Corner) having been considered at a high level as part of the 2014 / 2015 Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Assessment Report.

3.16 Carmarthenshire County Council's Highways department hold a series of traffic modelling tools that can be made available (subject to agreement and required updates) when assessing a development's impact within the Ammanford, Amman Valley and Tycroes areas. These include:

- Ammanford Town SATURN Model (which will need to be updated to reflect recent highway network improvements); and
- Ammanford Town Junction Models for the A483 and A474.

3.17 Due to known environmental, cost and funding challenges, delivering Phase 2 of the Ammanford Distributor Road would be challenging within the plan period. Consequently, on-line improvements are likely to be required along the A483 and A474 to facilitate development within Ammanford and surrounding areas. Walking and Cycling Linkages should also be considered.

3.18 A Masterplan for Active Travel improvements in and around Ammanford is being progressed, this includes localised connectivity improvements, as well a scheme to connect Ammanford with Cross Hands and in doing so connecting the Upper Amman Valley in the North (via the Amman Valley Cycleway) with the Gwendraeth Valley and Llanelli in South via the Swiss Valley Cyclepath.

A48 Cross Hands

3.19 The settlement of Cross Hands occupies a nodal location on the A48 which represents the main transport route through South West Wales.

3.20 The A48 intersects the A476 at the Cross Hands Roundabout and runs along an east–west alignment, linking Cross Hands with Carmarthen and Swansea. The A476 runs along a north–south alignment linking Cross Hands with Llandeilo and Llanelli. The Cross Hands Business Park and Services (including Aldi) are also accessed from the Cross Hands Roundabout.

3.21 Located to the south of the Cross Hands Roundabout is the A48 ‘Diamond’ junction. The Cross Hands Economic Link Road (ELR) extends from the A48 ‘Diamond’ junction to the A476 at a point approximately 1.2km to the north east of Gorslas. The link road is being delivered in three phases:

- Phase 1a links the A48 ‘Diamond’ junction to Cross Hands Business Park (Heol Parc Mawr),
- Phase 1b links Cross Hands Business Park (Heol Parc Mawr) to Black Lion Road; and
- Phase 2 will link Black Lion Road to the A476 north of Gorslas (before the junction with the B4297 Gate Road). It crosses the B4556 Norton Road in proximity to the Penygroes Concrete Products Works and residential properties in the vicinity.

3.22 Phases 1a and 1b of the ELR have already been constructed and are currently operational. Phase 2 of the ELR has obtained planning approval and is currently under construction.

3.23 The Cross Hands ELR was developed in line the Welsh Government’s WelTAG. The ELR was granted approval and funding on the basis that it would address existing transport constraints (congestion and safety) and would facilitate economic growth within the Cross Hands area. Once completed, the ELR is forecast to provide the following transport related benefits:

- Improve access to the proposed East Strategic Employment Site (ESES) and other proposed economic developments within Cross Hands and the surrounding area,

- Relieve congestion and improve safety on the A48 Cross Hands Roundabout which is on a Trans-European Route,
- Relieve congestion and improve safety on the A476 Gorslas “six-ways” junction,
- Improve journey time reliability through the A48 Cross Hands Roundabout and the A476 Gorslas “six-ways” junction,
- Improve safety on the A476 Llandeilo Road as part of the ‘Safer Routes in Communities’ programme,
- Improve noise and air quality on the A476 Llandeilo Road; and
- Support the delivery of the overarching objectives of the Regional Transport Plan (RTP).

3.24 The Welsh Government have stipulated that large sites within the Cross Hands area can only come forward in conjunction with a substantial highway infrastructure improvement scheme, as such there is an expectation that developments will contribute towards such improvements

3.25 Carmarthenshire County Council’s Highways department hold a series of traffic modelling tools that can be made available (subject to agreement) when assessing a development’s impact within the Cross Hands area. These include:

- Cross Hands (A48 / A476) SATURN Model; and
- A48 and A476 Junction Models.

3.26 Potential Improvement Schemes (to which contributions may be required) include:

- Further phases of the ELR; connecting to the Gwendraeth Valley in the west,
- A476 Link and Junction Improvements,
- Cross Hands Roundabout capacity and safety improvements
- Walking and Cycling Linkages,
- Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure; and
- Passenger Transport enhancements

Carmarthen / Johnstown / Pensarn

3.27 The County town of Carmarthen is located on the River Towy in the heart of Carmarthenshire. The town is strategically located at the junctions of the A48, A484 and A40 and is served by the London to Fishguard rail link.

3.28 Carmarthen functions as a gateway to West Wales and its ports whilst also serving the needs of the County's rural hinterland. Consequently, the routes serving the town and its immediate surroundings, particularly Pensarn and Johnstown, experience significant peak period congestion. Congestion along the trunk roads serving Carmarthen is significantly worse during the school holiday periods with the Pensarn Roundabout, A40 B&Q Roundabout and A40 Slips at Johnstown identified as pinch points.

3.29 The Carmarthen Western Link Road has now officially opened (2019) and provides a new link between Carmarthen and the A40 West. The road connects the A40 at Travellers Rest with College Road, providing direct access to the trunk road network for key employment sites at St David's Park, Hywel Dda Health Board's Hafan Derwen and the University of Wales Trinity St David's Carmarthen Campus. It also serves the new S4C headquarters 'Yr Egin', a major project for the Swansea Bay City Region. Given the road has been open for less than a year, the wider benefits of this new highway infrastructure have not yet been realised or quantified.

3.30 Carmarthenshire County Council's Highways department hold a series of traffic modelling tools that can be made available (subject to agreement) when assessing a development's impact within the Carmarthen area. These include:

- Carmarthen Town SATURN Model; and
- Carmarthen Town, Johnstown and Pensarn Junction Models (available across various locations).

3.31 Potential Improvement Schemes / Locations (to which contributions may be required) include:

- Carmarthen Western Link Road,
- Allt y Knap Road / Llansteffan Road Priority Junction,
- Johnstown Slip Roads,
- Pensarn Roundabout and A48 Slips,
- Walking and Cycling Linkages,
- Electric Charging Infrastructure; and
- Public transport Improvements.

4. Conclusions and Next Steps

4.1 This Transport Background Paper provides supporting information for the Revised LDP, outlining the issues and challenges that will need to be addressed as well as possible policy approaches to be incorporated in the plan. It has been compiled using evidence sources available from current and historic studies and reflects comments received from the Welsh Government's Network Management Division (as highway authority for the trunk road and motorways in Wales) on the candidate sites considered for inclusion in the Revised LDP.

4.2 This Transport Background Paper will be updated as the development process for the LDP progresses with further information to be provided on the following elements:

- Policy Considerations,
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (development grouping, cumulative impacts and mitigation),
- Pre-Application Consultation,
- Evidence Based Submissions,
- Travel Planning / Demand Management,
- Planning Conditions and Statutory Agreements; and
- Commuted Sums.