

Report To: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 25th October 2012

Lead Member / Officer: Stuart Davies, Joint Head of Highways and Infrastructure

Report Author: Tim Towers, Section Manager (Network Services)

Title: Major Transport Infrastructure Work

1. What is the report about?

This report is intended for information only.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

This report is intended to inform Members of the mechanism and potential funding streams for large scale infrastructure investment within Denbighshire.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members note the Council's involvement in strategic infrastructure development.

4. Report details.

4.1.1 The TAIH North Wales Regional Transport Plan (RTP) is the mechanism for the identification, development and delivery of major transport infrastructure schemes. It came into being in 2009 and replaced the previous individual Local Transport Plans which local authorities had prepared. TAIH is a joint transport board made up of the six North Wales local authorities. On this body Denbighshire is represented by the Lead Member for Public Realm and the Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Committee.

The RTP has a number of transport policy objectives and priorities which align with the objectives in the Wales Transport Strategy. Whilst these objectives and priorities are fairly broad-ranging, they put particular emphasis around greater use of passenger transport, walking and cycling as modes of transport.

Associated with the RTP is annual capital funding from the Welsh Government which is termed Regional Transport Consortia Grant (RTCG). TAIH collates bids for RTCG from the six authorities as part of an annual bidding process, together with bids for Region-wide

projects. The latter are usually associated with Passenger Transport initiatives. All projects receiving RTCG must be in the RTP programme. Each project within the programme has been independently assessed to check its fit with the RTP transport policy objectives and priorities. If projects don't meet fit with the transport policy then they are not included within the programme.

- 4.1.2 Typically, around £4.5 million of RTCG is available for the TAITH region per annum, although it is probable that this figure might reduce to less than £4.0 million within the next year or two.

Denbighshire has typically been awarded between £600k and £900k per annum since the RTP has been in place. Examples of Denbighshire projects that have been funded in from the RTCG in recent years are:

Prestatyn Bus Station
Rhyl Bus Station
Prestatyn Railway Station Car Park
Dee Valley Cycle Path
Ruthin Cycle routes

Clearly, the levels of funding available to individual authorities through the RTCG are not sufficient to fund major transport projects such as relief roads (by-passes). The other issue is that relief road schemes don't tend to score particularly highly when assessed for their fit against transport policy objectives.

There are some recent examples of where the Welsh Government has funded relief road projects. This is because the projects have been deemed to be nationally important, and also partially because the projects were at such a stage of development that they had already been committed to.

7. What consultations have been carried out?

The Regional Transport was extensively consulted upon with a wide range of stakeholders during its development. This included the submission of papers to the former Environment Scrutiny Committee on two separate occasions.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Taith is an important source of funds for the Council and may become more so in the future as regional working increases. It is important that members understand its role and how Denbighshire can maximise the benefit of its involvement.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Any projects funded by the Regional Transport Consortia Grant must be subject to a robust project management methodology to ensure any risks associated with an individual project are managed appropriately. Such risks will thus be managed on a project specific basis.