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# Formative evaluation of EDRF-funded A40 Road Operation

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# Formative evaluation of ERDF-funded Road Operation: A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross Improvements

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## **Glossary**

### **ERDF**

European Regional Development Funding

### **CCT**

Cross-Cutting Themes

### **WEFO**

Welsh European Funding Office

### **TEN-T**

Trans-European Transport Network

### **NDF**

National Development Framework

### **TRFP**

Trunk Road Forward Programme

### **WeITAG**

Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance

### **ECI**

Early Contractor Involvement

### **PLO**

Public Liaison Officer

### **NTFP**

National Transport Finance Plan

### **OP**

Operational Programme

### **COVID-19**

Coronavirus

### **PRoWs**

Public Rights of Way

**PMA**s

Private Means of Access

# 1. Introduction

This report provides a formative evaluation of new highway on the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin and Redstone Cross in Mid and South West Wales (referred to in this report as the ‘operation’), which was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Welsh Government as part of the 2014-20 European Structural Funds Programme.

## 1.1. About the ERDF funded road operations

ERDF funding was secured by the Welsh Government as part of the 2014-20 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Operational Programme (OP) <sup>[footnote 1]</sup> to deliver improvements to two arterial roads in Wales: the A55 and the A40.

The strategic rationale for ERDF investment is set out in the OP. This contains an objective to invest in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) <sup>[footnote 2]</sup>, a planned network of roads (and other infrastructure) which aims to “develop an integrated multimodal transport network allowing people and goods to move quickly and easily across the EU. This is intended to support the development of the internal market and reinforce economic and social cohesion” <sup>[footnote 3]</sup>.

The OP specifically highlighted investment on the A40, noting a preference for a small number of significant schemes in order to maximise impact. The core investment rationale set out in the OP is economic: Specific Objective 4.1 states that investments should aim to mitigate peripherality and “will need to demonstrate that they are addressing genuine bottlenecks in terms of access to employment or that they are unlocking opportunities for economic growth at a regional level rather than just affecting sub regional or local choices for business locations. There should be an expectation that investment will leverage additional private sector investments (e.g., through inward investment)” <sup>[footnote 4]</sup>. Operations are also expected to make a positive contribution to sustainable travel options, including through the provision of cycleways, footpaths, etc. in addition to the improved highway. The impacts of the scheme are considered in Chapter 7.

In addition to the economic benefits, the operations were expected to contribute to a broader range of environmental, transport and social benefits locally.

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### Footnotes

[1] [West Wales and the Valleys: European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\) operational programme 2014 to 2020 summary](#)

[2] The A40 forms part of the E30 TEN-T route, extending from Ireland to Russia

[3] [Trans-European Transport Network \(TEN-T\) – a quick guide \(senedd.wales\)](#)

[4] [West Wales and the Valleys: European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\) operational programme 2014 to 2020 summary](#)

## 1.2. Introducing the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross Improvements operation

Contributing to the OP priority for investment in the A40, the Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross Improvements scheme is located between Carmarthen and Haverfordwest, as shown in Figure 1.1. It comprises the construction of 4.3km of new highway to the north of the village of Llanddewi Velfrey and 1.8km of improvements between Redstone Cross and Penblewin Roundabout. In total this operation will provide 6.1km of improved highways including additional overtaking opportunities to improve journey reliability and road safety.

The Redstone Cross scheme was originally part of a suite of schemes to be delivered along the A40. However, it became apparent that the works would not be able to be delivered in their entirety within the ERDF funding allocation period. As a result, the Welsh Government decided to drop the overall suite of schemes, and incorporate the Redstone Cross scheme in the existing A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin operation. It was deemed appropriate for the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin operation to incorporate the Redstone Cross improvement works due to their close proximity and alignment in rationale and objectives.

**Figure 1.1: Map of A40 between Llanddewi Velfrey and Redstone Cross**



Source: Produced by SQW 2019. Licence 100030994. Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] 2020.

The total costs of the combined A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation were reprofiled between September 2022 and September 2023. The approved total project costs were £52.884m, comprising £45.462m of ERDF funding and £7.421m from the Welsh Government. Total eligible project costs were £52.290m, comprising £45.462m of ERDF funding and £6.828m from the Welsh Government. The revised figures represented a 86.94% intervention rate. The scheme end date was also extended to December 2023. By the end of December 2023, total eligible expenditure was £50.899m, which was made up of £44.254m of ERDF grant and £8.630m of Welsh Government match funding. Further detail on expenditure is provided in Chapter 4.

### **1.3. Operation objectives and key indicators**

The OP defined a series of result and output indicators which operations funded by ERDF were expected to achieve. In the case of the Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation, these were:

- the ERDF Result Indicator was a 5-10% increase in average speed along the A40 (from a new baseline average of 41mph in 2016 <sup>[footnote 5]</sup>)
- the ERDF Output Indicators were:
  - total length of reconstructed or upgraded roads (including TEN-T): 6.1km
  - footpath or cycleway created or reconstructed: 1km

By December 2023, one output was claimed as achieved (1km of footpath or cycleway) and one output was partially achieved (4.5km of reconstructed or upgraded roads). From January 2024, the scheme is 'non-functioning', which means that no further ERDF funding can be claimed. However, work on the scheme will continue, with funding from Welsh Government, to realise the ERDF investment. In addition, to allow for the full outputs to be reported to WEFO, the operation has been extended to December 2024.

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#### Footnotes

[5] The original baseline was calculated using Trafficmaster data. The new baseline has been calculated using Inrix data as Trafficmaster data is no longer available. Further information on this can be found in Chapter 7.

The objectives of the operation, taken from the WeITAG Study <sup>[footnote 6]</sup>, were to:

- enhance network resilience and improve accessibility along the east-west transport corridor to key employment, community and tourism destinations
- improve prosperity and provide better access to the county town of Haverfordwest, the Haven Enterprise Zone and the West Wales ports at Fishguard, Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock
- reduce community severance and provide health and amenity benefits
- reduce the number and severity of collisions
- promote active travel by cycling, horse riding and walking to provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles
- deliver a scheme that promotes social inclusion and integrates with the local transport network to better connect local communities to key transport hubs
- deliver a project that is sustainable in a globally responsible Wales, taking steps to reduce or offset waste and carbon
- give due consideration to the impact of transport on the environment and provide enhancement when practicable

#### **1.4. Cross-cutting themes**

All operations funded through ERDF must also integrate a series of Cross-Cutting Themes (CCT) into their design and delivery, consistent with the 2015 Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. These relate to sustainable development, tackling poverty and social inclusion, and equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming and the Welsh language. The business case set out a series of actions that would be taken to integrate the CCT within the delivery of the operation.

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#### Footnotes

[6] Welsh Government (2018) A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin Improvements WeITAG Stage 1 Report.

## 1.5. Report structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the evaluation methodology
- Chapter 3 sets out the context for the operation. It describes in greater detail the rationale for the scheme, discusses the wider economic, environmental and transport policy context in which it has been delivered and assesses the extent to which has been aligned to relevant strategic objectives
- Chapter 4 outlines the progress that has been made in delivery, considering timescales, expenditure and output delivery
- Chapter 5 considers the process of delivering the operation. This includes the effectiveness of project management arrangements, the process of monitoring outputs and the arrangements for communications and stakeholder consultation and engagement
- Chapter 6 looks at the delivery of the cross-cutting themes, which were an important aspect of the operation
- Chapter 7 considers the impacts that have been realised, or are expected to be realised, and how these compare with those anticipated in the original business case
- finally, Chapter 8 sets out conclusions and recommendations for future schemes

## 2. Evaluation methodology

### 2.1. Evaluation aims and objectives

In May 2020, SQW was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the operation. This has taken place alongside an evaluation of a second ERDF-funded road operation (improvements to the A55 between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion in North Wales), which has reported separately <sup>[footnote 7]</sup>.

The evaluation aims to assess the delivery of each operation against the indicators set out in the respective business plan and provide recommendations for future, similar activity. As the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation is still under construction, this report provides a formative evaluation rather than a final evaluation of the scheme. In line with this, the objectives of the formative evaluation are to:

- examine the continuing contribution of the operation with Welsh Government, WEFO and regional strategies and policies
- provide an interim assessment of the efficiency of the programme management and monitoring processes and identify how these may be improved for future, similar programmes
- assess the progress of the operation in meeting the specific aims and targets set in relation to the CCT
- assess the progress of the operation in meeting the specific aims and indicator targets set out in the relevant business plans (not including the average speed indicator)
- assess to what extent the operation is likely to achieve the outcomes it sought to achieve (as well as any extra outcomes or unintended consequences)
- assess whether the wider social, environmental, and economic outcomes and impacts of the operation are likely to be realised in the future (where feasible)
- identify any key lessons relevant to this and future operations to achieve the Welsh Government's strategic aims, especially lessons to take the project forward

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#### Footnotes

[7] The evaluation commission also included evaluation of a third road operation – improvements to A55 Junctions 15 and 16 at Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr. However, this operation was withdrawn from the ERDF programme in September 2021, pending the outcomes of the Welsh Government's Roads Review (discussed further in Chapter 3).

## 2.2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation has progressed through three phases of research. These involved an initial scoping phase in summer 2020, which led to the development of a logic model and evaluation plan; an interim evaluation which reported in January 2022 <sup>[footnote 8]</sup>; and the final evaluation phase, which involved a final evaluation of the A55 between Abergwyngregyn and Tai'r Meibion operation and a formative evaluation of the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation. There were four recommendations for the operations that were suggested in the interim evaluation and, where there is evidence that these have been addressed, this is mentioned later in the report.

Three research activities were undertaken at interim and formative evaluation stage. These were:

- a desk-based review of policy/strategy documents, including national strategies, local and regional strategies and documents relating to key policy issues (e.g., climate change/ net zero and the changing approach to transport strategy) and post-COVID-19 recovery
- stakeholder consultations (48 in total; 31 at interim evaluation stage and, building on this, 17 at formative stage <sup>[footnote 9]</sup>). These took the form of bilateral semi-structured interviews and covered the progress and impact of the scheme. Consultees included representatives from the project delivery teams (22), regional representatives from the Welsh Government (6), local authority representatives (9), and community and business organisations (11)
- analysis of programme monitoring data including the revised business case (October 2023), progress reports (up to October 2023) and documentation setting out expenditure, outputs and progress against the CCTs

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### Footnotes

[8] [The interim evaluation can be found here](#). It covers the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin and Redstone Cross operation, as well as the A55 Abergwyngregyn to Tai'r Meibion.

[9] Note that fewer consultations were conducted at the final stage due to a low response rate and previous involvement at interim evaluation stage. At final evaluation stage and once the scheme is complete, it would be useful to speak to more community and business organisations to understand the impact of the scheme.

Overall, the monitoring data that was received was of good quality and reliable. The expenditure data that was shared was set out at a high level and in summary format. While useful for tracking overall progress, more granular data would have been helpful for monitoring progress against spend over time. In addition, at times, the distinction between total costs and eligible costs could have been made clearer.

It should be noted that construction work was still underway as this formative evaluation report was being prepared. This means that it was not possible at this stage to fully assess the impacts of the operation: for example, we cannot know the effects of the scheme on accident rates or average journey speeds until sometime after completion. We have therefore considered the extent to which the operation is likely to achieve its anticipated impacts, based on evidence to date. The Welsh Government is planning a further review of impacts.

### 3. Context and assessment of strategic fit

This chapter sets out a summary of the strategic context within which the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross road operation has been delivered. It provides an overview of the existing transport network and explains the transport policy context, its evolution and the continued relevance of the operation.

#### 3.1. Transport infrastructure in Mid and South West Wales

The strategic transport infrastructure network in Mid and South West Wales <sup>[footnote 10]</sup> broadly runs east-west. It includes the western end of the M4 motorway, the A40 trunk road and the western part of the South Wales Main Line. It also includes five of the nine ports in Wales (see Figure 2.1), including Milford Haven (the largest port in Wales <sup>[footnote 11]</sup> and the third largest port in the UK by volume of freight <sup>[footnote 12]</sup>).

**Figure 2.1: Map of the major seaport locations in Wales (2022), including Holyhead, Fishguard, and Milford Haven**



Source: [Welsh Government: Statistical Bulletin, Sea transport 2022](#)

#### Footnotes

[10] Defined as the local authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and Swansea.

[11] [Welsh Government: Statistical Bulletin, Sea transport 2022](#)

[12] In 2022, it handled 38.9 million tonnes (Mt) of freight which was 8.5% of the UK total for 2022. Freight traffic at Milford Haven accounts for 72.2% of all Welsh port freight (see [Welsh Government: Statistical Bulletin, Sea transport 2022](#)).

The A40 Trunk Road (which is approximately 260 miles in length) provides an important strategic link to South West Wales. It serves the county town of Haverfordwest, the ports of Milford Haven (via the A4076) and Fishguard, as well as the wider economy of central and north Pembrokeshire. It is of national and international significance as part of the E30 TEN-T route, forming the key road link connecting continental Europe and Ireland, via the ports <sup>[footnote 13]</sup>. The A40 route is also strategically important as it provides access to the Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone with the opportunities the Enterprise Zone presents in renewable energy and port-related activities, as well as the major LNG terminals at Milford Haven <sup>[footnote 14]</sup>. In addition, the A40 serves an important visitor economy, and there is additional mixed-use waterfront development coming forward at the Port of Milford Haven <sup>[footnote 15]</sup>.

The road infrastructure in South West Wales is also important in enabling access to employment for residents; particularly as the region is a predominantly rural area, with limited access to public transport. According to census data from 2021 <sup>[footnote 16]</sup>, just under two thirds (61%) of workers (aged 16-74) living in the region travelled to work by car, van, motorcycle, scooter or moped. This corresponded to around 170,278 persons across the region. A smaller proportion (7% or 20,840 persons) travelled on foot or by bike, and only 2% travelled by train, bus, minibus or coach.

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#### Footnotes

[13] Outline Statement of The Welsh Government's Principal Submissions to be put forward at The Public Local Inquiry December 2019

[14] Milford Haven has an established energy presence. It also offers deep-sea port facilities combined with marine conditions suited to wave and tidal stream technologies and electricity grid access, making it an attractive location for marine energy activities. [Haven Waterway Enterprise Park](#) .

[15] [Latest News on the Milford Waterfront Development Project \(milfordwaterfront.co.uk\)](#)

[16] [ONS: 2021 Census Data](#)

## 3.2. Transport strategy alignment

### 3.2.1. Original strategic context and rationale

The case for improvements to the A40 between Llanddewi Velfrey, Penblewin and Redstone Cross is long-standing. The A40 St. Clears to Haverfordwest study on design options was published in 2015 <sup>[footnote 17]</sup>. This work built on an earlier study in 2004 and identified that the current routes had limited overtaking opportunity and particular congestion points that resulted in poor journey time reliability which, combined with alignment and vehicle mix, gave rise to safety concerns. This was reflected in the business case, which highlighted the road's poor safety record due to limited opportunities to overtake safely, multiple access points, and a mix of traffic types using the road contributing to driver frustration, risky manoeuvres and collision incidents.

From a broader perspective, the national strategic context for the 2014-20 OP was informed by 'One Wales: Connecting the Nation', the national transport strategy published in 2008. This emphasised sustainability as a central principle and included an aim of "getting the most out of the existing transport system" <sup>[footnote 18]</sup>. However, it also sets out commitments to:

- improvements to the road infrastructure, especially on the main east-west routes (including the TEN-T network)
- better road connections to the main freight ports
- investments to support improved safety and reliability

These commitments align with the aims and objectives of the scheme to improve the A40 between Llanddewi Velfrey, Penblewin and Redstone Cross.

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#### Footnotes

[17] Welsh Government (2015), [A40 St Clears to Haverfordwest study: design options report](#)

[18] Welsh Government (2008), [One Wales - connecting the nation - the Wales transport strategy \(trid.trb.org\)](#)

### 3.2.2. Subsequent developments in relation to decarbonisation and net zero

Since then, the policy context has evolved, with a progressive strengthening of measures to reduce Wales' carbon footprint and increase the sustainability of the transport system. For example, the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act include a low carbon society and well-connected communities, whilst the transport chapter in 'The Future Generations Report 2020' report <sup>[footnote 19]</sup> sets out how a sustainable transport system could be implemented. These serve to increase the relative prominence of active travel and public transport within the Welsh transport mix and reduce the emphasis on roads investment.

A series of strategic developments are relevant to this. The Welsh Government and Pembrokeshire County Council both declared a climate emergency in 2019. Following this:

- 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales' was published by the Welsh Government in 2019 <sup>[footnote 20]</sup>. This outlines several significant measures to support carbon reduction, including: the definition of a Sustainable Transport Hierarchy to guide transport investment, prioritising walking and cycling, followed by public transport, Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV), and finally other private motor vehicles
- the Welsh Government published its 'Net Zero Wales' plan in October 2021 <sup>[footnote 21]</sup>. This sets out 123 policies and proposals to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. In relation to transport, these include a commitment to reduce passenger transport <sup>[footnote 22]</sup> emissions by 22% by 2025 (over a 2019 baseline) and by 98% by 2050. Demand reduction and modal shift are seen as key contributors to this, with the 'Net Zero Wales' plan setting an ambition to reduce the number of car miles per passenger by 10% by 2030 <sup>[footnote 23]</sup>
- a year later this was followed by the Welsh Government publishing its 'Net Zero Strategic Plan' in September 2022 which set out 54 initiatives that provide the foundation for the Welsh Government to progress towards net zero. Under transport infrastructure, the key objective is "to maintain a safe, efficient

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#### Footnotes

[19] Future Generations Commissioner for Wales (2020), [The Future Generations Report](#)

#### Footnotes

[20] Welsh Government (2019), [Prosperity for All: Low Carbon Wales](#)

[21] Welsh Government (2021), [Second All Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan \(2021-2025\)](#)

[22] Passenger transport refers to the total movement of passengers using inland transport.

[23] Welsh Government (2021), [Second All Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan \(2021-2025\)](#)

transport network across the region to accelerate economic development and facilitate access to services and employment” <sup>[footnote 24]</sup>. Examples of initiatives include installing on-site renewable energy generation, where viable, installing high-efficiency technology by default across transport infrastructure, informing national standards and participating in discussions around reducing energy consumption from transport infrastructure

### **Llwybr Newydd**

In March 2021 the Welsh Government published its new Wales transport strategy (Llwybr Newydd) <sup>[footnote 25]</sup>. The strategy outlines a vision for an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system that is “good for people and communities, good for the environment, good for the economy and places and supports a thriving Welsh language and culture”. The Welsh Government has developed three priorities to help achieve its vision. The priority which is of most relevance to this operation is Priority 2: allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable transport. As part of this priority, the Welsh Government have committed to “provide safe, accessible and well-maintained and managed transport infrastructure” and to “future-proof it to adapt to climate change and facilitate more sustainable transport choices”.

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#### Footnotes

[24] Welsh Government (2022), [Welsh Government’s Net Zero Strategic Plan](#)

#### Footnotes

[25] Welsh Government (2021) [Llwybr Newydd: the Wales transport strategy 2021](#)

### 3.2.3. The Roads Review

In June 2021, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change announced a freeze on new road building projects, pending the outcome of an independent review, which subsequently reported in August 2022 <sup>[footnote 26]</sup>. In the Deputy Minister’s announcement, transport was acknowledged as a key contributor to Wales’ total emissions (circa 17%), and the review aims to reduce transport emissions to achieve Wales’ target of net zero emissions by 2050:

“We need a shift away from spending money on projects that encourage more people to drive and spend more money on maintaining our roads and investing in real alternatives that give people a meaningful choice.”: Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Climate Change.

While the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation was not included in the scope of the review, the outcomes of the review are relevant in considering the continued relevance of the operation.

The review recommended that to be consistent with Welsh Government policy, road schemes should only be considered for four purposes and, where they are implemented should meet four conditions, illustrated below:

**Table 3.1: Recommended purposes and conditions for future road investment, based on the Roads Review**

Purposes	Conditions
We recommend that to be consistent with Welsh Government policy, road schemes should only be for these four purposes:	We recommend that road schemes for these purposes should additionally meet four conditions:
1. Shifting trips to sustainable transport to reduce carbon emissions	1. The scheme should minimise carbon emissions in construction
2. Reducing casualties where they are high, through small-scale changes	2. The scheme should not lead to higher vehicle speeds that increase emissions
3. Adapting roads to the impacts of climate change	3. The scheme should not increase road capacity for cars
4. Supporting prosperity by providing access to development sites that will achieve high sustainable transport mode share	4. The scheme should not adversely affect ecological valuable sites

Source: [The Future of Road Investment in Wales: Advice from the independent panel appointed by the Welsh Government](#) (2022)

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#### Footnotes

[26] [Plenary 22/06/2021 - Deputy Minister’s Statement to the Senedd - Welsh Parliament \(assembly.wales\)](#)

It is likely that the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation continues to meet some of these ‘purposes and conditions’ even though it was not subject to review by the independent panel. Specifically, the scheme:

- seeks to improve road safety
- minimises carbon emissions in the construction process
- mitigates ecological impacts
- provides additional Active Travel routes
- improves access to public transport

Minimising carbon emissions during construction and mitigating ecological impacts are core elements of the cross-cutting themes. However, the business case (and the ERDF Result Indicator) explicitly seeks to increase vehicle speeds, which in some circumstances may increase average car emissions as a result of lower fuel efficiency although research has also shown that roads with faster moving traffic disperse pollutants more effectively than roads with slower moving traffic <sup>[footnote 27]</sup>.

#### **3.2.4. Infrastructure planning**

Finally, the Welsh Government published the ‘Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy’ in December 2021<sup>[footnote 28]</sup>. The strategy sets out the Welsh Government’s 10-year vision of the outcomes that investment in infrastructure should enable. Its vision is for “a well-being economy which drives prosperity, is environmentally sound, and helps everyone realise their potential”. Whilst there is a recognition throughout the strategy of the need to prioritise new investment in active, sustainable and public transport over the use of private road vehicles, there is also a commitment “to ensure that our strategic infrastructure investments enable effective maintenance of our Strategic Road Network, meeting our statutory obligations, and protecting the safety and lives of the people of Wales”.

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#### Footnotes

[27] Transport for London (2018) [Speed, emissions and health \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://tfl.gov.uk)

[28] Welsh Government (2021) [Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy](#)

### 3.3. Spatial strategy alignment

#### 3.3.1. Future Wales

In 2021, 'Future Wales: The National Plan 2040' <sup>[footnote 29]</sup> was adopted as the new national development framework, set in the context of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. In common with the wider strategic developments described above, it emphasises decarbonisation and sustainability, and includes a series of wider policies that are relevant to the operation:

- Policy 4 - Supporting Rural Communities. The Welsh Government will support investment in the road network to maintain or improve rural accessibility, sustainability and community well-being
- Policy 10 - International Connectivity. Haven Waterway, including the Ports of Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock, and Fishguard Port (which are served by the A40) are identified as Strategic Gateways that facilitate international connectivity. The Welsh Government sets out its commitment to working with stakeholders (including operators, investors, and local authorities) to support these Gateways and maintain their international connectivity role. One method of support will be via infrastructure investments
- Policy 11 - National connectivity. The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving national connectivity; key to this will be investing in a strategic road, rail, bus and cycle network

'Future Wales' defines the whole of South West Wales as a 'region'. It highlights the inter-regional links to Mid Wales, South East Wales and Ireland. Policy 32 of 'Future Wales' supports operations at Haven Waterway and recognises its location for potential new renewable and low carbon energy-related developing, innovation and investment.

Policy 29 also designates the 'Haven Towns' (Haverfordwest, Milford Haven, Pembroke and Pembroke Dock) as a Regional Growth Area, noting that: "Development in these towns will ensure they continue to provide jobs, leisure, retail and cultural opportunities, education and health services and connectivity infrastructure that is used and relied on by both their own populations and communities around them. It is important that these settlements maintain their regional role" <sup>[footnote 30]</sup>

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#### Footnotes

[29] Welsh Government (2021) [Future Wales: National Plan 2040](#)

[30] Welsh Government (2021) [Future Wales: National Plan 2040, p.149](#)

### **3.4. Economic strategy alignment**

The original business case was strongly predicated on the potential of the operation to drive economic benefits through more reliable connectivity. The OP noted that “investment to improve connectivity is an essential pre-requisite of the long-term success of all [European funding]. A well-functioning transport system helps people to access work, increases the forces of competition, promotes greater efficiency and increases the likelihood of co-location and clustering.” <sup>[footnote 31]</sup>.

#### **3.4.1. National economic strategy**

In November 2023, the Welsh Government published a new ‘Economic Mission’ <sup>[footnote 32]</sup>. This sets out a strategy for the ‘post-Covid’ era, and is set in the context of the overarching priority for a ‘just transition and green prosperity’ and the changing global climate for investment in technologies that will underpin the shift to a net zero economy. The ‘Economic Mission’ references Wales’ offshore wind and renewable energy capabilities (especially relevant to Milford Haven) and continues to prioritise investment in “transport, connectivity, and digital infrastructure across businesses to improve and maximise competitiveness”.

#### **3.4.2. Regional economic strategy**

In 2022, the South West Wales local authorities adopted a ‘Regional Economic Delivery Plan’ <sup>[footnote 33]</sup>. This specifically references improvements to the A40 as a benefit to the region. With reference to the sectors that may benefit from better connectivity to the Haven Ports, it also emphasises the region’s renewable energy capabilities as a core strength and a priority for investment, and also highlights opportunities for developing and building value in the visitor economy.

Also of relevance, the Swansea Bay City Deal is an investment of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of major programmes and projects across the Swansea Bay City Region – which is made up of Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea <sup>[footnote 34]</sup>. The £60m Pembroke Dock Marine programme is one part of the City Deal <sup>[footnote 35]</sup>. It aims to place Pembrokeshire at the heart of global zero carbon marine energy innovation while also helping tackle climate change. The programme is expected to generate £73.5 million a year to the regional economy.

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#### Footnotes

[31] Operational Programme, p.103

[32] Welsh Government (2023), [Economic Mission: Priorities for a stronger economy](#)

[33] South West Wales local authorities (2022), [South West Wales Economic Delivery Plan \(swansea.gov.uk\)](#)

[34] [Swansea Bay City Deal Projects \(swanseabaycitydeal.wales\)](#)

[35] [Swansea Bay City Deal: Pembroke Dock Marine \(swanseabaycitydeal.wales\)](#)

### 3.4.3. Local strategy

Improved connectivity through investment in existing transport infrastructure is also recognised as a priority in local strategies and policies. In South West Wales, the ‘Pembrokeshire Recovery and Regeneration Strategy’ <sup>[footnote 36]</sup> emphasises the importance of investing in key infrastructure to support the local economy and its main industries. The A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross improvements is cited as an example of such investment.

### 3.5. Responding to COVID-19

Various papers have been published at a national and local level regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the regional and local economy and on behaviours in terms of travel and working patterns. For example, a report by Public Health Wales outlines COVID-19 impacts on employment changes in Wales and the risk of job losses in Pembrokeshire <sup>[footnote 37]</sup>, a report by the South West Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership sets out the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market <sup>[footnote 38]</sup>, and reports by Ipsos Mori for the Department for Transport present analysis on the impacts of COVID-19 on travel patterns in the UK, including Wales, in the first few months of the pandemic <sup>[footnote 39]</sup>.

In February 2021, the Welsh Government published ‘Our Economic Reconstruction and Resilience Mission’, setting out a plan for economic recovery from the pandemic. While subsequently superseded by the new ‘Economic Mission’ referenced above, this highlighted the potentially permanent impacts of COVID-19 on work and travel patterns. Further information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of the operations is set out in the next section.

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#### Footnotes

[36] Pembrokeshire County Council (2020) [Renew and Regenerate. Pembrokeshire. A great place to visit, live and work, 2020-2030 \(pembrokeshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

[37] Public Health Wales (2021), [COVID-19 and employment changes in Wales \(phw.nhs.wales\)](https://phw.nhs.wales)

[38] South West Wales Regional Skills Partnership (2021), [An Analysis of the Impacts of COVID-19 on South West Wales \(rlp.org.uk\)](https://rlp.org.uk)

[39] Department for Transport (2020), [Travel behaviour, attitudes and social impact of COVID-19 \(gov.uk\)](https://gov.uk)

### **3.6. Conclusions**

Overall, the strategic context for transport has changed substantially since the operation was approved, with a much greater focus on active travel and public transport as an alternative to investment in road schemes, and a stronger commitment, linked with Wales' climate change priorities, to reducing demand for road use. It should be noted however that the stated objectives of the Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation included road safety improvements, additional active travel routes and improved access to public transport. Alongside improvements to the highway itself: these have, in policy alignment terms, become more important over time, and are augmented by the cross-cutting themes discussed further in Chapter 5.

The strategic connectivity afforded by the A40 also remains important to regional economic and transport strategy. This has, to a large extent, been reinforced by the continued emphasis on strategic economic opportunities west of Narberth (especially around Milford Haven), for which the resilience of the A40 expressway will be significant.

## 4. Overview of the operation

This chapter sets out the progress that has been made in delivering the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation, focusing on delivery timescales and changes in scheme costs.

### 4.1. Delivery progress to date

The Welsh Government announced the preferred route for the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvement scheme in March 2010. This included the feasibility of dualling the road <sup>[footnote 40]</sup>. An update <sup>[footnote 41]</sup> was undertaken in 2015 which considered options for improvements along the A40, assessed through the WelTAG appraisal process.

In October 2015, Arcadis was appointed as the Welsh Government's Employer's Agent to support the delivery of the scheme. In February 2017, the Welsh Government appointed Carillion, with Arup and RML (the 'Carillion Team') as their technical and environmental advisors, to develop the design of the proposed A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvements up to the publication of draft Orders (Key Stage 3) <sup>[footnote 42]</sup>.

Following the acceptance of a business plan in 2016 and prior to the award of the Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) contract to Carillion in 2017, WEFO approved the application for financial support from ERDF <sup>[footnote 43]</sup>.

Carillion entered liquidation in January 2018. The Welsh Government subsequently appointed Arup, supported by RML, to continue the development of the design up to publication of draft Orders and to support the Welsh Government through the Statutory process. Carillion going into liquidation caused major delays to the delivery of the scheme. In January 2018, the scheme was approximately eight weeks from finalising Key Stage 3. Given the work to date and the likely costs associated with changing the contractor team at this stage, the Welsh Government determined that it represented best value to appoint Arup and RML without a public tender process. The process took several months with work restarting in August 2018.

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#### Footnotes

[40] Outline Statement of The Welsh Government's Principal Submissions to be put forward at The Public Local Inquiry, Part B - Statement of Need, December 2019

[41] Welsh Government (2015), A40 St Clears to Haverfordwest Study, Design Options Report

[42] Outline Statement of The Welsh Government's Principal Submissions to be put forward at The Public Local Inquiry, Part B - Statement of Need, December 2019

[43] Outline Statement of The Welsh Government's Principal Submissions to be put forward at The Public Local Inquiry, Part B - Statement of Need, December 2019

Key Stage 3, which includes the completion of preliminary design submission and publishing draft orders for side roads, progressed well and was complete in Spring 2019. Key Stage 4, which includes the Public Local Inquiry and Inspector's report, Minister's decision and making the Orders, initially progressed well and the Public Local Inquiry was completed in March 2020. The Minister for Economy and Transport published his decision in March 2021 following consideration of the recommendation in the Inspector's Report; this was approximately six months later than expected (originally anticipated in spring/ summer 2020). The reason for the delay was given as further consideration of the scheme by the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales and the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport.

The project delivery team undertook work to minimise the delays to Key Stage 5/6 while waiting for the Minister's decision, including finalising procurement processes and tenders with the Welsh Government. However, as a result of the delay in the ministerial decision, the award of the construction works contract took place in summer 2021 with construction due to start in summer 2021 and finish in spring 2023, which was later than originally planned.

The Penblewin to Redstone Cross improvement works scheme that was incorporated into this A40 scheme commenced later than the Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvement scheme. Key Stage 3 was completed in autumn 2020 and the Public Local Inquiry for the Penblewin to Redstone Cross element took place in November 2020. Originally, it was thought that the two schemes would be delivered separately, however, the delay to the Minister's decision on the Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvement scheme meant that the two schemes could be approved together and be delivered at the same time.

Construction work on the combined scheme got underway by Alun Griffiths, the appointed contractor, in summer 2021. However, due to the various delays, including disruptions from external events, delays in obtaining protected species licenses, archaeological discoveries, legislative changes, contractor’s programme delays, design reviews and inflation-related adjustments, all construction work will not be completed until autumn 2024 (more detail on the delays included later in this chapter).

Despite this, by the end of December 2023, the contractor had completed one of the output indicators, 1km of footpath/cycleway. The second output indicator, 6.1km of reconstructed or upgraded roads, was only partially achieved, at 4.5km, with the remainder expected to be claimed in December 2024. Figure 4.1 below provides a map of the scheme showing the location of the WEFO deliverables.

**Figure 4.1 Map of the A40 showing the location of the WEFO deliverables**



Source: Welsh Government

## 4.2. Timescales

The original timescale for the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation is set out in Table 4.1, against the actual timetable for the operation.

**Table 4.1: Timetable for the A40 Operation**

	<b>Expected</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Public Local Inquiry</b>	Spring and Autumn 2020	Spring and Autumn 2020
<b>Procurement of contractor</b>	Autumn 2020 to Summer 2021	Autumn 2020 to Summer 2021
<b>Construction starts</b>	Summer/Autumn 2021	Summer 2021
<b>Construction ends</b>	Autumn 2023	Winter 2024
<b>Completion of ERDF indicators</b>	March 2023	December 2023
<b>Non-functioning extension</b>	N/A	January – December 2024

Source: [A40: Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross improvements \(overview\) and feedback from the project delivery team](#)

### **4.3. Scheme delays**

As set out above, the Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross improvement scheme has suffered significant delays for a number of reasons.

The project was disrupted early on by the liquidation of Carillion, the original main contractor, and by delays to the commencement of the detailed design and construction phase of the contract due to additional considerations as part of the Ministerial decision-making process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted on the delivery of the scheme. The Public Local Inquiry on the Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin scheme finished the week prior to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions being introduced. The Public Local Inquiry on the Redstone Cross scheme was held later in 2020 and the scheme had to develop a hybrid approach using video conferencing software. Whilst this meant it took slightly longer than planned, consultees stated that holding the Public Local Inquiry virtually worked well.

Additional design reviews were another source of delay. In an effort to optimise construction costs, additional design reviews were necessitated by the Employers Agent. These reviews were prompted by value engineering changes made to the contractors' detailed design. While aimed at achieving cost savings, these reviews introduced additional complexities and contributed to adjustments in the project's overall timeline.

Before work could start on site, delays were encountered in obtaining the necessary Protected Species Licences, which are important for areas with the presence of dormice, bats, and badgers. Licences are granted by Natural Resources Wales and help ensure compliance with environmental regulations. As a result, work on some areas of the site started in 2022, but in the remaining areas requiring licences work commenced in 2023. A pilot project to vaccinate badgers was also undertaken as part of the scheme.

An unexpected challenge arose in January 2022 when significant archaeological features were discovered on the site. A thorough Strip, Map and Record (SMR) exercise was conducted in order to document these findings and assess their impact. This exercise restricted the physical works that could be carried out. In January 2023, further significant neolithic archaeological features were uncovered, necessitating another round of the SMR exercise. Additional resource was allocated to this to ensure it was completed in a timely manner.

## 4.4. Expenditure

The original cost of the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin operation was £34.970m, comprising: £22.960m ERDF funding and £12.010m from the Welsh Government. However, as the operation has been revised to incorporate the additional work at Redstone Cross, the total cost of the scheme has increased. The revised cost for the operation was approved in autumn 2020; the total cost was £55.87m, comprising: £36.684m ERDF funding and £19.185m from the Welsh Government. This represented a 65.66% intervention rate. The operation end date was also extended from June 2021 to March 2023.

A further reprofile was undertaken between September 2022 and September 2023. The approved total project costs were £52.884m, comprising £45.462m of ERDF funding and £7.421m from the Welsh Government. Total eligible project costs were £52.290m, comprising £45.462m of ERDF funding and £6.828m from the Welsh Government. The revised figures represented a 86.94% intervention rate. Whilst costs on the A40 scheme had increased, as a result of the delays and external factors, the ERDF operation costs were reduced in this reprofile because the programme of works was able to accurately project the works that could be undertaken and defrayed within the ERDF programme period (i.e. up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023). Only works completed up to this deadline were eligible for ERDF support and WEFO sought to maximise support for the eligible works from decommitted funds elsewhere in the programme to alleviate budgetary pressures from escalating costs and timeframe of the operation. The revised figures represented a 86.94% intervention rate.

However, there will be ongoing, ERDF-ineligible work and expenditure after December 2023 which the Welsh Government will have to fully fund to complete the scheme. Assurances were provided to WEFO at the point of reprofile that the Welsh Government was committed to fully fund the works that fell outside of the programme period, and to ensure completion of the full A40 scheme.

By the end of December 2023, total eligible expenditure was £50.899m, which was made up of £44.254m of ERDF grant and £8.630m of Welsh Government match funding. This represents a 86.94% intervention rate. The final expenditure figures for the scheme as a whole are slightly below the original budget for the combined scheme.

Note that there are standardised costs associated with road improvement projects that are ineligible for ERDF funding. These costs are incurred by Welsh Government and are additional to the total WEFO project costs listed above <sup>[footnote 44]</sup>.

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### Footnotes

[44] [A40: Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross improvements | GOV.WALES](#)

## **4.5. Conclusions**

The operation experienced significant delays due to multiple factors, most of which were outside of the contractor's control. These delays led to revisions in the work eligible for ERDF funding. Despite this, one of the ERDF indicators was met by the end of December 2023 (1km of footpath or cycleway) and the other was partially met (4.5km of reconstructed or upgraded roads). The work also came in slightly under the original budget for the combined scheme.

## 5. Process evaluation findings

This chapter sets out the process evaluation findings in relation to the effectiveness of project management, communication and engagement and project monitoring systems.

### 5.1. Project management

The overall management and delivery model have remained as reported in the Interim Evaluation <sup>[footnote 45]</sup>. The Welsh Government's Transport Infrastructure Delivery Division is responsible for the delivery of the operation through the procurement of a private sector contractor which is responsible for construction.

The specific project management arrangements and responsibilities for the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation are as follows:

- a Project Director and Project Engineer at the Welsh Government have overall responsibility for the scheme
- Arcadis LLP is the appointed Employer's Agent. As the Employer's Agent, Arcadis represents the Welsh Government and ensure the works are done in accordance with the specification. Arcadis was appointed in 2015 and its contract runs until June 2028 (5 years after the scheme is complete)
- Alun Griffiths are the appointed contractor. On the construction site, the contractor's project manager was responsible for managing the contractor's operations and a supervisor from the Employer's Agent represented the Welsh Government
- construction is supervised by the core management team, the strategic board, and the project board
- the core management team includes: the Project Director and Project Engineer at the Welsh Government, the Employer's Agent, and the contractor's project manager
- the strategic board and project board are made up of various representatives from the Welsh Government, the project Employer's Agent, and the appointed contractor. These boards are typically only called upon when something cannot be resolved by the core management team

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#### Footnotes

[45] SQW (2021) [Interim Evaluation of ERDF Road Operations Also included in Annex B.](#)

The project management processes implemented by the Welsh Government appear to adequately support the delivery of the operations. Consultees attributed this to the following reasons:

- the Project Director and Project Engineer are familiar with the Welsh Government's project management processes and can therefore sufficiently prepare and respond to challenges appropriately if they occur. The project has drawn on senior officials for oversight and direction when required
- the project delivery team were working well together and had a shared responsibility for the delivery of the programme which had facilitated key construction outputs being delivered in 2023
- collaborative workshops with key delivery team staff were held in early 2023 to discuss key issues and find joint solutions. Consultees commented that the workshops were helpful in promoting a more collaborative approach, discussing how to manage risk and how to make sure the European funding deadlines were met. Significant progress with scheme delivery has been made since the meetings were held

## 5.2. Communication and engagement

Overall, feedback from local consultees had been fairly positive on the level of communication and engagement on the operation. For example, a representative of the Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council attends quarterly briefing meetings which are convened by the contractor to provide updates and for local stakeholders to raise concerns. It was also encouraging for local stakeholders to see a large number of construction workers on site. However, as the scheme was still under construction, many local stakeholders were experiencing disruption as a result of the road works and some would have liked more frequent communications on progress updates.

The contractor appointed a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) for the scheme. The role of the PLO was to engage with local stakeholders to inform them about the progress of the scheme and facilitate community benefits. The PLO had engaged with community groups, local authorities, landowners and other local stakeholders. There were regular communications with these groups through meetings, quarterly newsletters to local residents and a community website <sup>[footnote 46]</sup>. More specific updates are also made on a one-to-one basis. There was a recommendation in the Interim Evaluation linked to increased communication with local communities on progress with the scheme and the work undertaken by the contractor suggests this has been addressed.

Local stakeholders commented that there had been a change in personnel with the PLO which had been challenging in terms of continuity and knowing who to contact. Despite this, Alun Griffiths had worked hard to ensure there were clear and consistent communications with local stakeholders.

Alongside this, the Welsh Government also maintained and updated a clear and informative webpage with information on the scheme <sup>[footnote 47]</sup>. This provided an overview of the scheme, including its rationale, progress to date, a timetable and next steps and some relevant publications.

Representatives from Pembrokeshire County Council appreciated the progress updates on the scheme from the regular meetings with the project delivery team and the opportunity to raise issues and concerns. However, it was noted that if stakeholders could not attend one of these meetings, there were no other formal updates. On the whole, consultees were positive about how issues had been handled and the contractor's efforts to reduce the length of road closures and local disruption, where possible.

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### Footnotes

[46] [A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross Improvements – Griffiths Community](#)

[47] [A40: Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross improvements | GOV.WALES](#)

### **5.3. Monitoring systems**

Project monitoring systems were in place at various levels, including the Project Delivery Team, and within the Welsh Government, the Infrastructure Delivery Division and WEFO.

#### **5.3.1. Project Delivery Team**

The project monitoring systems were considered to be effective by the Welsh Government consultees, enabling them to monitor progress of delivery, manage and respond to risks, and ensure alignment across the various teams. The systems in place include:

- during construction, monitoring of delivery against key milestones was undertaken on site through the Employer's Agent
- the contractor provided a monthly programme, which set out their activities for the month ahead and the works to be undertaken to complete construction. The Employer's Agent would review this and it would be revised as necessary
- a monthly progress report was produced by the contractor for the Welsh Government regarding the operation activities and achievements, which was informed by data collected on site during construction. For example, this data included key progress activities, timesheets and the number of hours worked each month
- monthly progress meetings were held between the Welsh Government, the contractor and the Employer's Agent, during which project progress was discussed and key issues were raised
- alongside this, the Strategic Board for the scheme meet fortnightly and the Project Directors meet monthly
- a risk register was regularly reviewed and reported on at these meetings. There were also 'early warning' meetings weekly to raise awareness of any issues and to discuss how best to mitigate these
- quarterly finance meetings were in place and commercial updates were discussed alongside any issues or risks that could lead to cost escalation
- quarterly meetings were also in place with the local authorities and the environmental liaison group. Monthly meetings were held with the traffic management liaison group

Feedback from the project delivery team indicated that these arrangements had helped the scheme to progress, particularly in the last 12 months, and had ensured that any issues were raised early and addressed. There is collaboration and joint working at all levels which has led to smooth delivery of the project in recent months.

In the past year, more regular in-person monitoring visits had taken place and consultees thought this had been beneficial to the scheme.

### **5.3.2. Welsh Government Infrastructure Delivery Team**

Welsh Government has various systems in place to monitor delivery. They are kept informed of progress through monthly progress reports and meetings. The monthly progress report includes sections on progress updates, profile against spend, the forward plan, CCT, monitoring and evaluation, publicity, procurement and risks. On site, monitoring of progress is undertaken by the Employer's Agent and reported back to the Welsh Government.

Overall, representatives from the Welsh Government thought that the systems in place to monitor delivery were effective and helped the project to function well both at the strategic and operational levels. The regular meetings meant information was shared with stakeholders as required and trust has been built between the different partners. It was thought that an appropriate amount of information was shared with the Welsh Government, with an understanding that more detailed information was available on site as required.

### **5.3.3. Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO)**

The Welsh Government has appointed an EU Grants Officer within the Transport Team to act as an intermediary between the project team and WEFO. A decision was made by WEFO to approve funding very early on in the design process, before a preferred route had been identified. This meant that increased time was needed following funding approval to accommodate the consultation process, and the final design evolved in response. It also meant that there was less certainty around the scheme's spend and timescales. However, early approval helped the scheme to progress and meant it was able to deliver a longer stretch of improvements.

WEFO has a quarterly claim process in place. Operations are expected to submit quarterly reports, using a WEFO template, to summarise progress against delivery and expenditure, monitor progress against the CCT, and update on evaluation plans. The quarterly reports are followed up with a progress meeting between the Welsh Government intermediary and WEFO. Stakeholders from WEFO had also been to visit the site during construction.

Stakeholders from WEFO were satisfied with the monitoring systems that had been in place for this scheme. They received comprehensive updates through a quarterly meeting with all the relevant stakeholders and progress reports. This covered activity on site against the delivery profile, upcoming delivery schedules, financials and any issues. There was a recommendation in the Interim Evaluation linked to more regular reporting to WEFO and the evidence suggests this has been addressed. There was also a regular dialogue between Welsh Government's Infrastructure Delivery Division and, WEFO and the wider delivery team which meant issues could be picked up outside of the quarterly forum.

Alongside this, stakeholders from WEFO had also been involved in reprofiles of the scheme. These reprofiles were undertaken to grant a time extension to the project, and to enable additional funding to be reallocated to this scheme from the ERDF funds, due to changes to the overarching portfolio of projects. In order to undertake the reprofiling, various meetings were held with key stakeholders to understand scheme progress and expected activity.

#### **5.4. Conclusions**

Overall, project management and monitoring arrangements were efficient, and stakeholders regarded liaison between the contractor, the Welsh Government's Infrastructure Delivery Team and WEFO as effective. The Public Liaison Officer role appears to have been important in supporting communications with wider stakeholders.

## 6. Cross-Cutting Themes

The cross-cutting themes were an important part of the 2014-20 ERDF programme. The Operational Programme noted 'integration' as a key design principle, ensuring that EU investments work together and with other programmes to deliver better outcomes. The ERDF programme also coincided with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, which places a duty on all public bodies to work to achieve the seven defined 'wellbeing goals'. Within the spirit of the Act, public organisations ought to consider how "the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales" can be 'mainstreamed' within the delivery of multiple interventions <sup>[footnote 48]</sup>.

Consequently, there was a strong focus on the cross-cutting themes within the Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation. This chapter introduces the CCTs, explains how they were integrated into the delivery process and identifies key outputs and benefits.

### 6.1. Introducing the cross-cutting themes

The Operational Programme set out three CCTs:

- sustainable development, including opportunities to promote low-carbon transport solutions, increase resource efficiency, support innovation in energy production and supply and "contribute towards sustainable development objectives for environmental protection, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management"
- equal opportunities and non-discrimination, focused on the integration of equal opportunities, gender mainstreaming and the enabling the use of the Welsh language
- tackling poverty and social exclusion, including through measures to enable people at risk of social exclusion to access opportunities in the labour market

A summary of the CCT contributions set out in the Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross business case is set out below:

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#### Footnotes

[48] [Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015](#)

**Table 6.1: A40 Improvement contribution to CCT actions (taken from operation Business Plan)**

<b>CCT</b>	<b>Agreed actions in Business Plan</b>	<b>Actions to date</b>
<p><b>Sustainable development</b></p>	<p>Develop and promote integrated transport</p> <p>Potential to implement small-scale green or blue infrastructure into 'operation' design.</p>	<p>Impacts During Construction:</p> <p>Ongoing Environmental Management Environmental management will be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This will ensure that environmental issues such as surface water run-off, noise, and dust and site waste are properly addressed through the implementation and operation of the scheme. Further information relating to the approach to Environmental Management during construction, during the period of 'aftercare' will be provided in the Environmental Statement.</p> <p>Modern sustainable practices will be employed to minimise resources, waste and carbon emissions. This includes the planned recovery of old road materials for recycling, and the development of a solution, which allows the majority of aggregates, used to be produced on-site from 'site won rock' rather than from virgin stones.</p>
<p><b>Tackling poverty and social inclusion</b></p>	<p>Consult with local access groups, Third Sector organisations and local community groups.</p>	<p>The scheme has and will continue to be subject to extensive consultation with local community groups.</p> <p>Successful relationships must be established and maintained with all interested third parties, through effective Public Liaison.</p> <p>This process will primarily be facilitated by the project's Public Liaison Officer, and an Environmental Coordinator as well as the Project Director and Project Engineer.</p>

<p><b>Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming</b></p>	<p>Language / Accessibility The operation also needs to build-in Welsh language considerations. For example, ensure all materials, websites and publicity aimed at the public are made available in accessible and bilingual formats.</p> <p>Social Clauses / Community Benefit Schemes Wherever possible, work with contractors to incorporate a social clause/community benefit scheme, which offers some form of re-investment into the community via work experience/trainee placements and employment opportunities, invests back into the local community.</p> <p>Support / incorporate options that encourage healthier lifestyles such as walking and cycling.</p>	<p>The operation will consider the Welsh Language and ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English, particularly in terms of information to the public and residents about the scheme and the signage.</p> <p>The scheme will be delivered in line with best practice identified in the Welsh Government guide, Community Benefits: Delivering Maximum Value for the Welsh Pound, ensuring community benefits are realised from the public procurement. The document points towards the importance of training and recruitment opportunities benefitting the local community.</p> <p>The A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin design and build contract will include the provision of targeted training and recruitment as a core requirement of the contract fitting clearly with this objective.</p> <p>By providing safe walking and cycling routes within the village, the schemes will encourage active travel and healthier lifestyles.</p>
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Source: A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin and Redstone Cross Business Plan, WEFO (July 2020)

Some elements of the CCTs have a statutory element. For example, a Welsh Government-led capital project of this nature will have a statutory obligation to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment and an Environmental Site Management Plan, and to ensure that communications are bilingual. Nevertheless, the CCT team within WEFO seeks to capture both statutory delivery (which should be captured through audit processes anyway), as well as actions that go beyond specific statutory commitments.

## **6.2. Overall progress**

Good progress has been made against the CCTs, as outlined in the progress reports, particularly since construction work started on site. At the time of the evaluation, all of the CCT case level indicators for this operation had been delivered and case studies received. Welsh Government consultees thought that the contractor had been proactive in delivering the CCTs and had gone over and above what was expected, particularly on community benefits. The following paragraphs considers each of the CCTs in turn.

## **6.3. Sustainable development**

Sustainability was a key objective for the contractor to ensure environmental considerations were taken into account. To ensure that the scheme does not have an adverse impact on the environment, environmental mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scheme's design. These include:

- balancing ponds and pollution containment within the road drainage networks
- extensive planting of woodland and hedges for landscape integration, visual screening and biodiversity
- modifications to earth networks to provide low-level visual screening and visual integration with the setting
- maintenance of access to properties
- diversion, replacement and enhancement of the NMU network routes including circular routes
- underpasses to maintain access to fields and footpaths and to enhance the NMU route from Ffynnon to LV reducing necessity for motorise vehicle use to access the village
- wildlife underpasses, oversized watercourse culverts & Mammal fencing along much of the route

## 6.4. Tackling Poverty and Social Inclusion

There has been continuous engagement with the community throughout the scheme. Since the contract award, Alun Griffiths had a Public Liaison Officer (PLO) in post who was responsible for contact between the project team and stakeholders. This included businesses, residents, road users and local landowners. The PLO ensured that all stakeholders were aware of the operation, its progress and timescales. In particular, the contractor maintained a good relationship and open dialogue with residents living next to the site compound.

After they had been awarded the contract, Alun Griffiths organised two 'Meet the Buyer' events to engage local subcontractors and local supply chains. The scheme has worked to engage with local and/or Welsh suppliers. Outputs to date include:

- supported/utilised in excess of 100 businesses within Wales
- 42% of subcontractors within 30 miles of the site
- 44% of suppliers within 30 miles of the site
- 79% of the suppliers are from Wales
- 91% of subcontractors are Welsh
- 82% subcontractors are SMEs

During construction, the PLO worked with community councils to distribute a regular newsletter to local residents. Alun Griffiths set up a community website which had key dates, project bulletins, progress videos and traffic updates to keep the local community informed of activities and progress. People could register their interest in receiving updates on the scheme.

A Considerate Constructors Scheme visit took place in autumn 2023 which gave the site a score of 45 out of 50, which was equivalent to the performance level 'Excellent' [footnote 49]. The scheme recorded a maximum score in the following categories: Respect the Community; Care for the Environment; Value their Workforce.

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### Footnotes

[49] The [Considerate Constructors Scheme](#) is an independently managed, not-for-profit organisation that works with the construction industry and the public to raise standards and build trust.

## **6.5. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming**

In terms of promoting the Welsh language, the Welsh Government is obliged to publish everything bilingually and this has been the case in all material produced and at public engagement events. The contractor and Employer's Agent both had Welsh speakers in their teams. Alun Griffiths is a Welsh contractor and employs locally. Many of the workforce on site spoke Welsh and lived locally. The PLO on the scheme has engaged with Welsh medium schools, where possible.

The scheme has sought to provide safe walking and cycling routes to encourage active travel and healthier life styles. This includes plans for a 1km footpath or cycleway to be created or reconstructed by December 2023. Once construction is completed, there will be provision for active travel along the whole length of the scheme. The active travel provision has also been designed to align and integrate with the wider Pembrokeshire active travel network.

In terms of community benefits, the contractor has been proactive in engaging and supporting the community. By October 2023, the scheme has donated £22,330 to local community initiatives. Examples of community initiatives which the scheme has supported include: support for the Narberth Carnival, providing pedestrian fencing for the Narberth Rock Event, support for the Pembrokeshire Country show. The scheme also appointed a Community Benefits Champion from each major organisation involved. The Community Benefits Champions met in January 2023 to shortlist projects which will have a positive impact on the wider community. The shortlisted projects include:

- Llanddewi Community Hall
- Bloomfield Community Centre
- Narberth F.C.
- Clynderwen Public Park

The scheme has engaged with local schools to raise awareness of careers in civil engineering and construction in the area. This activity has included 35 school initiatives, 254 engagement hours and 2,479 pupils engaged. One example of the scheme's school engagement activity is a two-day Carmarthenshire Careers Convention which provided information on routes into civil engineering and included interactive activities to help pupils understand the role of technology within the industry.

The scheme is working to ensure that it provides training and employment opportunities for the area, with a substantial number of the workforce being relatively local and 89% of the workforce located in Wales. Training and recruitment outputs to date include:

- 1,345 weeks of targeted Recruitment and training to date
- 41 previously unemployed new starters (up from 34)
- 15 trainees and apprentices to-date, one new starter
- One new apprentice opportunity advertised via Apprentice Alliance Wales
- Two work experience placements
- 13 newly employed AGC staff

## **6.6. Contribution to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act**

The road scheme operation has contributed to achieving the goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, particularly those linked to a prosperous Wales and cohesive communities. This has been achieved through connecting communities, improving access to services, helping people to access work and improving access to markets for businesses in South West Wales. Linked to the achievements of the CCTs, consultees thought that the scheme had contributed to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act through the extensive community engagement, local employment, use of local supply chains and environmental benefits.

## **6.7. Monitoring systems**

Progress against the CCTs was reported at the monthly progress meetings between Welsh Government, the Employer's Agent and the contractor and in progress reports. This included reporting on activity undertaken to date, planned activity and raising any risks or issues.

The monitoring of the CCT is carried out at the quarterly Progress Review Meetings, attended by WEFO and the beneficiary, who will provide an update on the CCT activity which has been delivered. There are no programme indicators for the CCT in this operation but a range of CCT case (project) level indicators which apply. These are monitored through case studies provided to WEFO CCT Team.

There were some communication issues between WEFO CCT team and the delivery team in the early phase of the operation. However, since the interim evaluation, consultees commented that there has been a significant improvement with regard to communication and a close working relationship has been established. This is, in part, because formal progress meetings between the delivery team and WEFO CCT team took place regularly and there was an open and honest dialogue around what was being delivered, delays, and what support can be given.

## **6.8. Looking to the future**

In terms of embedding the CCTs in future projects, the main suggestion from consultees was to ensure they are included in the tender and contract documentation to ensure contractors are aware of the requirements early on. This also provides adequate time for contractors to consider how they can be achieved, and if any additional activity can be delivered. The CCTs can then be monitored during project delivery to ensure they are achieved.

It should be noted however that the concept of CCTs is strongly integrated into European funding, and central management resourcing via WEFO has been important in raising awareness of the CCTs. The CCT team described their role as a supportive one, rather than one based on 'compliance', and this appears to have been successful in this case, given the extent of delivery against the CCTs. As European funding comes to an end, it will be important to consider how CCTs (or an equivalent based on the Well-being of Future Generations Act) can be embedded in future projects.

## **6.9. Conclusions**

The operation had a positive record in the delivery of the CCTs. A wide range of actions were taken, which exceeded the original targets. This reflects both the importance attached to the CCTs in the Operational Programme and business case and the commitment of the contractor and project team. While there were some communication challenges between the project team and the CCT team at WEFO in the early stages of the programme, which were reflected in the interim evaluation report, these were subsequently resolved.

## 7. Impact evaluation findings and assessment of wider outcomes

This section contains the impact evaluation findings. It assesses progress against the operation's outputs and outcomes, the extent to which wider outcomes have been, or will be, delivered, and considers the operation's value for money.

### 7.1. Outputs

The scheme was expected to achieve a number of outputs. There were two ERDF outputs, as outlined in the revised business case and environmental statement, and two broader project outputs, identified in the scoping phase of the evaluation. Construction years of employment <sup>[footnote 50]</sup> was not set out in the operation business case but was identified and calculated by the evaluator during the initial scoping phase as a construction activity output. While the jobs were not central to the fundamental rationale for investment, they were an ancillary effect and were considered a relevant output from the construction activities.

By the end of December 2023, the operation had achieved one of the two ERDF outputs. This was 1km of footway/cycleway. The other ERDF output had been partially achieved, at 4.5km, with the remainder expected to be claimed in December 2024. Enabling works had also been completed to facilitate continued construction from January 2024. The broader outputs had been partly achieved. To date, there had been 15 trainees and apprentices onsite and two work experience placements.

In terms of construction years of employment, 660,089 construction hours were completed onsite which equated to approximately 349 construction years of employment. This was below the estimated 647 construction years of employment, however delays to the scheme meant construction was behind what was originally planned.

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#### Footnotes

[50] Construction years of employment calculates an estimation of the number of construction jobs generated by the scheme based on the total project construction capital cost using the direct jobs coefficients by category of activity. The coefficients express the number of workers required over one year to deliver £1m of construction investment.

**Table 7.1: Achievement against outputs**

	<b>Achieved?</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>ERDF outputs</b>		
6.1km of reconstructed or upgraded roads (including TEN-T)	Partly	4.5km achieved by December 2023. The remainder to be claimed by December 2024.
1km of footpath or cycleway created or reconstructed	Yes	Completed December 2023.
<b>Broader outputs</b>		
23 apprentices supported and 8 work experience placements	Partly	15 trainees and apprentices to date. Two work experience placements.
647 construction years of employment	Partly	660,089 construction hours completed up to the end of December 2023 which equates to approx. 349 years

Source: Consultations with the project delivery team

## **7.2. Outcomes**

The scheme was expected to deliver against four outcomes. There was one ERDF Result Indicator and three additional outcomes. These were:

- 5-10% increase in average speed along the A40 road (baseline average of 58kph) (ERDF Result Indicator)
- enhanced reliability in journey times
- shorter journey times along the route
- reduction in the number and severity of collisions

In the original business plan, the baseline data used for average speed outcome was calculated using TrafficMaster data which was supplied by the Department for Transport (DfT). The ERDF operation was set up using this as a specific baseline, and was used in the approval of the scheme for European funds. The ERDF Result Indicator was a 3-8% increase in average speed along the A40, from a baseline average of 58 kph, defined in the business plan. The DfT has discontinued using the TrafficMaster dataset and Welsh Government has also stopped using this data source. Welsh Government has adopted INRIX to replace TrafficMaster in the evaluation of road speed data.

These two are different data sources for the same variable (speed). INRIX will now be used to measure the average speed data for the A40. TrafficMaster used data on commercial vehicle tracking only, whereas INRIX data is based on GPS data from cars with built-in sat nav technology. This includes commercial fleets, delivery and taxi vehicles, as well as consumer vehicles, smartphones, cameras, incidents and other

sensors to collect data. Therefore INRIX is more robust. This data is also more current and up to date than TrafficMaster.

Due to data discontinuities with the original baseline data, a new baseline from 2016 has been calculated for comparative purposes. For consistency, a new baseline has been calculated using INRIX data for the purposes of comparing performance in future years. It has been calculated using vehicle average speed data from across 2016. The new baseline average speed is 41mph. Calculating a new baseline does not mean that the original target has been rebased, it simply enables future years to be compared with the pre-investment position on a new dataset. The INRIX data will need to be analysed post-completion to determine whether the scheme has resulted in the intended increase in the average speed.

Evidencing the outcomes from the A40 operation was dependent on the completion of the scheme plus a period of review and data gathering to monitor the effects, and, as such, it was too early to be able to evidence them at the time of the formative evaluation. However, consultees from the delivery team were confident that they would be achieved in due course. The key reasons for this were improving overtaking opportunities, the removal of trunk road traffic from the village of Llanddewi Velfrey, improving traffic flow, and reducing the likelihood of accidents.

### **7.3. Assessment of wider outcomes**

Various wider outcomes were anticipated as a result of the A40 scheme, as set out in the logic model (see Annex A). This section sets out stakeholder perspectives on the outcomes that were likely to be realised.

#### **7.3.1. Enhanced reliability in journey times / Shorter journey times along the route**

One of the key outcomes of the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross scheme noted by consultees was improvements to journey time reliability and shorter journey times along the route. This was considered to be of particular benefit for users outside of the local community that utilise the route every day, those passing through the area to access leisure or tourism destinations and for access to the ports of Fishguard and Milford Haven. Consultees hoped that the scheme would help to make the area more attractive to businesses and investors.

While journey time savings were considered to be of most benefit to users passing through the area, one consultee said that the work may also reduce waiting times for local residents crossing the relevant junction/s which is likely to improve journey times locally.

Journey time savings are enabled, in part, through the increased overtaking opportunities. The revised highway design to a three-lane carriageway, with two lanes in one direction and one in the opposite direction, will enable road users to overtake slow moving traffic and HGV vehicles travelling to the ports more easily and safely. Consultees described that this is likely to reduce congestion on the road as a result, although community consultees noted that the specific benefit for local residents is likely to be limited.

#### **7.3.2. Reduction in the number and severity of collisions**

Another key benefit of the scheme that was highlighted by consultees was related to safety. In particular, the Bethesda junction (which leads onto the A40 and across to Narberth) was referenced by two consultees who described the junction as problematic and dangerous, due to high volume of traffic approaching from both directions at high speed. Other safety benefits would be experienced due to the re-design of the junctions and the improved quality of the road surface.

Moreover, due to the volume and speed of traffic passing through the local villages, one community consultee said there are significant safety concerns over the current road layout which is inhibiting active travel around the village. The new road layout is expected to alleviate some of the safety concerns and thus enable greater active travel.

### **7.3.3. Improved pedestrian and cycling provision**

A new combined-user (pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian) route is planned along the southern boundary of the A40 to provide an active travel link between Llanddewi Velfrey and the de-trunked A40 to Penblewin – this also links into the Redstone section. Consultees described that the operation will create opportunities for more cycle paths locally which will enable more active travel. In addition, due to a reduction in traffic flows, it was considered that local roads will be safer for cyclists and walkers, promoting the active travel options.

### **7.3.4. Improved air quality**

Air quality is also a concern for local residents who live close to the existing A40 highway. One consultee said that by reducing the volume of traffic and the number of HGVs travelling through the centre of Llanddewi Velfrey, the operation could have a notably positive impact on improving the air quality locally.

This will be difficult to evidence as air quality data is not collected in the area around the road scheme. Air quality is monitored in Narberth, however, the monitoring site is located to the south of the A40, in a rural area close to the B4314. This presents some limitations with the data and will make attributing any differences to the A40 improvements scheme difficult.

### **7.3.5. Reduction in noise pollution**

The anticipated reduction in traffic volumes and the number of HGVs using the existing A40 highway, was considered to have potentially positive implications for local noise pollution. Noise pollution was described as a major concern for local residents. Changes to the road surfaces, in particular, were thought to reduce overall noise levels.

However, concerns were also raised regarding the location of the new highway and the associated increase in noise levels for local residents. For example, one consultee said that the new road is “too close to the rural part of Narberth” resulting in increased traffic and noise pollution in a previously quiet area. These issues will however have been considered as part of the consultation process.

### **7.3.6. Reduced community severance**

One consultee described the anticipated benefits associated with reduced community severance. The benefits included reunifying the community, reconnecting local amenities, making it a more attractive place to live and subsequently improving the quality of life for local residents. Much of this will arguably be achieved as a result of the reduced traffic flow through the Llanddewi Velfrey village centre (because of the new A40 highway).

However, concerns were raised by other community consultees regarding the extent to which the type of traffic will reduce through the village centre, as it is expected that many HGVs will still require local access to businesses; for example, to access the local quarry, dairy and food factory.

### **7.3.7. Unexpected outcomes**

The archaeological work that has taken place as part of the scheme has allowed the site to be thoroughly surveyed and investigated and this has uncovered neolithic occupations and settlements of various kinds as well as a range of important objects, such as neolithic pottery. These items can now be catalogued, restored and put on display. The archaeological representative on the scheme had delivered talks to local groups and schools and had hosted site visits from school children.

## **7.4. Value for money assessment**

An economic appraisal was undertaken on both schemes (Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin and Penblewin to Redstone Cross) during Key Stage 3. The analysis was undertaken by using the industry standard TUBA software to quantify user time and vehicle operating cost savings. An accident analysis using the industry standard COBA-LT software forms part of the economic appraisal necessary to complete a benefit cost analysis.

The accident analysis undertaken for both sections of the project has shown that WS2+1 carriageway roads are safer than single carriageway roads. As a result, both schemes would result in a reduction in the number of accidents. For example, under central growth assumptions for the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvements, the accident analysis forecasts a saving of 41 personal injury accidents resulting in 51 fewer casualties over the 60-year appraisal period.

Based on a number of assumptions, the economic appraisal and cost benefit analysis produced a benefit to cost ratio of 0.13 for the Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvements and a benefit to cost ratio of 0.27 for the Penblewin to Redstone Cross improvements. However, it should be noted that not all costs and benefits of the scheme can be quantified and monetised which means that there are a range of impacts which are not captured in an economic appraisal.

From a qualitative perspective, consultees were asked whether they thought the scheme would deliver value for money. It is generally hard for most consultees to provide an informed view on this, since the alternative use of the investment is unknown. But on the whole, consultees were in agreement that the scheme offered public value, in broad terms. The reasons for this included the safety improvements, the improvements to quality of life for residents of Llanddewi Velfrey, the local economic benefits and modal shift benefits. However, there were some concerns raised about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Britain's exit from the European Union on road usage, which would not have been forecast at the time of the original value for money assessment. If an economic appraisal of the operation was to be re-run, these factors could be taken into account.

## **7.5. Conclusions**

The operation successfully delivered one of its two ERDF output indicators and has partly delivered on the other ERDF output indicator and its two wider outputs linked to training and construction employment. While it is too early to know whether the journey speed and accident outcomes will be delivered, consultees were optimistic that they would be. A range of other benefits will also be delivered linked to active travel, air quality and noise pollution, adding value to the cross-cutting themes discussed in the previous chapter.

## **8. Conclusion and recommendations**

This section sets out a summary of the findings of the formative evaluation and the key conclusions. Based on this, a number of recommendations will be presented for future schemes.

### **8.1. Assessment of continued strategic fit**

Since the development of the scheme, the policy context has changed quite radically, including the creation of a new Minister for Climate Change portfolio, which brings together a number of portfolios including transport (May 2021). This aligns with the suite of climate change objectives set out within the Programme for Government and the Welsh Government's strong emphasis on decarbonisation as a theme running through all activity.

Despite this, a review of local and national policies and strategies confirmed that the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation continues to align with the Welsh Government's objectives to improve regional connectivity and existing transport infrastructure through investment to support economic development and improved wellbeing. While there has been an observable shift, both nationally and locally, in priorities regarding low-carbon and environment aims and targets, strategic consultees from the Welsh Government thought the operation remained relevant as it was supportive of these aims. In particular, the operation had ambitions to protect biodiversity and promote active travel.

### **8.2. Summary of progress**

Since the A40 improvement scheme was approved for ERDF funding, the operation has experienced notable delays which has meant that the operation completion date has been moved back to autumn 2024. These delays led to revisions in the work eligible for ERDF funding. Despite this, by the end of December 2023, the scheme had completed one of its two ERDF indicators and had partially completed the other ERDF indicator.

The total costs of the combined A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation were reprofiled between September 2022 and September 2023. Total eligible project costs were £52.290m, comprising £45.462m of ERDF funding and £6.828m from the Welsh Government. By the end of December 2023, total eligible expenditure was £50.899m, which was made up of £44.254m of ERDF grant and £8.630m of Welsh Government match funding.

### **8.3. Assessment of project management and monitoring arrangements**

The project management arrangements were seen as effective and working well. This was due to the knowledge and experience of the project delivery team, effective information flows and the partnership arrangements with local stakeholders.

The monitoring systems at a project delivery level were robust, and sufficient information was provided to the Welsh Government to enable effective management and oversight. Monitoring reports to WEFO have been comprehensive with a regular dialogue established between Welsh Government's Infrastructure Delivery Division and WEFO and the wider delivery team.

Overall, feedback from local consultees was positive on the level of communication and engagement on the operation, particularly in regard to the role of the PLO. Wider stakeholders (particularly in local authorities) appreciated the progress updates they received from the regular meetings with the delivery team and were positive about how issues had been handled.

### **8.4. Cross-Cutting Themes**

Good progress had been made against the CCTs as all of the CCT case level indicators for this operation had been achieved. A wide range of actions were taken linked to sustainable development, community benefits and active travel among others, which exceeded the original targets. This reflects both the importance attached to the CCTs in the Operational Programme and business case and the commitment of the contractor and project team.

In terms of embedding the CCTs in future projects, the main suggestion was to ensure they are included in the tender and contract documentation to ensure contractors are aware of the requirements early on. More broadly, given that European funding is coming to an end, consideration should be given to how the themes embedded in the Well-being of Future Generations Act can be further embedded in future project delivery, and the potential role of a central team in this.

### **8.5. Progress against outputs and outcomes**

By the time of the formative evaluation, one of the ERDF output indicators had been achieved (1km of footway/cycleway) whilst the other outputs had been partially achieved. This included 4.5km of reconstructed or upgraded road, with the remainder expected to be claimed in December 2024. Enabling works had also been completed to facilitate continued construction from January 2024.

The outcomes for the A40 Llanddewi Velfrey to Redstone Cross operation were dependent on the completion of the scheme and a period of monitoring following completion, and, as such, robust evidence was not available at the time of the

formative evaluation. However, consultees from the delivery team were confident that they would be achieved in due course.

Several wider outcomes were anticipated by consultees, including improvements to travel time reliability, reduction in the number of collisions, improved experience for Active Travel users, and reduced community severance among others. These outcomes were viewed positively by consultees and were expected to impact the local area and the broader region.

## **8.6. Value for money assessment**

Based on a number of assumptions, the economic appraisal and cost benefit analysis produced a benefit to cost ratio of 0.13 for the Llanddewi Velfrey to Penblewin improvements and a benefit to cost ratio of 0.27 for the Penblewin to Redstone Cross improvements. However, it should be noted that not all costs and benefits of the scheme can be quantified and monetised which means that there are a range of impacts which are not captured in an economic appraisal. From a qualitative perspective, consultees were in agreement that the scheme offered public value, in broad terms. The reasons for this included the safety improvements and better quality of life for the residents of Llanddewi Velfrey.

## **8.7. Looking ahead**

Looking to the future, there will not be any further European funding for road schemes due to Britain's exit from the European Union, and the outcome of the Roads Review suggests there will be lower levels of funding for road schemes in Wales going forward. However, there are a couple of key findings from this report which could inform future similar projects:

- the role of Public Liaison Officer at the contractor was of great value in building good relationships with local residents and businesses, and in delivering community benefits as part of the project
- the project delivery team took a creative and ambitious approach to delivering the CCTs, with their actions exceeding the original targets. Whilst the CCTs are strongly integrated into European funding, they have relevance to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and a similar approach could be taken in future in terms of embedding them in the contract and ensuring commitment to deliver against them by the contractor and project team
- facilitating collaborative workshops with key delivery team staff at the start of January 2023 helped to promote joint working and led to significant progress being made on the scheme. Holding these workshops earlier in scheme delivery may have encouraged more open communications from the outset

## 9. Reference section

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Welsh Government (2021) 'Second All Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan (2021-2025)'

Welsh Government (2021) 'Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy'

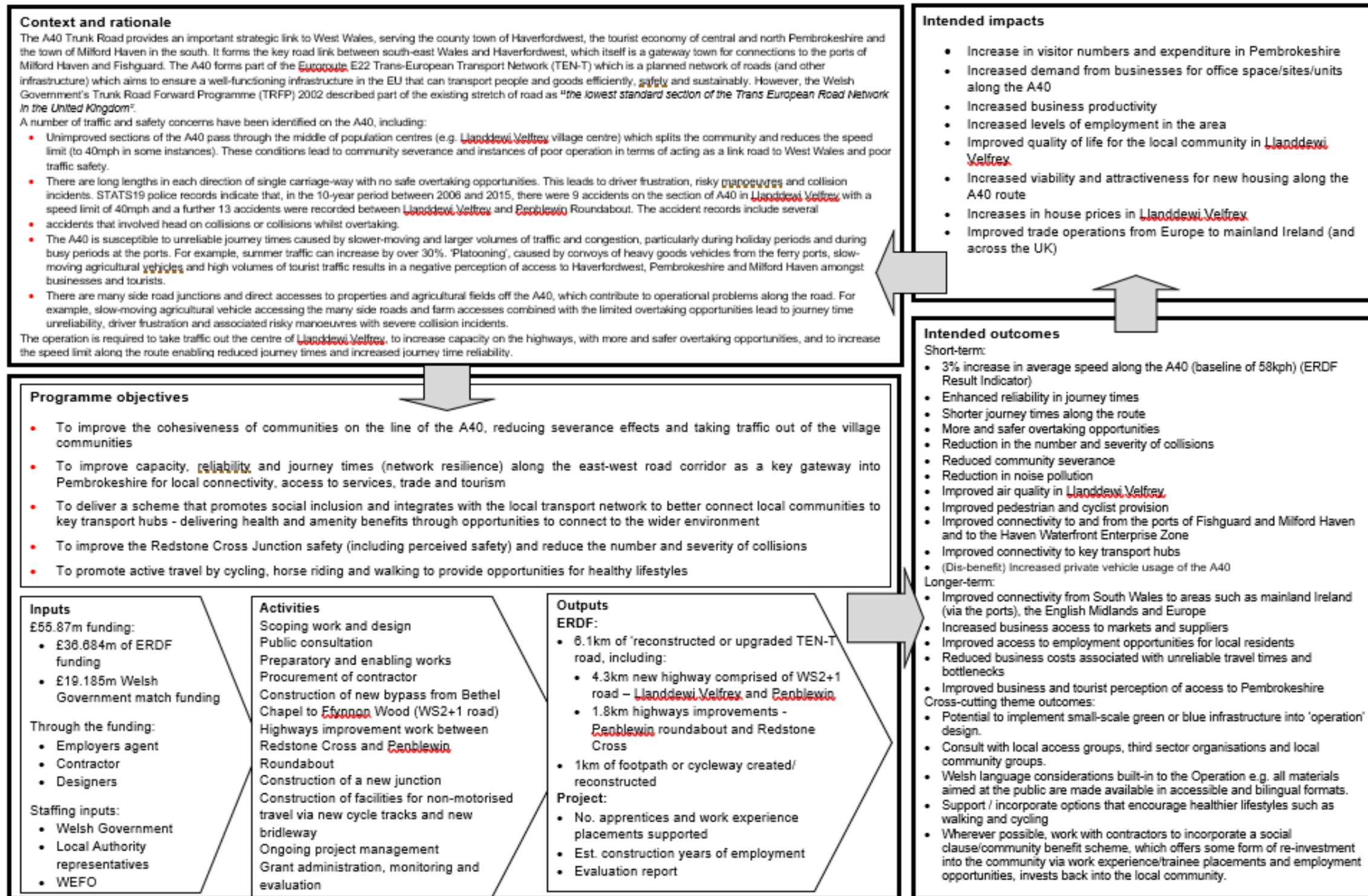
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Welsh Government (2023) 'Economic Mission: Priorities for a stronger economy'

# Annex A: Logic model

Figure A.1: A40 logic model



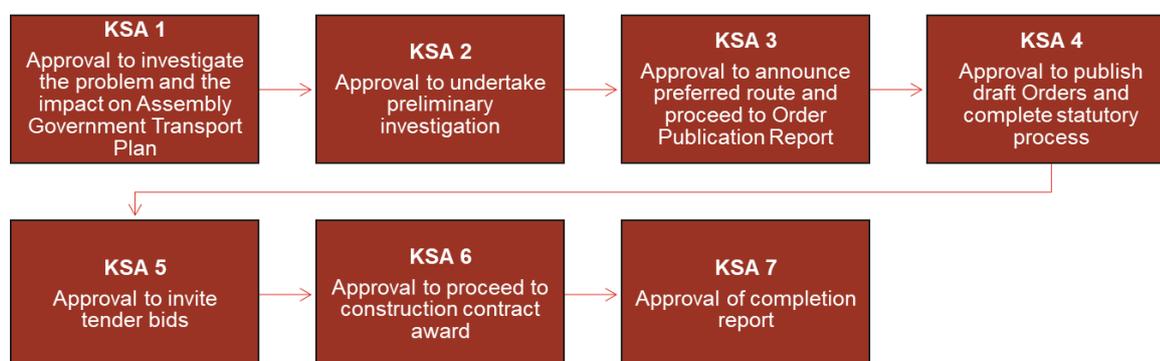
Source: SQW

## Annex B: Overview of the management and delivery model for the project

The Welsh Government's Transport Infrastructure Delivery Division is responsible for the delivery of the operation through the procurement of a private sector contractor which is responsible for construction.

The operation is being delivered through a Design and Build Contract, which the Welsh Government manages with the support of contractors engaged as an Employer's Agent. Delivery of the operation is split into seven key stages, which cover design, statutory process, construction and aftercare in accordance with the Transport Infrastructure Delivery Division's Key Stage Approval Process (see Figure B.1).

**Figure B.1: The Welsh Government's Key Stage Approval (KSA) process for major road projects**



Source: Welsh Government, adapted by SQW

A Core Management Team is responsible for the day-to-day detailed management of each scheme, as set out in Figure B.2.

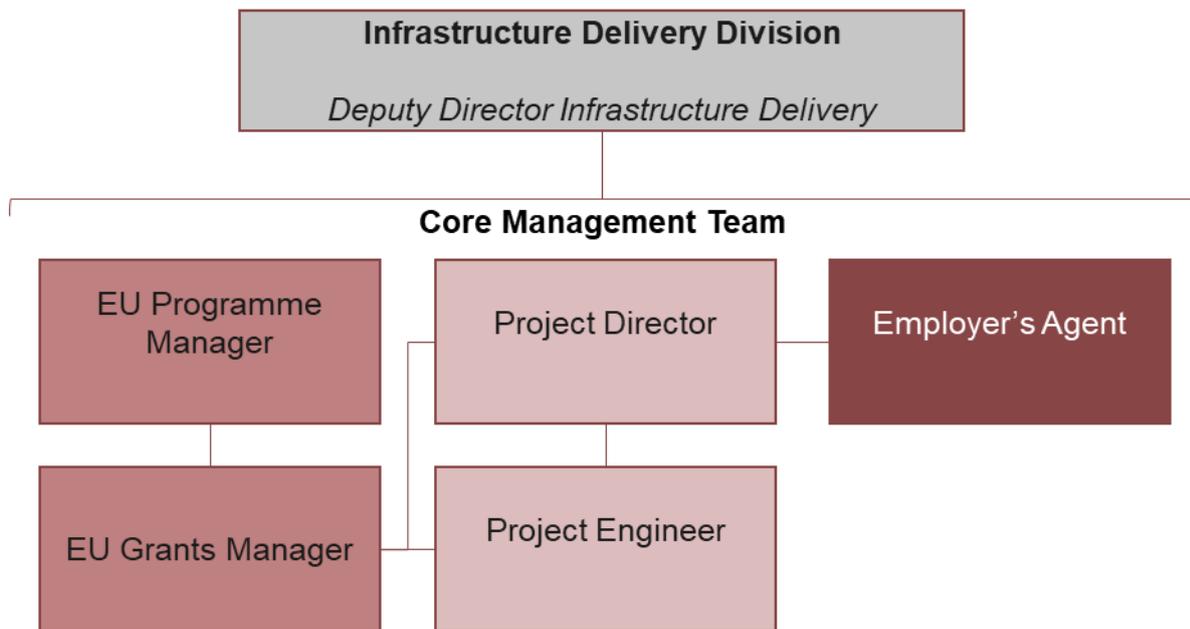
The Core Management Team comprises the Welsh Government Project Director and Project Engineer/s, representatives of the Employer's Agent and members of the contractor's team. The Team's primary activities include:

- promoting the scheme both internally and to external partners and stakeholders
- ensuring the scheme delivered is the optimum solution
- ensuring scheme activities comply with Welsh Government policy
- ensuring the scheme complies with its commitment to the Sustainability Objective of the Welsh Government
- ensuring the scheme is delivered to budget & programme

- ensuring the scheme delivers Value for Money within delegated financial commitments.

The Core Management Team is supported by the EU Grants Manager who leads on fulfilling the specific requirements of delivering ERDF funded projects including addressing requirements for publicity, CCT, monitoring and reporting on Operation delivery to the Managing Authority (the Welsh European Funding Office).

**Figure B.2: Infrastructure delivery organogram**

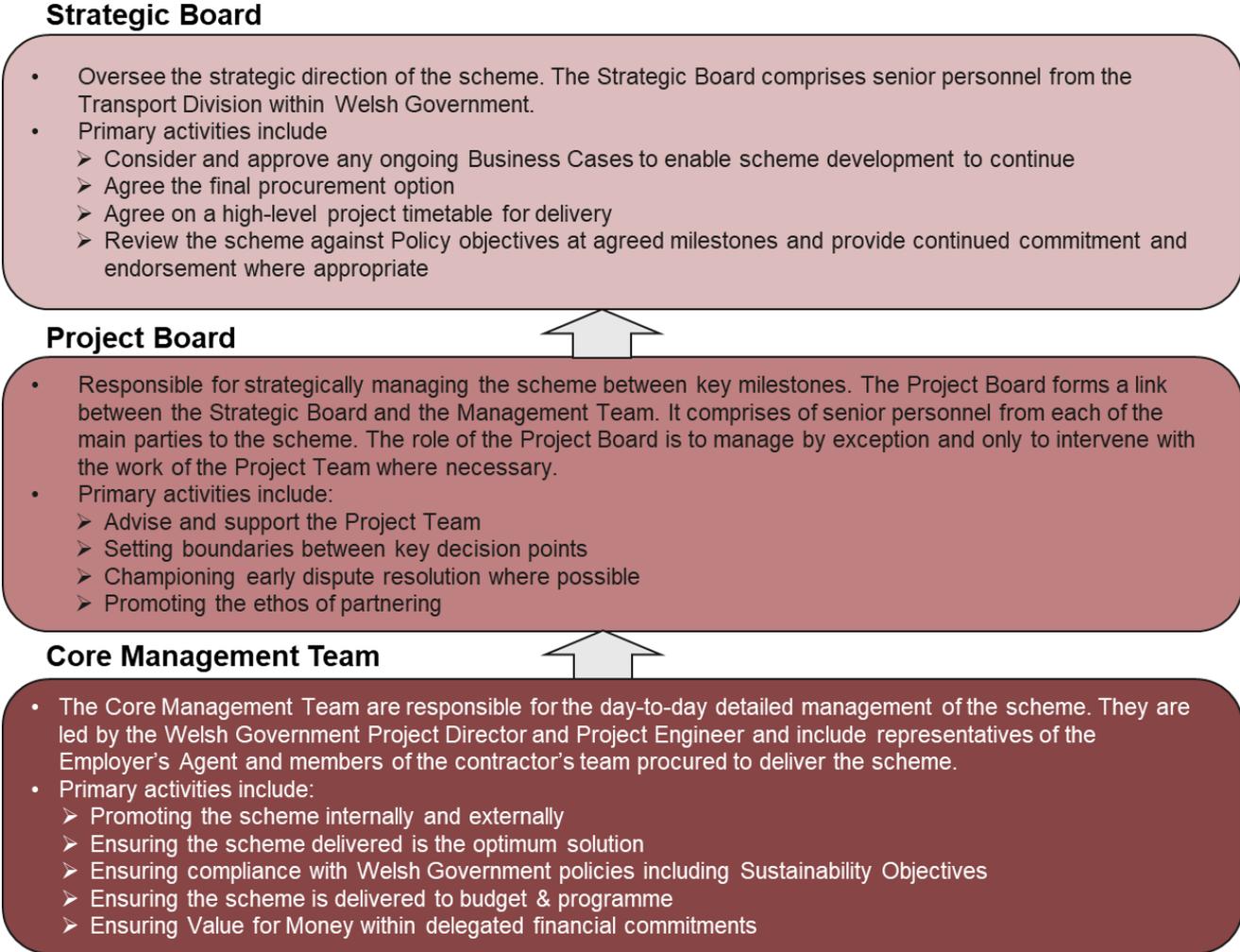


Source: Welsh Government, adapted by SQW

The governance structure and responsibilities for oversight of transport road projects is set out in Figure B.3. The Core Management Team reports to a Strategic Board which oversees the strategic direction of the scheme. The Strategic Board comprises senior personnel from the Transport Division within the Welsh Government.

The scheme also includes a Project Board responsible for strategically managing the scheme between key milestones. The Project Board forms a link between the Strategic Board and the Core Management Team. It comprises senior personnel from the Welsh Government and the contractors for each of the schemes.

**Figure B.3: The Welsh Government governance structure and responsibilities for highways projects**



Source: Welsh Government, adapted by SQW

## **Annex C: Topic guides for consultations**

### **Questions for Welsh Government Delivery Team**

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your background in relation to the A40 road project?
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date?

#### Project progress

2. How would you characterise project delivery progress to date, and why?
  - a. How close is the project to completion?
3. Is the project in line with the delivery plan, including key milestones?
  - a. Which key milestones had been achieved?
  - b. Had there been particular issues to overcome in meeting these milestones – internal to the project, and any external factors?
  - c. Which key milestones had been missed?
  - d. What issues led to milestones being missed?
4. At the end of August 2023, was the project in line with the spend profile?
  - a. If not, why not?
  - b. What issues, if any, had arisen around the spend profile?
5. Are there any external factors that have influenced, or will influence, the ability of the project to deliver against its original objectives (e.g. impact of COVID-19 on the wider economic conditions, availability of staff/contractor, impact of Brexit, etc.)?

#### Project management arrangements

6. Have there been any changes to project management processes since spring 2021? Probe on reporting mechanisms, risk management.
  - a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
7. To what extent have the project management arrangements been effective in supporting project delivery?
  - a. What have been the key strengths in project management?

- b. How has the effectiveness of project management evolved over time? What lessons (if any) have been learnt?
  - c. How could project management be improved in future projects?
8. Have there been any changes to the systems in place to monitor delivery?
- a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
9. To what extent have the monitoring systems supported the effective and efficient delivery of the operation? i.e. did the systems ensure the project was delivering on time and to resource?
- a. If not, why not? What improvements could be made in future projects?

### Cross Cutting Themes

#### Progress

10. To what extent has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives? Sustainable Development, Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming, and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion
- a. What has worked well/what has not worked well?
  - b. What problems have been identified and how have these been addressed?
11. Are there any external factors that have influenced the ability of the projects to deliver against their original CCT objectives?
12. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language through its activity?
- a. How, and to what extent, did the operation provide opportunities for people to use and develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace?
13. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?
14. From delivery to date, has there been any learning on good practice in environmental construction and supply chains?
15. What community benefits approaches have been applied for the operation?
- a. What outputs/outcomes has this led to? (e.g., numbers of apprentices etc)
  - b. Which local employment and training schemes (if any) have you managed to link in with?

- c. At what point in the project were these schemes engaged?
  - d. What has engagement with these schemes led to (no. of participants engaged etc.)?
  - e. Were there any approaches that were considered, but which were not taken forward? Why was that?
16. How has the inclusion of Active Travel interventions evolved over time and been embedded in the scheme?
17. [For contractors] How has delivering against the CCTs impacted your delivery, expectations and future plans?
18. Are there any lessons learned around how to embed the CCT principles into future projects (in light of the withdrawal of EU funding)?

#### CCT monitoring

19. Have there been any changes to the systems that are in place to monitor progress against the CCT objectives? Prompt on:
- a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
20. Were there processes in place to identify key barriers/enablers to achieving the CCTs?
- a. If yes, please can you provide more information? How were these addressed?
  - b. If no, why not? How were risks identified?
21. Are there ways in which the monitoring arrangements for the CCTs could be improved in future projects?
- a. If so, how?

#### Outputs/ outcomes

22. To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outputs?
- a. Which outputs has progress been made against? Why?
  - b. Which outputs has progress not been made against? Why?
23. [If applicable] To what extent is the operation likely to achieve its intended outcomes in the future?
- a. What are the reasons behind this?

24. Are there other outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been, or are being achieved?

- a. Locally – e.g. for the community
- b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity
- c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

#### Final reflections

25. Do you think the scheme represents value for money? Why/why not?

26. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery or management arrangements of the ERDF road operation?

27. As part of the final evaluation, we are looking to speak with a range of local stakeholders, including local authorities and community groups. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the outcomes that the operation is expected to deliver locally. Are there any contacts that you could put us in touch with?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for WEFO Cross Cutting Themes Team

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your background in relation to the A40 road project?
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date?
2. Are you aware of progress in the delivery of the operation? If so, how would you characterise project delivery progress to date, and why?
  - a. How close is the project to completion?

### Cross Cutting Themes

#### CCT monitoring

3. Have there been any changes to the systems that are in place to monitor progress against the CCT objectives since spring 2021?
  - a. If so, what changes have been made and why? How effective have these changes been?
4. Can you explain the systems that have been in place to monitor progress against the CCT objectives? Prompt on:
  - a. Has the delivery team regularly collected data on progress against Cross Cutting Themes objectives?
  - b. Has the delivery team provided CCT progress updates to Welsh Government/WEFO? If so, what data?
  - c. What CCT monitoring data has WEFO required? What format is this data requested?
  - d. Are you aware of CCT data that the delivery team/WG collects or reports on, that is not currently shared with WEFO?
5. Are there processes in place to identify key barriers/enablers to achieving the CCTs?
  - a. If yes, please can you provide more information? How are these addressed?
  - b. If no, why not? How are risks identified?
6. Are there ways in which the monitoring arrangements for the CCTs could be improved in future projects?
  - a. If so, how?

Progress (if relevant)

7. How have the CCTs been promoted, supported and implemented by the operation?
8. To your knowledge, to what extent has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives?
  - a. What has worked well/what has not worked well?
  - b. What problems have been identified and how have these been addressed?
9. Are there any external factors that have influenced the ability of the project to deliver against its original CCT objectives?
10. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language through its activity?
  - a. How, and to what extent, did the operation provide opportunities for people to use and develop their Welsh language skills in the workplace?
11. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?
12. From delivery to date, are there any good examples of or learning on good practice in environmental construction and supply chains?
13. What community benefits approaches have been/ will be applied for the operation?
  - a. What do you anticipate this leading to? (numbers of apprentices etc)
  - b. Which local employment and training schemes (if any) have you managed to link in with?
  - c. At what point in the project were these schemes engaged?
  - d. What has engagement with these schemes led to (no. of participants engaged etc.)?
  - e. Were there any approaches that were considered, but which were not taken forward? Why was that?
14. How has the inclusion of Active Travel interventions evolved over time and been embedded in the scheme?
15. Are there any lessons learned around how to embed the CCT principles into future projects (in light of the withdrawal of EU funding)?

## Final reflections

16. Do you think the scheme represents value for money? Why/why not?
17. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or management arrangements of the A40 road operation?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for strategic representatives from WG and regional/local partners

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your interests in relation to the A40 road project? Note that some consultees may not have been directly involved; their interests may be in the strategic implications of the operation (e.g. improved connectivity).
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date (if any)?

### Strategic alignment

2. How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider Welsh strategies/policies?  
*Probe on:*
  - a. Welsh Government's Prosperity for All strategy, including the Economic Action Plan (2017)
  - b. Cymraeg 2050
  - c. Wales Transport Strategy (2008)
  - d. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
  - e. 2014-20 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Operational Programme
  - f. Other
3. How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider plans/developments in the local areas, and in Wales more broadly – including with other Welsh Government and WEFO supported interventions? *Probe on:*
  - a. South West Wales
    - i. Swansea Bay City Deal
    - ii. Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone
    - iii. Economic Prioritisation Framework for Pembrokeshire
    - iv. Development at Milford Haven
    - v. Tourism attractions
  - b. Local authority strategies / policies – e.g. local transport plans and economic development strategies

## Cross Cutting Themes

4. [If known] To your knowledge, how has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives? Prompt on:
  - a. Sustainable Development
  - b. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming
  - c. Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion
5. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language?
6. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?
7. What community benefits has the operation delivered? E.g.
  - a. Local employment opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships, new entrant trainees)
  - b. Training opportunities
  - c. Local supply chain investment
  - d. Community engagement
  - e. Engagement with schools
8. How and to what extent has the operation delivered on Active Travel interventions?

## Outputs/ outcomes

9. [If relevant to consultee] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outputs?
  - a. Which outputs has progress been made against? Why?
  - b. Which outputs has progress not been made against? Why?
10. [If applicable] To what extent is the operation likely to achieve its intended outcomes in the future?
  - a. What are the reasons behind this?
11. Are there other outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:
  - a. Locally – e.g. for the community

b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity

c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

12. Are there any external factors that have influenced, or will influence, the ability of the project to deliver against its original objectives (e.g. impact of COVID-19 on the wider economic conditions, availability of staff/contractor, impact of Brexit, etc.)?

#### Final reflections

13. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or management arrangements for the A40 road operation?

14. As part of the final evaluation, we are looking to speak with a range of local stakeholders, including local authorities and community groups. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the outcomes that the operation is expected to deliver locally. Are there any contacts that you could put us in touch with?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for local authority representatives

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role and responsibilities?
  - a. How would you characterise your area? Probe on functioning of local economy, key strengths, key challenges.
2. Please can you give me an overview of your role and your background in relation to the A40 road project?
  - a. What has your involvement been with the project to date?
  - b. Are you aware of any issues with the A40 that needed addressing?

### Anticipated benefits

3. What would you say the A40 operation is looking to achieve? For whom? *Probe on:*
  - a. Economic benefits – e.g. access to jobs and markets, business/private investment
  - b. Social benefits – e.g. local employment and skills development
  - c. Environmental benefits – e.g. reduced emissions and improved air quality, increased use of cycleways/footpaths
  - d. Other benefits?
4. When can these benefits be reasonably expected?
5. How is the road scheme expected to bring about these benefits? *Probe on:*
  - a. What other factors is this logic dependent on (i.e. changes in road user behaviour)?
  - b. Are there other activities taking place locally (outside of the project/s directly) that may also contribute to the outcomes you have described?
6. Are there any disbenefits of the road scheme? Please explain.
7. How will the A40 operation impact on you/ your area directly? Prompt on:
  - a. Improved connectivity
  - b. Access to markets
  - c. Access to talent
  - d. Improved journey times and reliability (potentially leading to greater efficient/productivity)

e. Other

8. When do you anticipate those impacts will be realised?

#### Project progress

9. To what extent has the Welsh Government/contractor kept the local authority informed on progress of the scheme?

a. How has the Welsh Government/contractor communicated?

b. Could this be improved in future schemes?

10. How would you characterise project delivery progress to date, and why?

11. [If known] Is the project in line with the delivery plan, including key milestones?

a. Which key milestones have been achieved?

b. Have there been particular issues to overcome in meeting these milestones – internal to the project, and any external factors?

c. Which key milestones have been missed? What issues led to milestones being missed?

12. Are there any external factors that have influenced, or will influence, the ability of the project to deliver against its original objectives? (e.g. impact of COVID-19 on the wider economic conditions, availability of staff/contractor, impact of Brexit, etc.)?

#### Strategic alignment

13. [If not already spoken about] How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider Welsh strategies/policies? Probe on:

a. Welsh Government's Prosperity for All strategy, including the Economic Action Plan (2017)

b. Cymraeg 2050

c. Wales Transport Strategy (2008)

d. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)

e. 2014-20 ERDF West Wales and the Valleys Operational Programme

f. Other

14. How does the scheme align, in principle, to wider plans/developments in the local area, and in Wales more broadly – including with other Welsh Government and WEFO supported interventions? Probe on:

- a. South West Wales
  - i. Swansea Bay City Deal
  - ii. Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone
  - iii. Economic Prioritisation Framework for Pembrokeshire
  - iv. Development at Milford Haven
  - v. Tourism attractions
- b. Local authority strategies / policies – e.g., local transport plans and economic development strategies
- c. Any plans relating to key sites or proposed developments

15. How important is well-functioning road infrastructure to:

- a. The local economy
- b. Tourism
- c. The local community

(probe for examples of specific issues raised by, for example, businesses and community representatives over time)

#### Cross Cutting Themes

16. [If known] To your knowledge, how has the operation implemented and delivered the CCT objectives? Prompt on:

- a. Sustainable Development
- b. Equal Opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming
- c. Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion

17. How and to what extent, has the operation provided opportunities to promote the Welsh language?

18. How has the operation contributed to the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act?

19. What community benefits has the operation delivered? E.g.

- a. Local employment opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships, new entrant trainees)
- b. Training opportunities

- c. Local supply chain investment
- d. Community engagement
- e. Engagement with schools

20. Are you aware of any activities/progress made in these areas?

21. How and to what extent has the operation delivered Active Travel interventions?

#### Outputs/ outcomes

22. To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outputs?

- a. Which outputs has greater progress been made against? Why?
- b. Which outputs has greater progress not been made against? Why?

23. [If applicable] To what extent is the operation likely to achieve its intended outcomes in the future?

- a. What are the reasons behind this?

24. Are there other benefits / outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:

- a. Locally – e.g. for the community
- b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity
- c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

#### Final reflections

25. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or management arrangements for the A40 road operation?

26. As part of the final evaluation, we are looking to speak with a range of local stakeholders, including community groups. The purpose of the consultations is to understand the outcomes that the operation is expected to deliver locally. Are there any contacts that you could put us in touch with?

[Thank and close]

## Questions for community representatives/ organisations

1. Please can you give me an overview of your role in the community and your background?
2. Please can you give me an overview of your knowledge of the A40 road project?
  - a. When did you first become aware of the A40 operation and how?
3. Has delivery of the A40 operation progressed as you expected?
  - a. If not, why not?

### Anticipated benefits

4. What would you say the A40 operation is looking to achieve? For whom? *Probe on:*
  - a. Economic benefits – e.g. access to jobs and markets, business/private investment
  - b. Social benefits – e.g. local employment and skills development
  - c. Environmental benefits – e.g. reduced emissions and improved air quality, increased use of cycleways/footpaths
  - d. Other benefits?
5. When can these benefits be reasonably expected?
6. How is the road scheme expected to bring about these benefits? *Probe on:*
  - a. What other factors is this logic dependent on (i.e. changes in road user behaviour)?
  - b. Are there other activities taking place locally (outside of the projects directly) that may also contribute to the outcomes you have described?
7. Are there any disbenefits of the road scheme? Please explain.
8. How will the A40 operation impact on you/your community directly? Prompt on:
  - a. Access to amenities
  - b. Access to leisure
  - c. Access to job markets
  - d. Access to education
  - e. Improved journey times and reliability
  - f. Reduced congestion
  - g. Environmental benefits

h. Safer highways

i. Other

9. When do you anticipate those impacts will be realised?

#### Progress against outcomes

10. [If applicable] To what extent has progress been made in the achievement of the operation outcomes?

a. Which outcomes has greater progress been made against? Why?

b. Which outcomes has progress not been made against? Why?

11. Are there other benefits / outcomes not captured in the business case or discussed that have been or are being achieved? Prompt on:

a. Locally – e.g. for the community (including support for skills and employment opportunities as part of the development process)

b. Regionally – e.g. for connectivity

c. Nationally – e.g. for the economy

#### Final reflections

12. Do you have any other reflections regarding the delivery progress or the benefits of the A40 operation?

[Thank and close]