

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**20 MARCH 2007****REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION****Report by Regional Transport Strategy Steering Group**

This report updates the Partnership Board on the Public Consultation on the Draft Regional Transport Strategy and invites the Partnership to consider arrangements for approving the finalised Strategy for submission to the Transport Minister by 31 March 2007.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Partnership Board :-

- (i) notes the outcome of public consultation on the Draft Regional Transport Strategy, as summarised in the report and presented in detail to the Regional Transport Strategy Workshop on 20th March 2007;
- (ii) considers proposed amendments to the Draft Regional Transport Strategy, as presented to the Regional Transport Strategy Workshop on 20th March 2007;
- (iii) considers and agrees arrangements for approving the finalised Regional Transport Strategy and Indicative Delivery Plan for submission to the Transport Minister by 31st March 2007; and
- (iv) agrees to consider the finalised RTS Consultation Report at its meeting on 24th April 2007.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 16th January 2007 the Partnership Board approved the Draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and agreed arrangements for public consultation on the Draft RTS (Report RTP/07/03 refers). The formal public consultation period commenced on 22nd January 2007 and extends for 8 weeks until 16th March 2007. In parallel with public consultation on the RTS, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report was submitted to the SEA Gateway, consisting of Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.
- 2.2 At a Workshop on 20th February the Partnership Board received a progress update on the consultation process and on work by the MVA Consultancy on appraising the Draft Strategy, in accordance with the principles of the Scottish Executive's Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), and on the preparation of the RTS Delivery Plan, which is required to accompany the submitted RTS.

3. DISCUSSION

Consultation Process

- 3.1 The RTS consultation was publicised by placing statutory Public Notices in the Dundee Courier and Stirling Observer during week commencing 22nd January and issuing Press Releases, via Councils, to regional and local press and media, the content of which was agreed in advance with Council Public Relations Officers.
- 3.2 Copies of the full RTS document were forwarded to statutory consultees (constituent Councils, Health Boards, Community Planning Partnerships, SEA Gateway), all other Regional Transport Partnerships, and the Scottish Executive and Transport Scotland. Copies were also made available for public inspection in main Council offices and in all Public Libraries. Invitations to comment on the Draft RTS were sent direct to the 197 groups and individuals who form the RTS Key Stakeholders Grouping. All consultees were encouraged to access and respond to the consultation, by the 16th March deadline, via the TACTRAN website www.tactran.gov.uk. A questionnaire, designed to assist submission of views on the Preferred Strategy, proposed Interventions and other aspects of the Draft RTS was available on the website.
- 3.3 A Summary RTS was also produced and copies of this were sent to all Community Councils across the TACTRAN area. Copies of the Summary and Full versions of the Draft RTS have also been issued to individuals and groups on request.
- 3.4 As agreed by the Partnership Board on 20th February 2007, a series of themed Focus Groups were held with Key Stakeholders on 8th and 13th February, covering walking and cycling; public transport; freight; health; national parks and tourism; environment; economy and enterprise; and disability and other special needs interests. All Key Stakeholders were also invited to a consultation Workshop on 28th February.
- 3.5 Responses received to the public consultation to date, and outcomes from the Key Stakeholder events referred to above, are currently being compiled into a Consultation Responses Paper, for consideration by the Partnership Board at the RTS Workshop on 20th March 2007. Papers, consisting of summarised comments received to date and a recommended response to each comment received, will be circulated to Board members ahead of the Workshop on 20th March, along with a summary of the outcomes from the Stakeholders Focus Groups and Workshop. In the meantime a summary of responses received by 9th March is given below.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 3.6 The comments of statutory consultees are summarised below. Detailed comments will be included in the papers to be issued for the RTS Workshop. A number of requests for additional or amended Interventions have been submitted. These are currently being appraised by MVA in line with the approach adopted in developing the Preferred Strategy and the implications will be presented for consideration at the RTS Workshop.

Angus Council

- 3.7 Angus Council's Infrastructure Services Committee considered the Draft RTS on 8th March 2007. The Committee generally welcomed the development of the RTS. Suggestions for a number of amendments to the clarity and presentation of the document have been made. There is strong support for a number of proposed interventions, including the TERS rail proposals; improvements to the A92 north of Arbroath; improvements to Dundee station, including multi-modal interchange; Park & Ride; improvements to Port and Harbour access, including on A935; and integrated ticketing. The importance of ensuring that the needs of rural areas are fully addressed is highlighted and clarification is sought on TACTRAN's specific proposals in relation to developing Demand Management and a Regional Parking Policy Framework, and on inclusion of specific projects in the Reference Case (i.e. committed projects).
- 3.8 Angus Council has indicated support for the need to improve the A90 through Dundee as a high priority, but does not support a new Outer Bypass of Dundee within Angus Council's administrative boundaries. There is support for removal of tolls on the Tay Bridge to relieve congestion and air quality problems in Dundee. Angus Council has also requested that the RTS includes separate proposed interventions for improving access to Montrose and Dundee Ports and Perth Harbour.

Dundee City Council

- 3.9 Dundee City Council's Planning and Transportation Committee considered the Draft RTS on 12th March 2007. The Committee agreed to strongly support the Preferred Strategy as being the correct strategy for the TACTRAN Region and strongly supports the RTS Objectives and analysis of Issues. Dundee City also strongly agrees with the list of Interventions and Actions which form the Preferred Strategy. The Council strongly supports the case for the TERS rail proposals; improvements to Dundee rail station; the A90 Outer Bypass of Dundee, including investigation of all options for the A90 corridor through Dundee; and Park and Ride on the strategic network being included in the Strategic Transport Projects Review.
- 3.10 Dundee City Council has requested that the RTS includes a statement supporting the abolition of tolls on the Tay Bridge and, if this is not the outcome of the Tolled Bridges Review, that the RTS supports relocation of the toll plaza to the south end of the bridge, with supporting Park & Ride/Park & Choose measures to reduce the volume of single occupancy cars accessing the City for commuter and other travel demands.

Perth & Kinross Council

- 3.11 Perth & Kinross Council's Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee considered the Draft RTS on 7th March 2007. The Committee welcomed and supported the Preferred Strategy as representing a balanced approach to meeting the Objectives and addressing the key Issues. The Committee indicated full support for a number of the proposed Interventions, including the proposed new Tay Bridge and link between A94 and A9; new bus/rail interchange at Perth rail station; improvements to Perth Harbour; new Park & Ride sites; and development of sustainable options, including seeking TACTRAN support for a proposed pedestrian/cycle bridge linking Scone and Perth City Centre as a potential landmark urban cycling measure. The Committee has requested

clarification on TACTRAN's proposals for establishing Regional Best Practice in transportation aspects of Development Management and on developing a Regional Parking Policy Framework.

- 3.12 Perth & Kinross has requested inclusion of additional Interventions for road safety improvements to the A9 north and south of Perth, including additional dualled sections and grade separated junctions; improvements to the A977 to address congestion and road safety issues on this route; improvements to the Inverness – Perth – Edinburgh rail service; and consideration of Errol as a potential alternative air site, if proposed improvements at Dundee Airport are unable to be achieved.

Stirling Council

- 3.13 Stirling Council considered the Draft RTS at its meeting on 15th March. The Council agreed to strongly support the Preferred Strategy as being the correct strategy for the TACTRAN region and strongly agrees with the Objectives and analysis of key Issues and feels that an appropriate balance of urban and rural issues has been achieved. Stirling Council also strongly agrees with the list of Interventions and Actions which form the Preferred Strategy. There is support for the proposed Interventions on TERS rail proposals, extended to Dunblane, Stirling, and Glasgow; the need for additional car parking at Dunblane station; upgrading of Stirling Bus Station and integration with the rail station; bus and rail based Park and Ride, including at Craigforth, Stirling and at Dunblane and Bannockburn stations; new link road between A84 and A9; new M9/A811 interchange; and measures to address safety and congestion hotspots on the A9/M9, all being included in the Strategic Transport Projects Review.
- 3.14 The Council has requested an additional Intervention supporting proposed operation of 6-car trains between Dunblane/Alloa/Stirling and Glasgow/Edinburgh, with associated infrastructure upgrading works. The need to recognise existing joint working arrangements with Clackmannanshire and Falkirk is also highlighted.

Health Boards and Community Planning Partnerships

- 3.15 At the time of writing no comments have been received from Health Boards or Community Planning Partnerships. A reminder letter has been sent to these statutory consultees, indicating that TACTRAN is keen to have their views on the Draft RTS and reminding them that responses must be submitted by 16th March. Any responses received will be reported orally.

Scottish Executive and Transport Scotland

- 3.16 As part of the RTS Assurance Process the Scottish Executive and Transport Scotland will be submitting comments on the Draft RTS. At the time of writing this formal response is awaited. It is anticipated that the Executive's and Transport Scotland's comments will be received in time to be issued to Board Members ahead of the RTS Workshop on 20th March.
- 3.17 Informal comments indicate that the Executive is content that TACTRAN has broadly followed the RTS Guidance, and recognises that some elements of the process have required to be carried out in parallel, in order to meet the 31st March deadline. It is understood that the Executive feels that the Draft RTS sits well with National Transport Strategy and wider Scottish Executive objectives,

particularly growing the economy, although more emphasis is likely to be sought in relation to buses, in accordance with the NTS Buses Action Plan.

- 3.18 It is likely that some amendments to the final RTS will be recommended in relation to categorisation of proposed Interventions mindful of national and regional boundaries; tempering national project aspirations with likely availability of funds and other resources; the need to prioritise regional proposals on the basis of available funding and resources; and the need for appraisal of options using STAG, before commitments are made to specific interventions.
- 3.19 At its meeting on 19th December 2006 the Partnership agreed to write to the Transport Minister, updating him on progress with the development of the RTS. A letter was sent to the Minister under the signature of the Chair on 11 January, as previously copied to all Board members. The Minister responded on 15th February, indicating his appreciation of the efforts being made by TACTRAN in seeking to comply with the 31st March deadline and hoping that this can be achieved (see Appendix).

SEA Gateway

- 3.20 As indicated above, the SEA Environmental Report was submitted to the SEA Gateway on 22nd January, with a request that the Gateway submit responses earlier than the 16th March deadline, if at all possible. At the time of writing responses from the Gateway are awaited and will be reported orally.

Regional Transport Partnerships

NESTRANS

- 3.21 Nestrans has indicated support for the Draft RTS interventions/proposals on fast hourly rail services between Aberdeen – Edinburgh with few stops; improving traffic flows on the A90 through/around Dundee; developing sustainable transport options for improved access to the Cairngorms National Park; and joint RTP working on developing Integrated Ticketing and on Freight initiatives, including Freight Quality partnerships.

Shetland Transport Partnership

- 3.22 STP has indicated support for interventions/proposals for encouraging tourist travel by sustainable modes; fast hourly rail service Aberdeen – Edinburgh complemented by semi-fast Dundee – Edinburgh service; and joint RTP working on Integrated Ticketing. STP has also noted the proposed improvements to the A90 around Dundee as being of benefit to freight hauliers accessing the Scottish mainland via Aberdeen harbour. STP has also indicated a desire to share experience on Demand Responsive Transport.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

- 3.23 SPT has indicated willingness to develop joint approaches to common transport interests and objectives.
- 3.24 Responses are awaited from HITRANS, SEStran and the South West Scotland Transport Partnership.

Consultation Questionnaire

- 3.25 Of 21 responses received to date, 86% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the RTS Objectives; 75% agree or strongly agree with the analysis of Issues; 83% agree or strongly agree with the Preferred Strategy; and 80% agree or strongly agree with the Preferred Strategy Interventions. There is less support for the proposed Targets, with 50% feeling that these are not ambitious enough. A significant minority of 24% feel that the RTS might impact negatively on certain “equality” groups.
- 3.26 Whilst the above statistics are based on a limited number of responses, there appears to be an encouraging level of support for the Preferred Strategy and associated proposed Interventions. Updated statistics will be presented to the RTS Workshop on 20th March.

Key Stakeholders and General Public

- 3.27 Responses from Key Stakeholders, Community Councils and the general public received up to 9th March are being incorporated in the Consultation Response Papers which will be considered at the RTS Workshop on 20th March. An update on responses received between 9th and 16th March will be provided at the Workshop.
- 3.28 In general, responses to date appear to be broadly supportive of the Preferred Strategy although, as might be anticipated, specific interest groups are tending to respond requesting more emphasis on their particular areas of interest – e.g. cycling, freight etc.

RTS Consultation Report

- 3.29 The RTS Guidance anticipates that a Consultation Report, setting out the process followed in consulting on the development of the RTS and the outcomes and influences this has had on the finalised RTS, will be submitted alongside the finalised strategy. Recognising the significant amount of work involved in finalising the Consultation Report, Scottish Executive officials have agreed that this can be submitted after the 31st March deadline. It is proposed that the Consultation Report is submitted for approval by the Partnership Board at its meeting on 24th April. Clearly all responses received during the consultation will require to be considered and addressed during the finalisation of the RTS for submission to the Minister.

Strategy Appraisal and Delivery Plan

- 3.30 The RTS Guidance indicates that, alongside the finalised RTS, RTP's should also submit a STAG-based appraisal of the Strategy, and a Delivery/Implementation Plan which sets out a 3-year costed implementation programme and proposed Investment Plan for the first 5 – 10 years. The Guidance also indicates that the Delivery Plan should identify delivery agencies and any powers/functions which the RTP may require to ensure delivery of the RTS.
- 3.31 These requirements were the subject of discussion between RTP's and the Scottish Executive at a meeting of the Transport Partnerships Liaison Group (TPLG) on 5th March. Executive officials have recognised the difficulty all RTP's face in compiling detailed Delivery and Investment Plans at this relatively

early stage of RTS development. It was also accepted that identifying delivery agencies and possible powers/functions which may be needed by RTP's are matters which require detailed consultation with constituent Councils and other potential delivery partners, which cannot be undertaken within the timescale available for completion and submission of strategies. This has also been noted by Councils in their responses to the Draft RTS. Accordingly the Executive officials have indicated that they would be content to receive an Indicative Delivery Plan by 31st March, which sets out anticipated Revenue and Capital implications and requirements, recognising that detailed costings and consideration of delivery, and any related transfer of powers and functions to RTP's, will require detailed consultation with Councils and further development and appraisal of proposed Interventions.

- 3.32 An Indicative Delivery Pan is being developed and will also be submitted for consideration at the Workshop on 20th March. A progress update on the STAG appraisal work, which is ongoing, will also be provided by the MVA Consultancy at the Workshop.

Approval of Finalised RTS

- 3.33 At the time of writing a total of 44 responses to the public consultation have been received. Despite encouragement to consultees to submit responses ahead of the 16th March deadline, a significant number of responses may be received close to the end of the consultation period. It is, therefore, likely that a significant amount of information will require to be presented for consideration at the RTS Workshop on 20th March.
- 3.34 At its meeting on 20th February the Partnership agreed to hold an additional meeting on 27th March, if this was required to address issues arising from the Public Consultation and/or to ensure completion and submission of the finalised RTS by 31st March. Depending on progress on 20th March and if required, 27th March, it may be possible to gain approval of the finalised RTS on 27th March, failing which it may be necessary to consider delegating authority to the Executive Committee to approve the finalised RTS for submission to the Minister. Options for approving the finalised RTS will be considered on 20th March.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with Council representatives on the RTS Steering Group and Scottish Executive officials.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of developing the RTS with consultancy support are being met from Scottish Executive grant funding totalling £265,000 which has been allocated during the current financial year for this purpose. The constituent Councils are also making a significant resource contribution through officer input to the RTS Steering Group and supporting the consultants.

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For further information email ericguthrie@pkc.gov.uk or tel. 01738 47544

NOTE

Background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report :-

Draft TACTRAN Regional Transport Strategy
Responses to Public Consultation on Draft Regional Transport Strategy (various)