

**TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP****24 APRIL 2007****DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

This report updates the Partnership Board on various matters of interest and relevance to the work of the Partnership and seeks agreement to participate in a proposed Timber Transport Project.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Partnership Board :-

- (i) agrees to delegate authority to the Director to secure ad-hoc external support from CDU Ltd. as required;
- (ii) agrees to participate in a proposed Timber Transport Project being led by the Confederation of Forest Industries, at a cost of £10,000; and
- (iii) otherwise notes the updates given in the report.

**2 DISCUSSION****External Support**

- 2.1 At it's meeting on 31 January 2006 the Partnership Board agreed to retain the services of CDU Ltd. to provide administrative and management support until 31 March 2007, with continuation beyond that period to be subject to review (Agenda Item 6 refers).
- 2.2 During 2006/07 CDU Ltd. have provided secretariat support for meetings of the officer Management Team and other meetings; have assisted in the drafting and development of various Corporate Governance policies and papers; developed and maintained the Partnership's website; and have provided other ad-hoc administrative and management support and advice, as required.
- 2.3 Many of the functions and duties originally provided by CDU Ltd. now fall within the remit of the Office Manager/PA, who will take on responsibility for secretariat support for future officer liaison meetings; management and updating of the TACTRAN website; and providing other management/administrative support to the Partnership. As a consequence the services of CDU Ltd. are no longer required on an ongoing basis and it is proposed that the previous contract is not renewed.

- 2.4 The specialist expertise provided by CDU Ltd. may be of assistance in establishing the new Partnership Board after the May elections. A number of Corporate Governance policies and papers also remain to be developed, which it may be beneficial to seek external support with. It is proposed that the Director is authorised to retain services from CDU Ltd., on an ad-hoc basis, to provide administrative advice and expertise as required. It is envisaged that the costs of any such support would not exceed £5,000, which would be met from unallocated Reserves of £10,000 in the approved 2007/08 Revenue Budget.

### **Strategic Transport Projects Review**

- 2.5 A progress update on the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) was provided in the Director's Report of 20 February 2007 (Report RTP/07/09 refers). At that time it was noted that a meeting of the RTP's Reference Group in mid-February, when Transport Scotland were expected to provide an update on progress with the STPR, had been postponed.
- 2.6 A key purpose of the Regional Transport Strategy is to identify potential projects for appraisal and funding through the STPR. A meeting was held with Transport Scotland's consultants on 31 January, at which time details of relevant proposals within the Draft RTS were provided to the Executive's consultants. A copy of the finalised RTS has now been provided to Transport Scotland.
- 2.7 Transport Scotland have advised that a meeting of the RTP's Reference Group will be held during mid-May, followed by meetings with RTP's to discuss linkages between the ongoing work on STPR and the submitted Regional Transport Strategies. Further developments will be reported to a future meeting.

### **Future Funding for Rural Public Passenger Transport and Demand Responsive Transport**

- 2.8 At its meeting on 16 January 2007 the Partnership Board was advised of an announcement by the Transport Minister on 10 January, that the existing Rural Public Passenger Transport (RPPT), Rural Community Transport Initiative (RCTI) and Rural and Urban Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) schemes, and associated funding to Councils, Community Transport and DRT providers, will end on 31 March 2008. Related funding streams are to be merged into a single budget and transferred to RTP's from 1 April 2008.
- 2.9 As was noted on 16 January, these proposals have number of operational and management implications for RTP's, Councils and existing DRT/CT providers. CoSLA Leaders met recently with the Transport Minister to raise concerns about the proposed arrangements. The Minister confirmed the decision to merge the existing funds into a single budget. He also invited RTP's and CoSLA to consider alternative arrangements for managing the grant funding post-April 2008.

- 2.10 An officer meeting is currently being sought with CoSLA, SCOTS and ATCO, to explore possible alternative approaches to managing the grant funding concerned. The outcome of these discussions will be the subject of further discussion with Executive officials at the next meeting of the Transport Partnerships Liaison Group on 5 June and a meeting with the Executive and local authority representatives on 20 June, prior to consideration by the Joint RTP Chairs Forum on 28 June. The outcome of these discussions and the implications for TACTRAN and constituent Councils will be reported to a future meeting.

### **InterCity East Coast Rail Franchise**

- 2.11 At its meeting on 20 February 2007 the Partnership Board approved a response to a Department for Transport(DfT) consultation on the re-franchising of the InterCity East Coast (ICEC) rail service between Scotland and London.
- 2.12 On 20 February the DfT announced that Arriva plc, FirstGroup plc, Virgin-Stagecoach and NXEC Trains Ltd (National Express Group) have been shortlisted to bid for the renewed ICEC franchise. Bidders are in the process of making contact with stakeholders and, in response to these approaches, copies of the Partnership's response to the earlier DfT consultation have been provided.
- 2.13 Meetings are likely to be held over the next few weeks with prospective franchisees to discuss TACTRAN's aspirations and expectations for the new franchise. Further developments will be reported to a future meeting.

### **Proposed Timber Transport Project**

- 2.14 An approach has been received from the Confederation of Forest Industries (ConFor) and North East Scotland Rail Freight Development Group (NESRFDG) seeking support for a proposed project, which aims to identify opportunities to facilitate the movement of timber by rail and sea.
- 2.15 The project outputs include :-
- investigation of and report on infrastructure opportunities at supply and processor locations, and identification of potential infrastructure projects qualifying for Freight Facilities Grant funding;
  - a report identifying practically feasible timber rail flows, including removal of existing barriers;
  - facilitation of key forestry industry players to coordinate potential flows;
  - facilitation between the timber industry, rail and maritime freight operators to generate viable flows

- 2.16 The proposed project fits well with a number of areas of the TACTRAN RTS, including addressing the operational and environmental impacts of timber transport by road; investigating the potential for regional freight facilities; and developing the role of ports and harbours for multi-modal freight movement.
- 2.17 ConFor are seeking 50% grant funding from the Strategic Timber Transport Fund. They advise that they have already secured contributions of £10,000 from SESTRAN, SWESTRAN and SPT, have indicated an expectation of similar contributions from NESTRANS and HITRANS, and are seeking a similar contribution from TACTRAN. Other contributions are anticipated from the freight sector.
- 2.18 Consultations have taken place with constituent Councils and SET, all of whom are supportive of TACTRAN participating in the proposed project. It is recommended that TACTRAN participates in the project, and makes a contribution of £10,000, to be funded in two instalments of £5,000 in the current and next financial years. The 2007/08 costs can be met from the recently announced Scottish Executive Grant of £320,000, for development of the RTS, as discussed in the separate Financial Update report by the Treasurer. Provision for the contribution of £5,000 next financial year will require to be made within the 2008/09 Revenue Budget. These contributions would be contingent on TACTRAN having representation on the Project Steering Group.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The financial implications of securing CDU Ltd. to assist with ad-hoc administrative support, as required, and participating in the proposed Timber Transport Project can be accommodated within the approved 2007/08 Revenue budget, as detailed in the report.

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### **NOTE**

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.