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16<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Dear Dr Rands,

### **RSE Inquiry into Facing up to Climate Change**

Your invitation to submit comments to the Society's Inquiry was considered by the Tactran Partnership Board at its meeting on 16 March 2010, when the Partnership agreed to submit the following response.

#### General Comments

Tactran welcomes the opportunity to comment on the RSE's Inquiry. Our Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) aims to deliver a transport system which is environmentally sustainable. Promoting environmental sustainability is one of the 3 key strategic themes which underpin the RTS and one of our 6 "high level" RTS Objectives is to "*ensure that the transport system contributes to safeguarding the environment and promotes opportunities for environmental improvement*". Specific RTS sub-Objectives relating to the environment are :-

- *to contribute to the achievement of Scottish National targets and obligations on reducing greenhouse gas emissions;*
- *to promote a transport system that respects both the natural and built environments;*
- *to promote a shift towards more sustainable transport modes.*

In addition to the contribution we seek to make through development and implementation of the RTS, Tactran is a statutory Community Planning Partner and signatory to the Single Outcome Agreements covering our 4 partner Councils areas – Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling. We are committed to working with Councils and other Community Planning partners to address the impacts of Climate Change, including supporting SOA actions to reduce carbon footprint. The key strands of the RTS, including our regional Walking & Cycling Strategy, Buses Strategy, Travel Information Strategy, Park & Ride strategy and related Action Plans, identify measures which can support CPPs in achieving Local and National Outcomes on the environment, by promoting more sustainable travel solutions and choices for the movement of both people and goods through and within our region.

I attended the RSE's recent regional consultation event at Dundee on 14 January 2010, when a number of the Panel speakers made reference to the importance of addressing Climate Change and supporting actions at a regional level. Tactran fully supports this view given that the environmental impacts of transport and transport-related activity, and the solutions

required to address these, are seldom confined to a single local authority area. Mention was made that the Inquiry Panel had been meeting earlier in the day with representatives of Dundee City Council to discuss these issues. Given the acknowledgment that these issues need to be addressed at a regional level, we would have welcomed the opportunity to engage directly with the Inquiry team during its visit, to better inform you on the work which is being undertaken at a regional level. During the Question and Answer session there were a number of points and issues raised regarding the need for better transport options and solutions – for example the need for Park & Ride around Dundee; availability of better public transport alternatives; and addressing the relative costs of private and public transport – where there did not seem to be an awareness amongst the Panel of the significant amount of work currently being done by Tactran and its partners on these sorts of initiatives. Unfortunately the format of the event did not allow for informed input from the audience in response to such questions. Will there be an opportunity for Regional Transport Partnerships, either individually or collectively, to engage with the Inquiry team at a later stage?

Turning to the specific questions set by the Inquiry, Tactran's response is as follows :-

*Do you perceive the changing weather patterns in Scotland and globally as affecting you and/or your organisation ?*

Yes. As outlined above the need to address the causes and effects of Climate Change, through promoting and implementing measures aimed at reducing transport's contribution at a regional level, has been a key influence in the development of the RTS. The majority of work the Partnership is currently pursuing, and will continue to be engaged in, is aimed at delivering more sustainable transport solutions and options for both passengers and freight.

As a "Model 1" RTP Tactran is not currently a direct deliverer of front line roads and transport services. However our partner Councils and other Community Planning partners are significantly affected by the effects of Climate Change, changing weather patterns and other events which impact on winter and general infrastructure maintenance, flooding events etc. Recent experience and trends suggest that the severity and incidence of extreme weather related events, and the associated disruption and damage caused to transport infrastructure and services, are likely to be a continuing pressure on roads and transport authorities for the foreseeable future.

*What are the impacts of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act on the goals and activities of your organisation in terms of investment and exposure to risk ?*

As indicated above, one of the RTS Objectives is to "contribute to the achievement of Scottish national targets and obligations on greenhouse gas emissions". The RTS was drafted and approved prior to the adoption of the Climate Change Act and associated targets for emissions reduction. The Act, and its associated statutory obligations, have the potential to generally reinforce the goals and activities of the Partnership, by placing greater emphasis on the need for national, regional and local commitment to delivering actions and interventions within the RTS, and related RTS Delivery Plan, which can in turn contribute to achieving statutory Climate Change targets. The Partnership will consider any need to review its priorities in response to awaited Government Guidance on implementation of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, including any new duties or obligations imposed by Government.

The RTS Delivery Plan sets out a comprehensive range of proposed Interventions, across all modes of transport, which are required to deliver the RTS over the 15 year period 2008 – 2023. This has been developed on the basis of evaluating how each project contributes towards RTS objectives and sub-objectives and, therefore, reflects the aim of meeting obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The priorities within the RTS Delivery Plan will be reviewed in terms of their continuing fit with emerging SOA Action Plans, particularly in

relation to SOA Outcomes on reducing carbon footprint, and also their implementability in terms of resource availability.

The main risks are associated with the availability of Capital and Revenue finance to support delivery of the RTS. Transport is recognised to be a significant and increasing contributor to CO2 emissions but removal of the majority of ring-fenced Capital and Revenue funding for transport has generally constrained the ability to secure partnership funding to support delivery of regional transport priorities. If the Partnership, and the public sector generally, is going to be able to play its expected role in meeting Climate Change targets for reducing transport emissions, an increase in the level of funding currently being allocated towards supporting more sustainable transport solutions nationally and regionally is likely to be needed.

*What do you plan to do in response to these factors over the next 5 – 10 years ?*

As indicated above the RTS and Delivery Plan have been very much developed with the aim of contributing to Climate Change and broader sustainability objectives in mind. The RTS is scheduled for comprehensive review every 4 years with the first such review planned for completion by mid-2012. Review, development and implementation of the RTS will continue to be undertaken in close collaboration with Councils, CPPs, Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, transport operators and other key stakeholders, to seek to ensure that the RTS and Delivery Plan reflect national and local priorities, including agreed national and local targets relating to Climate Change. The next review of the RTS will be informed and heavily influenced by the availability of resources to support its implementation.

*How integrated is your response with other organisations in similar or related fields ?*

RTPs provide a focus for integrated partnership working with constituent Councils and other public and private sector stakeholders, including other RTPs. The Scottish Government/Local Government Concordat placed a new emphasis on public sector partnership working. Tactran is engaging actively with the CPPs in each Council area, with a view to ensuring that RTS actions and priorities are closely aligned with those in emerging Single Outcome Agreement Action Plans. The RTS Monitoring Framework has also been developed to enable RTS Indicators and Targets to link with those in SOA monitoring frameworks. We are also working closely with Transport Scotland to ensure that regional transport priorities and national priorities identified within the National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Projects Review are progressed in an integrated manner.

*What are the main barriers to change for you and/or your organisation ?*

Securing availability of the necessary Capital and Revenue funding to support delivery of the RTS is likely to be the main challenge in an increasingly constrained public sector funding environment. Whilst opportunities for securing other partnership funding will continue to be explored, the competing demands on ever scarcer public sector finance, locally and nationally, will remain a significant challenge. Securing political commitment to delivery of regional transport priorities and measures may also prove increasingly challenging, as tough choices regarding allocation of ever scarcer public sector resources will need to be made.

The apparent lack of joined up national policy, including Fiscal policy, is a further barrier. For example schemes like "Salary Sacrifice" have the potential to encourage more people to use public transport for commuting and work related travel demands, but the recent HMRC decision to refuse approval of schemes which are based upon network-wide ticketing eligibility merely serves to undermine the significant behavioural change benefits, and related transport emissions reductions, that such schemes have the potential to deliver. Challenging Climate

Change targets will only be achieved if all of the necessary policy frameworks are aligned in a manner which supports their delivery.

*What are the relative merits for your organisation of a carbon tax; emissions trading; energy regulations for performance standards; or incentive schemes ?*

Whilst each of these measures is considered to have a potential role to play in the achievement of broader Climate Change objectives, incentivisation schemes which encourage voluntary behavioural change in transport are likely to be most relevant to the Partnership's core purpose. However, as indicated above, there is a current lack of and need for proper alignment of the national policy framework to ensure that potentially successful incentivisation schemes, such as Salary Sacrifice, are not undermined by narrow fiscal policy priorities. In general, any organisational obligations regarding performance standards etc needs to be applied to both the public and private sectors, with appropriate sectoral standards and targets.

*How could your organisation's transport emissions be cut by 2020, and what are the barriers to achieving this ?*

Tactran is a strategic organisation with a small number of employees. In keeping with our core aims and objectives, work-related travel is already made by public transport and other "greener" modes and practices such as car-sharing wherever possible, and use is made of audio and video conferencing. Further efforts could undoubtedly be made by considering the necessity of work related travel and extension of existing home-working policies and practices, where operationally feasible.

The Partnership's main contribution to reducing transport emissions will continue to be through the successful development and implementation of our RTS, as outlined above. In particular Tactran already plays a significant role in encouraging and supporting other public and private sector bodies to develop and implement workplace Travel Plans. For example the Partnership has introduced the increasingly popular tactranliftshare.com car-sharing website, which umbrellas similar sites within partner Councils and Health boards. We also operate a Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme which, through match funding, aims to encourage public sector employers to adopt and implement sustainable travel measures, such as cycle-friendly policies and facilities; car-sharing etc. These and other measures associated with raising Travel Awareness amongst employees and the general public will assist in addressing cultural and behavioural barriers to adopting more sustainable transport habits.

I trust that the above comments are of assistance. In keeping with the Society's request, comments have been confined to 4 pages. As indicated above Tactran would welcome the opportunity to engage directly with the Inquiry Team to inform you on a number of the regional initiatives and approaches referred to above. If you require any further information, or clarification of any aspect of this response, please contact myself or Michael Cairns, Strategy Manager on 01738 475774.

Yours sincerely,

Eric Guthrie  
Director