

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**18 DECEMBER 2007****REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE****Report by Director**

This report updates the Partnership on progress in gaining Ministerial approval of the Regional Transport Strategy and on the programme of work for developing the Strategy during the current year.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Partnership:-

- (i) notes the current position on Ministerial approval of Regional Transport Strategies;
- (ii) notes progress on the 2007/08 work programme for developing the Regional Transport Strategy; and
- (iii) receives a further progress report to its next meeting.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At successive meetings over recent months the Partnership has received progress reports, updating Members on the position on gaining Ministerial approval of the finalised Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), as submitted to the Transport Minister on 30 March 2007.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 19 June 2007 the Partnership approved a proposed programme of work to develop elements of the RTS during the current financial year, utilising funding allocated by the Scottish Government for this purpose (Report RTP/07/22 refers). At its subsequent meeting on 23 October 2007 the Partnership noted progress on the RTS Development Programme and approved a number of revisions to the programme (Report RTP/07/33 refers).

3. DISCUSSION**Ministerial Approval**

- 3.1 Following earlier delays, it had been hoped that Ministers would pronounce on submitted Regional Transport Strategies soon after the outcome of the Government Spending Review was announced in mid-November. As reported to the Partnership on 23 October, RTP Chairs had written to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, seeking a meeting to discuss how RTPs and their Strategies can assist in delivering the Programme for Government (Report RTP/07/35 refers).

- 3.2 The Cabinet Secretary has responded inviting RTP Chairs to meet with himself, the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change and COSLA, on 11 December, to discuss the added value RTPs bring to transport planning and delivery, in the context of the new partnership agreed between Scottish Government and local government in the Spending Review announcement on 14 November. It is hoped that the arrangements for Ministerial approval of RTSs will be clarified at that time. Further developments arising from this meeting will be reported orally.

Publication of Finalised Strategy

- 3.3 Upon receipt of Ministerial approval, the Partnership is required to publish the Finalised RTS and make copies generally available. On 23 October the Partnership delegated authority to the Director to delete this element from the contract for RTS Delivery with the MVA Consultancy, and to progress alternative arrangements for publication of the Finalised RTS, with progress to be reported back to this meeting.
- 3.4 Stirling Council and Perth & Kinross Council have both expressed an interest in assisting with publication of the Finalised RTS and discussions on this are ongoing with both Councils' Print and Graphics sections. The final requirements and arrangements for publication and printing of the RTS will be clarified upon confirmation of Ministerial approval. Arrangements for publication of the Finalised RTS, including agreement of a cover cost for the document, will be reported to the Partnership's next meeting.

RTS Delivery/Business Plan

- 3.5 RTS Guidance requires RTPs to produce a Delivery or Business Plan, which sets out a 3-year implementation programme for the RTS, and which must be updated annually to reflect local and central government planning and funding cycles. As discussed in a separate report, the Scottish Government's Spending Review has introduced revised arrangements for the allocation of existing RTP Capital Grant funding to support delivery of Strategies.
- 3.6 At present the future level and availability of funding to support Strategy delivery is unclear. Following appointment of the Projects Manager and Strategy Manager, work is progressing on the development of a Delivery/Business Plan for the period 2008/09 – 2010/2011. As reported on 23 October, this will be the subject of a report to the Partnership early in the New Year.

Delivery Arrangements and Functions

- 3.7 RTS Guidance indicates that Strategies should include comment on how the RTP's functions will be exercised so as to fulfil the RTS and, if the RTP considers the conferring of further functions necessary, what those functions are. As further work is progressed on the Delivery/Business Plan for 2008/09 – 2010/11, it will be necessary to identify delivery responsibilities, and any associated conferring of delivery powers and functions, within this.
- 3.8 As agreed on 23 October, the Director has entered into discussions with Chief Officers of constituent Councils on future delivery arrangements. These discussions will continue in parallel with Delivery/Business Plan development, with a view to reporting further on both of these matters early in the New Year.

RTS Development Programme 200708

- 3.9 On 23 October the Partnership approved a revised programme for developing the RTS during the current year, utilising funding of £320,000 allocated by Scottish Government for this purpose. Further progress on various elements of the work programme is outlined below.

Sub-Strategies on Buses; Park & Ride; Walking & Cycling; Travel Information

- 3.10 Invitations to tender for development of these four sub-strategies were issued to 7 consultants, who were selected in consultation with constituent Councils. The buses strategy project has been extended to incorporate the development of a Regional Community Transport/Demand Responsive Transport Action Plan. This utilises a funding contribution of £25,000 from Dundee City Council 2007/08 Urban DRT Budget as agreed by the partnership of 23 October 2007 (report RTP/07/35 refers). A total of 17 submissions were received by the tender deadline of 30 November. Detailed analysis of submitted bids is ongoing, with a view to awarding contracts by 14 December. The outcome of the tendering process will be reported orally.

Tay Estuary Rail Service

- 3.11 A Brief for the STAG Level 2 “refresh” of the proposed TERS service and related infrastructure enhancements has been prepared for discussion with Network Rail, First ScotRail and Transport Scotland. Preliminary contact with these bodies suggests that, subject to more detailed discussion, it may be necessary to undertake this work in phases, involving an initial appraisal of the overall revised TERS proposal during the current financial year, followed by a more detailed assessment of the operational and financial delivery implications in 2008/09. Further progress on discussion with the rail industry and Transport Scotland will be reported to a future meeting.

Freight Quality Partnership

- 3.12 As previously reported, this work element will be progressed through the Regional Freight Stakeholders Forum. It is now planned to have the inaugural meeting of this group in early 2008.

Accessibility Mapping

- 3.13 Arrangements for the purchase and installation of the “Accession” accessibility mapping package have been progressed. The costs of purchasing licences for TACTRAN, constituent Councils, NHS Forth Valley and NHS Tayside, plus staff training and updating of the existing “Accession” model which MVA produced for development of the RTS, have been contained within the revised budget of £19,000, as approved by the Partnership on 23 October.

Freight Through Ports Study

- 3.14 A provision of £20,000 exists for further development of potential opportunities identified from a study undertaken on behalf of Scottish Enterprise Tayside, into the potential for new freight traffic by rail to/from the ports of Dundee, Montrose and Perth. The SET funded study has been reviewed by the Transportation Officers Liaison Group and technical comments on this are to be submitted to

SET, prior to seeking further discussion on the scope for TACTRAN supporting development of possible options identified.

Dundee Station Improvements Study

- 3.15 A contribution of £10,000 has been made towards an ongoing study into modernising Dundee Station, linked to the Dundee Waterfront development. The outcome of further work on an outline option for station enhancement is expected to be reported on in the New Year.

ConFor Timber Transport Study

- 3.16 TACTRAN's approved contribution towards this study is £5,000/annum in financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09. Confirmation of ConFor's proposed arrangements for commencing the study is currently awaited.

Tay Bridge South Park & Choose Study

- 3.17 On 19 June 2007 the Partnership approved a contribution of £10,000 towards a jointly funded appraisal of a Tay Bridge South Park & Choose facility, in partnership with SEStran. Officers have commented on a Draft Study Brief which has been prepared by SEStran, who are leading on this project as the proposed facility lies within their area. It is understood that tenders for the feasibility appraisal will be invited during December, with an anticipated completion by end March 2008.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the Chief Officers Liaison Group.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of developing the submitted RTS have been met from Scottish Executive grant allocations for this purpose, totalling £265,000 in 2006/07.
- 5.2 The revised 2007/08 programme of RTS development work is being largely delivered through procurement of consultancy support, the costs of which will be met from the approved RTS Development Budget of £320,000. Any additional costs will be met through virement from a projected underspend in the 2007/08 Core Budget for Staffing.

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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 :-

TACTRAN Regional Transport Strategy

TACTRAN Indicative Delivery Plan

Reports to Partnership on 19 June 2007, 21 August 2007 and 23 October 2007 on Regional Transport Strategy : Progress Update