

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING****17 AUGUST 2006****REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY****Report by Director**

This report asks the Board to confirm an intention to submit the Regional Transport Strategy for the TACTRAN area to the Scottish Executive by 31 March 2007, and seeks homologation of a letter sent by the Chair to the Transport Minister advising of this intention.

1 RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to:-

- (i) confirm the intention to comply with the Scottish Executive's deadline of 31 March 2007, for submission of the finalised Regional Transport Strategy for the TACTRAN area; and
- (ii) homologate the submission of a letter by the Chair to the Transport Minister confirming this intention.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 27 June 2006 the Board considered a report advising of the appointment of consultants MVA to assist with the preparation of a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the TACTRAN area and outlining the next steps in the RTS process (Report RTP/06/21 refers).
- 2.2 The Scottish Executive's Guidance and Model Timetable for the preparation and submission of Regional Transport Strategies requires any request for extension of the 31 March 2007 submission deadline to be intimated by 1 August 2006. In the report considered by the Board on 27 June, it was noted that discussions were ongoing between lead Regional Transport Partnership officers and the Scottish Executive on the scope for flexibility of this deadline, given the tight timescale for RTS development and submission, and the early stage of development of a number of the strategies.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 On 18 July 2006, the Scottish Executive wrote to RTP's confirming that the Transport Act does not allow any flexibility on the 1 August deadline by which any request for an extension must be sought. The letter also confirmed that the Transport Minister expects to receive strategies by the statutory deadline of 31 March, given their input to the Government Spending Review, which will take place after the May 2007 election.
- 3.2 Whilst the Board has not previously taken a formal position on the matter of compliance with the deadline of 31 March, the contract with consultants MVA

is based upon submission by the statutory deadline. The RTS guidance states that any application for extension should be from the Chair of the RTP to the Transport Minister, following an affirmative decision to this effect by the RTP Board. Following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, a letter was sent by the Chair to the Transport Minister on 31 July, confirming TACTRAN's intention to comply with the 31 March 2007 deadline, but also pointing out the particular challenge which this places on TACTRAN as the newest of the joint RTP's. A copy of this letter was circulated to all Board Members and is attached as the Appendix.

- 3.3 The Board is asked to confirm the intention to comply with the statutory deadline of 31 March 2007 for submission of the finalised RTS for the TACTRAN area, and to homologate submission of the letter from the Chair to the Transport Minister to this effect.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Council Lead officers have been consulted on the content of this report.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has no direct resource implications.

Eric Guthrie
Director

For further information email ericguthrie@pkc.gov.uk or tel. 01738 476544

NOTE

The following 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 the above Report; (list papers concerned)

Scotland's Transport Future : Guidance on Regional Transport Strategies
Transport (Scotland) Act 2005



Tayside and Central Scotland
Transport Partnership

31 July 2006

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Dear

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

I am writing to you in connection with the statutory requirement to indicate by 1 August, any need for an extension beyond the 31 March 2007 deadline for submission of Regional Transport Strategies.

Let me say at the outset that TACTRAN has every intention of completing and submitting our RTS to you by the end of March 2007 and the Board and our officials will be working hard to achieve this over the next 8 months. In early June we appointed consultants MVA to assist us in developing the RTS, and the programme which they and ourselves are working to provide for submission to you by 31 March next year.

At this point we are roughly 4 months behind the Executive's Model Timetable, although we expect to catch up over the coming months. The Board is meeting to consider the RTS Issues Report and develop our Vision and Objectives in mid-August, with detailed work on Options Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment during the autumn. The Board will consider the Draft RTS in December, roughly two months behind the Model Timetable at that stage. Following 8 weeks formal public consultation, starting in late-December through to early February, the Board will be asked to consider and approve the Final RTS for submission to you in March. We will, of course, be keeping under review any opportunities there may be to advance this programme.

As you will appreciate, being the newest of the joint Regional Transport Partnerships, we do not have the benefit of previous joint working which the other RTP's do, as a basis for development of our RTS. Whilst we do not currently anticipate having to seek an extension beyond the 31 March submission deadline, you will also appreciate that the timetable we are necessarily working to is extremely tight and has limited provision for slippage in the event of any unforeseen delays or difficulties. Therefore, if any such problems are encountered, it is possible that we may need to request an extension, although I would again stress that we will be doing everything that we can to avoid this.

At this relatively early stage in the development of our RTS, it is difficult to speculate on the length and the reasons for any extension, other than the fact that we are inevitably starting from a position which is less well advanced than is envisaged by the Executive's Model Timetable. It is equally difficult, at this stage, to speculate on the length of any extension which might need to be requested. However, bearing in mind the May 2007 elections and the possibility for delays associated with political changes and any "knock-on" issues, such as Council appointments to the Board etc., it is not impossible to envisage that any extension required could be for a minimum of 3 months and could be as much as 6 months.

We will, of course, be keeping your officials updated on progress over the coming months and will provide a further update in our Assurance/Progress report due in October. If your officials wish to discuss the situation further they should contact our Director, Eric Guthrie, who has recently taken up post in mid-July and will be making every effort to ensure that we deliver our finalised RTS to you by 31 March next year.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Alan Livingstone
Chair
TACTRAN

Copy: Board Members
 Council Lead Officers