

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

21 AUGUST 2007

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This report updates the Partnership on various matters of interest and relevance to the work of TACTRAN, and seeks approval of a contribution towards the costs of organising a proposed Regional Transport Partnerships Conference in 2008, and also for the Chair's attendance at the Confederation of Passenger Transport Scottish Annual Conference.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Partnership :-

- (i) agrees to make a contribution of £2,500 towards the costs of holding a proposed Regional Transport Partnerships Conference in spring 2008;
- (ii) approves the attendance and participation of the Chair at the Confederation of Passenger Transport Scottish Annual Conference on 24 and 25 September;
- (iii) notes that arrangements are being progressed for a meeting with the Transport Minister; and
- (iv) otherwise notes the progress updates and other information provided in this report.

2 DISCUSSION**Forum of Chairs of Regional Transport Partnerships**

- 2.1 The last meeting of the RTP Chairs Forum was held in Glasgow on 28 June 2007, at which time the Deputy Chair substituted for the Chair. The Draft Minute of the meeting is attached at Appendix A, for information. A number of matters are discussed in more detail below.

Meeting with Transport Minister

- 2.2 In response to a request for an early meeting with the new Transport Minister, Stewart Stevenson MSP, the Chairs of RTP's were invited to meet with the Minister on 17 July. As the Chair was unavailable on that date the Deputy Chair attended.
- 2.3 This was a largely informal, introductory meeting, at which time the Chairs were able to advise the Minister of progress on developing Regional Transport Partnerships and Strategies, and to discuss other issues of joint interest. As indicated in a separate progress report on the Regional Transport Strategy, the Minister indicated that he hopes to be in a position to approve strategies in September.

- 2.4 It was also indicated that the Minister sees value in having ongoing liaison, through regular meetings with the Joint RTP Chairs group, as had occurred previously.
- 2.5 At the meeting the Deputy Chair took the opportunity to invite the Minister to visit TACTRAN. At the time of writing discussions are ongoing with the Minister's office to identify a date for a visit by the Minister.

Proposed RTP's Conference

- 2.6 As was reported on 19 June, and referred to in Branch 10 of the Minute of 28 June, proposals are being developed for an RTP's Conference, potentially to be held in spring 2008. The proposed conference would be organised by Holyrood Events on behalf of, and in consultation with, the seven RTP's.
- 2.7 Discussions on the detailed arrangements for the Conference are continuing with Holyrood Events, through SEStran on behalf of all RTP's. Further progress is to be reported back to the next meeting of the RTP Chairs Forum on 27 September. In the meantime RTP's have been asked to agree a contribution of £2,500 towards the costs of organising the conference, and producing a special edition of Holyrood Magazine, reporting on the event. RTP contributions would be limited to this amount, with the main financial risk being borne by Holyrood Events.

Other Conferences

Confederation of Passenger Transport Scottish Annual Conference

- 2.8 The 2007 CPT Scottish Annual Conference is being held at Gleneagles on 24 – 25 September. The theme of the conference is "Joining up the Transport Jigsaw". The programme includes business sessions on the afternoon of 24 September, when speakers include the Transport Minister, Moir Lockhead, Chief Executive of First Group, and Simon Posner, Chief Executive of CPT, and on the morning of 25 September, which takes the form of a panel discussion session, involving RTP Chairs.
- 2.9 All RTP Chairs have been invited to attend and participate in the Conference, the costs of which will be met by the conference organisers.

Association of Commuter Transport/Travelwise Conference

- 2.10 The 2007 ACT/Travelwise conference is being held in Dundee on 11 October 2007. The event will showcase Scottish developments in sustainable transport, including best practice across the public and private sectors.
- 2.11 Regional Transport Partnerships are assisting in organising the event, through involvement of Travel Plan Officers. Attendance at the conference is free and further details will be forwarded to Board members when available.

Cycling Scotland Annual Conference 2007

- 2.12 The annual Cycling Scotland conference is being held on 13 November in Glasgow. The conference programme includes examination of the benefits cycling can bring to health, transport integration, the environment and the economy. Speakers include the Transport Minister and Erl Wilkie, Chief

Executive of Cycling Scotland, along with a range of practitioners and experts in transport policy and delivery.

- 2.13 Officer attendance at the conference is proposed. Further details are available at [conference website \(http://conferences.holyrood.com/\)](http://conferences.holyrood.com/).

Strategic Transport Projects Review

- 2.14 An update on progress with the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) was provided in the Director's Report of 19 June 2007 (Report RTP/07/24 refers). A meeting of the RTP's Reference Group was held on 5 July, at which time Transport Scotland and their consultants updated RTP officers on progress.
- 2.15 It was reported that the outcome of STPR work package SWP3 (Review of Current and Future Network Performance) will be released publicly during the summer. Work on SWP4 (Determining Gaps and Shortfalls) and SWP5 (Options Generation and Sifting) is now being progressed in parallel. Meetings are to be held individually with RTP's to inform this process. The STPR consultants are meeting with the Transportation Officers Liaison Group, as part of this process, on 16 August.
- 2.16 At the meeting on 5 July an update was also given on progress with the Forth Replacement Crossing Study. At that time Transport Scotland advised that a series of local public consultations/exhibitions on the options emerging from the study will be held during August. Dates and details for these are awaited and will be forwarded to Board members when received.

Staffing Update

- 2.17 Applications for the posts of Strategy Manager and Projects Manager were invited during June/July. A good quality field of applicants has been received for both posts. Arrangements are in hand for interviewing short-listed candidates on 12 and 13 September. The start dates for these key members of the Executive Team will be dependent upon the periods of notice the successful candidates require to give existing employers.

InterCity East Coast Rail Franchise

- 2.18 At its meeting on 19 June 2007 the Partnership noted that discussions had been held with shortlisted bidders for the re-franchised InterCity East Coast (ICEC) rail service between Scotland and London. The Department for Transport announced on 14 August that the franchise has been awarded to NXEC Trains Ltd (National Express Group). The new franchisee will take up operation of the service in December 2007.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is proposed that the contribution of £2,500 towards the costs of the proposed RTP's Conference is met from anticipated slippage in the approved budget for Conferences and Training. The report has no other direct financial or other resource implications.

Eric Guthrie
Director

For further information email ericguthrie@tactran.gov.uk or tel. 01738 475771

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.

APPENDIX A

Meeting of Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships

Consort House, Glasgow
28 June 2007

Note of Meeting

Present:	Cllr Alistair Watson	Chair, SPT (Chair to Item 6)
	Rodney Mortimer	SPT
	Cllr Duncan MacIntyre	Chair, HITRANS (Chair from Item 7)
	Dave Duthie	HITRANS
	Eddie Anderson	Deputy Chair, Nestrans
	Derick Murray	Nestrans
	Ben Kerfoot	Nestrans (Secretariat)
	Alex Macaulay	SEStran
	Cllr Brian Collins	Chair, SWESTRANS
	Alistair Speedie	SWESTRANS
	Cllr Alan Jack	Deputy Chair, Tactran
	Eric Guthrie	Tactran
	Cllr Allan Wishart	Chair, ZetTrans
	Michael Craigie	ZetTrans
Apologies :	Cllr Russell Imrie	Chair, SEStran
	Cllr Kevin Stewart	Chair, Nestrans
	Cllr Fraser Macpherson	Chair, Tactran

As SPT was hosting the meeting Councillor Watson took the Chair and welcomed everyone to Glasgow.

As a preamble to the meeting, Councillor Watson gave feedback on a briefing session given by the First Minister and the Cabinet for key public sector organisations on 26 June. He noted concern that despite the Executive's intention to invite all RTPs, only some had received invitations. He reported that Ministers had been keen to promote further joint working and had discussed the importance of ensuring that project appraisal does not delay delivery. It was agreed that it was important to maintain good relations with Ministers.

1. **Note of Last Meeting, 29 March 2007**

The note of the meeting was agreed. Matters arising:

- ❖ **Item 9a) – Network Rail Real Estate** – Councillor Watson reiterated his concern at Network Rail's approach to real estate adding significant cost to projects, particularly Park and Ride sites, where the cost was often much higher than using local authority land. It was agreed that this was part of a wider issue relating to Network Rail's involvement in projects and the high costs of delivery compared to rail projects in other European countries. It was noted that Ministers had talked about smarter procurement at the briefing on 26 June and agreed that this issue be raised with the Transport Minister. Rodney Mortimer agreed to draft a paper and invited contributions from other RTPs.
- ❖ **Item 9c) – Provision of Public Transport Infrastructure on Trunk Roads** – Rodney Mortimer reported that he had written to Jim Barton at Transport Scotland following discussion at the last meeting but had not yet had a response.

2. **Note of Meeting with CPT, 29 March 2007**

The note of the meeting was agreed. Matters arising:

- ❖ **Item 6 – Liaison between CPT and RTPs** – While it was noted that different circumstances existed in different regions, it was agreed that it was beneficial to have regular meetings with CPT and operators. The previous agreement to hold meetings roughly every six months was endorsed.
- ❖ **Item 2 – Buses Action Plan** – Eric Guthrie noted that a lot of work was ongoing through the Buses Action Plan Steering Group and Working Groups and volunteered to report on the progress of these groups at the next Chairs' meeting.

3. **Arrangements for Meeting with the new Minister for Transport**

It was noted that there had been discussions with Executive officials regarding a meeting in July between the Chairs of the RTPs and the new Minister, however a date had not yet been fixed. [Subsequently confirmed as 17 July.]

4. **Elections aftermath and Issues for RTPs**

It was agreed that while many of the Chairs had changed, it was important to continue to work together in a consensual manner in facing the challenges and new opportunities ahead.

5. **Regional Transport Strategies – Approval Arrangements**

It was noted that approval of the RTSs was still awaited and that the Scottish Executive's original intention to approve by the end of June was unlikely to be met. Although formal confirmation of any delay in approval beyond end June was awaited, this had effectively been

confirmed by John Swinney at the event on 26 June. The requirement for Appropriate Assessment of interventions within the strategies relating to their impact on particular wildlife habitats had created additional work in order to satisfy SNH. Derick Murray, Michael Craige and Eric Guthrie reported that this had been completed to the satisfaction of SNH, while Alex Macaulay reported that SEStran would be undertaking Appropriate Assessment at a later date. Alistair Speedie, Dave Duthie and Rodney Mortimer reported that work on Appropriate Assessment was still under way. Dave Duthie reported that the Executive had indicated that the Action Plan within the strategy may be treated separately and therefore would not be formally approved by the Minister. All RTPs had received confirmation that Executive officials were content to recommend RTS's for Ministerial approval.

6. Joint RTP Position Papers – Progress and Programme

Alex Macaulay introduced a paper setting out progress on the development of joint position papers, as agreed at the previous meeting. He reported that since then, the list of proposed position papers had been updated and officers had agreed the division of responsibility and priority. He suggested aiming for the papers to be signed-off by the Chairs meeting in September, following discussion and amendment by RTP officers. Derick Murray queried the approval process for the papers and reported that the Nestrans Chair had been uncomfortable with approving them without putting them to the Board. However it was noted that the Chairs had previously agreed that the papers would be approved by the Chairs and would represent their agreed joint position, rather than those of the individual Partnerships. Eddie Anderson suggested that RTPs may still wish to circulate the papers among Board members prior to agreement by the next meeting.

The existing paper on High Speed Surface Transport was discussed and it was agreed to amend it to include protection of regional air services in the recommendations and to emphasise the importance of improving rail connections north of the central belt, to Aberdeen and Inverness. The paper would also be amended to make clear it represented a joint position of the RTP Chairs, rather than the Partnerships.

Councillor Watson suggested that the revised High Speed Surface Transport paper be released at an early opportunity in order to influence the new Administration's thinking on these issues.

At this point Councillor Watson gave his apologies and left the meeting for another engagement. He invited Councillor MacIntyre to take the Chair.

7. DRT/RPPT/RCTI – Role of RTPs in New Arrangements

Eric Guthrie introduced a paper which set out the background on discussions to date with the Scottish Executive and detailed the existing funding streams and the proposed single budget. He reported that a meeting had taken place on 20 June involving the RTPs, Scottish Executive and ATCO (but which Cosla and SCOTS were unable to attend). Executive officials had confirmed that the new Administration intended to press ahead with the introduction of single enhanced DRT budget and had proposed a formula for the distribution of the new funding. Concerns had been expressed by some RTPs at the way in which the formula had been calculated and the Executive had advised that they were open to alternative suggestions, if the RTPs could come to a common agreement. It was proposed that RTP Lead Officers consider options and make a recommendation to the Chairs in September.

Alex Macaulay expressed concern at what he regarded as inconsistencies in the formula arising from the rural definition applied and the fact that the budget draws together funding allocated by formula and a bidding process. Dave Duthie noted that it was important that funding remained targeted primarily at rural areas. It was noted that Cosla was due to meet the following day but that the Executive had indicated that Cosla did not have a role in deciding the allocation of funding. However it was still considered important to gain the support of Councils to the proposals.

The RTP Chairs endorsed the principles for operation of the enhanced DRT budget as set out in the report and remitted to officers to consider alternatives for the allocation of funding and report back to the next meeting.

8. Strategic Transport Projects Review

Rodney Mortimer introduced a paper which provided an update on the progress of Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review. This expressed concern at the 'predict and provide' approach being taken by the consultants. There were also issues concerning the involvement of RTPs and local authorities in the process. While RTP officers were members of one of the Reference Groups, RTPs had initially not been permitted to share information received with officers in constituent councils however this had now been permitted. In addition it was noted that RTPs had been given little time to comment on interim documents, which afforded little opportunity for circulation and discussion with colleagues. Derick Murray added that Nestrans had recently written to the Executive regarding the timescales provided for consultation. In general it was noted that the situation on sharing of information had improved since the start of the year but it was agreed that more could be done to further involve RTPs in the process.

Alistair Speedie also expressed concerns at RTPs and local authorities being unable to involve their Boards and elected members, meaning

that RTPs were not able to gain wider approval of their comments and potentially storing up difficulties for the future. Eric Guthrie advised that this had been raised at a recent SCOTS meeting and suggested this be raised with the Minister. This view was endorsed by the RTP Chairs. It was agreed to write to the Minister to raise the issue of RTP and local authority involvement in the STPR and to submit this prior to the next meeting of the Reference Group on 5 July.

9. Trunk Roads Management & RTPs

Alex Macaulay introduced a paper which reported on a meeting he had with Jim Barton, Chief Road Engineer at Transport Scotland relating to a possible review of the trunk road network and the letting of the next generation of maintenance contracts in around 18 months time. Jim Barton noted that the previous Minister had committed to undertaking a review of the trunk road network following the establishment of RTPs and was therefore keen to ensure that the results of any review in terms of trunk roads responsibilities were incorporated into the new contracts. Alex Macaulay stressed that Jim Barton was not advocating any change but was interested in the appetite of RTPs for such a review of the trunk roads network. Councillor MacIntyre invited views of those present on this issue.

Councillor Collins noted that there were currently problems and inconsistencies with the current system and a review of responsibilities warranted further exploration. Alistair Speedie added that currently there was a lack of community input to the management of trunk roads, which were often central to rural communities, and a review of responsibilities offered potential for improvement. Councillor Jack agreed that the issue be considered but expressed reservations about creating three tiers of responsibility for roads, however Alex Macaulay noted that this could be resolved through a single contact point. He also noted the likely transitional costs that may be incurred. Derick Murray noted the importance of the review fully involving RTPs and that it be independent. Councillor Wishart supported the concept of a review, while noting that Shetland did not have any trunk roads. Councillor MacIntyre also expressed support for a review but noted that 18 months may not allow sufficient time. It was agreed that the issue of trunk road responsibilities needed to be considered in the wider context of RTP functions.

The RTP Chairs agreed their support for a review of trunk road responsibilities that fully involved RTPs and requested that Alex Macaulay discuss the issue further with Transport Scotland with a view to producing a scope for a review and indicative programme, to be reported to the next meeting.

10. Proposed 2007 RTPs Conference

Alex Macaulay noted that the previous meeting of RTP Chairs had agreed participation in a proposed Holyrood conference and had remitted to officers to liaise with Holyrood in the development of proposals. He introduced a paper which set out initial proposals for the conference, which would be aimed at MSPs, key stakeholders and decision-makers. It was intended to use the conference to launch the RTP position papers discussed earlier.

There was some discussion concerning whether a conference was the best means of reaching decision makers and raising the profile of RTPs. Eddie Anderson expressed concern that it may not attract the intended audience and suggested other PR activities may be more successful in raising awareness of RTPs. The draft programme was also considered to be made shorter and more focused. The cost to delegates was also queried as this is likely to affect who attends.

It was agreed that the proposed conference required further consideration and should be deferred until spring 2008. The RTP Chairs agreed that further discussions take place with Holyrood and that more detail on the intended audience, delegate fees and programme be reported back to the next meeting.

It was also noted that the Confederation of Passenger Transport would be holding their annual Scottish conference in September and it appeared that they would be inviting RTP Chairs to take part, however further information on this had yet to be received.

11. Possible Joint RTPs Training Programme

Rodney Mortimer reported that Howard Brindley from HITRANS was working with the Scottish Executive to organise a training day for RTP Board members. This is to take place on 27 September at the Teacher Building in Glasgow. There was general support for the proposal but it was noted that the programme still needed to be fleshed out. It was considered that this needed to provide members with new information to give them an incentive to attend. It was also suggested that the start time be put back to 10.30 to make travelling easier.

12. AOCB

- **Review of SPP17** – It was noted that the Executive was currently consulting on a revision of SPP17 but that there had been little involvement of RTPs to date. The review is being led by Keith Gowenlock of WSP, who had been invited to speak to the next meeting of lead officers. Alex Macaulay noted that RTPs are not a statutory consultee in the structure plan process and suggested this had been a legislative oversight. It was agreed that this issue be raised with the Minister.
- **Annual Accounts** – It was noted that advice on dealing with Annual Accounts had been provided by the Executive, but that this had

arrived too late for many RTPs. It was also noted that further clarification was required on the potential for special responsibility payments for Chairs of RTPs.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Councillor Collins reiterated the invitation to meet in Dumfries however it was thought appropriate to hold the next meeting in conjunction with the RTP members training event in Glasgow.

It was therefore agreed to hold the next meeting on **27 September at the Teacher Building in Glasgow**, following the RTP members training event.

July 2007

BK/13

ANNEX

ACTIONS ARISING FROM RTP CHAIRS' MEETING – 28 JUNE 2007

Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility
1 (9a)	Paper to be drafted on issues concerning Network Rail's approach to real estate.	Rodney Mortimer (with input from others)
2 (2)	Paper on progress of the Buses Action Plan Steering Group and Working Groups.	Eric Guthrie
6	Drafting of Position Papers in time for September RTP Chairs meeting. Final amendments to High Speed Ground Transport paper.	All RTP Lead Officers Rodney Mortimer
7	Further discussion and agreement on preferred funding formula for enhanced DRT budget.	All RTP Lead Officers
8	Write letter to Minister regarding involvement of RTPs and local authorities in the STPR.	Ben Kerfoot – for sign off by Councillor Watson.
9	Further discussions with Transport Scotland on possible trunk roads review and scoping paper to be produced for September meeting.	Alex Macaulay (with input from all Lead Officers)
10	Further discussion with Holyrood magazine on the proposed conference with revised proposals to be reported back to the September meeting.	Alex Macaulay
11	Amendments to programme for RTP Members training event.	Rodney Mortimer / Howard Brindley
13	Arrange for next meeting to take place at the Teacher Building.	Rodney Mortimer