

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration & Environmental Services (Land & Environmental Services)

Community Safety and Environmental Services Committee : 7 February 2007

**Subject: Regional Transport Strategy for the West of Scotland 2007-2021
Consultative Draft**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Committee for a response to the Consultative Draft of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the West of Scotland 2007-2021.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Consultative Draft of the first Regional Transport Strategy prepared by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. Its sets out a vision for a modern, integrated transport system for the Strathclyde area that's fit for Scotland in the 21st century. The RTS links with the National Transport Strategy for all of Scotland. It also links with the twelve local councils that make up SPT and their own Local Transport Strategies.
- 2.2** The Strategy recognises that a fast, efficient and reliable transport system is a vital component for economic growth for businesses from the greatest corporations to the smallest local enterprise. But the document also recognises that good transport systems can also play a significant role in breaking down the barriers of poverty, promoting social inclusion and real change in peoples' lives. All types of travel and transport have been included: buses, trains, the subway, cars, taxis, freight, planes, ferries, cycling and walking – everything that contributes to an integrated transport system.
- 2.3** When the Strategy is agreed with everyone who has a stake in it, SPT propose that the plan will be matched with the money and resources to make it happen. The future is about a transport network that matches the needs of the people, the needs of commerce and industry and the needs of the environment.
- 2.4** The consultative draft document is open to comment, suggestion and amendment. SPT seek detailed responses from all stakeholders.

2.5 Recent changes to the organisational structure for transport mean that partnership working is essential for the efficient and effective delivery of transport improvements. Developing shared goals and delivery structures with SPT's member councils, and key stakeholders, including transport operators, the Scottish Executive, Transport Scotland, Health Boards, Structure Plan teams and the private sector is a priority. The RTS nests within a suite of transport strategy documents in Scotland, supporting the National Transport Strategy and providing a framework for Local Transport Strategies.

2.6 The Minister for Transport has summarised the role of a RTS as follows:

“Each regional transport strategy will focus on the travel needs of people and business in their region. Travel plays an important part in all lives, so policy and delivery must be joined up with, and respond to, the demands of society for access to jobs, to schools, to services, to leisure and recreation, and to products and markets. Transport planning must be integrated ever more closely with land-use and development planning. This will support our effects to boost economic growth in a way that is consistent with our commitment to safeguard our environment, locally and globally.” – Tavish Scott MSP, Minister for Transport, 2006.

2.7 The basic parameters for the RTS set by the Minister are:

- **Partnership** approach to highlighting joined up delivery;
- Responsiveness to **demands of people and business**;
- **Integration** with land-use planning;
- Safeguards for the **environment**.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The consultative draft RTS identifies the long term challenges facing transport in the west of Scotland, sets objectives for transport, identifies alternative options, considers these in detail and proposes a preferred 15 year Strategy.

3.2 The development of the RTS has taken account of relevant national and regional policies and guidance including Community Planning Partnership Plans, Structure and Local Plans and economic and regeneration strategies.

3.3 SPT has followed a comprehensive process of consultation and technical analysis that has involved:

- (a) identifying issues;
- (b) developing a vision, goals and objectives;
- (c) producing a strategy framework;
- (d) testing a number of strategy options;
- (e) developing this consultative draft Regional Transport Strategy

- 3.4** The vision, goals and objectives of the RTS outlined below were developed from an analysis of issues, opportunities and constraints and the policy contexts.

Vision

A world-class, sustainable transport system that acts as a catalyst for an improved quality of life for all.

Goals

- (a) Develop the economy, through improving connectivity for business and freight, enhancing transport effectiveness and efficiency, providing access to employment, education, shopping and leisure, and by improving transport integration;
- (b) Promote social inclusion and equality, by providing a transport system that is safe, accessible, and affordable to all sections of the community; and
- (c) Improve health and protect the environment, by minimising emissions and consumption of resources and energy, by promoting active travel, quality public transport and modal shift.

Objectives

- (a) Safety and Security ~ to improve safety and personal security on the transport system
- (b) Modal Shift ~ to increase the proportion of trips undertaken by walking, cycling and public transport
- (c) Excellent Transport System ~ to enhance the attractiveness, reliability and integration of the transport network
- (d) Effectiveness and Efficiency ~ to ensure the provision of effective and efficient transport infrastructure and services to improve connectivity for people and freight
- (e) Access for All ~ to promote and facilitate access that recognises the transport requirements of all
- (f) Environment and Health ~ to improve health and protect the environment by minimising emissions and consumption of resources and energy by the transport system
- (g) Economy, Transport and Land-Use Planning ~ to support land-use planning strategies, regeneration and development by integrating transport provision.

3.5 The success of the RTS will be significantly influenced by 4 key factors:

- Effective Partnership Working
- Effective Demand Management
- Public Transport Improvements
- Funding

3.6 Central to the RTS are 10 priority projects which SPT seeks to deliver over the next 15 years. These form part of the overall strategy of 75 interventions. They are highlighted because they fully meet the shared regeneration objectives for the region. The economic success of the west of Scotland depends on good connectivity not only within the region but also the rest of Scotland and the world beyond.

The Regional Transport Strategy ten Priority Projects are:

- Improving sustainable access to airports
- Improving cross-City rail links
- Revitalising the Subway
- Developing faster rail routes to Edinburgh and England
- Completion of and access to the M74 (including M8 corridor)
- Introducing new ticketing technologies (e.g. Smartcard)
- Meeting the transport needs of key regeneration areas
- Developing mass transit for the conurbation (e.g. Fastlink)
- Promoting sustainable transport initiatives
- Providing strategic Park and Ride

Based on these the following key delivery measures area suggested:

- Funding mechanisms;
- Structure of bus service provision;
- Partnership working;
- Demand management; and
- Review of legislative context for the RTS (e.g. roads powers)

3.7 Following this consultation, the emerging options and interventions identified in the draft RTS will be further refined to produce an holistic transport strategy for the region which addresses the key issues, problems and opportunities and ensures that transport plays its full role in fulfilling regional aspirations.

3.8 Senior officers of West Dunbartonshire have been closely involved in the development of this RTS to this stage.

3.9 Appendix 1 represents the proposed response by West Dunbartonshire to this draft RTS, based on seven set questions.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Issues

5.1 There are no financial implications at this stage.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 The RTS is being developed by SPT and responsibility for risk assessment lies with them.

6.2 The Strategy itself includes a rigorous appraisal process which incorporates a range of potential risk factors, including failure to maintain the existing road network, failure to achieve accident reduction targets, failure to act to reduce traffic congestion etc.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The Regional Transport Strategy will provide the basis for all key transportation decision-making for the West of Scotland. West Dunbartonshire is a principal stakeholder in this Strategy and it is vital that the Strategy fits with our aspirations and requirements. The consultation gives the opportunity for formal comments to be provided.

8. Recommendations

8.1 **It is recommended that the Committee approves the proposed response from West Dunbartonshire Council to the Consultative Draft of the Regional Transport Strategy.**

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Date: January 2007

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Response to Regional Transport Strategy

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All

APPENDIX 1

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Response to Regional Transport Strategy for the West of Scotland 2007-2021 Consultative Draft

- 1. Do the vision, shared goals and objectives identified in this strategy fairly reflect the challenges facing transport in the West of Scotland?**

We agree that the vision, shared goals and objectives identified in the draft strategy reflect the challenges facing transport in the West of Scotland. However we would ask that Healthcare is more explicit in the goals.

- 2. The strategy contains a series of key interventions. Of these, which best support the strategy in addressing the needs of the West of Scotland?**

Considering the list of key interventions listed in section 5.1 we agree that these should all be utilised as the core of the RTS, as they all support the strategic vision and objectives. There should not be further priorities within the Strategy and the current key interventions should not be prioritised against each other.

In terms of the long list of interventions, it is understood that these have been priorities using as assessment process. It is of concern therefore that many interventions, which are of low cost and relatively easy to delivery, are ranked well down the list. A particular example is “smarter choices” ranked at 48. We would ask that this whole prioritisation is re-considered to better reflect the ‘deliverability’ of some interventions, focussing on ‘quick wins’ of sustainable transport and some bus actions.

- 3. Do you agree that our approach to produce a “blended” strategy is the best way forward?**

We agree that the “blended” strategy is the best way forward and fits best with our developing Local Transport Strategy.

- 4. Are there any interventions not listed which could be added to improve the strategy?**

We do not believe that any further key interventions are necessary for inclusion at this time. We understand that this list will be subject to regular review during the life of the strategy – probably on an annual basis?

5. What additional powers, funding, delivery structures or other measures are needed to make the strategy successful?

SPT should in due course be given responsibility for the key parts of the regionally strategic (not motorway) road network, currently the responsibility of Transport Scotland and Local Authorities. In West Dunbartonshire, this would only refer to the non-trunked section of the A82. Appropriate funding should be provided by the Scottish Executive to bring these key transportation routes up to an acceptable condition. The RTS should allow for such extension of powers.

It is unclear at this stage how the Scottish Executive intends to fund major transportation projects contained within the Strategy and flexibility of delivery mechanism will be essential.

We welcome the positive action being proposed to improve regulation of the bus network. For too long bus companies have taken control. If improved partnerships do not lead to improved bus services, then SPT should be given additional powers to “regulate” certain aspects of the regional bus operation.

6. How can SPT best work with the public and other stakeholders to deliver the strategy?

SPT need to work more closely with its constituent Authorities, particularly through community planning. Implementation of the RTS can form an effective catalyst for improved, more effective communication.

Delivery of all RTS interventions and projects will require co-operation and agreement of local communities.

7. Do you have any other comments on the strategy?

7.1(a) Chapter 8 provides a proposed List of Indicators for the RTS. There is considerable reliance on results from the Scottish Household Survey and little reference to work being carried out by member authorities in monitoring performance through indicators. This should be developed.

(b) Indicators I15 and I19 appear to be duplicates to some extent.

(c) Some indicators are seeking to measure issues which are not in the control of SPT or member authorities. Such indicators should be used with care as relevance to measuring actual performance may be misleading.

(d) Indicators I17 and I18 are unclear and should have more “commentary” information to show how these fairly intangible criteria can be measured.

(e) In indicator I32, what is the “time lost” due to?

- (f) Who is going to gather performance information – SPT or other partners, or a combination? This should be clarified at this stage.
- 7.2 It needs to be more clear that Appendix 1 is the current list of proposed interventions, as new projects will emerge as the RTS period progresses.
- 7.3 Appendix 1 – item 3 – typo error in last column (“2000”) and this should ideally be projected as being undertaken on a 10 year horizon.
- 7.4 “Components” shown on item 31 of Appendix 1 refers to “extensions” – Fastlink is now a Regional project not a Glasgow-centred project with extensions. This should be updated.
- 7.5 Why is item 52 of Appendix 1 only referring to East Ayrshire. Surely there are other rural areas in the SPT area.
- 7.6 Item 63 of Appendix 1 should include local authorities in any regional business forum. There are already Economic Forums across the West of Scotland which could be utilised, at least initially.
- 7.7 Are Sustrans not potential partners in Tackling the School Run in item 70?
- 7.8 Table 5.6 should have the A82 improvements listed to be consistent with table 5.2.
- 7.9 We would recommend that for this Council, SPT should take the lead in any future Quality Bus Partnership / Contract initiatives.
- 7.10 There needs to be more integration of community transport initiatives within the Strategy. These are a vital part of the transport network, particularly in our rural areas.
- 7.11 The strategy should be more explicit on fare structures, including support for the national concessionary scheme.
- 7.12 In general, the National Park is not well enough highlighted in the Strategy. As the local Planning Authority for the area, and having the National Park Plan, they are a key stakeholder, if not partner, in regional transport.
- 7.13 There is a general weakness in Tourism issues in the strategy. We would welcome a “Destination Strathclyde” type approach to this.
- 7.14 We welcome the support being given to local, smaller-scale park and ride facilities around local stations. There are vital for our local communities.

7.15 In conclusion, West Dunbartonshire Council recognises the need to focus on the Glasgow metropolitan area as the foundation of the strategy, but currently this consultative draft is overly Glasgow-centric and reference to the 'metropolitan area' (or similar terminology) rather than just "Glasgow" would assist.