

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT & PROPERTY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2005

SCOTLAND'S TRANSPORT FUTURE – PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS

Report By Executive Director of Development & Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to recommend a response from East Ayrshire Council to the Scottish Executive's consultation paper on 'Scotland's Transport Future: Proposals for Statutory Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP's).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 14 December 2004, the Committee was advised of the Scottish Executive's proposals for Statutory RTP's and the consultation questions as set out by the Scottish Executive. The Committee noted that WESTRANS will be submitting a full response to the Scottish Executive on behalf of the WESTRANS constituent local authorities. The Committee also noted that a copy of the draft WESTRANS response would be circulated to all Members for information. Members were requested to communicate any points they wished to be considered in the compilation of East Ayrshire's response to the Chair or Executive Director by the end of December. No further points had been raised at the time of writing.

3. THE WESTRANS RESPONSE:

- 3.1 Through the involvement of officers and Elected Member representatives on WESTRANS East Ayrshire has had the opportunity to influence the final response being submitted by WESTRANS on behalf of its constituent local authorities. The WESTRANS response is a fair reflection of the general views expressed by the representatives of the member local authorities. The proposed final draft of the WESTRANS response is attached in Appendix 1.

4. EAST AYRSHIRE'S REPOSENSE

- 4.1 The Scottish Executive has invited responses by 19 January 2005. However, privately, Officers have indicated that a number of Councils will have difficulty meeting this deadline due to their Committee cycle and that late responses will be accepted.
- 4.2 It is proposed that the Executive Director, submits a letter to the Scottish Executive, on behalf of East Ayrshire formally endorsing the WESTRANS response.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Committee is requested to;

- i) Agree to the submission of a formal response by East Ayrshire as outlined in the report.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services
12 January 2005
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information please contact Sandy Gillatt on 01563 555734

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Appendix 1

Scotland's Transport Future: Proposals for Statutory Regional Transport Partnerships

Draft Response from WESTRANS

- 1. We would welcome views on these proposed regional transport partnership boundaries. Would you suggest any modifications?**

WESTRANS would welcome the involvement of Dumfries and Galloway in the new west of Scotland partnership but recognises that there are few transport issues that link it and the conurbation.

Arran, the Cumbraes, Bute and the Cowal peninsula have been included in the Highlands and Islands area in the Executive's consultation paper, but each of these areas has strong transport links with mainland ferry terminals and railheads. North Ayrshire and Argyll & Bute Councils benefit from EU funding as a result of their membership of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise area and would not wish to lose access to this funding or be disadvantaged by the regional transport partnership proposals. Both councils also have concerns about the proposed national concessionary travel scheme and its potential impact on residents. The terms of the concessionary travel scheme will affect their views on the most appropriate regional transport partnership for their area.

Parts of west Stirlingshire have strong economic, social and transport links with the Glasgow conurbation.

Each of the four councils involved (Dumfries and Galloway, Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire and Stirling) must make its own decision on membership of this or other Partnerships.

- 2. What are the benefits and/or disadvantages of these proposals from the perspective of your organisation or the council area in which you live? Could a regional partnership based on these boundaries deliver improvements to transport in you area?**

A strong regional partnership combining public transport and other transport powers and functions would be able to deliver real progress in transport in the west of Scotland. It is important that boundaries reflect transport functions for the full benefits of an integrated transport system to be derived from the new body.

- 3. What should the role of external members be?**

To what extent do you think that external members should be: (i) representative of other stakeholder organisations; (ii) experts in particular spheres related to transport; (iii) representative of interests outside the transport world?

- (a) Do you agree that external members on the board of the partnership once approved should be there on the basis of personal contribution, skills and experience they bring rather than representing a particular organisation or interest group?**

There would need to be a mixture of representatives of stakeholder organisations and specialists. However, WESTRANS is concerned about the accountability of external organisations and individuals in relation to their ability to vote on matters which they are not funding.

- 4. Do you agree that decisions on who are appointed as external members are taken by RTPs themselves in conformity with guidance issued by Scottish Ministers?**

We agree that RTPs should decide upon external membership in line with guidance issued by Scottish Ministers.

- 5. How should the RTP involve people and stakeholders within its region? For example:**

- (b) Is there merit in co-opting key stakeholders to work at management team level?**

Key stakeholders could be co-opted to work on specific projects/initiatives for which they have expertise.

- (c) Would a stakeholder forum be a practical way of including broader interests?**

We believe that stakeholder forums are a good way of involving other interests and that there could be a number of different forums for key stakeholders.

- (d) **Are there any other means of ensuring wider engagement?**
- (e) **How can RTPs make best use of Community Planning to deliver better transport solutions? What should the Executive do to support them in this?**

We believe that a mechanism needs to be established at a regional level in community planning for a variety of issues, including transport. This should be led by the Scottish Executive.

- 6. Are there some particular organisations that you believe ought to be represented on some or all of the new partnerships? Are there any organisations that should not be represented?**

Organisations that are able to represent the whole of an RTP area should be included. Commercial groups and specific lobby groups should not be represented

- 7. Do you agree that on occasions when a vote is needed to reach a decision, that this ordinarily be decided by a simple majority?**

We agree that a simple majority should be sufficient.

- 8. On what issues (e.g. on issues involving the sharing or transferring of local authority transport functions) should decisions require a larger majority?**

A larger majority (two-thirds) would be required in relation to changes to the constitution of the RTP and its powers and functions.

Model 1 Regional Transport Strategy and Limited Transport Powers

- 9. What current local authority functions could be appropriate for an RTP to exercise concurrently with its constituent local authorities (in your region)?**

This is not applicable to the west of Scotland.

Model 2 Regional Strategy and Some Transport Powers Transferred

- 10. What current local authority functions could be appropriate for delivery at a regional level by an RTP (in your region)?**

This is not applicable to the west of Scotland.

Model 3 Regional Strategy and Significant Public Transport Powers Transferred

- 11. Do you agree that this model should be adopted by a west of Scotland RTP in order to ensure the continuity of the public transport service by SPT?**

Given that the powers of SPT are to be transferred to the new west of Scotland RTP, this is the only model in the consultation that is available to the west of Scotland. WESTRANS believes that the minimum functions to be undertaken by the new west of Scotland body should be those that are currently carried out by Strathclyde Passenger Transport (including their current rail powers) and the production of a regional integrated transport strategy, including prioritization of projects in the Strategy. It should be noted that Dumfries & Galloway Council currently manages public transport in its whole area and Argyll and Bute Council does so in most of its council area. These councils wish to continue to manage public transport, where appropriate, within an integrated strategic transport system managed by the new RTP.

The current Executive proposal for membership of the proposed new regional body is for there to be one member from each constituent local authority plus external members, with local authority representatives having weighted voting rights. If that model is chosen, it is possible that every authority would choose a representative from the same political party, resulting in a lack of political balance in the governing body. Also, the low number of members would cause difficulties in populating the necessary sub-committees to oversee the financial, staffing and many transport operations for the new body which will serve almost half the population of Scotland.

It is suggested instead that a local authority Joint Board be set up as the governing body, with the number of representatives from each council reflecting the population of the council. This is a tried and tested type of arrangement, which works well for police and fire services and has the necessary powers to control the regional transport functions that are assigned to it.

12. What powers currently held by local authorities in the SPT area would it make sense to deliver alongside SPT's existing public transport powers in a new west of Scotland RTP?

It is not envisaged that any other powers would be transferred to the RTP initially.

13. Which of these 3 models would you like to see your region adopt?

WESTRANS would wish to see Model 3 adopted in the west of Scotland as this will enable SPT's powers to be transferred to the new regional body. However, as stated in question 11, we suggest that a local authority Joint Board be set up as the governing body, with the number of representatives from each council reflecting the population of the council.

14. Do you envisage that the RTP in your region will gain further functions as it develops? If so, which ones?

WESTRANS anticipates that powers will be transferred to the new body as it evolves. However, at this time, it is not possible to state what those further functions might be.

In order to deliver an integrated transport system, it will be necessary for the new RTP to take on responsibility for strategic roads in due course. These might include some existing trunk roads and existing strategic roads currently managed by local authorities.

15. Do you agree that there is no alternative to requisition if regional transport partnerships are to have a stable and secure source of funding?

We do not agree with this proposal. One of the first tasks of the new regional bodies will be to prepare a transport strategy that promotes projects that not only support regional economic growth and social justice, but benefit the country as a whole. Indeed the strategy will need to be approved by Ministers and the national agency before being implemented. Under these circumstances, it could be argued that the running costs of the new organisation should be met by equal contributions from, on the one hand, the constituent local authorities and, on the other hand, the Executive. However, in the interests of local democratic accountability, the Joint Committee sees no alternative to all of the running costs of the new organisation being funded by requisitions from constituent authorities.

The new regional strategies will set out a prioritised programme of works to be undertaken, with each individual project having to meet current national appraisal criteria. It will be unnecessary for the Executive to appraise individual projects and we therefore contend that capital support from the Executive should be provided by means of an annual block grant to the partnership, and not by individual project grants.

16. What classes of expenditure (e.g. core staffing, running costs, provisions of services, capital investment) are best met through (a) requisition, (b) prudential borrowing, (c) grants from the Scottish Executive?

As stated in question 15, it is suggested that the costs of the new organisation should be funded by requisitions from constituent authorities. We are concerned that the RTP will have no revenue stream to support Prudential Borrowing.