

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 8 MARCH 2006

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR A PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' COMMITTEE (PTUC) FOR SCOTLAND

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the Scottish Executive's consultation on Proposals for a Public Transport Users' Committee (PTUC) for Scotland, and to request the Committee to endorse the draft WESTRANS response to the Consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on Scottish Ministers to establish a Public Transport Users' Committee for Scotland.

3. DETAILS OF THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Scottish Executive has proposed two options for the form and structure of the PTUC and posed a number of related questions for response.

The two options are:-

Option 1: Create one integrated high-level committee incorporating mode-specific sub-committees

The Scottish Executive state that *“One integrated high-level committee with mode-specific sub committees is possible. The functions of the proposed Scottish Ferry Committee (SFC) could be taken on by the PTUC and dealt with by a sub-committee leaving the new-style Shipping Services Advisory Committees (SSAC) to deal with individual complaints, although the PTUC's ferry sub-committee might deal with unresolved issues referred to it by the SSAC's. The functions of MACS (the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland) could be incorporated into the PTUC and be carried out by a sub-committee which would build on the excellent work of MACS and set its functions in a wider context. The functions of Bus Users Complaints Tribunal (BUCT) could be incorporated into the PTUC and be carried out by a bus sub-committee with an expanded remit to cover all aspects of bus user representation, although this would involve the PTUC's bus sub-committee in individual complaints. Sub-committees would be largely self-directing but would be answerable to the main PTUC. By working closely with them, the PTUC could complement the work of the reserved bodies, the Air Travel Users Council (ATUC) and the Rail Passengers' Council (RPC).*

Advantages of this option are that it would provide a consistent, manageable structure for the PTUC that would maintain the benefits of having customised sub-committees, while still creating a body with real influence based on hierarchy of passenger interests. Gaps identified in user representation could be filled. This would enable bus users, whose representation is disproportionately low compared to other modes, to be more comprehensively represented. There may also be scope to deliver best value benefits by having the sub-committees' serviced by a shared administrative unit or secretariat. There would be a clear message that the main PTUC would not deal with individual complaints.

Disadvantages of this option are that it would be legally complicated to recreate MACS and BUCT as sub-committees of the PTUC. The reserved ATUC and RPC would not be incorporated into the PTUC, so user representation of modes of transport would still reflect the devolution settlement.

Option 2:

The new PTUC could be an umbrella organisation working closely with and involving the existing bodies but having no statutory relationship with them. Its remit could be entirely separate from the existing bodies. It could provide a forum for members of the existing and other interested bodies to come together.

Advantages of this option are that it does not require the dismantling of any of the existing arrangements. It would maintain the benefits of having customised bodies and would be able to complement their work whilst adding a multi-modal perspective to transport users' needs.

Disadvantages of this option are that, due to the very varied nature of the remits and functions of the existing and planned bodies, it would be very difficult for the PTUC to avoid duplication. It would be reliant on the existing and planned bodies working closely together and it is likely that such a forum would be less influential".

The Scottish Executive's preferred option is Option 1, on the basis that: "Creating one integrated high-level committee incorporating mode-specific sub-committees. While it is recognised that this option may cause disruption in the short term, there are potential benefits for users in the long term, because it would provide simple structure that would be easy for users to understand and engage with. Furthermore, it would reduce the total number of user representation bodies and the number of public bodies, which is in keeping with the principles of best value and efficient government. Under this option the PTUC could address identified shortfalls in user representation, especially with regard to bus users, and work in close partnership with the RPC and the ATUC".

The questions posed by the Scottish Executive are as follows, with the Roads Division's comments noted in bold type:

1. Which Option do you believe would best deliver an effective PTUC?

Option 1 would bring the benefits as detailed and would facilitate interaction with the new Transport Agency and the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP'S). The proposed WESTRANS response also favours option 1 as detailed in the draft response attached.

2. Do you have any alternative suggestions of how the PTUC could be structured?

No alternatives are suggested.

3. In what way do you envisage the PTUC interacting with users or your organisation?

The PTUC would assist individual Councils and the RTP's to consult users and help to inform transport strategies at local and National level.

4. What do you believe should be included in the remit of the PTUC?

The remit should be as wide as possible to include all forms of public transport and all users and to provide for consultation and exchange of views at all levels.

5. Should PTUC membership seek to include passenger representatives covering rail, bus, ferry and air or should the focus be on an individual's ability to contribute at a strategic level?

The sub-committee structure should ensure the full representation of the various interest groups. Members of the PTUC should have a good grasp of the transport issues in Scotland and be able to contribute on a strategic level.

6. What essential skills and knowledge should a member of the PTUC have?

As stated above, members should have sufficient experience of strategic and local transport issues and the communication skills to effectively represent all users at the highest level.

4. DRAFT WESTRANS RESPONSE

- 4.1 The proposed WESTRANS response to the consultation is attached to this report. The WESTRANS response will be considered at the WESTRANS Joint Committee meeting on 13 March, and is considered to accurately reflect the views of the East Ayrshire representatives on the WESTRANS Management Group.

5. LEGAL / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No direct implications other than those set out in the report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Committee is recommended to

- (i) Endorse the draft WESTRANS response to this Consultation.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services
16 February 2006
SG/SC/YK - FV

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft WESTRANS response to the Consultation

For further information on the contents of this report please contact Sandy Gillatt on 01563 555734

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DRAFT

WESTRANS Response to the Consultation on Proposals for a Public Transport Users' Committee for Scotland

Introduction

The West of Scotland Transport Partnership (WESTRANS) is a Joint Committee of 13 local authorities: Argyll and Bute; East Ayrshire; East Dunbartonshire; East Renfrewshire; Dumfries and Galloway; Glasgow; Inverclyde; North Ayrshire; North Lanarkshire; Renfrewshire; South Ayrshire; South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire Councils and Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT). The two organisations have come together, with the support of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley and Ayrshire Structure Plan core teams to produce a Joint Transport Strategy (JTS) for the west of Scotland.

Responses to Consultation Questions

Question 1

Which option do you believe would best deliver an effective PTUC?

Option 1 offers the better opportunity to deliver effective user representation. It offers a structure covering all devolved modes of transport. This should result in improved efficiency, particularly in relation to administrative costs. It would enable a coordinated, integrated approach to be taken to transport user representation and should result in a better understanding of the key issues for users. The PTUC would be well placed to communicate these issues effectively and to inform local, regional and national government. The proposed structure would provide an opportunity for different issues/modes to be discussed in greater detail through the creation of sub-committees.

Option 2 may create duplication of effort by the new PTUC. The various user organisations would be encouraged to work together but would have no statutory requirement to do so. This proposal would be less straightforward for organisations such as the new regional transport partnerships as they would have to communicate and consult with several bodies representing the interests of users.

Question 2

Do you have any alternative suggestions of how the PTUC could be structured?

No

Question 3

In what way do you envisage the PTUC interacting with users or your organisation?

The creation of a PTUC would assist regional transport partnerships in consulting and communicating with transport users, seeking their views on the regional transport strategies and generally about policies, projects and initiatives.

Representatives of the regional transport partnerships should be able to attend meetings to gain an understanding of the important issues which should be considered in the regional transport strategies, and to consult the PTUC about developments and initiatives in their regions.

Question 4

What do you believe should be included in the remit of the PTUC?

The PTUC should:

- represent users of all forms of public transport and cycling and walking and give advice to local, regional and national government
- represent the transport needs of disabled people and provide advice on accessibility issues to national, regional and local government
- provide a forum in which local authorities and regional transport partnerships can consult with users and seek views on the local and regional transport strategies
- communicate regularly with the RPC and ATUC.

Question 5

Should PTUC membership seek to include passenger representatives covering rail, bus, ferry and air or should the focus be on an individual's ability to contribute at a strategic level?

It will be important to ensure that members of the PTUC have sufficient knowledge of the transport system in Scotland to make an informed contribution to the work of the committee. This will ensure that the committee's work has value, enabling a user perspective to contribute to improving the transport system.

Representatives must be able to work at a strategic level if the PTUC is to be effective in achieving the Executive's aims of inputting to the national and regional strategies and accessibility policies and advising Scottish Ministers.

Question 6: What essential skills and knowledge should a member of the PTUC have?

Members should:

- have a good knowledge of the transport system in Scotland
- be able to operate at a strategic level
- be able to represent the transport needs of disabled people
- have effective communication and analytical skills