

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2002

WESTRANS – PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTION AND FUNDING

Report by Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To seek the Committee's approval for the Council becoming a formal member of the West of Scotland Transport Partnership (WESTRANS) and for a first year financial contribution to the Partnership.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The West of Scotland Transport Partnership (WESTRANS) was formed in 1998. It is made up of Transport representatives from the 12 unitary authorities in the former Strathclyde Regional Council area and Strathclyde Passenger Transport.

- 2.2** Since its inception, WESTRANS has operated as an informal body, with no approved constitution, standing orders, or working arrangements. In January 2000, members agreed to suspend consideration of the issue of a formal structure for WESTRANS pending the completion by the Scottish Executive of its review of regional transport partnerships. With the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 having been passed into legislation, it is now appropriate to reconsider the structure of WESTRANS.

- 2.3** As part of its deliberations in drafting the Transport (Scotland) Bill, the Scottish Executive considered what format, if any, it would recommend for regional transport partnerships. The conclusion of those deliberations was that as regional circumstances varied, it should be left to local bodies to determine the appropriate form of a partnership. However, reserve powers were taken to the Scottish Executive under section 1 of the Act, that by Order, the Executive could require public bodies to prepare and submit a joint strategy dealing with such matters, and for such purposes, as may be specified in relation to the discharge of the functions of those bodies relating to transport.

- 2.4** In west central Scotland, a body already exists in relation to public passenger transport planning, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority (SPT). The strategic policies of that body interact with the land use planning, economic, and roads functions of councils within its area. It is important that mechanisms are in place to permit consultation and co-ordination of the various duties relating to the preparation or delivery of transport in west central Scotland.

3. OPTIONS FOR WESTRANS

3.1 A number of options would potentially provide a mechanism for the co-ordination of the transport aspirations of the twelve Councils and SPT, in addition to addressing the strategic planning of the roads functions of the twelve Councils.

- (i) **Joint (Consultative) Committee**
This would have political membership, formal constitution, cycle of meetings and funding arrangements. There would be no delegated powers.
- (ii) **Joint Committee**
This Committee with delegated powers would require to act through a lead authority.
- (iii) **Joint Board**
This Board with delegated powers would function in a similar fashion to the Police Board.
- (iv) **Using powers contained within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, the Scottish Executive may take action to impose a structure to deal with transport in the West of Scotland.**

3.2 As the role of WESTRANS is largely one of strategic planning and co-ordination of the Authorities', aspirations relating to transport and the discharge of their roads, planning and economic development functions, it is better if the Joint (Consultative) Committee fulfilled an advisory role which made recommendations to the member bodies which they in turn would require to consider whether to implement.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 It is proposed to establish a Joint (Consultative) Committee with the following remit :

- (i) to advise the constituent councils on matters of common interest, such as freight issues, consultation documents, relating to transport insofar as they relate to their respective functions;
- (ii) to work with, the Structure Plan Committees and other relevant bodies to prepare, recommend, and keep under review a joint transport strategy for west central Scotland;
- (iii) to recommend and prepare bids for funding, for projects which affect more than one council area, and which are not the statutory responsibility of SPTA, to the Scottish Executive's Public Transport Fund, Integrated Transport Fund or such other relevant funds as there may be.

- 4.2** A Joint (Consultative) Committee structure will bring the benefits of a recognised formal body with constitution, fixed membership, calendar of meetings and clear remit. It will not alter the advisory role of WESTRANS.

5. PROPOSED CONSTITUTION

- 5.1** A draft constitution for a Joint (Consultative) Committee has been prepared and will be submitted to each authority for approval. The key features of the proposed constitution are:

- The membership of the Committee will consist of all Councils from the former Strathclyde Region plus SPT (as co-opted member)-the quorum will be 7 out of the 13 members
- One Elected Member representative from each Authority (with a substitute permitted)
- The Committee will be supported by an officer Management Group
- One year's notice for withdrawal from the Committee (which may only take place at the beginning of the financial year)
- Appointment of the SPT to act as Clerks to the Committee (subject to annual review)
- Administration and accountancy services to be provided by a host Authority – (to be decided)
- Contributions in accordance with a fixed percentage determined by reference to populations, which may only be modified through unanimous agreement.
- Core costs (see para 8.1 below) will be met collectively, but specific projects of interest only some of the Committee member Councils will be separately managed and funded by those Councils

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The Transport (Scotland) Bill recommended that local bodies should determine the appropriate form of a Transport partnership, and that this partnership should prepare and submit a joint transport strategy. The local transport strategy agreed by the Council envisages its implementation in the context of a wider transport strategy agreed for the West of Scotland.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The propose Joint Committee would be set up under powers contained in the Local Government (Scotland) Act.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** It is proposed that the Joint Committee should operate on an initial budget of £50,000. It is anticipated that this will be matched by the Scottish Executive. This budget will be sufficient to cover the cost of

administration including producing reports, minutes of meeting and the cost of meeting arrangements, plus the cost of commissioning initial studies to prepare bids for submission to the Scottish Executive for funding to develop a full joint transport strategy. The funding would not cover the cost of preparation of project bids to the Public Transport Fund or the Integrated Transport Fund or the cost of implementation of any infrastructure improvement projects. It is not proposed to seek any contribution from SPT, since SPT is in turn funded by the constituent Local Authorities. The first year cost to East Ayrshire Council on the basis proposed would be £2,670.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i) approve the participation of the Council in the proposed Joint (Consultative) Committee subject to the approval of the constitution.
- ii) authorise the Head of Legal Services to agree the proposed constitution on behalf of the Council subject to such minor amendments as are considered appropriate and are consistent with the principles in para 5 above.
- iii) approve a contribution for 2002/03 of £2,670 towards the initial proposed budget for the Joint Committee of £50,000.

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22 February 2002
JTK/YK

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the contents of this Report, please contact Jim Kane, Head of Roads & Transportation on 01563 576310.

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AGENDA