

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 26 AUGUST 2003**

### **WESTRANS – CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A CORE TEAM**

#### **Report by Director of Development Services**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.1** The purpose of the report is to:

- (i) Seek the agreement of the Committee to extend the membership of the West of Scotland Transport Partnership (WESTRANS) to Dumfries and Galloway.
- (ii) Seek the agreement of the Committee to the establishment of a Core Team for WESTRANS as outlined in the report.
- (iii) Authorise the Solicitor to the Council to enter into a supplementary minute of agreement on terms and conditions to be agreed and negotiated by the constituent authorities.

## **2 INCLUSION OF DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY**

**2.1** WESTRANS was formed from the authorities which made up the former Strathclyde Regional Council area. There are similar regional transport partnerships in other parts of Scotland. They are viewed by the Scottish executive as having a key role in drawing up and implementing national transport strategy.

**2.2** Dumfries and Galloway is not currently included within any wider regional grouping. This is considered desirable within the national transport planning framework. There is also potential value to be derived from closer strategic workings with Ayrshire and the West of Scotland. In particular, strategic rail and road services are closely interlinked. It is recommended that the Council should agree to Dumfries and Galloway joining WESTRANS

## **3 BACKGROUND – OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

**3.1** Recent discussions with WESTRANS, and involving the Scottish Executive, highlighted a number of the issues facing the WESTRANS partnership. In particular it was noted that progress in developing any form of integrated

approach continues to be constrained by the limitations on the capacity of the local authorities and SPT in the West of Scotland:

- a) to harness additional resources through joint projects
- b) to gather and disseminate information
- c) to represent the views of the 13 authorities on matters of common concern
- d) to translate broad policies into co-ordinated operational programmes of action

**3.2** These will become even more acute due to the requirements to produce a Joint Transport Strategy (JTS) for the WESTRANS area in terms of two key aspects:

- a) the broad framework of action that it is now intended to have developed by Autumn 2003 will need to be tested and refined during the consultation period on the draft JTS in terms of the feasibility of the preferred course of action.
- b) once this first JTS is agreed (which is intended by early 2004) it will require an even greater level of joint effort to ensure that it is implemented.

Unless the operational issues are addressed, there will be delay in completing the development of the JTS and serious risk that the strategy will not be implemented.

## **4 PROPOSED CORE TEAM**

**4.1** At the meeting of WESTRANS Joint Committee held on 17 March 2003, it was agreed that the member Councils should consider establishing a Core Team. The Core Team proposal would have four professional officers including a team leader. The estimated cost is £250,000 including salaries and administration support costs.

**4.2** At a meeting of the WESTRANS Joint Committee on 16 June 2003, it was confirmed that the Scottish Executive would be prepared to contribute up to 80% funding towards the cost of the initial year, which would leave a balance of £50,000 for the constituent authorities to fund on a pro-rata basis by population. This was considered reasonable. The position would be reviewed annually by the Scottish Executive, the aim being for the Core Team eventually to be funded equally by the constituent authorities and the Scottish Executive.

**4.3** A full list of anticipated functions is provided in the Annex to this report. The Core Team would operate in the same way as Core Teams for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley and the Ayrshire Structure Plans. It is expected that, in the first

instance, the constituent authorities would wish to retain responsibility for the implementation of specific projects identified in the JTS. The Core Team would, therefore, not normally provide the 'client role' in preparing individual contracts and projects – this would rest with the relevant authority or authorities. The work of the Core Team will be complementary to the existing joint arrangements which have responsibility for cross boundary matters that are already served by other statutory mechanisms such as SPT and Structure Planning. It is proposed that the team will bring added value to the process and not duplicate the work undertaken by existing bodies.

- 4.4** WESTRANS is formed as a Joint Committee of the constituent local authorities and SPT. Each local authority has one Elected Member representing the authority. There is also a Steering Group of one officer from each of the member authorities. The core group will be accountable to the Joint Committee. It is proposed, however, to assist the Joint Committee in operational control of the Core Team's programme through the establishment of a smaller Executive Group of officers. Consideration will also be given to how the Scottish Executive might be included within the steering arrangements.

## **5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** The participation of the Council in a Joint Transport Strategy for the WESTRANS area is part of Government Strategy for developing integrated transport.

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** The pro-rata share of the cost to be met by East Ayrshire Council will be approximately £3,000 which can be met from existing budgets.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1** A supplementary minute of agreement to incorporate the proposed changes will be drawn up by Renfrewshire Council.

## **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1** The Committee is asked to:
- a) agree to the membership of Dumfries and Galloway on the Joint Committee;
  - b) approve the establishment of a Core Team for WESTRANS with initially four posts as outlined in 3.5 and 3.6 above;

- c) authorise the Solicitor to the Council to approve and sign a supplementary minute of agreement.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**  
**11 August 2003**  
**SC/JTK/YK/JR**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 WESTRANS Joint Committee meeting 17 March 2003 – Establishment of a WESTRANS Core Team.
- 2 WESTRANS Joint Committee meeting 16 June 2003 – Progress on establishment of a Core Team.

For further information on the content of the report please contact Jim Kane, Head of Roads and Transportation, on 01563 576310

**Implementation Officer: Jim Kane**

## **ANNEX FUNCTIONS OF PROPOSED CORE TEAM**

- Response to consultations from Government or other bodies as agreed by the Steering Group
- Test and refine specific policies and recommendations in the JTS as they are developed through the current WESTRANS/SPT partnership;
- Monitor implementation of the JTS and publish an annual report;
- Assist with the review of the JTS including co-ordination of a common database;
- Assist with the consultative processes on the JTS adopted by the Partnership;
- Assist with the development of other joint transport policies as required from time to time by the Steering Group;
- Provide supporting input to the preparation by member authorities and SPT of individual bids and contracts (as is sometimes requested of the Structure Plan Teams);
- Prepare and process, as agreed, joint bids for resources (e.g. ITF or European monies);
- Prepare and promote, as agreed, joint administration action (e.g. joint adverts or in promoting new legislation);
- Liaise with transport organisations to influence the shape and content of their policies and programmes to align them with the JTS (e.g. freight operators, SUSTRANS and CBI);
- Assist with any other action that will help implement the JTS (e.g. processing of claims or holding of joint accounts);
- Co-ordinate and disseminate information on transportation projects being undertaken by the members of the Partnership;
- Collect information on the programmes and policies of other organisations which are directly related to the work on the JTS;

- Develop and maintain a WESTRANS website;
- Prepare reports on matters which require a common view on behalf of the Partnership (e.g. the Airports Policy);
- Prepare documents to disseminate the work of the Partnership (e.g. press statements and articles); and
- Undertake any other tasks required by the Steering Group to promote the work and safeguard the interests of the Partnership.