

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 16 DECEMBER 2003

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS THROUGH WESTRANS

Report by Director of Development Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend approval for submissions of public transport development projects for funding through WESTRANS.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As previously reported WESTRANS was established last year as a Joint Committee to develop an integrated transport strategy and a programme of strategic transport improvements within the area of the former Strathclyde region. A separate report on this agenda updates the Committee on possible developments in WESTRANS resulting from the current consultation on national transport planning arrangements. In that report it is indicated that the Scottish Executive envisages regional transport agencies as having a role in the dispersment of funds for strategic transport initiatives within the context of their integrated strategies. As a demonstration of its intention it has made an early announcement of an allocation of £3.7 million to WESTRANS for projects to be undertaken within the current financial year.
- 2.2 It is intended that the funding will be allocated to the development of strategic projects promoted by the Member Councils. It is expected that the allocations will reflect to some degree the distribution of population but will also reflect the priority which could be attributed to project proposals for Member Councils in the context of WESTRANS' emerging strategy.

3 SUBMISSION FROM EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

- 3.1 To meet the deadline set by WESTRANS for submission of proposals, two proposals have been submitted:
- A Kilmarnock to Dumfries rail study
 - Completion of the network of public transport corridors, to cover the A76 to New Cumnock, the A713 serving the Doon Valley, the A70 and the A735 through Kilmaurs, Stewarton and Dunlop

3.2 In its submission, in August 2002, for a fifth tranche of funding from the Public Transport Fund the Council included the proposed Kilmarnock to Dumfries rail study alongside proposals for development of the transport corridors along the A71 through the Irvine Valley and down the A76 as far as Cumnock. Whilst the corridor programmes were approved the bid for funding for the rail study was not agreed at the time for support from the Public Transport Fund. Nonetheless, the study as proposed was supported by Strathclyde Passenger Transport, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, the East Ayrshire Social Inclusion Partnership and Dumfries and Galloway Council. It is, therefore, considered that this would be appropriate for funding through the allocation to WESTRANS.

3.3 Through the earlier tranches of funding received from the Public Transport Fund the Council has been able to make substantial progress in introducing a network of strategic public transport corridors and related improvements. The objectives of this programme are to:

- Encourage the use of public transport particularly buses
- Improve traffic circulation within Kilmarnock and Cumnock town centres (including circulation of buses)
- Improve the environment for pedestrians within town and community centres
- Improve opportunities for safe cycling
- Reduce potential for road accidents particularly those involving pedestrians

The total funding for this programme which has been allocated to date is £ 6.49 million .

3.4 The strategic network which is being rolled out is centred on the improved bus station facilities at Kilmarnock and the Tanyard, Cumnock. The strategic corridors which are now moving to the implementation stage will be the A71 through the Irvine Valley, the A76 to Cumnock and the B7081 Western Corridor including Irvine Road, Kilmarnock and Kilmarnock Road Crosshouse. The latter will connect up to a public transport corridor being introduced by North Ayrshire Council to form a continuous route which extends through to Ardrossan. The programme includes subsidiary corridors from Kilmarnock Town Centre to Shortlees, New Farm Loch and North West Kilmarnock.

- 3.5** The proposed submission for funding from the recent allocation to WESTRANS would complete a strategic corridor network by extending the network agreed to date southwards to New Cumnock, along the A70 both east and west of Cumnock, through the Doon Valley linking to a public transport corridor which is being developed by South Ayrshire Council, and northwards from Kilmarnock Town Centre through Kilmaurs and Stewarton to Dunlop.
- 3.6** Since the additional funds will require to be spent by April 2004 it will not be practical to undertake a programme of physical works on the ground. The funding submission is, therefore, restricted to the design and consultation required for the extended corridors.
- 3.7** The public transport corridors have been complemented by the rolling out of an integrated network of cycle routes within Kilmarnock and linking to external routes. The Council has also agreed with the new Morrisons' Superstore funding for a local town centre bus route. This will connect up the Morrisons superstore to the town centre, with the possibility of an extended circuit linking in the London Road area and the Glencairn area. This is also the subject of a separate report on this agenda.
- 3.8** Full details of the proposals are annexed to this report. In order to meet the very tight deadlines for local authorities to submit proposals for the consideration of WESTRANS, the proposals outlined above have already been submitted. It would be possible, however, to submit revisions to the proposals attached should the Committee wish.

4 LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** There are no legal or financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1** It is recommended that the Committee endorse the attached proposals for submission to WESTRANS for funding from the allocation of funds which they have recently received from the Scottish Executive for strategic transport projects within the WESTRANS area.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services
26 November 2003
SC/JR

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the content of the report contact Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services, on 01563 576011

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KILMARNOCK TO DUMFRIES RAIL STUDY

East Ayrshire Council proposes a study to examine the upgrading of the rail service between Kilmarnock and Dumfries & Galloway. The study, as proposed by EAC, would complement the proposal by East Renfrewshire Council to assess a circumferential public transport route extending from Braehead to Lanarkshire. Any rail upgrading would build on the benefits of further enhancement of the service between Barrhead & Kilmarnock as proposed by SPT & the SRA providing an appropriate interchange facility is provided between the circumferential route and the Barrhead to New Cumnock rail line.

The study will consider: -

1. the feasibility and associated implementation options of increased passenger and rail freight improvements to the rail line between Kilmarnock and New Cumnock, including options for additional stations and rail based park and ride facilities;
2. the knock-on implications for the continuation of the Glasgow to Carlisle line, particularly between Dumfries and Gretna.
3. the feasibility of providing an hourly rail service between Glasgow/Kilmarnock and New Cumnock, with the introduction of new stations and park and ride facilities between Kilmarnock and New Cumnock.
4. the feasibility of increasing local rail freight movements, within the context of a regional and national rail freight strategy.

The study as proposed by East Ayrshire Council has previously been supported by Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT), Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, and the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area Social Inclusion Partnership.

The study will take into account opportunities for increased passenger services brought about by the proposed increase in track capacity between Kilmarnock and Barrhead, recent signalling improvements related to the introduction of a freight line between Cronberry and Auchinleck, and the potential afforded by a number of housing and industrial developments along the route. The rail improvements would be integrated with the QBC measures currently being implemented in the A76 corridor with the PTF5 allocation and would provide enhanced opportunities for multi-modal interchange facilities in the corridor.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The Kilmarnock to New Cumnock rail line would contribute to achieving the following objectives:

Passenger Movements:

- Connection of the deprived wards in the Coalfield SIP area to areas of economic opportunity;
- Provision of reliable and attractive public transport;
- Highest levels of public transport accessibility, safety and convenience, from door to door;
- Reduction of congestion, improvement of pedestrian and cyclist safety, and enhancement of local environment; and
- Support for social and economic regeneration initiatives.

Freight Movements:

- To balance the requirements of passenger services with regional and national rail freight strategies;
- Opportunities to maximise transfer of freight from road to rail; and
- Opportunities to assist sustainable economic development through the provision of rail freight opportunities.

STUDY COST

The cost of the proposed study is approximately £150,000.

A735, A70 & A713 QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

To build on the previous PTF funded Quality Bus Corridor measures implemented in Kilmarnock and underway in the A71, A76, B7081 corridors and in Cumnock, it is proposed to extend the benefits of the QBC concepts to the other main bus corridor routes within East Ayrshire: -

1. A735 Kilmarnock to Dunlop corridor
2. A70 corridor
3. A713 corridor
4. A76 to New Cumnock

The implementation of QBC and related pedestrian-access measures on these routes would give benefits to the residents of the following communities in East Ayrshire: Kilmaurs; Stewarton; Dunlop, Muirkirk; Lugar; Skares; Rankinston; Ochiltrie; Drongan; Dalrymple; Patna & Waterside.

OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the QBC corridors are: -

- enhance access to public transport facilities in rural communities to address social inclusion issues;
- improve pedestrian routes to public transport and important community facilities such as schools, shops and places of work;
- improve bus stops, bus shelters and passenger timetable information
- enhance the pedestrian environment
- give priority to public transport
- improve facilities for cyclists and taxis
- introduce traffic management measures to ease traffic flows, improve road safety and enhance conditions for local businesses;
- improve safety and personal security for pedestrians on footways and pedestrian crossing points; and
- improve the ease of access for the mobility and visually impaired

STUDY COSTS

It is anticipated that the total cost of these QBC measures would be in excess of £1.5M.

In view of the need to carry out consultations and expend the additional moneys by April 2004, an allocation of £200,000 is sought in the current financial year to allow the Council to begin implementing the above measures.