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Date	19/06/20

For Office Use Only:	
Library Reference	71/20
Date Received	19/06/20
Bulletin	June 20

REPORT TO: Members' Library Report

MEETING DATE:

BY: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: ESESCR Deal: Transport Transition Group Project Plan

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the formation of a Regional partnership to develop and deliver a Transport Transition Plan to keep the transport network safe during economic recovery making provision for increase demand across local, regional and national transport corridors.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the setup of an operational South East of Scotland Transport Transition Group established in response to the letter issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (attached at Appendix 1); and the terms of reference for the Group have been drafted (attached at Appendix 2).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 22nd May the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity wrote to all Councils in order to outline plans for the direct engagement with local authorities in the Edinburgh and Glasgow City Regions. The letter makes clear the urgency and the scale of the public transport challenge which will require immediate joined up working to manage the operational interactions between the respective networks.
- 3.2 On 3rd June, the Edinburgh and South East of Scotland Transport Appraisal Group which includes representatives of Transport Scotland and SEStran met in order to map the way forward. It was agreed to establish the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Plan Group and to invite both Clackmannanshire and Falkirk to attend given their role in SEStran. Given the urgency of the transport challenge, the group will meet weekly in order to work together with Transport Scotland and SEStran to develop operational plans in response to the Covid-19 recovery.

- 3.3 The letter attached to this report was sent by the Cabinet Secretary to Council Leaders and Chairs of Regional Planning Partnerships. It announces the preparation of a National Transport Transition Plan, preparation of which will be guided by a National Advisory Group. The letter notes the reduction in public transport capacity during the lockdown and, because of ongoing social distancing requirements, the certainty of such reduced capacity for an extended period of time. It therefore highlights the risk of increased car use, with consequent adverse impacts on congestion, air quality, and increased inequalities; and the need to counteract this through a 'green recovery'.
- 3.4 Moving on to the process of assessment and implementation of measures the letter refers specifically to the urgency and scale of the public transport challenges in the Edinburgh and Glasgow city regions, and notes that Transport Scotland will be looking to engage with local authorities and regional transport partnerships in those regions.
- 3.5 Further supporting information published by Scottish Government states the overall aim of the Plan: "To operate a safe transport service, mitigating risks where possible for those using our transport network and for transport operators".
- 3.6 It goes on to set out the following objectives, to: "inform passengers about when and how to safely access public transport; support management of travel demand, reinforcing broader messages on physical distancing and discouraging unnecessary travel; sustain behavioural changes, encouraging active travel options and staggering journeys to avoid peak times; and inform passengers and road users of busy areas and times to encourage alternative choices."
- 3.7 Amongst the key issues it states the following: "Public transport has an essential function in our society. We need to consider the impact on those who are most vulnerable and those who are most dependent on public transport and for accessing essential services.
- 3.8 There may be a tendency to use private cars when available due to the ability to physically distance. We need to ensure the adverse environmental and physical impacts are limited by promoting cycling, walking and wheeling where possible."
- 3.9 In more detailed initial discussions at regional level with Transport Scotland the following matters were noted:
- Following the terms of the Cabinet Secretary's letter, Transport Scotland considers that the broad membership of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESESCRD) Transport Appraisal Board forms a basis for moving quickly to assess and instigate action within the region that contributes to the aim and objectives of the Transport Transition Plan; and involving all SEStran authorities in establishing the Transport Transition Plan Group.
 - It will be the responsibility of the regional group to ensure full engagement with the transport operators in the region.
 - Public transport capacity is expected to be between 10% and 25% of pre-Covid-19 levels for an extended period.
 - Transport Scotland have commissioned consultants to gather data towards preparation of an overall 'route map', and the results will be shared with the regional group.

- Transport Scotland are also undertaking surveys of consumer confidence in public transport in order to assess the most effective interventions to support that.
 - Promoting more and better active travel opportunities is an integral part of the Plan.
 - There is a need for measures to be implemented quickly so as to contribute most effectively to the overall economic recovery which will follow the easing of restrictions.
 - The National Advisory Group will meet regularly and will link closely with national organisations including CoSLA and SOLACE.
- 3.10 The City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Group met on 3rd June to begin work on the regional Transport Transition Plan (TTP). By way of reminder, that Group is part of the City Region Deal governance structure, and comprises representatives from all of the City Deal partners as well as from Transport Scotland and the Regional Transport Partnership (SEStran). It is not a decision-making part of the City Region Deal governance structure. In taking forward the preparation and implementation of the regional TTP it was agreed to establish the Regional TTP Group and, for completeness, to invite Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils to join the Group. Engagement with operators of public transport in the region will be essential, and the well-established links to these operators can be readily used to ensure a collectively sound, focused and comprehensive approach. Meetings of the Group are being held on a weekly basis, with one of the first tasks being to agree a project plan of urgently required transport measures and interventions.
- 3.11 Survey work, modelling and analysis is being conducted by Transport Scotland and, together with data held by SEStran and partner Councils, can provide a robust basis upon which to identify priority actions. The full range of possible interventions has yet to be established. In broad terms there will be a need for measures that seek to flatten the peak periods of demand for travel, and those which maximise the supply and attractiveness of public transport as well as the opportunities for safe other modes of travel (walking and cycling) to reduce reliance upon, and discourage increased use of, the private car. By way of a few examples, measures to flatten demand could include encouragement of continued high levels of home working, and the varying of workplace operating hours. Measures to maximise public transport and active travel could include more road space given over to bus lanes on arterial routes, more 'bus gates', and extensions to existing, or temporary additional, park and ride sites.
- 3.12 The provisions of the regional TTP will also be aligned with the principles set out in current and emerging national, regional, and local transport strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change, and to ensure that improvements to the transport system recognise and seek to reduce inequalities in access to employment, education/training, and services.
- 3.13 If the TTP is to be effective in supporting the region's economic recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions it is essential that operational transport measures and interventions are prioritised and implemented quickly. Transport Scotland have advised that, where possible, they should be programmed for implementation over the next few weeks. This will therefore also require an ongoing communications strategy to inform and engage with communities, transport operators, and transport users.
- 3.14 A copy of the draft terms of reference prepared by Transport Scotland for the purposes and operation of the TTP Group, and which were considered at the

meeting of the Group on 10th June are attached to this report at Appendix 2. They are due for consideration and approval by the City Region Deal Executive Group on 18th June; and any changes will be reported to the next available Council.

- 3.15 The Group is established as a vehicle for providing and sharing information and expertise, developing proposals and making recommendations. It is not a decision-making body and will not be able to commit partners collectively or individually in terms of policy and spending. Accordingly, it will be for partners to determine the extent of authority to be delegated to their representatives and their own internal decision-making and reporting procedures. Given the need for urgency in response to the Covid-19 recovery the immediate short term measures which are expected to be proposed are essentially operational in nature. Accordingly, regular briefings to the Cabinet Spokespersons for Environment and Economic development by the Head of Infrastructure and with any concerns or other matters arising being referred back to the Transport Transition Plan Group.
- 3.16 The TTP will need to include provisions to measure the performance of transport interventions and the consequent impact on specified target outcomes.
- 3.17 The principles of a preventative approach is fundamental to prioritising transport interventions to directly mitigate and reduce the adverse impacts of the Covid-19 on the local, regional and national transport network..
- 3.18 The preparation of the TTP involves genuine engagement with all of the main regional transport providers and stakeholders. A robust communications strategy to inform communities and the travelling public will need to be a part of the TTP.
- 3.19 A central aim of the TTP is to maximise the availability and attractiveness of public transport and active travel modes, and thereby reduce the potential growth of private car use.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Not applicable

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 An integrated impact assessment will be necessary to ensure equalities considerations in the preparation of the National TTP as well as any contributory regional strategies, regard will need to be had to the statutory requirements of the equalities legislation, as well as such plans being demonstrable in their attention to the needs of those within the protected characteristics categories. Negating potential or possible adaptation, alterations and changes to the transport system necessary to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions may have either directly or indirectly impacts on the key principles of reducing inequalities in health, education, and economic outcomes within East Lothian.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – There is no specifically allocated finance for the preparation or implementation of the TTP, although there are current funding streams within Transport Scotland that could be regarded as potential sources. Councils and partner organisations will also need to consider how best to use existing

operational budgets, including the potential pooling of finance.

6.2 Personnel - Not applicable

6.3 Other - If the TTP fails to address adequately the transport challenges posed by the impacts of the Covid-19 restrictions it will impair the ability of the national, regional and local economies to recover, with a particular impact on our more disadvantaged communities.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

AUTHOR'S NAME	Peter Forsyth
DESIGNATION	Asset and Regulatory Manager
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DATE	18 June 2020

Appendix 1

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and
Connectivity
Michael Matheson MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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To Council Leaders & Regional Transport
Partnership Chairs

22 May 2020

Colleagues,

Transport Transition Plan Engagement

I would like to thank you and your Council for the significant work that you have undertaken during this unprecedented time to keep the local transport networks safe and operational.

During the Scottish Parliament Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee meeting on the 13 May 2020, I outlined our intention to set out how our Transport Transition Plan will support Scotland's people and businesses on our transition out of lockdown. Further detail can be found at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/cabinet-secretary-sets-out-latest-transport-response-to-covid-19-outbreak/>. This will be an evolving process and we will engage Local Authorities and Regional Transport Authorities as it develops.

We are drawing together evidence to inform our plan, however one clear and significant challenge is around public transport. During lock down demand for public transport has fallen by between 85 and 90 per cent against 'normal' since 23 March. As we move towards easing lock down measures operators are estimating that capacity will be between 10 and 25 per cent of 'normal' with the level of physical distancing required. There is a risk this will result in increased private car use, leading to congestion, poor air quality and increased transport inequalities, particularly for the 29 per cent of households in Scotland that do not have access to a car.

We continue to take action to stabilise the transport system and prepare for physical distancing. Further details on the action I have taken can be viewed at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>. A key focus of our on-going work is to ensure that we continue to support a green recovery to deliver our Climate Change commitments and reduce inequalities.

As our national work continues I know you will also be leading your local and regional transport planning responses, in line with your transport responsibilities, which I recognise will be central to the success of the transition. I would encourage you to continue to take a cross boundary approach with your neighbouring authorities where needed.


While we have already been working closely, there will be a continuing need for collaboration to align approaches across our respective transport networks. I therefore intend to include within the Transport Transition Plan a statement on how we continue to engage with local authorities, regional transport partnerships and operators to operationalise the measures across Scotland. I would therefore ask you to consider what Transport Scotland input you may require in relation to your own transition transport planning. Please forward this to Amy Phillips (Amy.Phillips@transport.gov.scot) at Transport Scotland in the first instance.

Our engagement to date has reflected the differing challenges across the country, such as the on-going ferry operation discussions we have held with Island Authorities from start of the crisis. In the short term, Transport Scotland is also looking to engage directly with the local authorities in the Edinburgh and Glasgow city regions at an operational officer level. The urgency and scale of the public transport challenge in these areas requires immediate joined up working to manage the operational interactions between the respective networks for which we are responsible.

We are not seeking to underplay the challenges across rural areas of Scotland, other cities and areas of the country. We value Local Authorities' consideration in this regard, therefore I have asked for a Transport Transition Plan National Advisory Group to be set up with proposed membership to include representatives from COSLA, SOLACE, RTPs, SCOTS and other selected members.

We have held on-going discussions with COSLA, SOLACE, RTPs and SCOTS since the start of the emergency and will continue engagement on the Transport Transition Plan in the coming weeks as outlined above.

We look forward to engaging on our respective plans as we rise to the collective transport challenges as we safely transition out of lockdown to the new normal.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Matheson', written in a cursive style.

MICHAEL MATHESON

Appendix 2 – Purpose and draft Terms of Reference for the Transport Transition plan South East of Scotland Group

Purpose

1. To align approaches and share knowledge of national, regional and local transport planning activity to safely increase capacity across the transport system and manage demand in our journey along Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis. This will include broader considerations relating to equality impacts and consideration of tailoring measures, for example to specific geographies and sectors.

Draft Terms of Reference

2. The Group will:
 - a) consider regional, local and national transport as it applies in the travel to work area with a focus on issues within and on approaches to city centres to assist in Transport Scotland's evolving Transport Transition Plan;
 - b) focus on increases in travel demand and capacity in line with the second National Transport Strategy sustainable travel hierarchy and interactions between modes as appropriate while considering the four harms set out in *COVID-19: A Framework for Decision Making (23 April 2020)*;
 - c) identify regionally specific and cross-cutting issues, challenges and opportunities associated with increasing travel demand and capacity;
 - d) collectively engage to address these as and where appropriate;
 - e) input consideration of regional equality issues as per due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity;
 - f) input into scenario planning and provide advice on whether proposed scenarios or policy interventions appropriately and effectively reflect the operational requirements of the transport system from the regional perspective;
 - g) work together on key transport messaging and communication strategies to support the recovery and build confidence in the public transport system;
 - h) offer insight and feedback from those delivering services and measures to input into government decision making;
 - i) review and challenge material to support the response produced by Transport Scotland/Scottish Government, sectoral bodies and/or others; and
 - j) continue to bring together expertise and data in the monitoring of networks as we transition out of lockdown; and
 - k) advise Transport Scotland on the readiness of transport sectors to manage increased demand/service provision as appropriate.

3. Confidentiality

As the Group may be asked for its views on proposals that are still in development, and which have not yet been made available to the public, all discussions and material will be confidential.

Papers may be shared with named individuals who are not members of the group with the prior agreement of the co-chairs.

4. Conduct

Members of the group are expected to contribute their expertise as independent members and not to promote the interests of one organisation or sector. Members are asked to challenge assumptions and scenarios and should, likewise, expect to be challenged by other members of the group however this will be done respectfully.

5. Membership

- The City of Edinburgh Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- East Lothian Council
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Midlothian Council
- Scottish Borders Council
- West Lothian Council
- SEStran
- Transport Scotland
- Public Transport Operators to be invited as required and agreed with the co-chairs.
- Other representatives can be invited with prior agreement of the co-chairs.

6. Secretariat

The secretariat function will be provided by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Project Management Office.

Frequency of meetings to be confirmed, however it is anticipated that meetings will initially be held once or twice weekly, with the first taking place on the week commencing 1 June. Shorter, *ad hoc* meetings with selected members could take place more frequently depending on the requirement and speed of decision making that is required.

Frequency, role, remit and need for the group by all partners to be reviewed every two weeks.

The secretariat will aim to provide papers a day in advance but this may not be possible due to the speed at which work is commissioned and the need for quick turnaround.

The names and roles of all of those attending should be submitted to the secretariat in advance to enable a roll call at the start of each meeting and for the record, including any substitutions to agreed representatives.

7. Chairs

It is proposed that Grace Vickers, as Chair of the Edinburgh City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board, and Alison Irvine, Transport Scotland Co-Chair, noting that these are bespoke and sit alongside, but separate to, the City Region Regional Transport Working and other Transport Groups.