

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
3 SEPTEMBER 2004**

Regional Transport Partnerships

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To seek approval for the comments attached as Appendix A to be submitted to Westrans as a representation from the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee regarding the future arrangements for regional transport delivery in Scotland.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Scotland's Transport Future White Paper brought forward proposals to amend the delivery mechanisms for transport at a national and regional level. This includes the formation of statutory regional transport partnerships across Scotland.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS

- 3 The Scottish Executive has invited informal opinions on the finer details associated with the implementation of statutory regional transport partnerships prior to the publication of a formal consultation on the topic in Autumn. As such, a paper outlining the issues of importance to Ayrshire has been prepared and is attached as Appendix A.
- 4 Westrans is making representations to the Scottish Executive on behalf of its constituent local authorities regarding the future arrangements for the west of Scotland. As such, it is desirable to submit a paper outlining the requirements of Ayrshire to Westrans to ensure that Ayrshire's interests are appropriately represented in discussions with the Scottish Executive.

CONCLUSION

- 5 The proposals brought forward for the reform of regional transport partnerships by the Scottish Executive raise issues for Ayrshire which require to be highlighted. As the Scottish Executive is actively seeking feedback on the proposals it is appropriate that Ayrshire submits a representation to Westrans to ensure that these issues are taken into consideration in their discussions with the Scottish Executive.

RECOMMENDATION

6 It is recommended that the Committee:

- note that the reform of regional transport partnerships has implications for Ayrshire and that the situation is ongoing; and
- approve the paper attached as Appendix A for submission to Westrans as a representation of the issues of importance to Ayrshire.

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APPENDIX A

Scotland's Transport Future
Ayrshire Issues Paper

The publication of the Scotland's Transport Future White Paper and its proposals to introduce statutory Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) has produced a number of issues for Ayrshire. Through discussions with Westrains the Scottish Executive has indicated its desires to hear the opinions of local authorities on the detailed development of these proposals prior to the publication of a formal consultation paper on the matter. The issues of importance to Ayrshire are laid out in this paper.

Strategic Road Network

The Scottish Executive intimated that they would appreciate an indication of what is regarded as the key Trunk Roads within an area. As there are strategic routes in Ayrshire that are not Trunk Roads this remit has been extended to cover more than just the Trunk Road network. The key strategic road routes in Ayrshire are as follows:

	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire
M/A77	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A78		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A737		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
A738		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
A71	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
A70	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A76	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
A79			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

These routes are the strategic arteries that service Ayrshire's industries and provide essential linkages for Ayrshire's inhabitants to services and employment. They also serve Ayrshire's gateway infrastructure, Glasgow Prestwick International Airport and the ports of Troon, Ayr and Hunterston, that provide access to the west of Scotland and beyond.

RTP Boundaries

Feedback has been invited on the boundaries that RTPs may have in the future. It is strongly felt that all 3 Ayrshire local authorities should remain members of a west of Scotland RTP that includes the Glasgow conurbation. Ayrshire has around 15.5% of its population in full-time employment travelling to the Glasgow & Clyde Valley region compared with just 0.5% travelling to Dumfries & Galloway according to data

from the 2001 Census. It is clear therefore that Ayrshire has much stronger ties to this region than it does to Dumfries & Galloway.

These ties have been fostered by Ayrshire's inclusion in the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority area which has helped develop strong public transport links from Ayrshire to the Glasgow conurbation. The White Paper acknowledges that "the rail network in the west of Scotland is the most heavily used commuter network outside London, and caters for around 60% of passenger journeys made in Scotland." This demonstrates an acknowledgement by the Scottish Executive that there are strong ties between south-west Scotland and the Glasgow metropolitan area. However, the existing SPT boundary does not encompass the entire local authority area in any of the 3 Ayrshire local authority instances. As it has been indicated that an RTP in the west of Scotland would subsume SPT and its functions it would be desirable that the boundaries of the RTP encompass the entire local authority area in the case of East and South Ayrshire. Currently only the islands of Arran and Cumbrae are excluded from the SPT area within North Ayrshire. As these islands share many common interests in respect to transport with the Highlands & Islands rather than the Glasgow conurbation it is of less importance that they are accommodated within the west of Scotland RTP. Maintaining local authority boundaries intact wherever possible would rationalise the boundaries of the transport authorities in the west of Scotland and provide a simplified delivery structure.

The notion of "critical mass" with regard to the size of RTPs is crucial. It has been shown that small unitary authorities struggle to deliver major infrastructure schemes due to the simple notion of economies of scale. Small unitary authorities simply do not have the resources, financial or human, to deliver these schemes. Therefore, the creation of a RTP in the west of Scotland of sufficient critical mass to rectify this is vital. A RTP of a similar size to Westtrans in the west of Scotland will have sufficient regional overview and scale to plan and implement strategic transport projects. Two or more RTPs in the west of Scotland will dilute this ability and will limit the extent to which transportation planning can be undertaken at a truly regional scale. The overall number of RTPs in Scotland is insignificant. The most important issue is determining the most appropriate scale and membership of RTPs.

RTP Membership & Voting

There is confusion as to what is meant by the statement, "regional partnerships would have around a third of their voting membership from the business sector..." as this implies that a third of the membership of the RTP will be constituted by external members. However, the "Thinkpiece" on the issue circulated by the Scottish Executive states that "external members will always have one vote..." whereas elsewhere it states "...votes of which one third cast by external members." Clearly if external members are only to have one vote but are to cast a third of the votes this would effectively dictate the number of votes available to local authority members or indeed, the number of local authorities that would be a member of a given RTP. This seems an unfortunate scenario and clarification should be provided on whether a third of votes or voting members of RTPs is the intention of the Executive. It would seem sensible to have a third of voting members from external organisations as opposed to a third of votes.

If the existing Westrans local authority members are examined with regard to their population, as has been done in the table below, it can clearly be seen that by far the highest share of the population of the region is resident in the Glasgow City area. Therefore, it is presumed that they would be allocated the maximum 4 votes with the rest of the local authorities being allocated between 1 and 3 votes each. As the Ayrshire authorities sit around the centre of the population table there is a clear justification for the allocation of a substantial number of votes to the Ayrshire authorities. As the “Thinkpiece” specifically asks for views on the allocation of votes to Councillor members an indicative system based on a total of 34 votes (currently employed by SPTA) is shown in the table below. The difference between populations of neighbouring local authorities in the table is shown as justification for a change in the number of votes allocated. Where local authorities have broadly similar populations it is appropriate they should be allocated the same number of votes. Where a noticeable difference between populations exists, the number of votes allocated is increased to reflect this.

	2001 Population	% of Total	Votes	Difference between LAs
Inverclyde	84,203	3.57%	1	
East Renfrewshire	89,311	3.79%	1	5,108
Argyll & Bute	91,306	3.87%	1	1,995
West Dunbartonshire	93,378	3.96%	1	2,072
East Dunbartonshire	108,243	4.59%	2	14,865
South Ayrshire	112,097	4.76%	2	3,854
East Ayrshire	120,235	5.10%	2	8,138
North Ayrshire	135,817	5.76%	3	15,582
Dumfries & Galloway	147,765	6.27%	3	11,948
Renfrewshire	172,867	7.34%	3	25,102
South Lanarkshire	302,216	12.83%	3	129,349
North Lanarkshire	321,067	13.63%	3	18,851
Glasgow City	577,869	24.52%	4	256,802
Westrans Area	2,356,374	100.00%	29	
External Organisations	=1/3*no. of LAs	4.33	5	
Total Votes:			34	

Regarding the appointment of external members, whether voting or observer, it will be necessary to ensure the entire region is adequately represented. For example, Local Enterprise Companies have been suggested as potential members of RTPs. In the case of the existing Westrans area there are 6 Local Enterprise Companies within the Partnership’s boundaries. It would be necessary to ensure that they were all members to ensure the region was represented in its entirety.

As it has been indicated that Scottish Ministers are to appoint the first external members of the RTPs the issue of representation of the entire region must be emphasised to ensure that Scottish Ministers take this into consideration when appointing external members. The business sector of Ayrshire should be adequately

represented in a west of Scotland RTP to insure its interests are considered in the strategic transport planning for the region.

Increasingly there is a desire to integrate land-use and transportation planning at a strategic level. To facilitate this at a regional level it would be prudent to incorporate Structure Plan partnerships within the RTP area as external members, although this would have to be in an observer rather than voting capacity. Westrans already has representation from planning authorities which should be maintained in any future arrangements for RTPs.

There is scope to build into statute requirements for given organisations to partake in RTPs as is the case with Community Planning Partnerships. The Scottish Executive should explore this option with regard to RTPs to ascertain whether it is an appropriate mechanism for ensuring appropriate representation on RTPs.

Regional Transport Strategies

All 3 Ayrshire local authorities have produced Local Transport Strategies that outline their priorities with regard to the transport network in their local authority area. The Ayrshire Councils also recently approved a new draft of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan for consultation. The emerging Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan highlights the importance of the gateway infrastructure in Ayrshire, namely Glasgow Prestwick International Airport and the ports of Troon, Ayr and Hunterston, in linking the west of Scotland and beyond to the wider economy. The Westrans Joint Transport Strategy acknowledges the importance of these gateway locations and seeks to stimulate their continuing growth. Subsequently, a statutory regional transport strategy for the west of Scotland will need to take these key locations and the policies and priorities outlined in the emerging Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan into account.

The fact that Westrans has prepared a Joint Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland lends weight to the notion that the west of Scotland RTP should be maintained in as close a state to that that currently exists as possible. There appears little value in breaking up the region and starting regional transport strategies from scratch.

RTP Powers

The powers afforded to RTPs should be sufficient to allow them to undertake truly strategic projects. There is little point in creating bodies unable to implement the schemes of genuinely regional significance. This should of course be in respect to the roles of constituent local authorities and the powers they exercise. The national transport agency must also work closely with RTPs to help them undertake projects of this ilk and ensure that it is the projects required to benefit the region as a whole that are prioritised as opposed to localised schemes.

With regard to the west of Scotland it is vital that the duties and powers of SPT are not lost and that the RTP continues to discharge their function. The benefits accrued to the west of Scotland from membership of SPT must be carried forward in the new delivery mechanisms.

RTP Funding

The proposal to have prudential borrowing by the RTP propped up by revenue requisition from constituent local authorities obviously raises concerns regarding political accountability of expenditure and local authority control of their finances. There is also the issue of external members voting on financial issues that affect local authority funds. The rights of external members to vote on funding issues that affect local authority finances thus have to be carefully scrutinised.