

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
3 JUNE 2005**

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**SPT/Westrans Joint Transport Strategy**

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform the Joint Committee of the production of a final draft of the SPT/Westrans Joint Transport Strategy and seek approval for comments outlined in this paper to be submitted to SPT and Westrans.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The West of Scotland Transport Partnership, Westrans in conjunction with Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) published a consultative draft Joint Transport Strategy (JTS) in May 2004. The Joint Committee submitted a formal response to the consultative draft in September 2004 noting a number of issues and observations.
- 3 Following the consultation exercise Westrans and SPT undertook to revise the JTS to reflect the comments that had been made. A Steering Group was convened to consider alterations to the JTS on which the Joint Structure Plan and Transportation team was represented. It met frequently during late 2004/early 2005 and agreed a number of substantial changes to the style and content of the document.
- 4 If the proposals within the Transport (Scotland) Bill, which is currently before the Scottish Parliament, to create statutory Regional Transport Partnerships come to fruition it is anticipated that the minimum duty for the new organisation will be to prepare a statutory Regional Transport Strategy. Subsequently, it is likely that the Joint Transport Strategy will be the basis upon which the statutory Regional Transport Strategy will be developed.

AMENDMENTS TO THE JOINT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

- 5 The strategy is focussed upon the stimulation of economic growth and social inclusion across the west of Scotland. To facilitate a greater understanding of how transport can help achieve these goals the final draft of the JTS puts considerably more emphasis on the link between transport and land-use planning and, in particular, the policy that has been brought forward in the Structure Plans that cover the Partnership area. The policy context of the JTS has also been more widely acknowledged with the links to economic development, community planning, social inclusion as well as land-use planning policy all made more explicit. The JTS also now considers a wider range of additional issues including freight, cycling, walking and taxis amongst other things that were not part of the original draft.

- 6 A number of comments were made about the complexity of the consultative draft and the fact that the diagrams did little to clarify the points in the text that made the JTS inaccessible to individuals' outside the transport industry. As such attempts have been made to simplify the document and improve the diagrams in order to make it easier to read without changing the underlying ethos. This has resulted in a much more coherent document that follows a more logical flow from the objectives and context outlined through to how the strategy is to be achieved. The objectives themselves have been amended to more closely reflect the Scottish Executive's five key priorities of accessibility, integration, safety, environment and the economy with a heavy emphasis placed upon stimulating modal shift from the car to sustainable transport modes.
- 7 The strategy is based upon a series of actions, identified as the "Core of the Strategy", to promote enhanced accessibility across the Partnership area. These actions are supported by the identification of key proposals that are deemed to be of most significance to enhancing accessibility in the west of Scotland. The scope of these proposals has been extended beyond that identified in the consultative draft to incorporate a wider range of schemes including improving the Kilmarnock to Barrhead rail line. There has also been an attempt to ensure there is a consistency between the capacity constraints and infrastructure limitations identified in Chapter 3 and the actions outlined in Chapter 4 to address them.
- 8 A more holistic view of the infrastructure constraints and limitations that exist on the transport network of the west of Scotland has been taken into account in the final draft of the JTS. In particular, there is a more comprehensive acknowledgement of the capacity restrictions which exist on the rail network that inhibit the introduction of additional services and the problems that affect the strategic road network across the Partnership area.
- 9 There has been an attempt to widen the scope of the JTS to be less focussed upon Glasgow and its immediate hinterland in order to reflect the whole Partnership area in greater detail. This has resulted in the inclusion of a number of issues of importance to Ayrshire which previously were given little or no attention. This is an obvious improvement and will enable the Ayrshire local authorities to utilise the JTS more readily when preparing bids for funding and developing their own local policies.
- 10 Whilst the revised JTS is a significant improvement upon the consultative draft there are still a number of areas that require further attention. In particular there has been no mechanism developed to appraise and prioritise the project list that makes it difficult to identify the Partnership's priorities. There has also been no attempt made to cost the projects identified which makes it difficult to identify the scale of the resources required to implement the strategy and, therefore, to prepare bids for funding. The arrangements for monitoring the progress of the strategy are also not clearly outlined with no definitive targets set. This will make it difficult to ascertain whether the JTS has been successful in achieving its objectives. Some quantitative data has been appended to the document that will enable some limited conclusions about a base scenario to be drawn for future appraisal purposes. However, a more comprehensive set of targets and monitoring mechanisms will be required as the document evolves.

- 11 In addition, whilst it is acknowledged that problems relating to rural accessibility exist there is no policy or proposal brought forward to address the issue specifically. The lack of detail on rural accessibility issues was identified as a key concern in the Joint Committee's response to the consultative draft as this is a particularly pertinent issue for Ayrshire. It will be imperative that rural accessibility is explored in more detail as the document is developed in the future.

## CONCLUSIONS

- 12 The revised JTS is a significant improvement upon the consultative draft in that it is a much simpler document more accessible to the reader. It has taken into consideration the relevant land-use plans and policies and provides a more coherent picture of land-use and transport planning integration at the regional level. The JTS is likely to form the basis of a statutory Regional Transport Strategy and as such it is important that it accurately reflects the interests of Ayrshire. Whilst a number of issues remain outstanding the amendments that have been made to the final draft have resulted in a more comprehensive examination of the issues across the Partnership area. Subsequently, the final draft of the JTS can be regarded as a step forward in the production of a comprehensive Regional Transport Strategy that will provide a coherent starting point for the production of a statutory document.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13 It is recommended that the Committee:
- notes the changes that have been made to the consultative draft of the JTS during the preparation of the final draft;
  - approves the comments outlined for submission to Westrans and SPT.

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