

**AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
2 JUNE 2006**

Scotland's National Transport Strategy - A Consultation

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To inform the Committee of the publication by the Scottish Executive of a consultation document on the future National Transport Strategy for Scotland.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The NTS consultation report was published in April 2006 and is subject to a 12-week consultation period that ends on the 13 July 2006. The results of the consultation will be taken into consideration in the development of the final NTS that will be published later in 2006. The consultation document contains sixty five questions and these cover a range of issues including measures to promote economic growth, accessibility, choice and awareness of the need to change, modal shift, new technologies and cleaner fuels, measures to manage demand, the need to reduce the need to travel, road safety and future implementation including proposals for targets and indicators.
- 3 The white paper, Scotland's Transport Future that was published by the Scottish Executive in June 2004 made a commitment to publish a National Transport Strategy for Scotland. The National Transport Strategy is a non-statutory document but will represent the first of its kind for transport in Scotland. It is proposed that the NTS when it is finally published later this year will be a "high-level" document setting out a long-term vision (20 years up to 2025) for transport in Scotland.
- 4 The overall aim of the strategy will be to promote economic growth, social inclusion, health and protection of the environment through a safe; integrated effective and efficient transport system. Key objectives for transport within Scotland, previously set out in the White Paper are to:
 - Promote economic growth by building, enhancing, managing and maintaining transport infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency;
 - To promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network;
 - To protect the environment and improve health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumptions of resources and energy;

- Improve safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and staff; and
- Improving integration by making journey planning and ticketing easier and ensuring smooth connection between different forms of transport.

In terms of content, the NTS will not give any specific details of individual projects but will establish a framework for transport at the national, regional and local levels. The Strategic Projects Review will consider in detail the Executive's future infrastructure investment programme. There is no intention to publish an action plan with the final strategy.

COMMENTS

- 5 The Joint Committee welcome the preparation of the National Transport Strategy but would encourage greater integration of content and timing with the new status to be afforded to the National Planning Framework which is due for refresh every four years. This, in the future, statutory document, will guide the spatial development of Scotland and it is therefore important that a strong link between the two strategies exists **(Consultation Question 65)**.
- 6 In recent months the Ayrshire authorities have undertaken an extensive consultation on the transport priorities within Ayrshire resulting in the submission of a revised Structure plan to Ministers in June. This revision has also been supported by research undertaken by MVA consultants for Executive on the role transport plays in the economy of Ayrshire. Both the Structure Plan and the MVA research recognise the significant role transport infrastructure provision has in meeting wider environmental, social as well as economic objectives, particularly the key role it can play in the regeneration of communities within Ayrshire and in the integration of city region economies to the wider benefit of the Scottish economy. It is the view of the Joint Committee that Ayrshire's economy is hampered by the lack of integrated links to the national rail network and the over capacity that exists on the lines between Ayrshire and Glasgow Central. Priority investments to deliver Cross-Rail and associated network improvements on these lines are therefore essential to the long-term economic future of Ayrshire. It is also the view that access to the M74 from the central Ayrshire is poor and that a strategic scheme(s) for the improvement of this route/corridor requires to be brought forward at the earliest opportunity. The Joint Committee would therefore support the identification of key transport corridors and would draw attention to the priorities identified within the Structure Plan for Ayrshire **(Consultation Question 4)**.
- 7 The recognition of the current national regeneration priorities in the West of Scotland and Ayrshire within the consultation document is welcomed. The national planning framework, the Structure Plans for both the Ayrshire area and the Glasgow & Clyde Valley area as well as the emerging Regional Transport Strategy for the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport clearly identify an agenda for national investment in transport infrastructure in these regeneration priority areas. The implementation of these priorities such as Cross Rail, additional capacity on the Ayr and Kilmarnock lines and

improvements to the A737 would be consistent with support for the regeneration of these areas. In addition it should be noted that Government policy, through the national planning framework identifies Central Ayrshire as a priority economic development zone. Targeted expenditure on transport improvements to and within these “economic zones” within Scotland will strengthen their economies and support Scottish economic growth. The alignment of national spending consistent with the spatial priorities outlined in the National Planning Framework is supported (**Consultation Question 6**).

- 8 The Structure Plan for Ayrshire outlines a number of steps that can be taken to facilitate the international connectivity of Scotland both by rail and sea. These include transport infrastructure enhancements that support the continuing development of Hunterston, Glasgow Prestwick Airport and the ports of Ayr, Troon and Ardrossan. These “Gateways” to the Scottish economy have significant potential for growth in terms of passenger and freight. Surface access however is poor. The global potential of Hunterston as an international transshipment location needs to be recognised by supporting national infrastructure (e.g. A737) of a comparable scale. The UK Government’s aviation white paper has formally confirmed Glasgow Prestwick airport as West Central Scotland’s “second runway”. By 2030 the three airports of Glasgow Prestwick, Glasgow & Edinburgh are projected to handle in excess of 41 million passengers, only Glasgow Prestwick has substantial existing spare capacity together with specialist expertise in freight and aircraft maintenance. This capacity could be further developed through greater use of the Route Development Fund. In recent years routes supported by this fund have accounted for over 20% of patronage through Prestwick Airport. The three ports of Ardrossan, Ayr & Troon would all benefit from improvements to the access. It is important for the NTS to recognise the contribution these Ayrshire transport assets can make to the future development of the Scottish & UK economy. Ensuring greater integration and capacity improvements in the transport networks between these facilities and the economic opportunities, in the East of Scotland, England & Northern Ireland, should be recognised in the final strategy. (**Consultation Question 7 & 8**).
- 9 It is noted that the NTS will identify freight and logistics priorities of Scotland’s industries. The significance of Hunterston & Prestwick, see above, as future opportunities should be recognised in this analysis. In addition to recognising the growth potential of these “hubs” the NTS should also recognise the need to improvement of surface access particularly along an east – west route between central Ayrshire and the M74, including an improved A78 to Hunterston. Within the context of specific industrial sectors the development of the timber industry can be supported by funding to support rail freight interchanges and public road improvement and maintenance (**Consultation Question 12**).
- 10 Transport improvements are critical to increasing tourism revenues and improvements to access to the major airports will play an important role. Within the context of Prestwick Airport the congestion and poor service on the Ayr line is likely to present a detrimental image to the tourist visiting Scotland, better ticketing procedures and additional rail service capacity is now required (**Consultation Question 14**).
- 11 The barriers to access facilities such as health provision or employment can often be significant. The proposals outlined in paragraph 63 merit further considerations (**Consultation Question 17**).

- 12 Consideration should be given to the expansion of funding for demand responsive transport facilities. In parts of Ayrshire where schemes have been introduced the facilities that have been provided have been welcomed (**Consultation Question 20**).
- 13 The Ayrshire Authorities will request travel plans for all significant trip generating land uses; mechanism and funding to support the enforcement of Travel Plans would be welcomed (**Consultation Questions 24 & 25**).
- 14 The local authorities within Scotland have directed national funding to improvements in the walking and cycling environments of their areas; this has included 20mph zones around schools. There remain however significant further improvements that can be made and additional funding, capital & revenue, is necessary if these facilities are to be expanded but also maintained. A closer integration of transport and land use priorities will strengthen the opportunities to provide cycling and walking facilities in conjunction with planned development (**Consultation Question 28**).
- 15 Park & Ride facilities can offer opportunities and choice for the commuter and shopper. An effective network developed in conjunction with Regional Transport Partnerships and combined with parking incentives and public transport improvements such as rail capacity and bus priority lanes could contribute to modal shift and car journey reduction. Funding however for additional stations and improvements to park and ride facilities is limited (**Consultation Questions 43 & 44**).
- 16 National road pricing is currently being considered by the Department of Transport as a mechanism to address congestion on the road network. The potential impacts on the distribution of land uses could be significant and these should be fully explored prior to its implementation in Scotland. The objectives of any road-pricing scheme should perhaps go beyond traffic volume and CO² reduction (**Consultation Question 46, 47, 48 & 49**).
- 17 Land use and travel patterns are inextricably linked and exert considerable influence on each other. Co-ordinating planning of land use and transport can reduce the need to travel and encourage modal shift. To facilitate this it is essential that transport is considered comprehensively and from the outset as part of the land use development process (**Consultation Question 51**).
- 18 The Joint Committee welcomes the introduction of indicators and targets to monitor the effectiveness of the Strategy. The introduction of measures that would reduce CO² emissions from transport and also reduce other green house gases is supported. Specific targets should, as a minimum, reflect the current UK target (**Consultation Question 63 & 64**).

CONCLUSION

- 19 The Joint Committee welcome the preparation of the National Transport Strategy but recognise that there are major challenges faced in bringing forward a comprehensive package of measures which will lead to a transport system that is compatible with the vision and principles established in the consultation document. However it is the view

of the Ayrshire Authorities that the transport assets within Ayrshire have much to contribute to the primary objective of the Executive of facilitating growth in the Scottish Economy. Greater integration and capacity improvements in the transport networks between these facilities and the economic opportunities of the rest of Scotland, the UK and Europe will bring economic benefits not only to Ayrshire but also to the wider Scottish economy. It is hoped that this opportunity can be reflected in the NTS. Finally the Executive should consider preparing an Action Plan as an annex to the document that would set out key steps for the implementation of the strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

20 It is recommended that the Committee:

- note the contents of the report; and
- ask the Structure Plan Manager to forward a copy of this report to the Scottish Executive as the response of the Joint Committee to the National Transport Strategy Consultation.

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