
AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
7 JUNE 2002

Transport Delivery Report

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To comment on the Scottish Executive's recent transport publication, 'Scotland's Transport: Delivering Improvements'.

BACKGROUND

- 2 This long-awaited document, also termed the Transport Delivery Report, was finally published in March, following the appointment of a new Scottish Minister responsible for transport, Wendy Alexander. The report was originally intended as a long-term plan for transport in Scotland, similar to the DETR's Ten Year Plan, 'Transport 2010' (2000). However, due to the ministerial changes at the Executive the final emphasis of the document was changed to a delivery report coupled with the establishment of key priority project areas and a 'vision for the future'. A series of nine regional leaflets detailing the transport improvements delivered by the Executive over the previous four years and those to be implemented over the following two years were also published.

CONTENT OF THE DOCUMENT

- 3 The main theme of the report is to tackle congestion in and around Scotland's cities. The document states that "*Whilst traffic volumes are predicted to rise by 27% over the next two decades, 80% of this congestion will be concentrated in and around our major metropolitan areas*". Delivering greater integration and completion of vital missing links in the transport network are also seen to be key priority areas. Consequently, the Executive have devised an integrated package of ten priority projects to modernise and improve public transport, to promote alternatives to the car and to target completion or enhancement of key motorways and trunk roads. These ten priorities for delivery are:
 - Letting a new 15-year Scottish passenger rail franchise;
 - Re-development of Waverley Station in Edinburgh;
 - Development of rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports;
 - Development of a 21st Century public transport system for Edinburgh;

- Fixing congestion in Aberdeen;
- Delivering the top priority public transport projects as identified in the Central Scotland Transport Corridor studies;
- Progressing the Central Borders Rail link;
- Free off-peak local bus travel for the elderly and disabled;
- Improvement of customised public transport information through Traveline; and
- Promotion of through-ticketing on local buses.

In addition, the Executive will also examine how vital links on the A8 and A80 might be completed along with existing previous commitments to complete key routes such as the M77 extension, the Glasgow Southern Orbital and the M74 Northern Extension.

- 4 As well as these ten specific projects, the document also outlines a number of general policy tools aimed at reducing congestion. These include improving public transport, changing attitudes, introducing urban congestion charging, promoting walking and cycling and reducing the need to travel through land-use planning. The Executive highlights a commitment by the end of 2002 to undertake a comprehensive review of existing targets for the four main cities and their neighbours. A range of measures necessary to deliver these targets by 2021 will be identified such as those policy tools outlined above. A separate report is also expected to follow on a range of indicators to monitor the strategy against the core themes of national transport policy.
- 5 Overall, a two-fold increase of total expenditure on transport in Scotland is illustrated in the eight years between 1995-96 and 2003-04. In particular, spending on public transport is shown to have increased dramatically from £32 million in 1996-97 to £363 million in 2003-04 whilst spending on motorways and trunk roads has remained stable at £224 million. In Ayrshire, £32 million of Motorway and Trunk Road Programme funding, £10 million of Public Transport Funding, almost £7 million of Freight Facilities Grants (to November 2001) and £0.87 million Rural Transport Funding has been spent or has been committed. An additional £2 million has also been invested through the Rural Transport Fund and the Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Programme. The final section of the report goes on to discuss current research and studies underway on behalf of the Executive, including the Review of Strategic Planning, the Scottish Strategic Rail Study and the National Freight Strategy.
- 6 This report is seen as a ‘first chapter’ in the delivery of a future transport agenda for Scotland. It marks the next stage in an emerging national transport strategy to meet Government objectives for sustainability previously outlined in ‘Travel Choices for Scotland’ (1998), NPPG17 (1999) and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. Following the Spending Review later this year, the Executive will outline in more detail how, when and who will roll forward the priority project areas. The Executive recognise that some of these major projects are likely to take considerable time to complete and may well fall behind the three-year time horizon of the forthcoming spending review. Partnership with external bodies is therefore seen to be fundamental in this process in order to lever the resources necessary for future investment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AYRSHIRE

- 7 It is disappointing that this delivery report is not the long-term transport plan originally anticipated. However, clearly this is only the first stage in a new transport strategy for Scotland and it is recognised that many studies are still in progress. The conclusions of such studies along with further guidance on aspects such as targets and indicators, transport assessments and road traffic reduction reports should help local authorities to set local policies in a national context. The Transport Delivery Plan provides a useful point of reference to evaluate previous and committed investment within Ayrshire, the WESTRANS/SPT area and other local authority areas.
- 8 Whilst it can be seen that Ayrshire has been relatively successful in being awarded over £50 million of public funding since the mid-90's, it is disappointing to note that the future priority for the Scottish Executive will be to tackle congestion in the major conurbations. It is also concerning that the Glasgow to Kilmarnock rail line enhancements are not part of the Executive's top rail-related priorities mentioned in the document. However, it is stated that the Executive will pursue the strategic projects identified in the Strategic Rail Authority's Strategic Plan where this line is a short-term commitment. In addition, the latest PTF Guidance (Circular 4/2002) stated that the existing bidding procedures carried out by local authorities are set to change as the Executive is keen to introduce more flexibility in awarding resources for future transport projects. This will undoubtedly have financial and staff resource implications for the Ayrshire Councils and further details on this matter are expected from the Scottish Executive in the autumn.

CONCLUSION

- 9 'Scotland's Transport: Delivering Improvements' marks the first stage in a new transport strategy for Scotland. It provides a useful reference for previous and committed transport investment and establishes a vision for the future by outlining a number of priority projects. There may be a number of resource implications for Ayrshire as the main priority has been identified as reducing urban congestion in the major cities and future arrangements for supporting transport authorities' capital allocations are set to be modified.

RECOMMENDATION

- 10 It is recommended the Committee note the contents of this report.

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