

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Thursday 25 June 2020

South East of Scotland Regional Transport Transition Plan

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	16, 18, 19, 26, 27

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 Committee is asked to note that an operational South East of Scotland Transport Transition Group has been established in response to the letter issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (attached at Appendix 1), and that the Terms of Reference for the Group have been drafted (Appendix 2).

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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South East of Scotland Regional Transport Transition Plan

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On 22 May 2020, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity wrote to all Council Leaders and Regional Transport Partnership Chairs and highlighted the challenge for public transport as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The letter stated that Transport Scotland would engage directly with the local authorities in the Edinburgh and Glasgow city regions at an operational officer level due to the urgency and scale of the public transport challenge in these areas.
- 2.2 On 3 June 2020, the Edinburgh and South East of Scotland Transport Appraisal Board, which includes representatives of Transport Scotland and the South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran), met in order to map the way forward. It was agreed to establish the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Operational Group and to invite both Clackmannanshire and Falkirk councils to attend given their role in SEStran.
- 2.3 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. Background

- 3.1 On 22 May 2020, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity wrote to all Council Leaders and Regional Transport Partnership Chairs. The letter (included in Appendix 1) 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 physical distancing requirements, the certainty reduced capacity on public transport for an extended period of time. The letter highlights the risk of increased car use, with consequent adverse impacts on congestion, air quality, and increased transport inequalities; and the need to counteract this through a 'green recovery'.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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”.*
- 3.4 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.”*
- 3.5 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.*
- 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.”*
- 3.6 In more detailed initial discussions at regional level with Transport Scotland the following matters were noted:
- 3.6.1 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 Scottish Government’s Transport Transition Plan, subject to involving all SEStran authorities in establishing the Transport Transition Plan Group;
- 3.6.2 it will be the responsibility of the regional group to ensure full engagement with the transport operators in the region;
- 3.6.3 public transport capacity is expected to be between 10% and 25% of pre-COVID-19 levels for an extended period;
- 3.6.4 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;
- 3.6.5 Transport Scotland are also undertaking surveys of consumer confidence in public transport in order to assess the most effective interventions to support that;

- 3.6.6 promoting more and better active travel opportunities is an integral part of the Plan;
- 3.6.7 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; and
- 3.6.8 the National Advisory Group will meet regularly and will link closely with national organisations including CoSLA and SOLACE.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The ESESCRD Transport Appraisal Board met on 3 and 10 June to begin work on the regional Transport Transition Plan (TTP). The Transport Appraisal Board is part of the City Region Deal governance structure and comprises representatives from all of the City Region Deal partners as well as from Transport Scotland and SEStran. It is not a decision-making part of the City Region Deal governance structure.
- 4.2 It was agreed to set up the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Operational Group to take forward the preparation and implementation of the regional TTP. It was agreed to invite Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils to take part at meetings of this Group as they form part of SEStran. Their involvement will require to be formally approved by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee.
- 4.3 Engagement with operators of public transport in the region will also be essential, utilising the existing well-established links with the operators to ensure a collectively sound, focused and comprehensive approach.
- 4.4 The Group will meet weekly for now, with one of the first tasks being to agree a project plan of urgently required transport measures and interventions. 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.
- 4.5 The full range of possible interventions has yet to be established. However, 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. Opportunities to introduce and expand other safe modes of travel (e.g. walking and cycling) will be explored to reduce reliance upon, and discourage increased use of, the private car. Some examples of measures to flatten demand that are being considered include encouragement of continued high levels of home working, and the varying of workplace operating hours.
- 4.6 The priority actions identified from this plan will be integrated with the existing [Spaces for People](#) programme which the Council is progressing in response to COVID-19 to maximise public transport and active travel.

- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 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.

Terms of Reference

- 4.9 A copy of the terms of reference for the purposes and operation of the TTP Group are attached to this report at Appendix 2.
- 4.10 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, they could form part of regular briefings to the Convener and Vice Convener of the Council's Transport and Environment Committee by the Executive Director of Place; and with any concerns or other matters arising being referred back to the TTP Group.
- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 It will be for partners to determine for themselves the extent of authority to be delegated to their representatives and their own internal decision-making and reporting mechanisms. Subject to freedom of information and environmental information rules, and the regime of public access to council meetings and information, the Group's work will be confidential but may be shared with appropriate officers and elected members.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The TTP operational group will continue to meet weekly 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 COVID-19 crisis.
- 5.2 Corridor leads have been identified to explore the potential for supply and demand-side interventions to reduce pressure at key pinch points across the region. The cost and impact of these is being considered and shared on an ongoing basis with the Group, before being incorporated in the National Transport Transition Plan.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 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.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Early modelling suggests a correlation was found between areas of deprivation - where public transport is more critical to accessing employment - and where demand may exceed supply in public transport. It is also suggested that isolated communities may be more at risk from accessing public transport. These inequalities will continue to be considered and will be at the forefront of any proposed interventions.
- 7.4 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.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Transport Transition Plan Engagement - Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity to Council Leaders and Regional Transport Partnership Chairs
- 9.2 Terms of Reference – South East Scotland Transport Transition Plan Group.



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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.

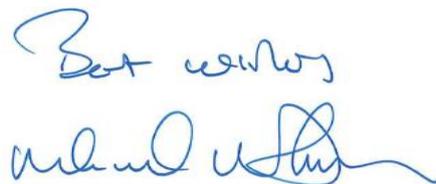
While we have already been working closely, there will be a continuing need for collaboration to align approaches across our respective transport networks. I therefore intend to include within the Transport Transition Plan a statement on how we continue to engage with local authorities, regional transport 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 "Best wishes" followed by a stylized signature.

MICHAEL MATHESON

Purpose and Draft Terms of Reference for Transport Transition Plan South East Scotland Region 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.