

Strategy -

3a Director's report on liaison between RTPs, and with the Scottish Government and Others

o **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on liaison with other RTPs and with the Scottish Government and other organisations.

o **Background**

This report details meetings with other RTPs across Scotland, Transport Scotland and other national transport bodies highlighting issues of interest across Scotland. It also notes meetings of the Health and Transport Action Plan Steering Group and the Local Authority Bus Operators Forum.

o **Recent Developments**

The last Board meeting was held on 8 June 2016, since which the following updates are available from meetings:

❖ **HTAP Steering Group, Aberdeen, 7 June 2016**

The latest meeting of the Health & Transport Action Plan Steering Group was held at Summerfield House on 7 June. A minute of the meeting is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

❖ **RTP Chairs, Gatehouse of Fleet, 14-15 June 2016**

The RTP Chairs meeting was hosted by Swestrans in Gatehouse of Fleet. This meeting was attended by Councillor Ramsay Milne and Derick Murray.

The Chairs discussed:

- The Chairs received an update on active/ sustainable travel including a pilot hosted by Tactran involving the employment of a cycle training officer funded 50/50 by Tactran and Cycling Scotland.
- There was some discussion on developments with the Bus Stakeholder Group including discussion on the new bus registration scheme. This includes the requirement for Councils to consult RTP's where there is a registration change to a "strategic" service. RTP's are asking Scottish Government to clarify the guidance around this requirement.
- The RTP's had previously agreed to part fund a national Bus Passenger Survey. Questions for specific regions were requested.

- A National Steering Group has been set up to oversee the development of smart and integrated ticketing at the national level. This group has been charged with encouraging operators to take up smart ticketing.
- The new Buses Bill in England was discussed within the context of a Government Manifesto commitment to introduce a Transport Bill in Scotland. Discussion centred on possible RTP representations on what might be included in the Bill and what opportunities are being created in England with the new Bill. It was noted though that there is considerably more spent by English Local Authorities than Scottish counterparts on bus travel. SPT are creating a Strathclyde Bus Alliance and have offered to present on their progress.
- Progress on the Northern Isles Ferries Service STAG assessment was noted.
- The Chairs noted updates on High Speed Rail, East Coast Main Line Association and Community Rail partnerships.
- The Independent Panel Review of Planning was noted. This is discussed at item 3c on the agenda for this meeting. The Chairs instructed the Lead Officers to meet and discuss the recommendations from the Review Panel and to try and develop an RTP view to pass on to Government for consideration in their deliberations on the recommendations. It could be noted that although the Review Panel could be thought to be advocating a level of centralisation with incorporation of Regional Strategic Planning into National Planning the Seven Cities Alliance have also published advice “Empowering Scotland’s Cities” which offers advice on the further devolution of powers.
- The Chairs noted the progress of the various Roads Collaboration programmes across the country.
- The Chairs noted the principles of an RTP response to the Communities Empowerment Bill.
- The Chairs noted a report on Funding Opportunities.
- The Chairs agreed to hold an additional meeting should the secretariat manage to secure a meeting with the new Minister. It was agreed that such a meeting invitation should also extend to include the Planning Minister given the implications from the Planning Review recommendations.

❖ **Transport Scotland Rail Quarterly Meeting, Aberdeen, 20 June 2016**

Derick Murray and Rab Dickson met with Transport Scotland’s rail team. This meeting formed part of the now regular series of meetings with the Transport Scotland Rail team.

The meeting discussed:

- The Aberdeen to central belt project and the City Region Deal announcement on the additional funding for this project
- The performance of the stations in our area
- The need for platform extensions and the possibility of selective door opening on the refurbished HST trains.
- An update on the Fraserburgh/ Peterhead to Aberdeen study
- The current thinking on the next Regional Transport Strategy priorities for rail
- The current status of the Dyce station Car Park.

❖ **Cycling Action Plan Scotland, Edinburgh, 21 June 2016**

Rab Dickson attended Cycling Scotland's CAPS Delivery Group meeting in Edinburgh. Cycling Scotland has now published its CAPS Progress Report which reports a positive impact and outlined some successes.

❖ **Transport Scotland Stakeholder Workshop on rail connectivity between Scotland and Northern England, Dundee, 28 June 2016**

Derick Murray and Joanna Murray from Aberdeen City Council attended this event. This was an event held by Transport Scotland's High Speed Rail team and the Department for Transport. It was held, along with another event in Motherwell, to permit stakeholders from across Scotland to highlight to the team what their needs were in relation to cross border rail travel.

From the north east perspective the follow was highlighted:

- High Speed Rail to Scotland will benefit parts of the country – but not all the country (as an HS2 report showed there is a disbenefit to the north east)
- Shorter journey times from England to central Scotland bring these regions closer together but increase the relative peripherality of the north east
- Journey times to many places in England become below the threshold for a switch from flying but this doesn't apply to the north east where even the journey time to the central belt is just under the threshold without the onward journey to England. Therefore flying from the north east becomes more important
- A high speed journey from the north east to England via Glasgow was unlikely to be attractive due to the likely change of stations in Glasgow
- The East Coast Main Line, with its through services, were important to the north east
- Sectors which use cross border travel include:
 - Energy sector
 - Supply chain (across the whole UK)
 - Labour (Mainly the north east of England)
 - Bio-pharma sector
 - Growing links to Newcastle, Stevenage & Cambridge
 - Tourism
- The importance of improving the internal Scottish rail network, in areas where there has been little improvement over the past two decades, was emphasised along with the need for prioritisation of projects.

❖ **East Coast Mainline Association, London, 12 July 2016**

Due to the events following the EU referendum, this meeting was postponed. It is hoped to re-schedule in the autumn period.

❖ **Transport Scotland, Aberdeen, 25 July**

This was a meeting with the Transport Scotland team that acts as an RTP liaison team. Its purpose was to highlight the current issues that Nestrans are dealing with and to consider forthcoming issues relating to, for example, the Planning Review and the Strategic Transport Fund.

o **Future Programme of Meetings**

❖ **LABOF Steering Group & workshop, Aberdeen, 9 August 2016**

❖ **RTP Lead Officers, Glasgow, 17 August 2016**

❖ **Transport Scotland, Glasgow, 24 August 2016**

This meeting will be attended by both Councils and will be discussing the City Region Deal.

❖ **Transport Scotland, Inverness, 30 August 2016**

This meeting will be discussing the A96 dualling proposals.

❖ **RTP Chairs meeting, Shetland, 14 September 2016**

Recommendation

The Board is recommended to note progress on liaison arrangements with other RTPs, the Scottish Government and others and arrangements for future meetings.

RGM/ RD 21 July 2016