

3d Trans-European Network - Transport

o Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members of issues in relation to the European Commission's Trans-European Network - Transport.

At its meeting on 9 October 2015, the Nestrans Board were informed (item 3a Director's report on liaison between RTPs, and with the Scottish Government and Others) that the RTP Chairs at their meeting in Dundee on 16 September 2015 had asked all Chairs to lobby at UK Government level for any changes to include the north of Scotland within the Core Network. This paper is to inform the Board of the situation regarding the Trans-European Network – Transport and to seek the Board's endorsement of further lobbying activity regarding the inclusion of the North East of Scotland on this Network.

o Background

The current situation in the Trans European Network – Transport (TEN-T) is that the member states are directed to establish the TEN-T Comprehensive Network by 2050. This is a network of interconnected infrastructure to meet a set of standards for each transport mode as laid down in the Ten-T regulations.

In the north-east of Scotland, this infrastructure includes:

- the rail line Aberdeen to Dundee and south,
- the rail line Aberdeen to Inverness,
- the trunk roads A90 Aberdeen to Dundee and south,
- A90 Aberdeen to Peterhead, and
- A96 Aberdeen to Inverness,
- the airport at Aberdeen,
- the port of Aberdeen.

The Core Network is a further refinement of the Network and is a subset of the Comprehensive Network. The Core network is to be established to meet a defined standard of infrastructure on key routes by an earlier deadline of 2030. Elements of the Core Network have since been combined into Core Network Corridors that cross the EU territory and form nine intersecting routes. It should be noted however, that the Core Network Corridors do not cover all of the Core Network.

o Discussion

To coordinate the transnational linkages and identify and deal with any bottlenecks etc., the European Commission have appointed European Coordinators for each of nine Core Network Corridors (and two for the horizontal priorities) to facilitate the improvements on their respective corridors. The UK is within the North Sea – Mediterranean corridor and the "info sheet" for each the UK member state is attached as appendix 1 and gives an overview of the key projects to be built in the period 2014–2020.

The North Sea – Mediterranean corridor runs up through the United Kingdom but stops at Glasgow/Edinburgh. The corridor map is attached as appendix 2. In the United Kingdom there are no routes or nodes designated as Core north of Glasgow/Edinburgh. The main difference between the Core Network and the Comprehensive Network is in regard to the timescale for development. By being on the network there are obligations for meeting a certain standard of infrastructure provision and also the implementation of other regulations depending on the status of the infrastructure.

There has been a substantial amount of Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funding available for projects looking to achieve these standards, however this is a small amount compared to the cost of the work required and always at a maximum grant rate of 50% or usually much less. The CEF funding has mostly been allocated to projects of European added value on the Core Network. There is no guarantee that such funding will continue to be available after the current allocation is exhausted.

The rationale for establishing that a network node is on the Core Network is laid down in planning methodology for the relevant EC regulation – for example, cities are defined amongst other criteria as capital cities or conurbations with a population of a million or more. Ports are defined as having a certain percentage of the total EU trade by tonnage and other facilities such as airports have similar criteria – a list of these nodes are made in annexes to the regulation.

There is a mechanism for certain facilities eg: ports and airports to change their status as their tonnage or volume changes over time, however in order for any other change to take place, a convincing case would have to be made for any change in the planning methodology and member state agreement would have to be obtained. The work plans of the Coordinators is for the period until 2030 and any review of the Core Network nodes is not likely to apply until the work is substantially complete. However, The North Sea Mediterranean Corridor Coordinator (Peter Balazs) met with the RTP chairs as reported to the previous board meeting and as agreed with RTP chairs, it is thought prudent to make a lobbying effort with the UK government and others now to try and include factors in the review that would increase the standing of the transport facilities in the North East of Scotland in the network. This work will build on the substantial efforts already made by Aberdeenshire Council both through North Sea Commission and Commission for Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and directly with the European Commission whereby CPMR, for example, had itself then adopted a lobbying position as recommended by the North Sea Commission to include the road and rail corridor from Aberdeen to the central belt on the original Core Network. An extract of this proposal from 2012 is attached as appendix 3.

It is noted in the work plan for the North Sea - Mediterranean corridor that as far as short sea transport is concerned that “a clear request has been made by peripheral regions such as ...North and east of Scotland.... to be connected with the Core Network notably via Motorways of the Sea and the Comprehensive Network but this request requires further refinement and also application to other modes.

o **Proposal**

It is clear from discussion after the RTP chairs meeting that the Coordinator is of the opinion that the majority of issues raised at that meeting were considered as national problems and thus Nestrans along with other RTPs are directed to lobby the UK Government as member state to further address the issues raised. The Board is recommended to endorse this proposal and to ask officers to look for related lobbying activity through existing and further

contacts to promote the inclusion of the North East of Scotland in any network revision on the basis of potentially revised economic and transport methodologies either singularly or in conjunction with other regions in a similar position.

o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the content of this report;
- b) instruct officers to continue to lobby for the strengthening the position of North East of Scotland in future Network revisions.

Philip Smart 1 December 2015