

## **Scottish Government Pre-Election Manifesto “Transport” Commitments**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To present the SEStran Board with the opportunity to comment on potential emerging work priorities for the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government 2016-17 which given no party has a majority may be further involved by other parties manifestos, which are also summarised within the report.

### **2. SNP Manifesto**

- 2.1** The paper was drafted and issued before the newly elected SNP Government had issued any subsequent Programme for Government 2016-17. However, based upon the manifesto<sup>1</sup> commitments outlined pre-election there will be a number of legislative and strategic actions in the short-term which will have clear impacts for the policy areas covered by Regional Transport Partnerships, notably:

- Commitment to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the National Performance Framework which includes commitments on inequalities and climate change;
- Provide free bus travel to all young people under 21 undertaking an apprenticeship.
- Introduce a new Climate Change Act, with a new 50% by 2020 emissions reduction target;
- £20 billion investment in infrastructure and commitment to review continually the pipeline of projects;
- In first 100 days to bring forward a Labour Market Strategy informed by work of the Fair Work Convention;
- Establishment of Regional Economic Forums led by enterprise agencies to promote and oversee local business support;
- To commence the socio-economic duty of Equality Act 2010 to require all public bodies to evaluate their policies against the duty to reduce inequalities;
- Publish a Fairer Scotland Action Plan informed by recommendations of the Independent Poverty Advisor and re-appoint an independent advisor in addition to establishing an inequality and poverty commission to monitor progress;
- Bring forward proposals to modernise and improve powers for compulsory sale orders and establish a new land agency: Land Scotland to manage publicly owned land in the national interest;
- Develop a Rural Infrastructure Plan which addresses key economic and social needs;
- Commitment to develop an ambitious and long-term Scottish energy strategy including the requirement for a low carbon transition in transport;

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<sup>1</sup>[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/thesnp/pages/5409/attachments/original/1461145824/SNP\\_Manifesto2016-web.pdf?1461145824](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/thesnp/pages/5409/attachments/original/1461145824/SNP_Manifesto2016-web.pdf?1461145824)

- Deliver a Low Carbon Travel and Transport programme with £62.5million investment to create low carbon infrastructure;
- Bring forward by 2018 the first low emission zone in Scotland;
- Refresh the Switched On Scotland Electric Vehicle Roadmap;
- Continuing commitment to rail infrastructure investment;
- Commitment to refresh the National Transport Strategy and review the national and local guidance to ensure greater community involvement;
- Commitment to a Transport bill that will improve bus services, enhance and improve the role of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner and to enable and enforce responsible parking;
- Review of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland including on extending cycling training “bikeability” schemes for the young; a commitment to improve the integration between active and public transport.
- Consult on a Bill to decentralise local authority functions, budgets and democratic oversight to communities;
- Review and reform the role of Community Planning Partnerships so they are better placed to drive reform, including through use of citizens’ panels and town hall meetings;
- Establish a new Islands Strategic Group and develop a new National Islands Plan;
- Reduce Air Passenger Duty by 50 per cent during the course of the next Parliament.
- Commitment to continue to grow and develop City Deals, Town Centre Partnerships and Regional Economic Partnerships so that clusters of agencies and shared interests can work together for the benefit of their local economies and communities;
- In the next parliament, a commitment to bring forward a Planning Reform Bill based on the recommendations of the Review. This will aim to streamline development planning and management procedures and practices to remove unnecessary blockages and delays. Amend Planning Obligations so they work for the benefit of all and do not cause delays to the completion of projects.
- A commitment to reform local taxation by asking those living in the highest banded houses to pay more and reducing tax for low income families with children. Pledge to increase the financial accountability of local authorities. By assigning a share of Income Tax to councils, they will be less reliant on central government funding and incentivised to grow their local economies.

### **3. Specific Projects mentioned**

- 3.1** The Scottish Government pre-election manifesto also made a commitment to invest in electrifying the Stirling-Dunblane-Alloa line, the Glasgow-Edinburgh Shotts route, complete the redevelopment of Dundee station, support shorter and more frequent journeys between Aberdeen and Inverness, improve the Highland and Aberdeen mainlines and invest in redeveloped station hubs at Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth, Stirling and Motherwell.

- 3.2** From 2018, as a direct result of increased investment, the pre-election manifesto also said that rail passengers will be able to benefit from more seats, services and faster journey times. Commitment to maintain the rail route to Stranraer, maintaining lower fares on the route, conduct a feasibility study into extending the Waverley route via Hawick to Carlisle and make progress on improvements to the East Coast mainline, including examining the case for a station at Reston in Berwickshire.
- 3.3** In addition, to further commitments to examine the case for an extension of the Stirling-Alloa rail line to Dunfermline by upgrading the existing Longannet freight line. A pledge to back local bus services by continuing to provide financial support for services as well as incentives for the take up of greener vehicles.
- 3.4** In the first year of the new Parliament, was also a pledge to introduce a Bill which will require all public vehicles carrying children to and from school to be fitted with seatbelts and also a commitment to support community transport initiatives to train and qualify more minibus drivers.
- 3.5** The manifesto highlighted that through the National Entitlement Card, Scotland's older people and disabled people will continue to be able to travel for free on local or Scottish long distance buses. As well as a commitment that national smart card plans will be rolled out across ScotRail, with systems ensuring that the same cards can be used on ScotRail and the Glasgow Subway. Alongside an action to work with bus and ferry companies to ensure that the Saltire national concessionary travel cards are usable across the entire transport network.
- 3.6** The incoming Scottish Government also pledged to continue to put in place record investment in cycling and walking over the life of the next Parliament. As well as a commitment to implement the national walking strategy and achieve a vision of 10 per cent of everyday journeys being made by bike by 2020.
- 3.7** The manifesto highlighted that making roads and communities less congested but well served is an important balance to achieve observing that through the Freight Facilities Grant, there has been a commitment previously to continue to invest in projects which get goods and services to communities more efficiently, working to improve urban deliveries in particular.
- 3.8** The manifesto also proposed specific investment plan programmes:-
- £5 billion in rail improvements – including upgrades to the Aberdeen/Inverness line and the Highland Main Line and modernisation of the Glasgow Subway
  - £1.4 billion in improvements to the road network including work on dualling the A9 and A96, bypassing Maybole on the A77 and improving other sections south of Girvan, further improvements to the A75, and exploring how to better connect Dumfries and the M74;
- 3.9** As well as a commitment to prioritise improvements to the road network that connects the East of Scotland and Scottish Borders with England – the A7, A1 and A68.

#### **4. Other Parties Manifestos**

- 4.1** The Scottish Conservatives outlined a commitment to investing in the Scottish road network especially focussed on rural areas and named the A1 within the SEStran area as vital for tourism, commerce and industry. There was continued support for electric vehicles, a proposal to extend the free bus scheme to community transport and a comprehensive national strategy for this form of transportation. On Rail, there was support for further improvements between Central Belt and Aberdeen, a call for a feasibility study on a direct link between Perth and Edinburgh, as well as suburban Edinburgh South railway and restoring Reston and East Linton stations. There was clear support for further investment in active travel and an aim for at least one segregated cycle route in each of Scotland's seven cities, linking from outer city limits through city centres.
- 4.2** The Scottish Labour manifesto made a general commitment to sustainable, public and active travel and support a strategic review of the next generation of transport investment. They support the acceleration of reopening rail lines including the extension to the Borders Railway, the Levenmouth line, the Edinburgh South Suburban line and Edinburgh to Berwick via Dunbar, with new investment in stations such as those at East Linton and Reston within the SEStran area.
- 4.3** They proposed the integration of Scotland's transport system, accessible with one smartcard ticket for use on all modes of public transport, the length and breadth of our country and the exploration of contactless payment across all modes of public transport in Scotland by the end of the next Parliament. The manifesto also proposed regulation of Bus services in Scotland to give local communities and councils greater say over the services.
- 4.4** The Scottish Greens manifesto highlighted the need to develop sustainable travel options which are accessible to everyone, create a low-carbon future and reduce the impacts of climate change. Currently two-thirds of all commuting is done by car, the manifesto highlighted this was unsustainable but it also highlighted an equality issue that women and people from deprived areas rely on public transport disproportionately. The manifesto called for more investment in walking and cycling for shorter journeys, more funds for maintaining rather than building new roads and a push for a reliable and efficient public transport network, with expressed support for the regulation of buses. The manifesto also outlined a commitment to work with the Scottish Government to legislate against parking on pavements.
- 4.5** Finally, the Scottish Liberal Democrats in their manifesto supported the progression of contactless payment, support the development of electric vehicles and continue to make case for High Speed Rail. They show the conducting of a feasibility study for extending the Border's railway to Hawick and Carlisle. The proposed retention of Air Passenger Duty, take forward the Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy and increase capital spending on cycling and active travel each year.

## **5. New Cabinet and Ministerial Team**

- 5.1** On 18 May, the First Minister announced her new Cabinet and wider Ministerial team<sup>2</sup>. Fergus Ewing MSP is the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy & Connectivity with responsibility for transport within a wider portfolio, who will be supported by Humza Yousaf MSP as the new Minister for Transport and the

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/About/People/Ministers>

Islands, who will also report to the Economy (Keith Brown MSP) and Climate Change (Roseanna Cunningham MSP) secretaries as appropriate.

## **6. An Influencing Strategy**

- 6.1** The key themes of the Scottish Government's pre-election manifesto was that they had a plan for further reform and transformation of Scottish society, its economy and public services based on an ambitious programme of investment, innovation and integration.
- 6.2** In terms of Regional Transport Partnerships, there was no specific mention of RTPs. However, there certainly appeared to be a narrative within the manifesto of the increasing aggregation of service delivery whilst increasing local community participation and scrutiny of the outcomes. This type of agenda may offer clear opportunities for RTPs given their regional/cross-boundary strategic statutory role. However, given the emerging proposal for primary Transport legislation and early influencing of that legislation and potential amendments to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 will be a crucial part of any influencing/lobbying strategy agreement.
- 6.3** Clearly any initiation of a lobbying strategy would need to await the details of the Programme for Government 2016-17. The existing joint RTP/COSLA/SG "Develop to Deliver" document offers a clear nexus for any further influencing actions ahead of the actioning of the manifesto commitments into a Programme for Government 2016-17 but members may wish to suggest specific priorities.
- 6.4** However, with a new Scottish Government in place it might be an initial first action to seek a meeting with Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing MSP and/or Transport Minister Humza Yousaf MSP and SEStran office bearers, to enable a discursive but focussed agenda on how RTPs could deliver for the Scottish Government some of their ambitious manifesto commitments regarding transport and wider inclusive growth, given integrated transport importance to a number of other key policy areas. To this end, the Senior Vice-Chair has last month sent Scottish Ministers an introductory letter. There has also been letter sent from the Senior Vice-Chair to the relevant Opposition Spokespersons on Transport, given the minority status of the Scottish Government in the Scottish Parliament 2016-2021 session.
- 6.5** The Board may wish to discuss the best strategic approach in the initial few months of the new Scottish Government and the incremental opportunities to advance RTPs case over the first 2-3 years of Government whilst also protecting our current standing in the face of potential primary transport legislation but also within the first 100 days of the new Government the publication of the conclusions of the Independent Review on Planning and a new Labour Market Strategy.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1** The paper seeks to enable discussion on a series of matters relating to the new Scottish Government's pre-election Manifesto, other parties pre-election manifestos and seeks to highlight emerging priorities for any subsequent SEStran Lobbying and Influencing Strategy to be developed over the Summer for working with the new Scottish Government in delivering its strategic vision and policy/project priorities for the next Parliament.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1** The board are invited to comment upon key lobbying points of Scottish Government's pre-election manifesto which presumably will heavily influence the 2016-17 Programme for Government.
- 8.2** That the Board note the changed location of transport within Cabinet Secretaries' portfolios and the new Ministerial team.
- 8.3** That the Board agree SEStran office bearers should progress an initial lobbying and influencing strategy for SEStran with the new Scottish Government Ministerial team building upon any priorities agreed at the Board meeting.

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10 June 2016

Policy Implications	Potentially significant further changes to transport legislation, policy and strategy.
Financial Implications	None
Race Equalities Implications	None
Gender Equalities Implications	None
Disability Equalities Implications	None.
Climate Change Implications	None