

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report informs the Board of progress on the review of the National Transport Strategy and the second Strategic Transport Projects Review. It also covers the business of the most recent meeting of the Regional Transport Partnership Chairs, appraises the Board on a proposal to add a Work Place Parking Levy option to the Transport Bill and provides an update on High Speed rail.

2. National Transport Strategy Review (2)

- 2.1** Recent advice from Transport Scotland has confirmed that consultation on the NTS 2 proposals will begin in the summer, with the intention of publishing the document by the end of the calendar year. A Strategic Environmental Analysis (SEA) will also be undertaken within the above timescale.
- 2.2** With regard to options for future regional governance, included within the review, recommendations from the "Roles & Responsibilities Working Group" are currently being considered by government and it is anticipated that conclusions and recommendations emanating from this element of the process will accord with the timescale of the wider review.

3. Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR 2)

- 3.1** Regional Transport Working groups, established to assist Transport Scotland and their consultants in carrying out the review, are now up and running. SEStran is actively participating in groups associated with the Edinburgh city region, which is based on the city deal geography and the Stirling, Clackmannanshire deal configuration supplemented by Falkirk.
- 3.2** Discussions so far have recognised the importance of the Regional Transport Strategies (RTSs) in these endeavours.
- 3.3** The consultants are preparing to embark on a stakeholder consultation process and it has been agreed that the same events can also be used for SEStran to begin their consultation on the main issues for the re-write of the RTS

4. RTP Chairs Forum

- 4.1** The RTP Joint Chairs are due to meet on 5 June, in Perth and the following items are on the agenda:

- National Transport Strategy & Strategic Transport Projects Review
- Transport Bill
- Planning Bill
- Hitrans Provocation Piece
- Presentation & Discussion on STPR2 + update on the NTS by Transport Scotland
- Consultation Responses
- Infrastructure Commission
- Williams Rail Review
- RTP Chairs Work Programme
- Future invitees to Chairs meetings
- East Coast Mainline Authorities
- West Coast Rail
- Low Emissions Zones
- Scottish Islands Passport Update
- Holyrood Magazine Article
- Communication with Partners & Stakeholders
- Place Principle Conference

5. The Transport Bill –Workplace Parking Levy

- 5.1** John Finnie MSP has lodged amendments to the Transport (Scotland) Bill in respect of adding the option of a Workplace Parking Levy to be available to Local Authorities.
- 5.2** These provisions are being proposed to the Rural Economy & Connectivity Committee (RE&CC) for consideration at Stage 2 of the Bill.
- 5.3** Within the policy context of the amendments it is stated that, “such measures have the potential to encourage modal shift towards public and sustainable transport and to enhance transport infrastructure and services in local areas, to the benefit of those who do not primarily travel by car.” It is also stated that, “The WPL is a levy on premises, not individuals or specific professions.”
- 5.4** SEStran’s Partnership Director was invited to give evidence to the RE&CC, on behalf of both SEStran and SCOTS, on 22 My 2019 and he took the opportunity to emphasise that such an option should be regarded as another “tool in the box” for authorities to promote in appropriate circumstances and recommended that any authority taking such a proposal forward should be compelled to consider it in the context of the prevailing Regional Transport Strategy, to ensure that constituents in neighbouring councils are not unfairly impacted. The point was made that if not considered in this way there is a risk that the largest financial impact will fall on the lowest paid car commuter, probably travelling from a rural area with few public transport options and gaining no benefit from the funds generated by the promoting council.

6. High Speed Rail

- 6.1** Following the publication of the High Speed Rail Scotland Summary Report in March 2016 - <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/high-speed-scotlandsummary-report/> - there was joint commitment from the UK and Scottish Governments to take forward further feasibility work: “..in this control period [CP5–2014 -2019] the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland will take forward work with Network Rail to identify any and all options with strong business cases, for consideration for implementation in Control Periods 6 and 7 [2019 –2029], that can improve journey times, capacity, resilience and reliability on routes between England and Scotland. This will include consideration of how these improvements can be future-proofed to allow further progress towards 3 hour journeys.”
- 6.2** Subsequently, Transport Scotland commissioned consultants Arup to undertake an Engineering Study Report and on 24 January a stakeholder group was invited to hear the conclusions of that report and next steps. The outcome of the study is that there are two potentially preferred routes on the West Coast and one preferred route on the East Coast to link up with HS2 and bring the benefits of High Speed Rail to Scotland.
- 6.3** The view of Transport Scotland is that High-Speed Rail is beneficial, economically and politically. It allows Scotland to keep pace with England. Scotland will reap the benefits in terms of access to larger markets, decreased journey times and investment in jobs.
- 6.4** It is vitally important that partners in Scotland get this right due to the nature and large scale of the project. Transport Scotland was looking to prepare a draft business case by August 2019 but resources have been diverted to Brexit related tasks, in the recent past and it is expected that the draft business case will be delayed until later in the year. The partner Local Authorities and RTPs have been asked to support Transport Scotland in developing the business case.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1** The Board notes the contents of the report.

Jim Grieve
Partnership Director
28 May 2019

Policy Implications	There may be policy implications for the longer term but and it is anticipated that they will start to emerge later this year
Financial Implications	Depending, particularly, on decisions being taken on the output of the Roles & Responsibilities Working Group referred to in 2.2 there may be financial implications for future years.
Equalities Implications	None
Climate Change Implications	None