

## **New Regional Transport Strategy (RTS): Update Report**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Partnership Board on 19 June 2020, it was agreed to note the requirement to review the RTS delivery programme to take account of the resource effects and consequences to transport services of COVID -19 and approval of a revised programme for delivery of the RTS was delegated to the Partnership Director.

### **2 Current Situation**

- 2.1 Covid-19 has created an extremely uncertain future for transport provision across the SEStran region. At a fundamental level, the long term aims and objectives at the heart of the existing and new RTS and the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) are likely to remain unchanged by Covid-19, although achieving the following challenges may be amplified and therefore become more urgent due to the wide-ranging impacts of Covid-19:-
- reducing inequalities,
  - taking climate action by reducing the need to travel,
  - encouraging sustainable mode choices and active travel, and
  - supporting inclusive growth.
- 2.2 Public transport demand remains impacted by the need for physical distancing and a drop in public confidence. Working from home, the move to more shopping online and impacts on the tourism and leisure sector have seen major reductions and changes to demand. Significant changes in the timing of trips is also currently apparent with lower morning peak demand and greater trip movement between the peaks. Given the levels of uncertainty it is only right that we consider the implications for transport and how we integrate these and other requirements into the development of a robust and flexible new RTS.
- 2.3 Covid-19 has impacted on the pace of development of the Second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and National Planning Framework (NPF4). As previously indicated, it is vital that the RTS aligns with the outcome of both these processes. There is now some clarity on the timing of STPR2. As part of the Programme for Government 2020-21 announced in September 2020, it was indicated that there would be a two-phase approach to the ongoing work associated with STPR2.
- 2.4 Phase 1 of STPR2 has two outcomes. The first will focus on recommendations which “lock in” the benefits and travel behaviours of individuals by extending successful temporary initiatives to support active travel through the Spaces for People funding. This is considered vital by Scottish Government to aid and provide a step change in investment which

supports the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy. The report is due to be published in December 2020.

- 2.5 This second element of Phase 1 is the completion of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Case for Change Report following discussion with the Regional Transport Working Groups across Scotland. This will include the sifting logic behind the development of options to be included for future assessment. The final case for change report is also due to be published in December 2020.
- 2.6 Phase 2 of STPR2 is the Final Options Appraisal which will be undertaken during 2021 and will identify the options worthy of further consideration and potential future investment as part of the national transport investment programme.
- 2.5 The impacts of COVID-19 delayed the progress of STPR2. The change in the approach to STPR2 particularly focussing on the “locking in” of the benefits and travel behaviours changes has impacted upon the whole sifting and appraisal process. This is influenced by and consistent with the NTS focus on the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy.
- 2.6 This revised delivery timescale of these outputs from STPR 2 are key factors in the development and consideration of the SEStran RTS. The development of strategies and policies will need to reflect this revised approach to project priorities and therefore, the adjustment of the RTS programme to align with the new timescales for STPR2 allows for the development and assessment of options that fully take account of how STPR2 has developed and its findings.
- 2.7 It is important to progress the RTS development process to maintain valuable stakeholder buy-in and momentum, but it is important that the revised RTS programme can now develop in alignment with the ongoing development of the wider policy context.
- 2.8 The RTS Steering Group has met during the development of the revised programme and considered ongoing development of the consultancy brief to procure the support needed to deliver the RTS.

### **3 New RTS –next steps**

- 3.1 Following review of the stages required to develop the RTS and the consultancy support required, and the confirmation of work recommencing on STPR2, procurement has commenced. A tender package for a contract to provide transport planning services to support production of a new Regional Transport Strategy for the SEStran region has been advertised on Public Contracts Scotland. The revised programme, showing key indicative stages of development of the RTS, is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The procurement exercise will be complete by mid-December 2020 and it is anticipated that works will commence at the start of January 2021 and will commit the budget expenditure identified in the 2020-21 budget for the

delivery of the RTS. However, the delay to align with the STPR2 will reduce the anticipated spend on the project in the current financial year which will result in a carry over into 2021-22. Anticipated spend in 2020-21 is £50,000 subject to final tender prices and contract programming.

- 3.3 Consultation exercises with stakeholders are expected to take place during the first half of 2021. This time period will also see the commencement of STAG based appraisals and various statutory assessments necessary to support the development of the RTS. It is anticipated that the draft RTS and supporting assessment will be presented to the Partnership Board for approval for final consultation in September 2021.
- 3.4 Update reports on progress will be presented to the Partnership Board meetings whenever appropriate.

#### 4 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- 4.1 notes the recommencement of work on STPR2 and the proposed two phases of delivery;
- 4.2 notes the review of the delivery programme (appendix 1), to take account of the resource effects and consequences to transport services of COVID -19 and the alignment with the revised delivery programme for STPR2; and
- 4.3 notes the impact of this change in spending profile on the Projects-Indicative Activities for financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 with an anticipated expenditure in 2020/21 of £50,000.

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 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Policy Implications	A new RTS will impact on future strategy development and local transport authorities' plans and strategies.
Financial Implications	Sufficient funds are contained within the projects budget for delivery of the RTS
Equalities Implications	The new RTS is subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)
Climate Change Implications	The new RTS will be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Appendices	Appendix 1 Revised RTS delivery programme.

