

Chief Officer Liaison Group

Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the terms of reference of the SESTRAN Chief Officer Liaison Group which was established by the South-East of Scotland Transport Partnership at its meeting on 24 October 2006.

BACKGROUND

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 which established Regional Transport Partnerships provides for the delegation of powers to Committees comprised only of Members; subsequent guidance from the Scottish Executive also provided for delegation to Officers of the Partnership (i.e. employees and other persons contracted to provide Proper Officer functions). These provisions were enshrined in SESTRAN's Standing Orders.

There is, however, no provision for delegation of powers to officers of constituent Councils. Nevertheless, it is essential for SESTRAN to have access to the views and advice of appropriate Council officers in order to carry out its strategic and operational functions and business.

The former SESTRAN Management Team has therefore been re-established as the Chief Officer Liaison Group with a more formal composition and terms of reference than hitherto, and with the opportunity for the Group to report directly to Partnership Members to ensure that there is effective liaison not only between constituent Council officers and SESTRAN officers, but also between the Group and the Partnership Board.

STATUS OF GROUP

The Chief Officer Liaison Group serves as a forum for senior officers of the Partnership's constituent Councils to discuss issues relating to policy, strategy and operations, and to form a consensus view (or otherwise) to inform the Partnership Board's deliberations.

The Group has no delegated powers and is not a Committee of the Partnership. As such its meetings are not regulated by SESTRAN's Standing Orders.

REMIT

The Group's remit is:

- To provide a forum for discussion of transport matters between officers of the constituent Councils and officers of SESTRAN
- To consider transport matters relating to the functions, strategy and operations of SESTRAN and provide advice to the Partnership Board
- To consider transport matters arising through reports and meeting notes from the other SESTRAN Liaison Groups and provide advice to the Partnership Board
- To consider and provide advice on any transport matters referred to the Group by the Partnership Board or by the Partnership Director

- To inform and advise the Partnership Director on transport matters as affecting the SESTRAN constituent Councils

COMPOSITION

The Group comprises:

- The Head of Transportation (or equivalent post or nominee) from each SESTRAN constituent Council (8)
- Chairs of other Liaison Groups. If the Chair of a Liaison Group is also his/her Council's representative on the Chief Officer Liaison Group, the member shall attend in both capacities (maximum 5).
- SESTRAN Partnership Director (1)

CHAIR

The Partnership Director is Chair of the Chief Officer Liaison Group.

QUORUM, VOTING ARRANGEMENTS, ETC

Because the Group is solely advisory, there are no provisions for a quorum or for voting.

If a member cannot attend a meeting, he/she may arrange for the attendance of a substitute or alternate member in order that each council has full opportunity to participate in discussions.

If a group at any meeting fails to reach a consensus view on any matter, this will be recorded in the notes of the meeting so that the Partnership is aware of any difference of opinion among its Council advisers.

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

At each meeting a member of the Secretariat will attend to take notes.

Notes of Group meetings held since the last Partnership Board meeting are placed as standing items on the agenda of each meeting of the Board. Any matters not arising elsewhere in the Board agenda may be drawn to the Board's attention by the Partnership Director as Chair of the Group.

In most cases, however, it is expected that substantive recommendations emanating from the Group will be the subject of separate reports submitted by the Partnership Director.

It is not necessary for the notes of a Chief Officer Liaison Group meeting to be first approved by the Group before being included on the agenda of the Partnership Board.

For transparency, notes of Group meetings are also placed in the public domain by being posted on the SESTRAN website except for any matters which are judged to be exempt from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

REPORTING TO SESTRAN BOARD MEMBERS

In order to provide a direct link between the Chief Officer Liaison Group and the Partnership Board, the Group shall organise a seminar at least once per year, to which will be invited all SESTRAN Members and all members of the Group. At the seminar, presentations shall be made of the key issues discussed by the Group, and there shall be opportunity for discussion and debate.

