

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**15 SEPTEMBER 2020****DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

This report asks the Partnership to consider and approve a response to Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy consultation and to delegate authority to the Director to consider and approve the annual submission for Public Sector Climate Change Duties Reporting. The report also provides updates on non-Councillor Member recruitment; rail issues, National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review; National Planning Framework 4; and Cycling Scotland initiatives, which the Partnership is asked to note.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Partnership:

- (i) considers and approves a response to Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy consultation, as contained in Appendix A;
- (ii) delegates authority to the Director to consider and approve the submission of Tactran's Public Sector Climate Change Duties Reporting for 2019/20: and
- (iii) notes updates on non-Councillor Member recruitment; rail issues, National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review; National Planning Framework 4; and Cycling Scotland initiatives.

2 DISCUSSION**Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy Consultation**

- 2.1 On 5 August 2020, the North East Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) published their [draft Regional Transport Strategy](#) for consultation. This strategy covers the period 2020-2040 and follows on from the Nestrans 2008 RTS and 2013 RTS Refresh.
- 2.2 Along with the draft RTS, a number of supporting documents and studies were published and comments on these documents were also invited. The supporting documents include: [Strategic Transport Appraisal \(STA\)](#); [Strategic Environmental Appraisal \(SEA\)](#); [Fairer Scotland Duty, an Equalities Impact Assessment and a Health Inequalities Impact Assessment](#).
- 2.3 The Draft RTS identifies four 'pillars' to support the RTS Vision "To provide a safer, cleaner, more inclusive and accessible transport system in the North

East, which contributes to healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities.”

- Promoting equality across the north east
- Helping the north east economy prosper
- Taking action to reduce impact on climate change and protect the natural and built environment
- Improving health and wellbeing across the north east

2.4 Sitting within these pillars are six Key Priorities which are:

- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity
- Zero fatalities on the road network
- No exceedances of WHO safe levels of emissions from transport
- Significantly reduced carbon emissions from transport to support net-zero by 2045
- Accessibility for all
- A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes

2.5 The proposed Tactran response focuses on areas of the Draft Strategy that have a direct impact on the region, such as cross boundary issues relating to trunk roads and the rail network. It also considers proposals that have an impact on Tactran residents that access employment and services within the Nestrans area such as park and ride proposals to the south of Aberdeen City.

2.6 The consultation period closes on 16 October 2020 and the proposed Tactran response to the Nestrans Draft RTS is shown in Appendix A. The Partnership is asked to consider and approve this response to allow it to be submitted prior to the stated deadline.

Public Sector Climate Change Duties Reporting 2019/20

2.7 The Climate Change (Reporting on Climate Change Duties) (Scotland) Order 2015, requires specified public bodies, including RTPs, to prepare annual reports on compliance with duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Tactran has reported annually since submitting a first report in Autumn 2015 for year 2014/15.

2.8 The annual reporting has included; Profile of the Reporting Body, Governance, Management and Strategy, Emissions, Targets and Projects; Adaptation; Procurement; Recommended Reporting and Validation and Declaration.

- 2.9 Following Scottish Government consultation on 'The role of Public Sector Bodies in tackling climate change' (Report RTP//19/42 refers) the reporting requirements were to be updated and amended prior to the 2019/20 Public Sector Climate Change Duties (PSCCD) reporting being submitted in November 2020. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic, work on updating the reporting requirements has not been completed and public bodies are being asked to submit PSCCD reports based on the same template and requirements as last year. This reporting procedure is expected to be in place during September 2020.
- 2.10 Last year Tactran's total emissions reported were 14 tCO₂e, with the majority of this (10.2 tCO₂e) being for office gas and electricity consumption.
- 2.11 Given that the new procedures are not yet in place and the reporting tool is only to be available from the end of August 2020, the Partnership is asked to delegate authority to the Director to consider and approve Tactran's 2019/20 PSCCD report for submission by end of November 2020.

Non-Councillor Member Recruitment

- 2.12 The membership of the Partnership is prescribed within the Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005. This requires the Tactran Partnership to have 4 or 5 non-Councillor Members. The Partnership has previously taken the view that it would wish to appoint the maximum of 5 non-Councillor Members, as permitted by legislation.
- 2.13 Reflecting the important policy and delivery relationships between health and transport, Scottish Government has encouraged all Regional Transport Partnerships to appoint an individual with direct experience or knowledge of the health sector as one of their non-Councillor members. Officials from both NHS Tayside and NHS Forth Valley have fulfilled this role previously.
- 2.14 There are currently 3 non-Councillor members. Discussions are continuing with NHS Tayside and NHS Forth Valley regarding appointing a health sector representative. Tactran is also advertising for a further non-Councillor Member with a closing date for application of 8 September 2020. An oral update will be provided at the Partnership meeting.

Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Enhancements

- 2.15 Members will be aware that the Scottish Government announced an additional allocation of up to £200million in the Transport Scotland Rail Budget, alongside the Aberdeen City Region Deal, to provide infrastructure improvements on the rail line between Aberdeen and the Central Belt to enable improved journey times and increase capacity.

2.16 To oversee this investment, a Reference Group was established which, as reported to the Partnership at its meeting on 17 December 2019 (Report RTP/19/51 refers), assisted in setting outputs for the project to deliver:

Enhanced commuter services into Aberdeen and Dundee –

- Local service with minimum of half hourly service into Dundee and Aberdeen in morning and evening peaks; and
- Hourly, all stops service between the two cities.

Reduced Inter-City Journey Times –

- Aberdeen to Edinburgh – 2hrs 10mins;
- Aberdeen to Glasgow – 2hr 30mins or better;
- Aberdeen to Dundee 1 hr 10mins.

Freight Growth –

- Increase capacity on the line to enable new freight paths.

2.17 The Reference Group has now moved to become a Project Delivery Group with the Senior Partnership Manager representing both Tactran and Tay Cities at Key Stakeholder meetings.

2.18 At the most recent Key Stakeholder meeting in July 2020 an update was received from the Project Delivery Group, providing details of the work completed to date.

2.19 The project is progressing through the rail industry's 8 stage GRIP process (Governance for Railway Investment Projects). The GRIP 2 stage, Project Feasibility, has now been completed. This considered a number of concept times tables which included train service specifications to provide for enhanced intercity and local stopping and freight services to meet or better the above project outputs. In turn a number of options to achieve this were identified:

- Modernising signalling and reducing the signal block length at 8 sections of the route between Aberdeen and Perth;
- Providing more opportunities for overtaking through provision of 7 freight loops at various locations on the route; and
- Station rail efficiency enhancements at Aberdeen, Montrose, Arbroath and Dundee stations.

2.20 Each of these individual options will now be taken forward to GRIP stage 3, Option Selection, for assessment. Appendix B provides a more detailed summary of work undertaken to date.

2.21 The Senior Partnership Manager will continue to input into this process and further reports will be provided as the project progresses. The Partnership is asked to note the progress to date.

Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan

- 2.22 Transport Scotland published the [Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan](#) on 28 July 2020. This has been produced in response to the Programme for Government Commitment in September last year to publish an action plan setting out how Transport Scotland and the rail industry propose to decarbonise domestic rail services in Scotland by 2035. Whilst the majority of this objective will be achieved through an extensive programme of electrification there are other routes where we will look to deliver the output via alternative traction technology (battery or hydrogen).
- 2.23 In terms of the Tactran area the Action Plan sets out the intention that routes through Tactran area from the Central Belt to Inverness and Aberdeen are to be electrified by 2035, with the West Highland Line to be alternative traction by the same date. The Action Plan also notes that design and development being undertaken in 2020 includes Edinburgh Haymarket to Fife/Dundee and from Dundee to Perth.
- 2.24 Tactran officers have regular meetings with Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ScotRail and will use these meetings to ask for more detail on the programme of the electrification.

National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review

- 2.25 Transport Scotland published consultation on 'Strategic Transport Projects Review 2: Case for Change Reports' on 27 February 2020 seeking responses by 8 April 2020, subsequently extended to 30 April 2020. During March 2020 the Partnership agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to consider and approve responses to the Transport Scotland consultation, in particular to three Case for Change reports, namely:
- National Case for Change
 - Tay Cities Case for Change
 - Forth Valley Case for Change
- 2.26 The Executive Committee approved responses to the three consultation documents, and these have been submitted to Transport Scotland. A copy of the Tactran Executive Committee report, with the consultation responses contained within the appendices, was circulated to all Members on 14 May 2020 ([Report RTP/20/20 refers](#)).
- 2.27 Following submission of these consultation responses Transport Scotland wrote to each Regional Transport Working Group noting that they were pausing work on both the STPR and National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan, as a result of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on their resources.

- 2.28 Subsequently Transport Scotland on 17 August 2020 informed the Regional Transport Working Groups that they intend now to take a phased approach to STPR2, with Phase 1 reporting along the original planned timescales and focusing on recommendations which “lock in”, in transport terms, the positive benefits and travel behaviors of individuals and provide a step change in investment which supports the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy. Transport Scotland currently envisage that Phase 2, which will complete the review, will report later in 2021.
- 2.29 As a first step in re-starting work, Transport Scotland is now looking to close the window for comment on the draft Case for Change reports and has asked those organisations who have not submitted responses to do so by 4 September 2020. They have also asked if there are organisations who wish to add to their comments already submitted to do so by the same date.
- 2.30 Tactran officers have reviewed the Tactran consultation responses submitted in May 2020 and consider that no further additional comments are required, as at the time of the original submission the responses had the following caveat:
- ‘It should be noted that this Case for Change report was developed and issued for consultation prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. Therefore, the Tactran response is made assuming the same conditions will exist post lockdown. In reality the world will have changed significantly as a whole post lockdown and the overall circumstances for transport is likely to be considerably different to that anticipated in the reports, with different priorities and requirements. At this time, it is not possible to clearly anticipate what these circumstances may be.’*
- 2.31 It is considered that this caveat is still currently relevant, as the it is still not possible to clearly anticipate what the circumstances may be post the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.32 Tactran officers will continue to engage through the Tay Cities and Forth Valley Regional Transport Working Groups, with officer representation on both Groups and the Tactran Director chairing the Tay Cities Group. Tactran officers will continue to update and involve Board members at appropriate points in the STPR process.

National Planning Framework 4

- 2.33 The National Planning Framework (NPF) is a long-term plan for Scotland that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. The current framework - NPF3 - was published in 2014 and the Scottish Government has now begun a process of review and preparation of a new framework – NPF4.

- 2.34 Scottish Government had anticipated laying a draft NPF4 in the Scottish Parliament in September 2020 but given the impact of the current emergency on many people's and organisations' capacity at the moment, delay has been inevitable. Therefore, Scottish Government now anticipate laying a draft in the Scottish Parliament in autumn 2021, with a final version being adopted in spring/summer 2022. Taking into account stakeholders' ability to get involved in preparing the draft, the period required for consultation, the timing of the 2021 Scottish Parliament election, and also the revised timescales of other government policies with which the NPF4 must align, it is considered that autumn 2021 is the earliest a draft NPF4 could be laid in Parliament.
- 2.35 Scottish Government intend to publish an interim position statement in autumn 2020, that will: explain how they will align with other Scottish Government strategies; set out an overview of the key challenges, opportunities and potential policy changes for NPF4; and reflect on the impacts of COVID-19 and what NPF4 can do to help societal and economic recovery. At the time of writing the interim position statement is still awaited.

Cycling Scotland initiatives

Bikeability Scotland – Local Authority Education Hubs

- 2.36 Cycling Scotland has supported and funded Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils in education hubs during the school summer holidays via the Bikeability Scotland Support Plus Funding.
- 2.37 Angus had 11 support hubs across Angus and 6 participated in the delivery of cycling activities. Dundee City had 8 Community Support Centres across Dundee and all 6 centres participated in the delivery of cycling activities. Perth & Kinross has set up 5 key workers Children's Activity Centres and 3 participated in the delivery of cycling activities.
- 2.38 As schools go back during August 2020 the Regional Cycle Training & Development Officer has developed a project plan to gradually integrate Bikeability Scotland into local authority schools linking in with current local authority active travel projects and plans. These plans and future Bikeability will evolve as restrictions ease.

Scottish Transport Awards 2020 – Shortlisted

- 2.39 Tactran regional Bikeability Scotland submission for the Scottish Transport Awards (best practice in travel to school) has been shortlisted for an STA award: <https://www.transporttimes.co.uk/Admin/uploads/sta-shortlist-2020.pdf>

Adult Cycling Project – Community, Workplace and Families

- 2.40 The aim of the project is to further develop Adult Cycling skills opportunities across the Tactran region as an introduction to independent cycling, using Essential Cycling Skills training and Learn to Ride training.
- 2.41 The programme will use Cycling Scotland instructors based in Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross local authorities, with Forth Environment Link/Stirling Active Travel Hub delivering this in the Stirling area. The project is due to commence in September 2020.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 Elements of the report have been the subject of consultation with partner Councils, other RTPs, Transport Scotland and other partners/stakeholders, as appropriate.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report has no direct or additional financial or other resource implications.

5 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified.

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Director

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NOTE

Papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

Report to Executive Committee RTP/19/42, The Role of Public Sector Bodies in Tackling Climate Change: Consultation Response, 31 October 2019

Report to Partnership RTP/19/51, Directors' Report, 17 December 2019

Report to Executive Committee RTP/20/20, Strategic Transport Projects Review 2: Case for Change Reports, 31 March 2020

Proposed Response to the Nestrans Draft RTS Consultation
Consultation Questions

Question 1: Do you agree with the vision?

Tactran agrees with the vision for the RTS.

Question 2: Do you agree with these key pillars?

Tactran agrees with the pillars identified as they complement and support the pillars identified within the National Transport Strategy

Question 3: Do you agree that each should have equal prominence?

Tactran agrees that each pillar should have equal prominence which aligns with the approach taken in the National Transport Strategy.

Question 4: Do you agree with these priorities?

Tactran agrees that the priorities as identified are appropriate. A key priority from a Tactran perspective being the priority relating to journey efficiencies to improve connectivity which has an inter-regional dimension.

Question 5: Are there any other high-level priorities that have been missed?

No

Question 6: Are any of the high-level priorities more important than the rest?

As noted previously, from a Tactran perspective, the priority relating to journey efficiencies to improve connectivity is of key importance due to the inter-regional dimension.

Question 7: Within the RTS summary “at a glance” we have grouped our proposed schemes and measures into six packages. Do you have any comments on these packages, or the measures being proposed in each package?

The grouping presented provides a concise overview of the identified schemes and measures. Section 4, measure ii) states:

“Campaigning for enhancements to the A90 Aberdeen-Perth, including a by-pass around Dundee and grade-separation of junctions;”

Tactran would note that the solution to the problem associated with the A90 at Dundee has not yet been identified. Tactran’s Delivery Plan reflects this by including the project as ‘A90 upgrade through or around Dundee’. Tactran continues to work with Transport Scotland on the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) and it is anticipated that potential solution(s) to identified problems relating to the A90 would be appraised as part of the STPR. Tactran would welcome the opportunity to involve Nestrans in developing and progressing appropriate solutions as part of the STPR.

Question 8: Within the Full RTS document, we have provided more detail on the individual actions, measures and policies. Do you have any comments on these proposed measures and policies?

Within RD3, the draft RTS states that Nestrans will “*Work with Tactran to press for a bypass of Dundee*”. While Tactran recognises the issues relating to the A90 at Dundee that impact on journey times between the Nestrans area and the central belt the solution to this problem has not yet been identified. Tactran continue to engage with Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Project Review and would anticipate that potential solution to identified problems relating to the A90 would be appraised as part of that project. Tactran would welcome the opportunity to involve Nestrans in developing and progressing appropriate solutions.

Tactran supports other interventions identified that have cross border implications including:

- Safety improvements and removing pinch points on the A92 coast road between Stonehaven and Montrose.
- RD 9: A93 route action measures to deliver safety and operational efficiency improvements
- RL 2: Rail Connectivity: Recognising Dundee as a key employment, education and leisure destination, as well as a key interchange point, all stations from Inverurie south to have a minimum of hourly direct service to the city.
- PR 2: a high-quality Park & Ride facility to the south of Aberdeen at Portlethen
- RU 5: New types of rural transport provision including demand responsive transport and Mobility as a Service.

Tactran also notes the aspiration for a 15-minute peak frequency and a 30 minute all day frequency to / from Aberdeen for all stations between Inverurie and Stonehaven or Montrose which we would support if it can be delivered without impacting on intercity services or reducing calls at other stations within the Tactran region.

Question 9: Overall, do you agree that the strategy is ambitious and achievable?

Tactran agrees that the strategy is both ambitious and, notwithstanding the significant challenges, should be achievable within the 2020-2040 time period.

Question 10: If not, would you like the strategy to be More ambitious, More achievable, Have alternative proposals?

N/A

Question 11: Please add in other comments about the content of the draft strategy below

Tactran have no further comments to make

STA

Question 12: Twenty-nine specific interventions have been appraised in this work. Do you agree with the outcomes and the suggested next steps for these interventions, presented in the table in the Executive Summary?

The STA has thoroughly investigated and appraised a wide range of interventions with appropriate outcomes and suggested next steps identified.

Question 13: Are there any strategically important schemes that you feel have not been appraised, and if so, which ones?

No

Question 14: There are a number of issues that may significantly re-shape the way we use the transport network in the coming decades, including moving away from petrol and diesel, new technologies, and wider changes in society. What might the most significant changes be, and how might that influence our priorities?

There are a range of uncertainties that will have an impact on transport in the coming decades. Innovation and technology will likely be the most significant as that will directly impact on the ability to make the required shift to a low carbon network.

SEA

Question 15: We welcome any comments that you may have on this report including comments on the assessment tables, and also the key findings

Tactran has no comments to make.

EglA

Question 16: We welcome any comments that you may have on this assessment

Tactran has no comments to make.

Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Enhancements

Background and Remitted Outputs

The Aberdeen City Deal was announced in 2016. Concurrently, a further announcement was made stating that the Scottish Government would invest an additional £200 million in improving capacity, performance and journey times on key rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group was set up in 2017. In September 2019, the group concluded that its objectives would best be achieved through an investment focussed on signalling enhancements between Dundee and Aberdeen. The feasibility of the following alterations should also be considered:

- freight/passenger overtaking locations that provide the space required to introduce more passenger and freight trains
- journey speed improvements to reduce journey times
- how a new timetable could be designed to introduce more passenger trains and reduce journey times
- whether new platforms at Arbroath and Montrose could reduce journey times and provide better train performance to customers

In January 2020, a remit was agreed between Network Rail and Transport Scotland to proceed with accelerated development of the project to deliver the following key outputs:

- Additional space on the railway to introduce more freight trains
- Additional space on the railway to introduce more passenger trains, in turn improving the experience for customers when changing trains and providing customers with more opportunities to travel to/from stations between Aberdeen and Dundee.
- Reduce inter-city journey times
 - Reduce the journey time between Aberdeen and Edinburgh to 2 hours 10 minutes or better from 2 hours 30 minutes current average.
 - Reduce the journey time between Aberdeen and Glasgow to 2 hours 30 minutes or better from 2 hours 39 minutes current average.
 - Reduce the journey time between Aberdeen and Dundee to 1 hour 10 minutes or better from 1 hour 13 minutes current average.

Timetable Design, Enhancements and Outputs

Network Rail designed several potential timetables that would deliver the outputs in the Transport Scotland remit. At this stage of development, no one timetable is “chosen”. Four different timetable designs were created which helped identify where and what enhancements would be needed on the railway between Perth and Aberdeen. The work identified a total of 22 enhancement options to the railway that create the additional space required for new train services to be introduced and reduce journey times. The use of four different timetable designs helped confirm that the enhancements would be flexible enough to accommodate future timetable changes after the project is delivered and considers the need to deliver a highly performing railway for passengers and freight customers.

The upgrades fall into three categories, however many of the benefits are repeated across these. This is because the enhancements should be viewed as a package of options to deliver each of the remitted outputs and the wider Dundee to Aberdeen corridor benefits.

Freight Loops (overtaking locations)

A loop at Perth and six loops between Dundee and Aberdeen allow faster passenger services to overtake slower freight services.

- Enables Express passenger service journey time reductions
- Creates space for additional passenger services, which in turn provides increased journey opportunities for passengers
- Creates additional space for extra freight services to run to/from Aberdeen
- Allows for a more standardised hourly timetable than is currently possible with more consistent passenger journey time
- Provide performance resilience when delays occur

Signalling upgrades between Perth and Aberdeen

Eight separate sections of the line have been identified as requiring signalling upgrades, providing additional space on the network to operate a timetable that fulfils the remit

- Enables Express passenger service journey time reductions
- Creates space for additional passenger services, which in turn provides increased journey opportunities for passengers
- Enabled reduced connection times for passengers on the corridor, reducing journey times in turn
- Provides flexibility for future timetable changes
- Increases performance resilience by allowing services to safely run closer to one another when delays occur
- Prepares the corridor in part for decarbonisation

Station Interventions

Four stations on the route (Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose and Aberdeen) have been identified as requiring changes to the track and signalling to unlock passenger benefits;

- Enabling easier train to train connections for passengers
- Enabling reduced connection times for passengers on the corridor, reducing journey times in turn.
- Increasing space for additional trains to operate, providing timetable flexibility and performance resilience

At the same time, Network Rail reviewed what each timetable would provide for passengers and freight customers, both in terms of the remit outputs and other elements. Each of these elements are important to existing passengers and freight customers who use the railway currently and attracting new customers to the railway:

- The likely ability of each timetable to deliver a high performing train service
- What passenger services are needed for each timetable
- How long customers need to wait when changing trains and where they would need to change trains
- How many times each hour customers can make a journey at each station
- How long customers need to wait between trains at each station
- Passenger train and freight train journey times
- The number of freight trains that can travel the route per hour

These elements enable a comparison of the four timetable designs to determine how well they deliver for customers and compares each with the timetable introduced in December 2019. This comparison allows stakeholders and others to review each timetable and make evidence-based decisions on which timetable design would provide the best service for most customers. The formal timetable will be progressed later, once further technical development has been undertaken on the proposed signalling and track enhancements.

Current Project Stage and Next Steps

The timetable design and comparison work were undertaken in approximately four months. This is significantly quicker than similar works which can take up to two years. Indeed, it has been delivered not only in an accelerated manner, but it has produced more detailed evidence which will help accelerate the next stage of the project. Though this development work has been undertaken quickly and progress has been swift, that is not to say that quality is reduced. The timetable designs and associated enhancements have been extensively consulted within the rail industry (including Transport Scotland, ScotRail, Freight Operators and many Network Rail teams). This has maximised collaboration and pooled the extensive knowledge of the railway, and in particular, the rail corridor to Aberdeen, ensuring the acceleration of the next stages of design and delivery.

The current stage of development (feasibility stage) is completed. This accelerated development work will provide focus to the next stage of work which will undertake outline design of the proposed enhancement options, combined with option selection, as well as refining the extensive and thorough timetable development work undertaken to date.