TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

16 MARCH 2021

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The report asks the Partnership to note updates on the Tay Cities Region Deal; Spaces for People Regional Monitoring, round 2 MaaS Investment Fund and Bus Partnership Fund. The Partnership is also asked to note Tactran's response to 'Cleaner Air for Scotland 2, Draft Air Quality Strategy' and responses to Union Connectivity Review.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Partnership:

(i) notes updates on the Tay Cities Deal; Spaces for People Regional Monitoring; round 2 MaaS Investment Fund Bid and Bus Partnership Fund;

(ii) delegates authority to the Chair of Tactran to approve and sign the Bus Partnership Fund bids being developed within the region;

(iii) notes the response to Scottish Government consultation on 'Cleaner Air for Scotland 2, Draft Air Quality Strategy' as approved by the Executive Committee in January 2020, as shown in Appendix B; and

(iv) notes and Tactran and Tay Cities response and the joint RTP response to the UK Government's Union Connectivity Review in December 2020, as shown in Appendices C and D respectively.

2 DISCUSSION

2.1 Tay Cities Deal Update

The Tay Cities Region Deal was signed on the 17th of December 2020. It is A deal between the Tay Cities Regional Partnership and both the UK and Scottish Government. The UK and Scottish Governments are each investing up to £150 million. This investment has the potential to secure over 6,000 jobs and lever in £400 million of investment over 10 years.

This financial year is the first year of delivery for the Deal and the Partnership and both Governments are working hard to ensure the drawdown of the profiled funding allocation for the Region. The projects identified for Y1 20/21 drawdown, subject to approved Full Business Cases are:

- Eden Campus
- Growing the Tau Cities Biomedical Cluster
- Perth Cultural Transformation (City Hall)

- Hospitalfield
- Dundee Airport Investment (revenue)

Space for People – Regional Monitoring

2.2 Tactran was awarded £250,000 from Sustrans' Spaces for People initiative to monitor the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on travel in the Tactran region, in particular assessing the impact of Spaces for People infrastructure and interventions implemented by Tactran's constituent Councils; assessing trends in our towns/cities and undertaking behaviour and attitude monitoring. Systra have been appointed to manage the survey companies and design, collate and report on surveys undertaken.

2.3 The monitoring of Spaces for People projects is ongoing through an extensive programme of data collection and analysis. An initial programme of data collection was undertaken in October 2020 with the second programme undertaken in February 2021. A further programme of data collection is scheduled for April 2021.

2.4 Six waves of attitudinal surveys have also been completed and are available on the Tactran website. An infographic summary showing the key trends and changes between wave 1 and wave 5 is shown in Appendix A.

MaaS Innovation Fund – Round 2

2.5 As the Partnership is aware, Tactran was awarded £550,112 from the Round 1 MaaS (Mobility as a Service) Innovation Fund from Transport Scotland in 2019, with Tactran providing £120,000 partnership funding and up to a further £140,000 potentially being provided by Paths for All and Perth & Kinross Council (Report RTP/20/13 refers). This was to develop a transport booking platform and associated touchpoints (app and url) for pilot projects, with NHS Tayside, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and Dundee & Angus College, in the Tayside and Central Scotland Region. This project is progressing well and the Partnership has received regular updates on progress.

2.6 As reported at the Partnership meeting on 15 December 2020, Transport Scotland announced that round two of the MaaS Innovation Fund (MIF) was launched in January 2021, with bids submitted by the end of February 2021. Subsequent to the December meeting, Tactran officers worked with Angus, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Councils officers and NHS Tayside to submit further bids to Round 2 MIF. These include 2 bids which Tactran is leading:

- a rural transport solution app based on demand responsive transport in Perth & Kinross, Stirling and Angus
- extension of the Round 1 NHS Tayside pilot to include the whole of NHS Tayside

2.7 The total bid to round 2 MIF was £313,400, with Tactran contributing an additional £10,000. The successful bids are expected to be announced by end of April 2021.

2.8 In addition, Perth & Kinross Council has submitted a bid to round 2 MIF for Perth Innovation Highway utilising the Tactran Enable Platform, for which Tactran is a supporting partner.

2.9 As noted at the Partnership meeting in December it had been intended to seek Executive Committee endorsement of the round 2 MIF bid prior to submission. However, time constraints did not permit this to happen with work on developing the bid progressing up to the deadline of Friday 26 February 2021. The Partnership is therefore asked to note the round 2 MIF bid. The outcome of the bid will be reported at the next partnership meeting in June 2021.

Bus Partnership Fund

2.10 At its meeting on 15 December 2020 the Partnership was informed of a Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) and that Tactran was involved in two Bus Alliances covering the Forth Valley area and the Tayside Area, together with the relevant Local Authorities and Bus Operators. The BPF is intended to tackle the negative impact of congestion on bus services so that bus journeys are quicker and more reliable – encouraging more people to travel by bus.

2.11 Phase 1 of the BPF is a call for proposals and invites partnerships to come forward with outline proposals. The deadline for the phase 1 of the BPF is 16 April 2021.

2.12 Both Bus Alliances, are continuing to develop suitable projects for submission to the BPF within the timescale set. The Partnership is asked to delegate authority to the Chair of Tactran to approve and sign the bids being developed within the region. A further update on the bids submitted will be provided at the next Partnership meeting in June.

Consultations

Cleaner Air for Scotland 2

2.13 Scottish Government published Cleaner Air for Scotland 2, a Draft Air Quality Strategy Consultation on 30th October, seeking responses by 22 January 2021. At its meeting of 15 December 2020, the Partnership delegated authority to the Executive Committee to consider and approve a response to the consultation (report RTP/20/44 refers).

2.14 In November 2018 the Scottish Government commissioned an independently led review of its Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy, which was published in 2015. The aims of the review were to assess progress to date in implementing the strategy and to make recommendations for additional actions required to deliver further air quality improvements.

2.15 A report setting out the conclusions and recommendations arising from the review was published in August 2019. These recommendations have been used to inform the development of a new air quality strategy, which is the subject of this consultation. The draft strategy sets out the Scottish

Government's proposals for delivering further air quality improvements over the next five years.

2.16 CAFS 2 is shaped around 10 general themes, which largely reflect the high level recommendations arising from the CAFS review.

- Health - A Precautionary Approach
- Integrated Policy
- Placemaking
- Data
- Public Engagement and Behaviour Change
- Industrial Emissions Regulation
- Tackling Non Transport Emissions Sources
- Transport
- Governance, Accountability and Delivery
- Further Progress Review

2.17 Also issued along with the main consultation document, were a number of supplementary reports that are referenced within the consultation questions.

- Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report
- Business & Regulatory Impact Assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment

2.18 The consultation asks 30 questions relating to the actions within the topics noted above along with the supplementary assessments. The response from Tactran is limited to the questions related to transport.

2.19 The Executive Committee approved the response shown in Appendix B (Report RTP/21/01 refers) which the Partnership Board is now asked to note.

Union Connectivity Review

2.20 The UK government announced the establishment of the Union Connectivity Review on 30 June 2020, with the remit to look at how transport infrastructure and connections between the four nations of the UK can be improved and "levelled up". The Review is being led by Sir Peter Hendy, formerly the Commissioner of Transport for London, and issued a call for evidence late in 2020 seeking views on what stakeholders believed was required to deliver the improvements needed.

2.21 The Tactran and Tay Cities and joint Regional Transport Partnerships responses are included at Appendices C and D respectively. Key points of responses are:

- The importance of connections between Scotland's cities and cities elsewhere in the UK;
- Many parts of Scotland are very remote geographically to other parts of the UK, and this is a significant challenge to deal with in improving transport connectivity;

- Focus on connectivity to Scotland generally centres on connections to the cities of the central belt (Glasgow and Edinburgh), and greater emphasis needs to be given to the five other cities in Scotland, and towns, rural and island communities.
- Various points on specific modes, including the importance of air connectivity for Scotland, consistency in trunk roads / motorways between Scotland and England (including preparing for electric vehicles), the key role of Scotland's ports, and the importance of ensuring Scotland is not forgotten in the future High Speed Rail map of the UK.
- The ongoing issue of agreeing priorities between the various Governments and common benefits for each nation in delivering a truly connected transport system.
- The ability of regions within each nation to set their own transportation priorities, for example through regional transport strategies.

2.22 To coincide with the Call for Evidence, the Department for Transport initiated a programme of engagement with Sir Peter Hendy and the policy team leading the review to gather thoughts and advice on union connectivity from a range of stakeholders across the UK.

2.23 As part of this, a session took place with Scottish Local Authorities on 13th January 2021 to discuss their views on what could be included in the review due for publication next summer. Regional Transport Partnerships were represented at this session and the points raised in the joint RTP response were reiterated.

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.

Mark Speed
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 Partnership RTP/20/13, Mobility as a Service: ENABLE Pilot, 17 March 2020

Report to Partnership RTP/20/44, Director's Report, 15 December 2020

Report to Executive Committee RTP/21/01, Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 Consultation, 13 January 2021

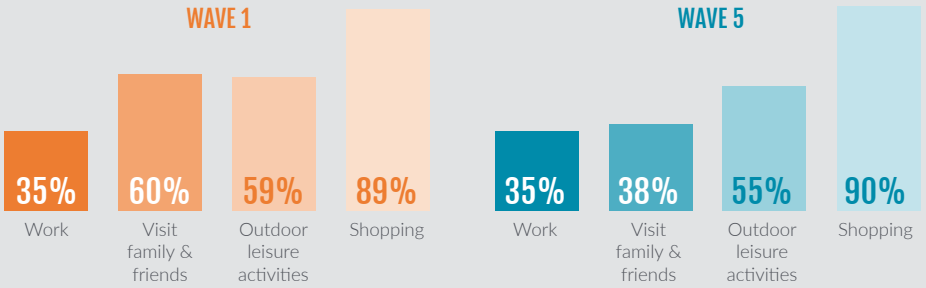
APPENDIX A

Spaces for People attitudinal surveys

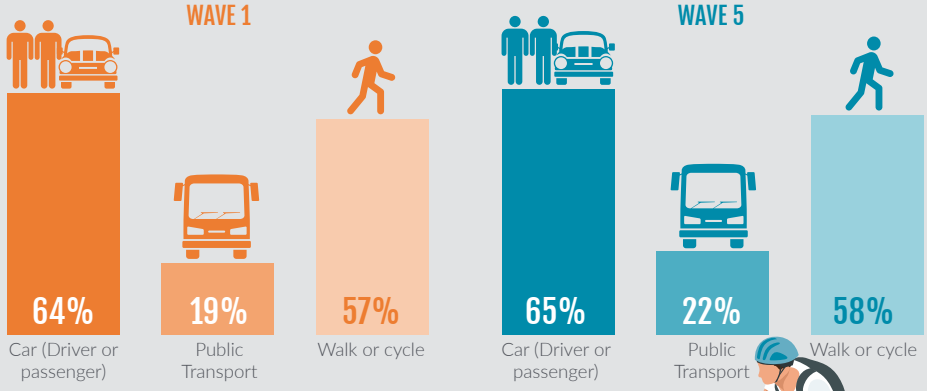
Wave 1 and Wave 5 Report Summary

tactran
Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership

Journeys made at least once in the last seven days



Positivity towards ways of travelling



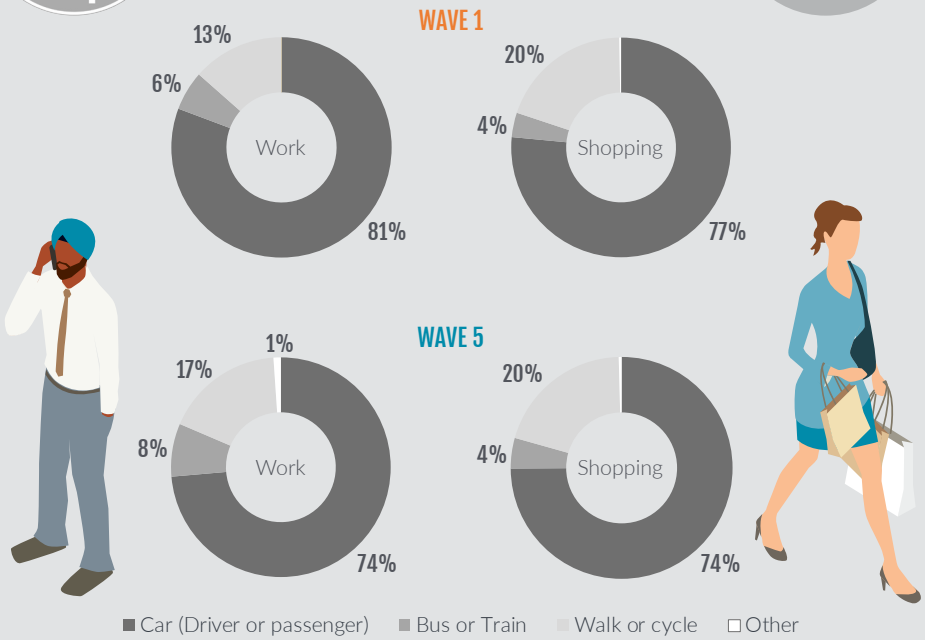
Awareness of measures

WAVE 1		WAVE 5
54%	20mph speed restrictions	64%
28%	Pavement widening	48%
33%	Segregated cycle lanes	48%
20%	Restrictions on certain types of vehicles	42%
33%	Temporary road closures except for buses, pedestrians and cyclists	53%
35%	Temporary road closures except pedestrians and cyclists	52%
36%	One-way systems for pedestrians	50%
28%	One-way systems for vehicles	47%
46%	Parking suspensions	58%

Positivity towards the introduction of (more) measures

WAVE 1		WAVE 5
50%	20mph speed restrictions	49%
61%	Pavement widening	54%
53%	Segregated cycle lanes	49%
43%	Restrictions on certain types of vehicles	38%
41%	Temporary road closures except for buses, pedestrians and cyclists	32%
42%	Temporary road closures except pedestrians and cyclists	37%
44%	One-way systems for pedestrians	42%
39%	One-way systems for vehicles	39%
48%	Parking suspensions	43%

Main ways of travelling by journey types



WAVE 1 survey undertaken between 19th August and 31st August 2020, 312 responses

WAVE 5 survey undertaken between 30th November and 8th December 2020, 308 responses

Full results available: https://www.tactran.gov.uk/projects_activetravel.php

SYSTRA

Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 – Draft Air Quality Strategy Consultation

Question on Health

1. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the health chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree or disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran supports the actions proposed within the health chapter, in particular the proposal to follow an evidence led approach to tackling air quality issues and to aid better understanding of the problems.

Questions on integrated policy

2. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the integrated policy chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran supports the actions proposed to ensure that any proposals to improve air quality also contribute positively to other policy objectives and to enable better understanding of the linkages between air quality, noise and climate change agendas. However, it is important to recognise that the primary objective for tackling air quality issues is public health and there is a risk that by conflating air quality with the other issues identified, focus on this objective could be lost. This could also undermine any public messaging and public support for any air quality interventions.

3. What in your opinion and/or experience are the barriers to cross departmental working within local authorities or other organisations on air quality and how can these barriers be overcome?

Tactran is currently involved with the Dundee LEZ working group which has demonstrated good partnership working, both working across the various council teams and departments as well as key external partners and agencies. This multi-disciplinary approach has worked well. It should also be noted that the trunk road network has a significant impact on air quality and should be included within the relevant teams working on AQMA. The key enabler to remove any barriers is to ensure support from both senior officers and elected members.

The document also notes that air quality is inextricably linked to climate change agenda. Transport and travel occur across local authority boundaries, particularly considering CO2 emissions and reductions and Regional Transport Partnerships have a role to play in providing a consistent approach to emission reduction.

Questions on placemaking

4. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the placemaking chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran supports the proposed actions to ensure that place making and in particular the place principle is embedded in any interventions that are developed to improve air quality. This principle encourages better collaborative working by recognising the importance that different sectors and organisations have on the overall standard of 'Place'. Regional Transport Partnership should be included in discussions regarding embedding air quality within other plans and strategies.

5. Do you have any suggestions on the role of place-based approaches in delivering targeted air quality improvements?

Any place-based approaches to improving air quality must still reflect the objectives of air quality action plans, low emission zones and national policy.

Question on data

6. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the data chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments to support your answer

Tactran supports the proposed actions noted within this section, however consideration should be given to going further and better integrating current data sources, data collection, and modelling between transport, land use and air quality. The existing LATIS framework provides a good basis for this integration and could be expanded to include the NMF within its 'suite' of models and data. The LATIS framework also includes processes and procedures for sharing data that is not made available via open data.

Better coordination of data collection could allow standardised data to be collected more efficiently and in a more cost-effective manner. It would also ensure a consistency of format that would make it easier for the end user.

It is recognised that data collection is resource intensive and requires significant finance to collect. It should therefore be recognised that any data has a monetary value and could be used as an income stream to finance its collection.

7. Do you have any suggestions on the approach for annual collection of traffic data for air quality management purposes?

See above

Question on public engagement and behaviour change

8. Do you agree with the package of measures put forward in the public engagement and behaviour change chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments to support your answer

A complementary package of behaviour change promotion would ensure that any additional benefits of air quality interventions are maximised and can help build public support for any measures implemented. However, any new package of behaviour change promotion and public engagement should take cognisance of existing programmes and relevant strategies (eg the Tactran Regional EV Strategy) to avoid duplication and reduce the potential for mixed messaging. Consideration should also be given to direct engagement with children via schools.

The proposal to undertake a baseline survey of awareness should be expanded to capture public attitudes towards air quality issues and potential interventions.

There is a need to be able to outline the specific benefits improved air quality bring to the public. For example, when considered alongside what could be negatively be perceived as restrictions to movement brought about by introduction of LEZs in our cities, there is a need to publicly state the benefits. Although, the difficulty is that the benefits are largely likely to accrue to people within the LEZ, where the restrictions effect those outside the LEZ.

Questions on industrial emissions regulation

9. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the Emissions Regulation chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments to support your answer

Tactran supports the proposed actions in this section where there is a link to transport. In particular, the control of non exhaust emissions from vehicles is strongly linked to an overall reduction in vehicle km which also supports other policy objectives.

10. Should currently unregulated sectors such as non-waste anaerobic digestion and non-road mobile machinery be brought into existing legal frameworks?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Don't know

Please explain your answer

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

Question on domestic (household) combustion emissions

11. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward to reduce the impact of domestic (household) combustion?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

12. What potential impacts might the package of actions put forward have on households and businesses?

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

Questions on agricultural emissions

13. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the agricultural section?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

14. We will work together with SEPA and the agricultural industry to develop a voluntary code of good agricultural practice for improving air quality in Scotland. Do you agree with this approach to tackling ammonia emissions from farming?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Please explain your answer

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

15. Any voluntary code of good agricultural practice could be subject to an early review process to assess its effectiveness and compliance. If the review indicates that insufficient progress is being made, the need for direct regulatory intervention will be considered. Do you agree with this approach?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Please explain your answer

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

Question on nitrogen deposition and environmental impacts

16. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the nitrogen deposition and environmental impacts section?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran has no comments to make in relation to this topic.

Question on Transport

17. Do you agree with the actions put forward in the transport chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran supports the actions contained within the Transport chapter and notes that many of the existing actions are those detailed within the NTS2. In particular, it is noted that the commitment to introduce LEZs in to the four largest cities remains and Tactran will continue to support Dundee City Council in the development and implementation of their LEZ proposals.

Tactran also supports any actions that will result in a reduction in travel, however reference should be made to existing workplace travel planning programmes and resources such as Travel Know How Scotland.

Under the action relating to the Bus Partnership Fund, it should be noted that this fund is closely linked to the formation of BSIPs and a more regional, collaborative approach to improving bus travel.

It should also be noted that within the Low Carbon Economy section, significant collaborative work has been undertaken within the Tactran region (and others) on developing a holistic EV strategy which will help deliver and compliment the actions proposed.

The action suggested within the "Trunk Road Network and Demand Management" section to explore how road space can reallocated following the Spaces for People programme would be more appropriate within the active travel section of the transport chapter. The further development and potential move to permanence of Spaces for People schemes is better delivered via programmes such as Places for Everyone that are noted within the Active Travel section.

Question on Local Air Quality Management

18. Do you agree with the package of actions put forward in the Local Air Quality Management chapter?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran supports the actions within this chapter, however the monitoring and review of LAQM should be done in collaboration with other monitoring frameworks relating to transport and travel such as the active travel monitoring framework and local and regional monitoring programmes. This will allow a better assessment of the effectiveness in delivering improvements and some of the associated/related benefits within the mobility sector.

Question on governance

19. Do you agree with the proposed Governance of CAFS 2?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran supports the actions within this chapter, in particular the flexibility that would appear to be suggested with the formation of dedicated specialist groups. The reflects that air quality issues are cross cutting across many sectors and are also not constrained by administrative boundaries with, for example, travel to work areas spanning across multiple local authorities and regional transport partnership boundaries.

Question on progress review

20. Do you agree with the proposed review timeframe?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Neither agree nor disagree

Additional comments in support of your answer

Tactran agrees with the proposed review timeframe, although it should be recognised that this period will contain a significant period of post-covid recovery which will have to be considered, including potential permanent/long term changes in travel demands and travel patterns.

Equality Impact Questions

21. Are you aware of any additional equalities impacts of the proposals in this strategy?

No

22. Do you think introducing legislation to control the supply of the most polluting domestic fuels, as described in chapter 7 of this consultation, will have disproportionate impacts on remote/rural or island communities?

Please provide evidence where possible in support of your answer.

Tactran has no comment to make.

23. Do you think this strategy will disproportionately impact low income households?

Please provide evidence where possible in support of your answer.

The potential impact on low income households that would be impacted by LEZ proposals has been mitigated somewhat by the introduction of the LEZ support fund, however further assessment of this impact should be based on SIMD data for LEZ areas.

Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment Questions

24. Are you aware of any additional business or regulatory impacts of the proposals in this strategy?

Please provide any supporting evidence that you are aware of.

Tactran has no comment to make.

25. Do you anticipate that the proposals in this strategy will have differing impacts for large/small scale businesses?

Please provide any supporting evidence that you are aware of.

There is the potential for smaller scale transport operators to be more adversely impacted financially as they may be less able to absorb the costs associated with moving to LEVs and alternative fuels in comparison to larger operators. As small operators often provide an important part of the wider public transport network, continued support must be made available to assist with the transition.

26. Would there be different impacts for those that operate in Scotland only and those that operate across different parts of the UK?

Please provide any supporting evidence that you are aware of.

Tactran has no comment to make.

27. Would there be different impacts for those that operate in remote/rural or island communities?

Please provide any supporting evidence that you are aware of.

Tactran has no comment to make.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report Questions

28. What are your views on the accuracy and scope of information used to describe the environmental baseline set out in the Environmental Report?

The scope and accuracy of information presented within the environmental report are appropriate.

29. What are your views on the predicted environmental effects as set out in the Environmental Report?

Tactran noted that the environmental effects of the strategy are positive and it is noted that the cumulative effect of this strategy with other PPS is positive

30. What are your views on the findings of the SEA and the proposals for mitigation and monitoring the environmental effects set out in the Environmental Report?

The proposals for monitoring are appropriate, however consideration should be given to reflecting other monitoring frameworks which will have a direct impact on CAFS2.

APPENDIX C

Union Connectivity Review

Call for Evidence

Tay Cities and Tactran Response

2. Questions

This response to the call for evidence is made on behalf of Tay Cities partners and Tactran

The Tay Cities Region is the economic geography that covers the local authority areas of Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and North East Fife set up to deliver an ambitious economy strategy and the Tay Cities Deal in partnership with the private and third sectors.

Tactran (Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership) is the Regional Transport Partnership for Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Councils.

Assessing the need for cross-border connectivity

1. **If you represent a place, what is your current strategy for growing the economy and improving the quality of life there? Please provide a summary, but you are welcome to append or link to published strategies.**

    a) **What is necessary to achieve this strategy and what evidence do you have that improved connectivity is needed in this instance?**

    Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy is built around the three pillars of Inclusive Tay; Innovative International Tay and a Connected Tay.

    The strategy considers the period 2019 – 2039. The strategic objectives for the Initial 10-year period 2019-2020 are:

    - Our overarching ambition is to increase the number of businesses and to create more, better-paid jobs across the Tay Cities Region in order to improve access to opportunity and increase the distribution of wealth and wellbeing within the region.
    - In the short-term, our objective would be to mitigate the potential impact of Brexit and maintain employment / unemployment across the region at current levels, while capitalising on any opportunities arising from the UK's departure from the European Union.
    - Our longer-term objective is to subsequently reduce unemployment / increase employment to levels better than the Scottish average by 2029 while increasing productivity and creating higher-paid jobs.

    Growth Opportunities in the region include World Class Tourism; Creative Industries; Digital Innovation; Biomedical research; Health & Care; Food & Drink; Eco Innovation; Oil & Gas Decommission; Engineering.

    As noted above Connectivity is one of the three pillars of the strategy and needed to ensure that businesses can access markets, customers and suppliers more easily and cost-effectively. Improved connectivity will make the Tay Cities region more attractive to investors and tourists. Consequently, improved connectivity to the major transport hubs of London and other UK and European cities is a vital part of this strategy.

    The approach focuses on improving connectivity to and between key business and tourist locations. However major investment is also required in improved road, rail, port, air and digital connectivity, infrastructure and capacity across the region and beyond.

The strategy aims to develop a range of proposals to invest in both digital and physical transport infrastructure to help to unlock the full economic potential of the Tay Cities region, its people and businesses, and to increase our contribution to the economic growth and wellbeing of Scotland.

The Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal

Stirling has strong economic growth ambitions, focussing on creating new high value job opportunities across our region. Promoting research, innovation and growth in key sectors such as Digital, Life Sciences, Environmental Sustainability, Low Carbon Technologies, Tourism and Food and Drink will provide new employment opportunities and increased wage levels within our region. Stirling is well geographically positioned in the centre of Scotland, however targeted investment in transport connectivity across our region is required to enable Stirling to realise its full potential, to connect with markets across Scotland and the UK, and to contribute to the growth of the Scottish Economy. To enable the growth of our economy, projects and activities focus on three key areas:

- **Business and Sector Development** - working with regional partners, Stirling University, Forth Valley College and businesses to develop sector opportunities and reshape business support to focus on the immediate recovery and sector growth. Opportunities across the Stirling region include, Life Sciences, Digital and Data, Creative Industries, Environmental Sustainability, Innovation and Research, Food and drink and Tourism

- **Infrastructure Development and Connectivity**- Stirling was one of the UK's first Gigabit cities, however, continued investment in Digital connectivity across the region will be essential to address challenges in rural areas to provide inclusive connectivity to all and support the development of rural businesses. Transport infrastructure interventions are required to improve access to the national road and rail networks, improve connectivity between urban and rural population centres, business centres, communities and further education establishments. Improved connectivity will make Stirling more attractive for investment and tourism and improve connections with the rest of the UK.

  Community Development - The principles of community wealth building run through all activity to ensure that economic growth is sustainable and benefits all our citizens. Through building community capacity and confidence whilst providing local infrastructure to support growth and development, focusing on training and employment opportunities will enable local businesses to thrive and maximise local, regional and national markets.

Alongside digitalisation as a key enabler of growth is that of **transportation**. The impacts of Covid-19 on this sector are likely to be far reaching. This will not be peculiar to the Stirling, Tay Cities or Tactran regions and recognises the role of Transport Scotland across the country. However, as the region grows its expertise and develops as a hub for decarbonised, sustainable transport there is opportunity to accelerate that and reroute investment into new technologies and modes as well as 'park and choose' options. Innovative regional transport models may become increasingly important and relevant

for regions such as Stirling, Tay Cities and Tactran, particularly with large rural hinterlands requiring inclusive rural connectivity support potentially around public transport options. A key challenge is that of data and monitoring to understand behavioural change to then inform policy and future direction.

Tactran's Regional Transport Strategy sets out a vision for improving the region's transport infrastructure, services and other facilities over the period to 2036.

The Vision is to deliver:

"a transport system, shaped by engagement with its citizens, which helps deliver prosperity and connects communities across the region and beyond, which is socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable, and which promotes the health and well-being of all."

The Strategy aims to ensure our transport system supports a growing economy while at the same time connects communities and protects environment.

The economic objective is to ensure transport helps to deliver regional prosperity by addressing issues of peripherality associated with the Tactran region and ensuring good connectivity between Tactran's cities and those in the rest of the UK, and with major Airports.

Key supporting documents are:

Tay Cities City Regional Deal

Tay Cities Region Economic Strategy 2019 - 2039

Tay Cities Region Tourism Strategy 2019 – 2024

Tay Cities Region Skills Investment Plan

Tactran Regional Transport Strategy 2015 – 2036 Refresh

Rail Study

M9 Corridor study

Stirling Council, Local Transport Strategy, 2017-2027

Stirling & Clackmannanshire City Region Deal

2. **Please provide any information you hold about current multi-nation journeys within the United Kingdom.**

Tactran's Monitoring Framework 2018 Progress Report contains information regarding travel to/from major destinations (pages 27 to 33). However, this information is gleaned from other data sources, rather than unique data gathered by Tactran.

3. **In general terms, is there a need for new or improved transport links between the nations of the United Kingdom?**

Yes, there is a need for improved links between the UK nations.

The requirement is two-fold: links between Scotland and other nations and links between the Tay Cities/Forth Valley/Tactran regions and other UK nations.

It is important to note that good transport links between Scotland and other nations, and England in particular, does not only mean good links between Glasgow/Edinburgh and England. Two thirds of Scotland's land mass including, 5 other cities, is north of Edinburgh and Glasgow that, by comparison, have significantly poorer links to the other nations and therefore their relevant peripherality is exacerbated. Three of these cities are within the Tactran region; Dundee, Perth and Stirling, with Dundee and Perth also within the Tay Cities Region. An example of the relative peripherality is that there is half hourly frequency of LNER services between Edinburgh and London, but only two direct services per day between Dundee and London. (See answer to Q7 for more detail)

4. What are the main obstacles and challenges in improving transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

The main challenges are:

- Considering connectivity between the whole of Scotland and other UK nations
- Agreeing priorities between the various Governments and common benefits for each nation in delivering a truly connected transport system.
- The ability of regions to set their own transportation priorities, for example through regional transport strategies.

This needs to be set against a background of social equity within a just transition to a low carbon economy.

5. What evidence exists to demonstrate the potential impacts of improved transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

There is a lot of research and evidence available on agglomeration economies to support this – i.e. that improvements in transport connectivity (driven by increased network capacity, reduced travel times and costs together with improved network reliability) generate improvements in productivity.

Reduced transport costs have many benefits for businesses and can support their connections to customers, suppliers and employees. For individuals, reduced transport costs support individuals to participate in the labour market, access a wider range of jobs and connect with education, leisure and retail opportunities.

Where transport investments are 'transformational', they can also influence the location of economic activity, for instance allowing businesses to relocate to more productive locations with better access to skills, other resources and customers. Investing in transport connectivity can not only influence the amount of economic activity in a region, it can also influence where it is located. Across the UK, this could mean that locational decisions could support positive impacts within more communities.

Reference:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386126/TIEP_Report.pdf

https://greenerjourneys.com/guidance-tool/relationship-between-transport-economy/

6. **When making transport investment decisions which aim to improve connectivity between the different nations of the United Kingdom, does the current appraisal framework capture all the potential impacts?**

Nowadays decisions on transport investment are doubly complicated with an additional layer of complexity added to investment and policy decisions given that different stakeholders seek different outcomes from transport investments. For some, economic growth is the principal, overriding objective, yet for others, improvements to the transport system are seen primarily as a means to reduce inequality, for example, improving the access to employment for deprived communities. Added to this, there is increasing focus on the environmental performance of the transport system and the significant importance of climate change which makes the appraisal of competing transport and wider infrastructure investment demands more challenging still.

Although in terms of transport appraisal there is different guidance in the different nations e.g. TAG in England and STAG in Scotland, the methodologies are similar. As has been shown through the various City Deals which are supported by both Scottish and UK Governments, the Green Book appraisal methodology applies equally well no matter the type of business case or intervention proposed.

In terms of transport, it has traditionally been reasonably easy to identify the direct benefits, but more difficult to identify the wider economic benefits of transport interventions, such as agglomeration, etc.

However even direct benefits have become more difficult to assess by changes in technology, where for example, travel time on train journeys can no longer be said to be non-useable time. This is more likely to become more difficult as technology increases and moving to such innovations as automated vehicles etc. The Covid-19 pandemic has also thrown up rapid changes in lifestyle and where before transport connectivity was crucial, the importance of digital connectivity has now been proven.

Although appraisal methodology is reasonably straight forward, the difficulty is in assessing the likely benefits and the various futures that might occur through scenario planning. There needs to be a better understanding of the Wider Economic Benefits transport interventions can bring, using evidence from previous major interventions.

Opportunities for Improved Transport Connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom

7. **Which specific journeys would benefit from new or improved transport links?**

The Scottish Cities Alliance published a position statement on the role of improved connectivity in empowering Scotland's cities in February 2016. Connecting Scotland's seven cities together and to the world set out the context for continued investment in better transport links in and between Scotland's seven cities, and the potential economic contribution such improved connectivity could make. This document set out a set of

priorities shared by the seven cities, which focused on the overall objective of establishing a set of 'Quality Standards for Connectivity' so that transport and digital communications between each of Scotland's cities are at a consistent quality comparable with the best in the world. This can be facilitated by a set of specific infrastructure enhancements and key among these are linking Scotland's cities to the world by the most appropriate high-quality connections and gateways. For example, the re-instatement of a direct rail link between Perth and Edinburgh would improve connectivity, through a reduction in journey time, from Inverness/the Highlands/Perthshire to connect with the East Coast Main Line.

Rail

East Coast

There are good connections between Edinburgh and London via rail, with journey time reductions and a high frequency of services – although this can be further improved, improving capacity between Newcastle and Edinburgh. The work undertaken by East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) identifies the interventions required and the benefits this will bring to the economy. It is understood that ECMA will be responding separately to this call for evidence, and rather than duplicate that response, it is noted that it is supported.

However, as noted above connections between the five Scottish cities north of Edinburgh and Glasgow and cities on the East Coast Mainline – Newcastle, York and London, is poor by comparison and leads to relative peripherality of these cities. Two direct services per day between London and Dundee and Stirling and one direct service between Perth and London is inadequate. Although there are frequent services between these cities and Edinburgh, the journey times are not good and interchange times can be poor at Edinburgh. Research undertaken by Transport Focus identifies that the need to interchange between services can be a significant deterrent to rail use. It is therefore considered that an increase in number of direct services and a reduction in journey times to the cities north of Edinburgh is required.

Stirling Council, in partnership with Tactran, has been progressing a range of strategic studies in relation to opportunities for proposed Rail Halts within the Stirling area, to improve access to the national rail network and services. (can be shared to support this call for evidence). Some of the opportunities being explored would increase rail access for Stirling University and Forth Valley College as well as providing greater connectivity across the Stirling and Clackmannanshire region and more direct access to national rail services.

Transport Scotland has recently published its rail services decarbonisation plan, which commits to having a fully electrified service between all of Scotland's cities and to Newcastle and Carlisle by 2035. This is fully supported and must be accelerated and coordinated for services between Scotland's cities and England's main conurbations, particularly tying in with the proposals for the Northern Powerhouse.

Cross Country & West Coast

Similar to East Coast rail comments, the rail connections between Glasgow and cities in England are supported by regular, frequent rail services. However, direct rail access to

West Midland, the Midlands and the western cities in the Northern Powerhouse in England from the Tay Cities/Tactran region are poor. There is one direct return Cross Country Service per day from within the Tay Cities Region (from Dundee) that calls at Newcastle, York, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham, and no direct services from Perth or Stirling to these cities. Anyone wishing to access these cities not only need to change services at Glasgow but are also required to travel between two different stations, Glasgow Queen Street and Glasgow Central. This is hardly conducive good connectivity and economic growth. There needs to be good connections between Scotland's 5 more northern cities and the West Midlands, Midlands and Northern Powerhouse.

Rail Freight

The ability to move freight from road to rail is recognised, and the first rail freight facility within the Tactran region should be operational within the next few months at Blackford in Perth & Kinross, initially catering for Highland Spring requirements. Further opportunities are also being pursued, notably at Montrose, where a multi-modal hub for road, rail and sea is being investigated.

Support should be given to developing a network of multimodal hubs across Scotland and the UK, serving rail, road and water traffic, to allow for the consolidation of freight and movement through sustainable modes of transport.

In addition, there is a need to ensure adequate rail gauge requirements are in place to accommodate increased rail freight use throughout the Scottish rail network, ensuring rail can accommodate freight movements from north of Scotland to south of England.

High Speed Rail

In the longer term, High Speed Rail is set to significantly shrink journey times within England and boost economic growth. High Speed Rail needs to be extended to Scotland, and it is understood that Scottish Government is actively supporting this and it is also welcomed by Stirling/Tay Cities/Tactran. However, this must be supported by better rail connections north of Glasgow and Edinburgh, electrifying the rail network and significantly reducing journey times to the north, if an increase in relative peripherality is to be avoided.

Road

Road connections to England on the west coast via M74/M6 are good, however access via the east coast route is poor between Edinburgh and Newcastle – although there have been significant upgrades in England south of Newcastle on this route, the A1 between Edinburgh and Newcastle remains significantly substandard in terms of capacity, condition and technology and needs to be upgraded to support the economy and connectivity.

The most northerly motorway in the UK terminates at Perth, at a roundabout, with all roads to cities further north either dual carriageway or are being upgraded to dual carriageway (A9 Perth to Inverness). While these are generally adequate, the lack of grade separated junctions (e.g. Keir Roundabout at Stirling) can have a detrimental impact on these routes and there are difficulties around the cities of Dundee and Perth, which as well as causing significant delays to long distance cross border traffic, causes

congestion within these cities. The lack of grade separation at Keir Roundabout, also causes traffic volume pressures and other impacts within the adjacent communities of Stirling, Bridge of Allan and Dunblane.

Stirling Council, in partnership with Tactran and Transport Scotland, has been progressing a study of the M9 junctions within the Stirling area to considered adaptations necessary to support future growth and consideration of a new junction connecting the M9 & A811. Interventions on the motorway network within the Stirling area will be required to enable future residential and economic growth, efficient connections to national markets.

Within the Stirling Local Transport Strategy and The Tactran Regional Transport Strategy, the need for improved local road links to better connect Stirling with the national strategic road network has been identified. Consideration will need to be given to the creation of a new Kildean Link Road to the north of the city. This would provide new connections to the strategic network at Junction 10 of the M9, provide much need additional crossings over the railway and River Forth. Other benefits include, improved access to Stirling University, Innovation Park, business centres, and strategic business development space at Kildean.

In addition, consideration will need to be given to the upgrade of the A91 to the south of the Stirling. This route connects from the M80/M9 at Pirnhall providing the key principal route through Stirling and onward to Clackmannanshire and Fife. In addition, this route also provides an alternative route should the other strategic crossings of the River Forth be closed.

It is of note that the Eddington Report of 2006 made the point noting the increasing gap in standards of connectivity between most UK cities and those increasingly commonplace across much of urban Europe. In discussion of what might be done to reduce this gap, and which investments might produce the best economic returns, Eddington went on to make an important point: that the cumulative impact of several relatively small improvements to the transport system can often be at least as big as that of the large ‘megaprojects’ that often steal the limelight. Recognising a future of financial constraint post pandemic this may be something that has to be revisited by local and national governments.

Road infrastructure must also look towards future technology and the decarbonisation of road transport, and it is essential that to accommodate transition to low carbon vehicles, investment in hydrogen refuelling and rapid charging infrastructure is provided at key Trunk Road sites. A strategy for developing a network of recharging and hydrogen refuelling sites to enable cross border low carbon travel should be prioritised to create capacity for the forthcoming demand.

Air

Ease of access to London, and indeed the wider global marketplace, is a key enabler/lever for inward investment and an attractor for talent. The perceptions that such a link provides to businesses, investors and talent should not be underestimated.

A study commissioned by Tactran and undertaken by York Aviation, in 2019 found that in 2018, nearly 2.8 million commercial air passengers travelled to or from the Tay Cities

Region, of which, over 600,000 passengers travelled for business purposes and over 2.1 million passengers travelled for leisure. Over half of all passengers who travelled to or from the Tay Cities Region were short haul passengers, with domestic passengers accounting for nearly a third. The remaining passengers travelled to or from long haul destinations.

Edinburgh Airport is the most used airport for commercial air passengers travelling to or from the Tay Cities Region. In 2018, 79% of Tay Cities Region passengers used Edinburgh Airport for their journey. Glasgow Airport and Aberdeen Airport followed as the most popular airports, respectively handling 14% and 3% of all Tay Cities Region passengers. Dundee Airport, the only airport within the Tay Cities Region handling scheduled commercial services, handled around 0.7% of all Tay Cities Region passengers.

Airports are considered to be an important factor in the development of a regional economy. Studies have identified the impact of small airports on economic development with good transport connectivity a facilitator that allows the economic potential of an area to be realised. Regional airports allow communities to be part of the national economic and social fabric, providing connections within the UK and to Europe and beyond. Regional airports can act as catalysts for regional economic growth, enhancing the performance of business sectors and facilitating inward investment. Airports also support businesses to export and in bound tourism in an area.

Therefore, as well as seeking to maintain good ground transport connections to other Scottish airports, the Tay Cities region is looking to further invest in Dundee Airport to provide a direct connection to the Tay Cities region from London and other major international air hubs, recognising the economic impact this can make to the region, with the aim of:

- increasing passenger numbers to 110.000 passengers/year;
- increasing the number of routes, including to UK and European hubs;
- Raising the profile of the region as a destination for visitors and business, enhanced perceptions – with access to key hub airports facilitating travel;
- Support for key tourism and growth sector initiatives

It is expected this will increase the GVA for the region by £6.1m and create 320 jobs. The potential for Dundee Airport to service London Heathrow in the future is recognised and an MOU has been signed between Heathrow Airport and Dundee City Council to prioritise a route to Heathrow if the third runway is built.

Ports

In addition to the decommissioning of oil and gas and the opportunities wind power provides through the proximity of the Neart na Gaoithe (NnG) offshore wind farm to the Scottish East Coast ports, consideration should be given to facilitating effective port infrastructure for short sea connectivity with other parts of the UK and opportunities for freeport infrastructure.

There is also potential for direct ferry routes from the East of Scotland to near continent ports with early forward investment by Government to enable viability. Although not within the Tay Cities region it is recognised that there is the potential to restore the

passenger and freight ferry to Rosyth. This provides a direct link to mainland Europe without the need to travel south through England to a UK port thus reducing freight on the roads and supporting a low carbon agenda.

8. Is there a need for the development of a national strategic transport network to replace the European TEN-T network within the UK?

A major failing in the TEN-T network in Scotland is that it only goes as far north as Edinburgh and Glasgow. As noted earlier in this response a major failing is that connection to Edinburgh/Glasgow does not equate to a connection to Scotland as a whole. There is a need to connect all cities within Scotland to the rest of the UK and Europe.

Although the TEN-T existing inland waterways and ports and railways and airports network within the UK does include ports in Aberdeen and further north, none of the Tay Cities ports, including Dundee and Montrose are included.

Any replacement for the TEN-T network should address these issues.

a) How should such a network be defined?

Any replacement network should ensure good access to all of Scotland's cities, ports and airports, to ensure the movement of people and goods as efficiently and sustainably as possible.

b) What would be the potential impact of such a network?

This would have beneficial economic, social and environmental impacts, by connecting the whole of Scotland to the UK and Europe.

c) How should a network of this nature it be managed or financed?

National Government (or their devolved administrations) should manage and finance this network within the UK, perhaps by recognising the importance the network has on the UK nation.

d) Do you have any further comments on the potential development of a national strategic transport network?

No further comment

Connections to Northern Ireland

9. With reference to the unique geographical position of Northern Ireland please set out how best to improve cross-border transport connectivity with other nations

There has historically been (and continues to be) a high number of students from Northern Ireland at both of Dundee's universities and at the University of Stirling. Bringing them, friends and family to the region is key – and a Dundee to Belfast air route has recently been added and requires to be strengthened as an attractor of future students and talent to the city.

In addition to an improved air route, with the Tactran and Tay Cities region lying on the eastern side of Scotland, there is the need for reliance on good road and rail connections to the West of Scotland to provide access to Northern Ireland. There is also a need to improve rail to ferry connections and deep ports to facilitate freight and passenger connectivity between nations.

10. Other than geographic, are there any other specific restrictions to improving connectivity between Northern Ireland and other nations in the United Kingdom?

No comment

Final questions

11. What else can be done to support greater transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

Increased co-ordination between nations and consideration for the needs of the regions within each of the nations.

Transport remains a devolved issue north of the border and there are differing regulatory regimes and procurement requirements which can make delivery of major truly pan UK projects difficult. However, there requires to be a strong commitment for the UK and Scottish Government to overcome some of the big challenges when building infrastructure across differing jurisdictions.

12. Do you have any further comments?

Whilst this review focuses on physical transport connectivity, the COVID pandemic and pre-existing gaps in digital infrastructure provide a clear argument for digital connectivity to both property and premises level to be a significant economic enabler. For communities which experience issues of physical connectivity to the wider UK geography and economy, investment in reliable digital infrastructure can enable the creation of new, and growth of indigenous, businesses, supporting local jobs and supply chain opportunities.

The pandemic and attendant reduction in travel has yielded significant carbon reduction and efficient digital infrastructure reduces both the need for routine business travel, and maintenance expenditure for road infrastructure.

In the new ‘normal’ it is likely mobility in all its forms will need to address safety and public health for all modes of travel with capacity issues a major concern particularly for the private sector operators and impact on revenues. Public Transport with rail and bus in particular has been hit hardest with the pandemic and it is likely operators will need to change business models significantly to return to some degree of normality. The role of national and local government may also be required to radically change its relationship with the private sector. Greater flexibility of services increases in demand responsive services and more effective contractual arrangements mitigating risks will all likely have to play a part in the new normal for operators.

Building on the UK Government's smart motorways investment programme, digital infrastructure requires to be built into major transport infrastructure investment, with consideration of sensor and Internet of Things based opportunities for more productive use of existing infrastructure, and provision of real-time data on usage, asset condition and traffic status to both reduce inspection revenue costs and information decision making on maintenance and investment.

Union Connectivity Review

Response on behalf of Scotland's Regional Transport Partnerships

Assessing the need for cross-border connectivity

1. **If you represent a place, what is your current strategy for growing the economy and improving the quality of life there? Please provide a summary, but you are welcome to append or link to published strategies.**

This response is made on behalf of the Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), established in terms of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005.

All RTPs have as one of their functions the production of a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). In terms of the Act, these are set out at section 5(2). In summary, the Strategies should set out how transport in their area should be provided, developed or improved having regard to various issues including well-being, social inclusion, sustainable development and 'to integrate with transport elsewhere.'

RTPs are statutory local authority partnerships, and work closely with their constituent local authorities, as well as other partners, to develop and deliver not only a Regional Transport Strategy but other linked strategies such as regional economic strategies, linking also with City Deal infrastructure developments. Their functions vary between so-called 'model 3' partnerships like SPT, who have additional operational responsibilities in relation to, for example, bus services.

a) **What is necessary to achieve this strategy and what evidence do you have that improved connectivity is needed in this instance?** *We expect that transport is not the only factor necessary to achieve regional strategies and would like to understand what else might need to be in place to see benefits from improvements in connectivity.*

Many parts of Scotland are geographically remote, meaning that connectivity is a key consideration in decision-making. For example Lerwick in Shetland is more distant from London than Milan, Italy while Inverness is as far from London as Zurich, Switzerland.

Road, rail, maritime and air connections are crucial to the economic recovery of such regions, and to mitigate against, for example, the impact of Brexit. For example, Nestrans has produced a draft Regional Transport Strategy (NESTrans2040 - Regional Transport Strategy Virtual Public

Exhibition (consultation.ai)), setting out their ambitions for transport policies, developments and interventions over the next 20 years.

Edinburgh and Glasgow in particular, and connections between them and other major UK cities, are crucial to the economic health of the UK as a whole.

Other examples of strategies which address these areas on an evidence-based approach include:

SEStran's RTS 2015 - 2025 Refresh;

Tactran Regional Transport Strategy 2015 – 2036 Refresh

Hitrans Draft Regional Transport Strategy 2018

SPT Regional Transport Strategy

Many of these strategies are currently in the process of being refreshed in the light of recent events.

2. **Please provide any information you hold about current multi-nation journeys within the United Kingdom.**

Please provide information relating to current journey volumes, assessments of future demand, journey reliability and locations/corridors of particular strategic importance. In particular, please provide information about current journey levels, assessments of future demand, locations of important strategic transport corridors and the reasons for importance

Tactran's Monitoring Framework 2018 Progress Report contains information regarding travel to/from major destinations in Scotland (pages 27 to 33).

Further useful data regarding travel connections to and from the south west of Scotland can be found here.

There is also a wealth of research and further information available from Transport Scotland: see, e.g., 'Transporting Scotland's Trade – 2019 Edition.'

3. **In general terms, is there a need for new or improved transport links between the nations of the United Kingdom?**

As stated above, there are opportunities to improve transport links in road, rail, air and sea networks. The impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit have yet to be quantified but will inevitably have an impact on all areas of Scotland.

If so, please explain why and provide evidence to support your view. Please ensure that your response relates specifically to multi-nation transport links and not to improvements in connectivity in general.

Whilst transport links to Edinburgh and Glasgow, the main Central Belt cities, are better than the links further north, that is not to say that the linkages between the Central Belt and and other nations, and England in particular, do not need improvement.

In addition however there are 5 other cities north of Edinburgh and Glasgow that, by comparison, have significantly poorer links to the other nations. An example of the relative peripherality is that there is half hourly frequency of LNER services between Edinburgh and London, but only a single daily return to Inverness and two direct services per day between Aberdeen, Dundee and London.

Air Travel

The continuing importance of services to London Heathrow is critical and must be guaranteed. Other key destinations including Gatwick and regional airports would enable the opportunity to expand Scotland's role in many industries, to major business centres outwith the UK but also linking to and from destinations such as Belfast, Norwich, Southampton and East Midlands.

The imposition of Air Passenger Duty needs to ensure that it does not unfairly penalise some regional airports.

Edinburgh and Glasgow, along with other Scottish airports, face extreme difficulties due to the downturn in passenger numbers arising as a result of Covid-19.

A key issue facing air services north of the Central Belt is not reliability per se. Rather, it is the lack of certainty over their continuation at suitable frequencies and timings. Areas outwith the Central Belt want to avoid returning to the position where Government policy on hub access leaves us susceptible to airlines' decisions overriding the connectivity needs of the UK's most peripheral regions.

Road

Trunk roads are important networks linking the north of Scotland to major markets elsewhere. The motorway network stops in the Central Belt and the trunk road network should aim for a consistent standard both sides of border. This standard should incorporate charging facilities for Electric Vehicles and hydrogen charging, which require a national overview. DfT should be working collaboratively with Transport Scotland to ensure consistency with cross-border links such as the A1.

Coach travel to other UK nations is currently underused, mainly due to journey times.

Rail

The north of England and Scotland will be severely disadvantaged if the benefits of HS2 infrastructure being gradually extended northwards in increments from a London base do not reach the north of England and Scotland until well into the 2040s. An earlier investment in high speed rail infrastructure in the north of England should align with the Scottish Government's ambition for high speed rail in Scotland to release the latent economic growth potential that is being suppressed by relatively poor connectivity.

The Scottish Government has committed £200million to upgrade the East Coast Main Line between Aberdeen and Scotland's Central Belt - a major commitment which provides improved journey times (including 20 minutes off Aberdeen-Edinburgh), service resilience, unlocks local station and service opportunities as well as freight potential. These benefits should also be recognised in Aberdeen-London journey times.

Sea

The importance of Scotland's ports, as recognised in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), should be recognised (see below). This is especially the case in relation to freight, and the need to transition to a more multi-modal shift to both rail and sea, rather than road, freight transport. Cross-UK connectivity is vital for freight transport in particular.

4. What are the main obstacles and challenges in improving transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

Recognising the different administrations and their devolved powers, it will be important that authorities work together to ensure improved connectivity.

Please provide evidence relating to any specific challenges that prevent or hinder the development of additional or improved transport links. Please consider socio-economic, political, organisational and practical issues.

The main challenges are:

· Considering connectivity between the whole of Scotland and other UK nations

· Agreeing priorities between the various Governments and common benefits for each nation in delivering a truly connected transport system.

· The ability of regions to set their own transportation priorities, for example through regional transport strategies.

This needs to be set against a background of social equity within a just transition to a low carbon economy.

Union Connectivity Review

5. What evidence exists to demonstrate the potential impacts of improved transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

Please ensure that your answer relates directly to transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom and not to transport connectivity in general. Please consider economic, social and cultural impacts and provide documents or links. Please also highlight specific potential growth areas such as housing or wages.

There is a lot of research and evidence available on agglomeration economies to support this – i.e. that improvements in transport connectivity (driven by increased network capacity, reduced travel times and costs together with improved network reliability) generate improvements in productivity.

Reduced transport costs have many benefits for businesses and can support their connections to customers, suppliers and employees. For individuals, reduced transport costs support individuals to participate in the labour market, access a wider range of jobs and connect with leisure and retail opportunities. The original business case for High Speed Rail only showed a positive outcome when Scottish connectivity was included in it.

Where transport investments are 'transformational', they can also influence the location of economic activity, for instance allowing businesses to relocate to more productive locations with better access to skills, other resources and customers. Investing in transport connectivity can not only influence the amount of economic activity in a region, it can also influence where it is located. Across the UK, this could mean that locational decisions could support positive impacts within more communities.

Reference:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386126/TIEP_Report.pdf

https://greenerjourneys.com/guidance-tool/relationship-between-transport-economy/

Transport connectivity is a fundamental element of The Borderlands (Dumfries & Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland, Carlisle and Cumbria) Growth Deal and the indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) for the South of Scotland. Full information is available at https://www.borderlandsgrowth.com/ and

https://dumfriesgallowayintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s23664/South%20of%20Scotland%20Regional%20Spatial%20Strategy%20-%20Appendix.pdf

For air please see the evidence in *https://bit.ly/3h9G4ru HITRANS response to UK Government Air Strategy* and

Union Connectivity Review

https://www.hie.co.uk/media/3002/economicplusandplussocialplusimpactplusofplusinvernessplusairportplus-plusreport.pdf.

6. **When making transport investment decisions which aim to improve connectivity between the different nations of the United Kingdom, does the current appraisal framework capture all the potential impacts?**

Please provide evidence such as links to existing reviews or analysis that may have already considered this.

The Scottish Government are currently consulting on a Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan which covers the financial years 2021/22 to 2025/26 and outlines their approach to delivering on the National Infrastructure Mission, recognising the role infrastructure has to play in enabling inclusive, net zero and sustainable growth. The full consultation is available through

https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-draft-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-202122-202526/

The Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan sets out the Government's vision for future infrastructure – intended to support Scotland's resilience and enable an inclusive, net zero emissions society. The plan focuses on adopting and building on the recommendations of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland's Phase 1 report. It sets out a long-term vision for Scottish infrastructure, indicating how they intend to choose the right future investments, and sets out a 5-year programme of improvements.

The Scottish Government are seeking views on the ways to implement the Commission's recommendations in the following areas:

· The inclusion of natural infrastructure;

· How to prioritise - the common investment hierarchy approach;

· How to best assess the impact of proposed infrastructure; and

· How to best assess the carbon impact of future Plans.

It is important that the standard appraisal processes, including Transport Scotland's STAG process, and HM Treasury's Green Book framework, are fit for purpose. The overall approach needs to take a much wider cross-outcome view above and beyond solely economic benefits which has skewed investment to south-east England for too long.

7. Which specific journeys would benefit from new or improved transport links?

Please identify two or more specific points within the United Kingdom for each journey and provide details as to why each journey has been identified. Please list these journeys in order of priority. Please ensure that these journeys traverse two or more nations. If none then please go to Question 8.

The Scottish Cities Alliance published a position statement on the role of improved connectivity in empowering Scotland's cities in February 2016. Connecting Scotland's seven cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Perth and Stirling) together and to the world set out the context for continued investment in better transport links in and between Scotland's seven cities, and the potential economic contribution such improved connectivity could make. This document set out a set of priorities shared by the seven cities, which focused on the overall objective of establishing a set of 'Quality Standards for Connectivity' so that transport and digital communications between each of Scotland's cities are at a consistent quality comparable with the best in the world. This can be facilitated by a set of specific infrastructure enhancements and key among these are linking Scotland's cities to the world by the most appropriate high-quality connections and gateways.

Rail

East Coast

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However, as noted above connections between the five Scottish cities north of Edinburgh and Glasgow and cities on the East Coast Mainline – Newcastle, York and London, are poor by comparison and leads to relative peripherality of these cities. Although there are frequent services between these cities and Edinburgh, the journey times are not good and interchange times can be poor at Edinburgh. Research undertaken by Transport Focus identifies that the need to interchange between services can be a significant deterrent to rail use. It is therefore considered that an increase in number of direct services and a reduction in journey times to the cities north of Edinburgh is required.

Transport Scotland has recently published its rail services decarbonisation plan, which commits to having a fully electrified service between all of Scotland's cities and to Newcastle and Carlisle by 2035. This is fully supported and must be accelerated and coordinated for services between

Scotland's cities and England's main conurbations, particularly tying in with the proposals for the Northern Powerhouse.

Cross Country & West Coast

Similar to East Coast rail comments, the rail connections between Glasgow and cities in England are supported by regular, frequent rail services. However, direct rail access to West Midlands, the Midlands and the western cities in the Northern Powerhouse in England from the parts of Scotland further north are poor. Anyone wishing to access these cities not only need to change services at Glasgow but are also required to travel between two different stations, Glasgow Queen Street and Glasgow Central. This is hardly conducive to good connectivity and economic growth. There needs to be good connections between Scotland's 5 more northern cities and the West Midlands, Midlands and Northern Powerhouse.

Rail Freight

Support should be given to developing a network of multimodal hubs across Scotland and the UK, serving rail, road and water traffic, to allow for the consolidation of freight and movement through sustainable modes of transport. This is supported, for example, in a recent study being carried out on behalf of SEStran which indicates there is potential to increase the role of shipping and ensuring ports have the infrastructure to accommodate that modal shift.

In addition, there is a need to ensure adequate rail gauge requirements are in place to accommodate increased rail freight use throughout the Scottish rail network, ensuring rail can accommodate freight movements from north of Scotland to south of England.

High Speed Rail

In the longer term, High Speed Rail is set to significantly shrink journey times within England and boost economic growth. High Speed Rail needs to be extended to Scotland, and it is understood that the Scottish Government is actively supporting this. However, this must be supported by better rail connections north of Glasgow and Edinburgh, electrifying the rail network and significantly reducing journey times to the north, if an increase in relative peripherality is to be avoided.

Road

Road connections to England on the west coast via M74/M6 are good, however access via the east coast route is poor between Edinburgh and Newcastle – although there have been significant upgrades in England south of Newcastle on this route, the A1 between Edinburgh and Newcastle remains significantly substandard and needs to be upgraded to support the economy and connectivity.

The most northerly motorway in the UK terminates at Perth, with all roads to cities further north either dual carriageway or are being upgraded to dual carriageway (A9 Perth to Inverness). While these are generally adequate, the lack of grade separated junctions (e.g. Keir Roundabout at Stirling) can have a detrimental impact on these routes and there are particular difficulties around

the cities of Dundee and Perth, which as well as causing significant delays to long distance cross border traffic, causes congestion within these cities.

It is of note that the Eddington Report of 2006 made the point noting the increasing gap in standards of connectivity between most UK cities and those increasingly commonplace across much of urban Europe. In discussion of what might be done to reduce this gap, and which investments might produce the best economic returns, Eddington went on to make an important point: that the cumulative impact of several relatively small improvements to the transport system can often be at least as big as that of the large 'megaprojects' that often steal the limelight. Recognising a future of financial constraint post pandemic this may be something that has to be revisited by local and national governments.

Road infrastructure must also look towards future technology and the decarbonisation of road transport, and it is essential that to accommodate transition to low carbon vehicles, investment in hydrogen refuelling and rapid charging infrastructure is provided at key Trunk Road sites. A strategy for developing a network of recharging and hydrogen refuelling sites to enable cross border low carbon travel should be prioritised to create capacity for the forthcoming demand.

Air

Ease of access to London, and indeed the wider global marketplace, is a key enabler/lever for inward investment and an attractor for talent. The perceptions that such a link provides to businesses, investors and talent should not be underestimated.

Airports are considered to be an important factor in the development of a regional economy. Studies have identified the impact of small airports on economic development with good transport connectivity a facilitator that allows the economic potential of an area to be realised. Regional airports allow communities to be part of the national economic and social fabric, providing connections within the UK and to Europe and beyond. Regional airports can act as catalysts for regional economic growth, enhancing the performance of business sectors and facilitating inward investment. Airports also support businesses to export and in bound tourism in an area.

Connections between Scottish airports and major UK hubs, especially Heathrow, need to be maintained and strengthened and the use of the PSO mechanism should be considered to guarantee a minimum service level.

Ports

In addition to the decommissioning of oil and gas and the opportunities wind power provides through the close proximity of the Neart na Gaoithe (NnG) offshore wind farm to the Scottish East Coast ports, consideration should be given to facilitating effective port infrastructure for short sea connectivity with other parts of the UK and opportunities for freeport infrastructure.

There is also potential for direct ferry routes from the East of Scotland to near continent ports with early forward investment by Government to enable viability. There is the potential to restore the passenger and freight ferry to Rosyth. This provides a direct link to mainland Europe without the

need to travel south through England to a UK port thus reducing freight on the roads and supporting a low carbon agenda.

a) **What would be the benefits of improvements to these specific journeys?**
Please provide evidence of the benefit that these proposed improvements would deliver. Please consider wider economic, social and cultural benefits as well as specific areas such as potential improvements in housing and productivity.

Benefits are included in the SWSTS, North Channel Partnership Strategy, and Borderlands Growth Deal submission and the indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.

b) Are you aware of any work that has been done to assess the need or feasibility of improvements to all or part of these specific journeys?
Please provide evidence.

See above

c) How would the costs and benefits of the identified improvements be distributed?
Please consider the economic, social and geographic distribution of these costs and benefits and provide evidence to support this.

See above

d) How will demand for these journeys change in the future?

Please consider the next 20-30 years in your response and set out the reasons why demand will change. Please also consider the potential impact of COVID-19 and the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.

Future demand will be a key element of appraisal and therefore at this point it is not appropriate or feasible to assess in any detail. Clearly the pandemic is likely to lead to greater working from home patterns; the UK's departure from the European Union will have big impacts on the movement of people and goods which would be impossible to assess at this time.

e) In your opinion what is the preferred means by which to improve these journeys?

Please consider specific transport modes i.e. rail, road, air and maritime and details of any new infrastructure requirements. Please also consider whether there is an opportunity to promote active travel such as walking or cycling or environmentally friendly modes of transport.

A fully sustainable road/dedicated public transport/Active Travel link which is future proofed for the low carbon EV, autonomous and High Speed Rail future should be a national priority (delivered regionally). Future infrastructure will need to blend an enhancement of existing networks as well as new, bold and sustainable solutions.

f) What would be the environmental impact of improving these journeys in the way that you have identified?

Please consider positive and negative impacts as well as possible mitigations. Please do this in the context of the United Kingdom's domestic and international targets for greenhouse gas and carbon emissions and provide evidence.

Again, this will be addressed in detail through an appraisal process.

g) Are there any interdependencies with other policies that may impact the deliverability of the identified improvements?

Please consider all relevant national and regional policies as well as those set by devolved administrations and provide your assessment as to how these policies may need to change to facilitate delivery of the identified improvements.

There are interdependencies across all public policy areas from Climate Change, Planning, Transport to Public Health. An assessment of how they need to change is the remit of devolved administrations.

8. Is there a need for the development of a national strategic transport network to replace the European TEN-T network within the UK?

Yes.

Please consider the specific strategic benefits of a replacement national network which would connect strategically important regions, and places in the United Kingdom in order to support economic growth and quality of life. View maps of the existing TEN-T inland waterways and ports and railways and airports network within the UK.

a) How should such a network be defined?

Please consider which criteria should be considered when identifying transport links for inclusion and how these should be assessed. Please also consider which specific transport modes should be included.

Any replacement network should ensure good access to all of Scotland's cities, ports and airports, to ensure the movement of people and goods as efficiently and sustainably as possible.

b) What would be the potential impact of such a network?

Please consider possible economic, social and environmental impacts

This would have beneficial economic, social and environmental impacts, by connecting the whole of Scotland to the UK and Europe.

c) How should a network of this nature it be managed or financed?

Please consider the role of the Government, Devolved Administrations and local transport authorities in your response.

This would be a matter for the UK and Scottish Governments to discuss and agree.

d) Do you have any further comments on the potential development of a national strategic transport network?

No.

Connections to Northern Ireland

9. With reference to the unique geographical position of Northern Ireland please set out how best to improve cross-border transport connectivity with other nations

Please consider all possible transport options including maritime, air and rail or road via a fixed link and provide evidence as to the cost, benefits and environmental impact of these options.

The link from Scotland to Northern.Ireland via Cairnryan Ports serves as a significant connection for the movement of goods for a wide geographical spread of the UK (as shown in the SWSTS). However, the robustness of this connection is jeopardised by the poor transport infrastructure linking the ports at Cairnryan to onward strategic corridors (West Coast Main Line(WCML)/A74(M)/M6 etc). The A75 is the major link road for circa 97 miles between Stranraer and the town of Gretna Green and the junction of the M74/M6 north/south axis motorway network linking England, Scotland and Northern ireland. Only around 4 miles of the 97 miles is currently dualled, hence journey times typically exceed 2 hours.

Despite this strategic infrastructure significance (the road forms part of the European Route E18, the route requires much further improvement for the Larne, Cairnryan transport axis to grow and/or maintain present volumes of commercial and tourism/car traffic. In recent times the Freight Transport Association (FTA) which represents logistics operators on both sides of the Irish Sea, has called on the UK government to prioritise the infrastructure deficit leading to and from Loch Ryan, which handles approximately 45% of Northern Ireland's trade with the rest of the UK. The FTA identify there are 9,000 sailings a year on the Cairnryan to Northern Ireland route, carrying 410 thousand units of freight.

However, growth on the route of 1.3% in the year to date is outstripped by far greater growth in movements on the route between Dublin and Holyhead. This will only continue if the inadequate quality of the A75 is not addressed soon. Options relating to A75 have been identified for further development within the SWSTS.

In addition, connections between the rest of Scotland and Cairnryan need to be considered further.

10. Other than geographic, are there any other specific restrictions to improving connectivity between Northern Ireland and other nations in the United Kingdom?

Please consider legal, policy and practical restrictions. Please set these out and provide evidence as to how they may limit opportunities for improved transport connectivity. Please also consider this in the context of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.

No comment.

Final questions

11. What else can be done to support greater transport connectivity between the nations of the United Kingdom?

Please consider legal, political, structural and economic factors in your response as well as other opportunities for the UK Government to directly support improvements to transport connectivity.

Clearly close working between the UK and Scottish Governments will be crucial to some of the suggested improvements being delivered.

12. Do you have any further comments?

Whilst this review focuses on physical transport connectivity, the COVID pandemic and pre-existing gaps in digital infrastructure provide a clear argument for digital connectivity to both property and premises level to be a significant economic enabler. For communities which experience issues of physical connectivity to the wider UK geography and economy, investment in reliable digital infrastructure can enable the creation of new, and growth of indigenous, businesses, supporting local jobs and supply chain opportunities.

The pandemic and attendant reduction in travel has yielded significant carbon reduction and efficient digital infrastructure reduces both the need for routine business travel, and maintenance expenditure for road infrastructure. This needs to be sustained in the future and form part of future investment decision-making.

In the new 'normal' it is likely mobility in all its forms will need to address safety and public health for all modes of travel with capacity issues a major concern particularly for the private sector operators and impact on revenues. Public Transport with rail and bus in particular has been hit hardest with the pandemic and it is likely operators will need to change business models significantly to return to some degree of normality. The role of national and local government may also be required to radically change its relationship with the private sector. Greater flexibility of services, increases in demand responsive services and more effective contractual arrangements mitigating risks will all likely have to play a part in the new normal for operators.

Building on the UK Government's smart motorways investment programme, digital infrastructure requires to be built into major transport infrastructure investment, with consideration of sensor and Internet of Things based opportunities for more productive use of existing infrastructure, and provision of real-time data on usage, asset condition and traffic status to both reduce inspection revenue costs and information decision making on maintenance and investment.

The consultation document asks for views on a fixed link between Northern Ireland and Scotland due to the former's unique geographical position, However, Scotland's islands are also uniquely positioned within the UK as they too are separated from the UK mainland. They would also benefit from transformational investments in fixed links. As an example, cross-border UK journeys to/from Orkney (including fish exports from Scotland) are constrained by the existing ferry services. In contrast, a fixed link between Orkney and Caithness would reduce journey times, provide unlimited frequency and capacity, and remove the costs of ferry fares. This transport investment would help to increase Orkney's contribution to the UK economy.