

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

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TACTRAN ENABLE MaaS PROGRAMME

REPORT BY SENIOR STRATEGY OFFICER

Purpose

The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of the Tactran ENABLE Mobility as a Service (MaaS) programme which commenced in January 2020 and is currently programmed to end in March 2023 (subject to the success of an application for Smarter Choices Smarter Places grant).

Summary

A MaaS platform and a model for successful dissemination of MaaS journey planning applications has been developed and tested across the Tactran region, funded by Transport Scotland's MaaS Investment Fund. MaaS journey planning tools support the achievement of climate change, air quality and social inclusion objectives by promoting awareness of sustainable transport opportunities for those with and without access to car. However, whilst Transport Scotland funding for the Tactran project will end in March 2023, it is unlikely that Transport Scotland will make any decision on if or how to take MaaS projects forward until 2024. If the project is halted, this will put at risk the ability of the tool to be an option for the public services in the region in the future. Whilst the project evaluation report is currently being prepared for submission to Transport Scotland in April 2023, this report summarises the programme, and proposes a way forward until a time when the Partnership can consider the conclusions of both the Tactran Project and Transport Scotland Programme Evaluation reports.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Partnership:

- (i) Support applications to extend the Tactran MaaS ENABLE programme until the Partnership have an opportunity to consider both the Tactran Project and Transport Scotland Programme Evaluation Reports;
- (ii) During this period, note officers will market the project utilising the Tactran Evaluation Report; and
- (iii) Agree to consider at a future Partnership meeting the costs and benefits of the Tactran ENABLE programme once Transport Scotland's programme evaluation report has been published.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 23 December 2019, Transport Scotland announced an award of £550,112 to Tactran to permit the ENABLE MaaS Pilot to be developed and trialled across the region. In addition to securing Smarter Choices, Smarter Places funding of £90,000, the Partnership allocated a total of £137,000 over 2019-2022. In addition, an additional £12,000 has been provided by Transport Scotland, £9,000 by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority. This provided a total budget of £798,112.
- 2.2 The project involves developing a MaaS platform (the 'back office' enabling the planning, booking and paying of transport services) and associated touchpoints (apps and websites) to assist users access NHS Tayside facilities, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and Dundee & Angus College.
- 2.3 To support climate change, air quality and social inclusion objectives, not only must sustainable transport opportunities be improved, there must also be effective mechanisms for making people fully aware and informed of their choices. It is also recognised that planning and booking transport services can be a barrier for people, hence journey planning must be made as convenient and easy for users as possible. Furthermore, as promoted in the Scotland's Second National Transport Strategy (NTS2) investment hierarchy, the best use must be made of existing transport services by promoting to the full what is already in place.

3 DISCUSSION

Programme Summary

- 3.1 The Tactran ENABLE MaaS Programme piloted a model for developing and disseminating journey planning, booking and payment tools to enable users to sustainably access destinations and services, thereby supporting public sector social inclusion and climate change objectives.
- 3.2 **The problem:** providing an alternative to the car, whether for those with or without access to such, requires both provision of alternatives for the whole journey, but also information about what alternatives exist for the whole journey. There has never been a comprehensive single source of information in the Tactran region to enable users to be aware of all their opportunities and be fully informed about the choices they have.
- 3.3 **The opportunity:** Mobility as a Service technology enables the co-ordinated planning, booking and paying of the complete range of transport services, enabling users to make the most of whatever services are available. Transport Scotland's MaaS Investment Fund enabled Tactran to pilot a MaaS programme across the Region.

- 3.4 **The programme:** The Tactran ENABLE MaaS Programme consists of:
- A MaaS platform: the ‘back office’ containing the software that enables the planning, booking and paying of a range of transport services
 - Interfaces (apps/websites) designed with and for the users of three pilot services
 - Dundee and Angus College
 - Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
 - NHS Tayside
 - Communications and marketing programme
 - Monitoring and evaluation programme

3.5 The programme differs from many MaaS programmes in that it is targeted at specific user groups and places these users at the centre of the design, review, improvement, marketing and communications processes – compared to the majority of MaaS programmes which produce generic journey planning tools for the ‘whole community’. The programme creates the eco-system to identify and give users what they need, maximising the utility and benefits of MaaS tools for users and public sector service providers.

Programme successes and learning

- 3.6 The programme to develop and trial the journey planning tool commenced in January 2020, but as consequence of the travel restrictions imposed in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, the launch of the live pilots was delayed until September 2021. These pilots will remain live until end of March 2023.
- 3.7 The programme has resulted in many more users – approximately ten-fold – than any of the other MaaS programmes funded by Transport Scotland MaaS Investment Fund (Sept 2021 – January 2023):
- National Park Journey Planner: 7893 visitors (38.9% returning users) planning 11025 journeys
 - GoNHS Tayside 2064 visitors (13.5% returning users) planning 1945 journeys
 - Dundee and Angus College 776 visitors (56.6% returning) planning 2068 journeys
- 3.8 The modal share of the programmes suggests that the tools either promote or support sustainable transport options:
- National Park Journey Planner: 60% of users planned bus and/or rail trips, and 12% planned walking and cycling trips

- GoNHS Tayside: 61% of users planned bus and/or rail trips, 10% planned walking or cycling trips
- Dundee and Angus College: 73% planned bus trips, with a further 11% planning rail or bus/rail trips. 5% planned walking and cycling trips

3.9 Learnings from the Monitoring and Evaluation programme include:

- There is a need: The survey results suggest that users of the apps are more likely to experience travel difficulties resulting from both availability of options as well as costs.
- Users appear to like the tool: the high percentage of returning users for the National Park Journey Planner and MyD&A interfaces suggest that users found the tools useful (NB while the number of repeat trips that someone is likely to make to a destination should be considered, hopefully a person will only visit the hospital on an occasional basis).
- Developing interfaces for users of a specific service, and branding and disseminating the tool via that service has resulted in many more (10x) users than the other MaaS pilots. The customer journey does not start with “what bus do I catch”, it starts with “I want to go to college”
- The continual user feedback loop, and especially the audit of the tool by people with disabilities and early onset dementia emphasised that what people want are simple and clear tools. The design of many MaaS tools is based on making the most of the technology. Is this what the user needs or wants. It is near impossible to present an app which is both simple and does everything. We should be mindful of the scale of the respective problems that people face. Awareness of services is perhaps a bigger problem than being able to buy a bus ticket. Furthermore, the booking of that ticket is unlikely to be cheaper through a third-party app, than via the transport provider
- What is the value to the public purse? It is looking unlikely that booking and advertising income is likely to enable a public sector tool to be sustainable. However, the costs of not supporting such a tool are likely to result in the mitigation costs for social inclusion and climate change being greater than the cost of the tool.

3.10 The programme has not only supported the climate change and social inclusion objectives of the Government, the Councils and Tactran, it has also helped support:

- The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority’s (LLTNPA) wider programme to address the impact that visitors accessing the Park by car have on the climate, local communities and the special nature of the Park.
- NHS Tayside’s aspirations to help user access services as well as help address the parking pressures on site. With regard to the ability of users to access the service, NHS officers noted the anxiety patients have when

attending an appointment and how this can be amplified by concerns about how to get to the site. Officers noted that this is likely to be part of a suite of factors that can affect do not attends (typically 11% in Tayside) a significant cost and inefficiency to NHS service delivery.

- Dundee and Angus College who provide further education for a large rural area, with the ability to access the College being a significant factor in which courses pupils can enrol in. Furthermore, given the typical age range of the user group, the students are more likely to be reliant on other forms of access (whether that be lifts or regular use of public transport) than those with their own car and require information either on a regular or infrequent basis of how best to access different sites on different days at different times to help ensure attendance.

3.11 Other benefits of the programme and the tool include:

- Continued building of relationships with services, enabling opportunities to support their objectives to be identified, investigated and supported;
- It provides another medium for services to communicate and engage with their users;
- It provides valuable insights into users and their access issues for services, helping inform their service delivery.

3.12 When considering the results of the project, and in particular user numbers, it should be remembered that the journey planning tools were launched as Scotland was emerging from the covid pandemic. The pandemic has had a huge impact on people's comfort with using public transport (see [Tactran Spaces for People](#) monitoring programme), and the project has occurred over a time when public transport usage started at a very low level, and has increased slowly (although not yet back at pre pandemic levels).

3.13 A significant element of programme evolution came with Sustran successfully being awarded monies from the second round of the MaaS Investment Fund. To enable project timescales to be hit and to reduce costs, the MaaS platform developed for the Tactran ENABLE project was shared with Sustran. This enabled Sustran to meet their project requirements but also resulted in a sharing of costs and learning experiences. Direct consequences of this are:

- The intended nine-month trial period for Tactran's pilots have been able to be extended to sixteen months.
- Tactran and Sustran work jointly on developing and promoting the platform and its opportunities.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 3.14 Tactran will complete its project evaluation report to submit to Transport Scotland in April 2023. SEStran will be completing their project evaluation report in Summer 2023 to submit to Transport Scotland.
- 3.15 The user numbers in comparison with other programmes suggest that a successful model has been developed for designing and disseminating journey planning tools.
- 3.16 MaaS products do come at a cost, both in terms of development and software license costs. However, the need to be able to successfully promote and make the most of sustainable travel options must be recognised. The benefits of promoting sustainable travel that are felt across society and public sector services, are central to Tactran's objectives and arguably reduce mitigation costs elsewhere.
- 3.17 The MaaS Investment Fund projects are intended to inform Transport Scotland's thinking on if and how MaaS tools should be taken forward in Scotland. Unfortunately, there is likely to be a year's gap between the funding for the Tactran pilot ending and a decision by Transport Scotland on the way forward. If the eventual decision is that a Tactran MaaS platform is of value to the public services and the region, there is a significant risk and cost to allowing the project to end, and then trying to resurrect it in the future.
- 3.18 The Directors of the three RTPs involved in the MIF programme (Tactran, HITRANS and SEStran) have written to Transport Scotland expressing these concerns and offering to work with Transport Scotland to find interim solutions to help bridge this gap. In the meantime, Tactran and Sestrans, supported by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority are submitting a bid to Paths for All for Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP) money to enable the project to 'tick over' for a further 12-month period, by which time hopefully Transport Scotland will have a clearer understanding of whether they wish to support public MaaS journey planning programmes.
- 3.19 The costs of providing a MaaS platform are likely to be prohibitive for most services on their own. It is also unlikely that the current model would attract sufficient income from booking income and advertising to make it cost neutral. However, the uses and benefits are potentially widespread, and the more services that the tool is shared across, the greater the benefits, and the smaller the individual costs. The need to take a collaborative approach to developing and promoting a shared MaaS platform has been adopted by Tactran and SEStran officers, and both are in conversation with other agencies across the east of Scotland who have shown an interest in the programme, as well as NHS Scotland. Building a collaborative model to share and learn and attract potential users into the programme is at the heart of the proposed SCSP bid.

- 3.20 A MaaS tool for the region presents opportunities to promote sustainable travel, enable the digital transformation of booking and paying for services (including Demand Responsive Transport) which support the core objectives for addressing climate change and promoting access to services for those without access to a car. If the current tool, with its embedded costs, is to be retained as an option for the longer term, there is a need to keep it 'ticking over' whilst the successes of the pilot are promoted and further programme partners are sought.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with the Local Authority transport officers as well as officers of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, Dundee and Angus College, NHS Tayside and SEStran.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As noted in a separate report to this meeting, an allocation of £10,000 is proposed in the initial 2023/24 RTS Revenue Programme budget as a contribution towards the continuation of the MaaS ENABLE pilot.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified. The process of developing a RTS will include the following impact assessments:
- Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment
 - Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment
 - Children's Rights Impact Assessment
 - Health Inequalities Impact Assessment

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NOTE

The following background 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 the above Report:

Report to Executive Committee RTP/22/02 'Tactran ENABLE MaaS Project Spend Approval' 14 February 2022

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

Exemption Request for 'ENABLE Mobility as a Service Project', 20 January 2020