

**TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP****12 DECEMBER 2023****DIRECTOR'S REPORT**Purpose

The report asks the Partnership to note updates on Bus Alliances, Community Bus Fund, Hydrogen Decarbonisation Project and Social Media Strategy. The Partnership is also asked to note a response to ScotRail's Fife and Tay Cities Timetable Consultation.

Summary

Updates are provided on Bus Alliances, Community Bus Fund, Hydrogen Decarbonisation Project and Digital Media Strategy, as follows:

- Tayside Bus Alliance has submitted a strategic business case to the Scottish Government Gateway and Forth Valley Bus Alliance are in the final stages of doing so. Tayside Bus Alliance has also been awarded funding to implement bus priority at traffic signals.
- Tactran has been awarded up to £75,000 from Transport Scotland's Community Bus Fund supporting a review of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 'new powers' for bus supply.
- Hydrogen Decarbonisation Project is aligning with an assessment of hydrogen requirements at a national level and is continuing with fleet analysis at a regional level.
- The most successful social media promotion has been through paid campaigns and Flourish are undertaking work to identify an audience review and establish which platforms should be prioritised with campaigns.

The Executive Committee approved a response to ScotRail's Fife and Tay Cities Timetable Consultation and it is included for noting.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS****1.1 That the Partnership:**

- (i) notes updates on Bus Alliances, Community Bus Fund, Hydrogen Decarbonisation Project and Digital Media Strategy; and
- (ii) notes the response to the ScotRail's Fife and Tay Cities Timetable Consultation, as detailed in Appendix B.

## **2 DISCUSSION**

### **Bus Alliances Update**

- 2.1 Two bus alliances operate within the Tactran region: the Tayside Bus Alliance, and the Forth Valley Bus Alliance. Both have completed STAG appraisals, including the Strategic Business Case (SBC) required for consideration for further support by Transport Scotland at the Gateway review.
- 2.2 The Tayside Bus Alliance (TBA) submitted SBC and early intervention requests to the gateway review on the 6 April 2023. Progression of the primary work to the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage has not yet been approved and is pending final review in the gateway. Approval has been granted to the early intervention requests of the TBA.
- 2.3 A similar path has been followed by the Forth Valley Bus Alliance (FVBA), who have also completed a draft SBC for submission to gateway. The FVBA work is undergoing final revisions with feedback from the constituent councils received and are working through final documents based on the recommendations from the Councils. Following final approval from all authorities documents will be submitted for gateway review.
- 2.4 Approval has been given to the TBA for early interventions, also called 'quick wins' related to Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) bus priority measures. UTMC priorities will be delivered in Perth and in Dundee as enhancements to the existing UTMC systems in those cities. An extension to the BPF grant award of up to £120,000 has been awarded to the TBA for the development of UTMC systems. The system implementation is required to be completed by the 31 March 2024, with ongoing evaluation beyond that date. The new systems thus developed will be integrated into the ongoing bus alliance analyses where these are approved.

### **Community Bus Fund**

- 2.5 Funding of up to £75,000 has been allocated to Tactran from the Community Bus Fund (CBF), supporting a review of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 'new powers' for bus supply, to be focused via the bus alliances. The work will be closely linked to activities at Local Transport Authority level in light of the new powers. By linking the work of the Local Authorities with a wider evidence base and regional impacts assessment, the work will provide common resources between authorities, and support regional outcomes as well as those on a local level.

### **Hydrogen Decarbonisation Project**

- 2.6 An update on the Hydrogen Decarbonisation Project was provided at the Partnership meeting on 14 March 2023. Due to changes at Low Carbon Economy Directorate at Transport Scotland and the Hydrogen Accelerator at St Andrews University, the decision was taken to pause the project to identify a way forward.

- 2.7 Tactran continued to engage with Transport Scotland's Low Carbon Economy Directorate for support of the project and align it with other workstreams that can help support it, including a strategic assessment of the hydrogen requirements at a national level. This work is being undertaken by Heriot-Watt University. The assessment is due to be completed by March 2024. Representatives from Transport Scotland agreed to ensure the required links between the two individual projects are made.
- 2.8 Transport Scotland also commenced work to look at ways to leverage in private financing across fleets in Scotland to accelerate deployment.
- 2.9 Further to this, Transport Scotland indicated that a small underspent budget may be available to continue with the fleet analyses at a regional basis. Having now completed the analyses for Angus, Dundee City, Perth and Kinross and Stirling Councils as well as for Tayside Contracts, Tactran is now working with the Resource Management Association of Scotland (RMAS) to complete respective analyses for their members. Tactran Officers are in contact with both the RMAS and Transport Scotland to establish whether it is feasible to utilise the available underspend by the end of March 2024.
- 2.10 The results of the initial assessments will be detailed in the finalised Tay Cities Regional Hydrogen Assessment report. The report is due for publication in December and will be shared with the project partners and Transport Scotland.
- 2.11 Tactran Officers will continue to work with partners to further strengthen the case for investment into the hydrogen infrastructure in the region to ensure project partners remain engaged and benefit from participation in the project.

### **Digital Media Strategy**

- 2.12 Following the departure of previous agency, Miconex in 2020/21, Tactran's social media marketing was reviewed and relaunched by procuring Flourish Marketing Ltd in October 2022. Upon relaunch the messaging focussed primarily on the "On the Go" brand in partnership with the three Tayside local authorities: Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils. However, the Tactran brand was also promoted separately. The existing social media statistics had been low prior to Flourish being appointed due to a hiatus between Miconex leaving and Flourish commencing and also very little promotion, in line with covid-19 messages at the time regarding social distancing, stay at home etc.
- 2.13 Flourish note that in 2022/23 the most successful peaks related to paid campaigns including Snapchat advertising to promote Under 22 travel (with a reach of 36,000 and 4000 actual views) and Instagram/Facebook. These platforms not only targeted the younger population (22 and under), but also over 65s were identified as an engaged group as well as the parent groups of 40 and over.

- 2.14 Flourish Marketing Ltd are currently working with Tactran to conduct a review of target audiences versus social mediums through a “Messaging Matrix”. This will be undertaken to identify an audience review and establish which platforms should be prioritised with campaigns, in order to plan both location and more effective subject-specific messaging in 2023/24.
- 2.15 If more ambitious behaviour change targeted campaigns are desired, this would require a multi-faceted approach to promotions on many media platforms, similar to that conducted by the Scottish Government with the “Choose Another Way” campaign and require a more significant budget.
- 2.16 Appendix A provides some key highlights from Flourish’s Annual Report.

## **Consultations**

### Fife and Tay Cities Timetable Consultation

- 2.17 On 11 September 2023 ScotRail published [consultation on proposed new timetables for Fife and Tay Cities](#) that includes services on the Levenmouth rail link to new stations at Cameron Bridge and Leven. Responses to the consultation were to be submitted to ScotRail by 23 October 2023.
- 2.18 Tactran received a ScotRail Service Update presentation from ScotRail’s Business Development Executive at its Partnership meeting on 12 September 2023. This presentation included an overview of the Fife and Tay Cities Timetable consultation and the Partnership delegated authority to the Executive Committee to respond.
- 2.19 The reopening of the Levenmouth rail link will provide the area with a major boost to economic sustainability and connectivity. It will deliver opportunities for local people, unlocking access to education, culture, entertainment, and employment options, as well attracting new business and investment.
- 2.20 The planned timetable will be introduced in 2025 once the necessary steps required to ensure there are enough resources have been undertaken by ScotRail and Network Rail. When the Levenmouth rail link opens in late spring / early summer 2024, ScotRail will introduce one of two interim timetables that will deliver many of the benefits of the planned timetable.
- 2.21 This phased approach aims to ensure that a reliable train service is operated across all of Fife and into Tay Cities when the line reopens, which is essential in making rail an attractive mode of transport and ensuring that the new stations at Leven and Cameron Bridge are a success.

- 2.22 The planned 2025 timetable will remove local calls between Kirkcaldy and Edinburgh from the Dundee to Edinburgh service, reducing journey times on the Dundee – Edinburgh service. In terms of the two interim options:
- Option A has no impact on journeys to and from the Tay Cities area.
  - Option B includes the removal of local calls between Kirkcaldy and Edinburgh from the Dundee to Edinburgh service, reducing journey times between the two cities.
- 2.23 Tactran’s response welcomes the planned 2025 timetable and is supportive of Interim Timetable Option B with the proposed reduction in journey times between Edinburgh and Dundee up to 2025, as this will bring forward the wider benefits of the scheme, including to the Tactran area, at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.24 Tactran’s response to the consultation, as detailed in Appendix B, was considered and approved by the Executive Committee and submitted to ScotRail by the deadline of 23 October 2023.

### **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/23/04, Tactran ENABLE MaaS Programme, 14 March 2023

Report to Partnership RTP/23/14, 2023/24 Budget and Monitoring, 13 June 2023

Report to Executive Committee RTP/23/16 Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods: Planning Guidance – draft for Consultation, 26 June 2023.

### **Key highlights from Flourish Marketing Limited Annual Report**

In 2022/23, there has been strong growth across the board for both Tactran and Get On The Go channels with increases in reach, engagement and followers month on month. There was a slight lull in activity across all channels in July, which is to be expected as people go on holiday and generally spend less time online during the Summer months.

A key highlight has also been the growth in stakeholder relationships, as these have built and there is a markable positive increase in stakeholders engaging and bringing content forward.

#### **Tactran**

Linkedin - We have seen positive growth on this channel, which was a blank slate when Flourish first took over posting. Since then we have been sure to push content that is specifically catered to stakeholders. Average engagement rate for this channel is now at around 8.76%, far surpassing the industry benchmark of 3.16%. We have also seen a healthy growth in follower count, growing by 69% since October 2023.

Twitter - For both Tactran and Get On The Go, Twitter continues to perform on a lower level. Whilst we do still gather some reach, this does not come close to that of LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. It may be worthwhile to consider putting these channels under review for now as time and budget could be spent on increasing paid activity or activity elsewhere.

#### **Get On The Go**

Facebook & Instagram - We made an active effort to ensure that content on these channels represented a balance of campaign and event activity for all Tactran regions by taking time each month with local councils and keeping in contact with stakeholders. There has been a positive uptake in activity across both of these channels. It has been great to see engagement growing in the form of comments and shares as people begin to use these pages as an online hub for learning about local activity. Instagram engagement has been very steady since the channel was launched in February 2023.

Twitter - Comments as above applies here also.

Paid Campaigns - Get On The Go's first snapchat ad campaign was a success in capturing a younger audience - with nearly 1,500 13-17 year olds swiping up to find out more about their free bus pass, this was accompanied with a parent targeted Meta campaign that pulled in some positive engagement and shares. Budget was also put behind the launch of our Instagram channel, this quickly saw the channel grow from 0 to 380 followers in a matter of weeks. Budget remains for paid ads whereby we hope to see further uplift in followers.

**Fife and Tay Cities Scotrail Timetable Consultation**

**ScotRail Consultation**

**Tactran Response**

Dear Sir / Madam,

**ScotRail's Fife and Tay Cities Scotrail Timetable Consultation**

Tactran welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on ScotRail's Fife and Tay Cities Scotrail Timetable Consultation.

The Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran) notes that the proposed interim timetables for 2024 would either provide a half-hourly weekday service with all trains running to and from Edinburgh via Dunfermline and no direct links with Kirkcaldy (Option A) or an hourly service via Kirkcaldy with no direct trains via Dunfermline (Option B). From 2025 there would be a half-hourly weekday service alternately via Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline. In all cases there would be an hourly late evening and Sunday service.

Tactran notes the planned timetable changes in 2025 which will fully realise the wider benefits of the Levenmouth Rail Link including for the Tactran area. The proposals will capitalise on the improved connectivity to and from Edinburgh from 2025 onwards and, as such the 2025 timetable will increase the opportunities for local people within the region as it unlocks access to education and employment opportunities in Edinburgh's identified Growth Areas, and also attract inward investment in the Tactran region.

Tactran is therefore supportive of Interim Timetable Option B with the proposed reduction in journey times between Edinburgh and Dundee up to 2025, as this will bring forward the wider benefits of the scheme, including to the Tactran area, at the earliest opportunity.