

A New Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy 2024 – 2034

Summary of consultation on the Draft Regional Transport Strategy

20 February 2024

Responses to the consultation on the Draft Regional Transport Strategy 2024 - 2034

In preparing a new Tayside and Central Scotland we previously sought views on the main issues that should shape the strategy.

In 2022, we sought views on the draft objectives and outcomes and the scale of change required, and what this will mean for individuals and businesses across the region.

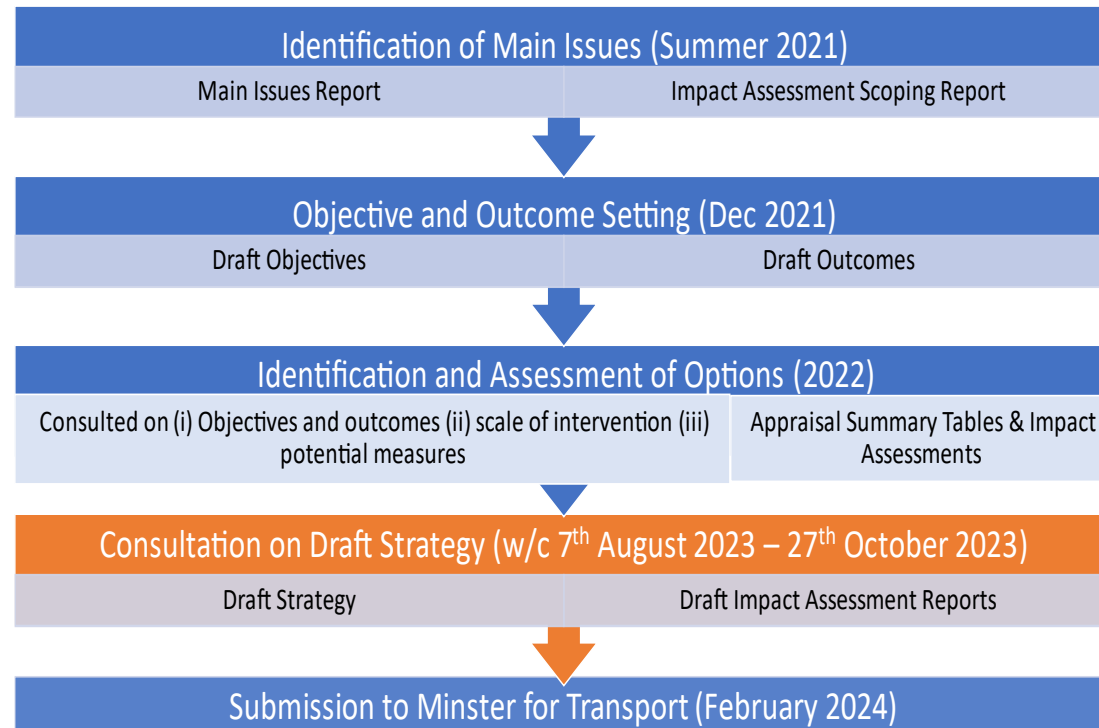
We also asked your opinion to the extent to which individual measures can help deliver the objectives and outcomes, and address the issues identified.

From 7th August to 27th October 2023, we sought views on the Draft Regional Transport Strategy and complementary Impact Assessments. Although discussion with, and responses from, organisations continued to be submitted up to 16th November 2023.

Responses were gained from:

- 13 officer groups (representing over 30 organisations); 20+ questionnaire and written responses
- 1069 individuals involved in a Quantitative Public Opinion Research
- 21 questionnaire responses / 19 people via social media / 17 responses to Courier article. The Blairgowrie Advertiser also published details of the consultation.

Stakeholder organisations participating included:



Angus, Dundee and Stirling Community Planning Partnerships / Tay Cities Region Deal Management Group & Heads of Economic Development / HITRANs / Scotrail and Network Rail / SPT / Tay Cities Tourism Officers / Active Travel Partners (Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, Paths for All, Living Streets) / Nestrans / SEstrans / PKC transport and Planning Officers Group / Community Transport Association / NHS Forth Valley / TayCities Bus Alliance.

A. The challenge and the level of ambition

Following both the main issues and option consultation in summer 2021 and autumn 2022 respectively, the Partnership approved on 13 June 2023 a draft Regional Transport Strategy and complementary Impact Assessments for consultation.

Stakeholder organisations were well supportive of the challenges as presented while raising the below questions:

- The strategy does not sufficiently reflect#:
- Causes and consequences of car dependency in rural areas
- Tourism issues
- Road safety issues
- Community and climate resilience
- The aging population and the long-term consequences of this on transport and travel
- The accessibility gap for people with disabilities
- The scale of the climate change problem
- The issues relating to carers
- Safety and security for young people
- Whether rail networks had the capacity to enable a modal shift
- Is there sufficient emphasis on connectivity to Edinburgh and Glasgow by rail?
- Do the targets sufficiently drive progress towards reducing inequalities?
- Should there be additional targets in relation to freight modal transfer and resilience?

The Quantitative Public Opinion Research sought views from a representative sample of the population and indicated that all four strategic objectives received strong support. While supporting climate change is the most important issue quoted within

written responses, improving health and wellbeing is the strongest supported strategic objective within the Public Opinion Survey.

Public questionnaire responses: Respondents to the public online questionnaire tended to agree that the challenges have been correctly identified and agreed with the objectives, outcomes and targets.

Nonetheless, the following suggestions were made:

- **Tourism** issues, especially in relation to the National Parks, had been ignored
- **Inclusive travel** for older and disabled people could be addressed more explicitly
- **Climate change targets:** Some respondents questioned whether it was ambitious enough to refer to the Scottish national targets
- **Deliverability and political will:** whilst the ambition may have been welcomed, questions were raised around the ability and political will to deliver

Social Media: Comments received via social media echoed the public responses to the questionnaire.

B. The scale of change required

A focus of the engagement was to understand the potential implications on individuals, businesses, and stakeholder organisations of the scale of the change required. Overall, the public agreed with the overall approach to pursue significant change, including:

- **Integrated solutions:** Respondents welcomed how consideration of the whole journey will reduce car dependency
- **Exploring new models of bus provision:** Respondents welcomed considerations of local authorities to run their own bus services
- **Liveable / 20minute neighbourhoods:** The concept of local living was welcomed by most respondents.

However, the following concerns were raised:

- Political will and weight of the regional transport strategy. Respondents asked if it will “actually happen”. Respondents observed that “action depends on political will. If this is not present, then delivery is unlikely.” They asked whether “Tactran have any authority to insist on the changes required” and whether “the Council[s] have any funds to ensure the required changes are made?” Respondents remained sceptical as to whether there is “really any prospect of partnership working between the various councils?” and asked how Tactran will “ensure the necessary political will is put behind the aims and objectives listed in the document” and “how will [Tactran] ensure that the necessary investments are made and the unnecessary investments discouraged?”
- Charging mechanisms to discourage car use: respondents highlighted that, for some, charges would make it difficult for some to continue to participate in society.
- Electric Vehicles Respondents also pointed out that current models for EV ownership are not working for households in the lowest income brackets.
- Liveable / 20minute neighbourhoods: A small minority were of the opinion that the concept involved the restriction of free movement.
- Role of Scottish Government: Respondents noted that there was a role for Scottish Government and Transport Scotland where a national approach to particular programmes could be more effective and efficient

Social media: The above points were echoed by the comments on social media.

There was support for the strategic policy direction established in the document by **stakeholder organisations** who commented on the below matters:

- Rural areas: The strategy underestimates the issues relating to rural areas and the difficulty in delivering change
- Finances: Can finances be allocated proportionality across geographies relative to addressing targets (e.g. most km in rural areas / most air quality and health problems in urban areas)
- Co-ordination and responsibilities: While some argued that more finances were necessary, others argued co-ordinating and prioritising spend on identified priorities could go a long way. The need and the difficulties (reinforced by experience) of ensuring all relevant agencies (especially the four councils and the RTP) work together and pull in the same direction was mentioned. AS was the need to co-ordinate traffic restraint measures.

The strategy requires long term commitment (and hence ownership) if it is to be delivered and its objectives achieved. Responses reflected on the inability of Tactran to enforce any of the strategy and recommended to strengthen ability to ensure delivery. There were some suggestions, although not from partner agencies, for Tactran to assume the role of a passenger transport authority.

Bus operators were content to explore, with the partnership, new models of service provision.

- Demand management: Use of restrictive measures on car use are risky. No response suggested that road user charging was wrong, but all highlighted the difficulties and hence the conditions that would need to be in place for it to work.
- Support for integrated solutions
- Lack of trust in delivery unless the reader can see how actions relate to their geography e.g. Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park; Forth Valley etc.
- Useful to emphasise the relationship between (the resources for) improving public transport and charging for car use

A. The actions

The consultation gave public and stakeholders organisations the opportunity to comment on the implications of potential measures.

In principle, **stakeholder organisations** supported the actions. Comments included:

- Affordability of public transport not covered
- Minimum levels of public transport provision desired
- Greater role for community transport
 - Potential complementary functions for interchanges and rural bus operators for collection/drop off points and delivery of goods suggested
- Connectivity between transport modes is only covered in relation to interchange facilities rather than timetables etc

- Demand responsive services which require booking at least a day in advance, can only provide an option for some trips
- Make the connection between MaaS journey planning tools enabling and supporting new transport services to be provided
- Electric vehicles: Lack of confidence in sufficient charging infrastructure to enable the electric and low vehicle emission revolution
- Mixed response to the level on emphasis placed on cycling. Active travel agencies / groups feel that there is not enough emphasis. Others suggest there is too much expectation that people will start cycling
- Ensuring new development is accessible by modes other than the car was supported, although the adverse economic impacts of not allowing development in (especially rural) locations where there is not public transport were highlighted.
- Greater emphasis on rail freight desired
- Suggestions that pinch points on the trunk road network should be addressed through a modal shift
- Behaviour change campaigns were supported by some, while others suggest that change will come from improved alternatives
- Greater emphasis on network resilience desired
- Impact of national networks on local communities
- Promoting air travel is questioned as it is contrary to some objectives
- Liveable / 20min neighbourhoods should apply to all areas
- Noted that Park and Ride is currently limited in some areas across the region
- If parking restrictions are to be used to encourage a modal shift, they need to cover areas which would prevent the driver from just parking an additional couple of hundred metres away

Many responding stakeholders desired further detail on the actions they commented on.

Public questionnaire responses: largely supported the potential measures. Comments included:

- Public transport and buses. Respondents noted that reliable and high-quality public transport connections, particular buses, across the region is key for social inclusion and modal shift. Including:
 - The affordability of public transport was highlighted as a key barrier that needs to be addressed
 - Integrated service timetabling
 - Information
 - More welcoming interchange facilities
- Behaviour change: It was suggested that people will respond to supportive and voluntary policies while restrictive measures, such as road user charging, will fail.
- Demand management: Doubts were raised in relation to actions which restricted car use

Social Media: Comments received via social media echoed the public responses to the questionnaire.

The **public opinion survey** further elaborated on the attitudes of the public towards climate change and the willingness to change travel and the adequacy of transport provision and travel alternatives. If there were safe, affordable and convenient alternatives, to combat climate change, instead of using the car people are 'much more' / 'more' likely to:

- Travel to facilities closer to home (29%)
- Get the bus (20%)
- Get the train (20%)
- Walk more (18%)
- Cycle (10%)

It should be noted that 74% said that irrespective of safe and convenient facilities, they would not be encouraged to cycle instead of using the car. People agreed, however, that resources should be directed to:

- those locations / trips where the most car km is driven 72% (5% disagreed)

- assist the more vulnerable / most in need in society to access jobs / training and services 88% (0% disagreed).

Considering the charging mechanisms to discourage car use and the use of any respective income

- 96% of respondents agree (with 62% strongly agreeing) that measures should recognise that some people need to travel, specifically in rural areas when the only way to access facilities is by car.
- 95% of respondents agree (with 72% strongly agreeing) that measures should not increase the cost of travel (specifically for those who can least afford it).
- 93% of respondents agree money should be directed at alternatives (e.g. buses and trains). There was stronger support that income used to address air quality (90%) rather than reducing car km (77%).
- 88% of respondents agree there should be co-ordination across regions and/or country to ensure consistency in approach / measures.

Considering electric vehicles, 34% of the least affluent do not know where they would charge an electric car (average 21%)

88% of respondents say electric car clubs would not change the number of cars in the household.

Next steps

This note summarised the public and stakeholder responses to the third phase of engagement to help inform a new Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy. Further details of this engagement can be found in the meetings page (12 December 2023) of the Tactran website [A New Regional Transport Strategy](#)

The summary of the responses to the first phase of engagement, on what are the key issues the strategy needs to support, can be found on the Regional Transport Strategy page of the Tactran website [Regional Transport Strategy Update Note January 2022.](#)

The summary of the responses to the second phase of engagement, on the conversation about changing how we travel, can be found on the Regional Transport Strategy page of the Tactran website [Summary of the Second Phase of Engagement 'A conversation about changing how we travel Update Note: February 2023'](#).

All responses have been considered by the Partnership to prepare a final draft RTS 2024 – 2034.

The Tactran Board approved to submit the Final Draft of the RTS 2024 - 2034 to the Minister for Transport for their approval.

It is intended to publish the approved strategy in Spring 2024.