

## TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

11 JUNE 2024

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Purpose

This report asks the Partnership to note: updates on Hydrogen initiatives and Stirling Local Rail Development Fund (LRDF) study and information on Audit Scotland's audit on progress towards reducing car use. The Partnership is also asked to approve a proposed response to HITRANS' Draft Regional Transport Strategy and note officer responses to Stirling Council LDP Guidance on Sustainable Transport and Access for New Developments and LDP3 Call for Evidence.

Summary

Updates and information are provided on Tactran Hydrogen initiatives, Stirling LRDF and Audit Scotland's audit on reducing car use. A response to Hitrans' Draft Regional Transport Strategy consultation is provided, as are officer responses to two Stirling Council LDP consultations.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 That the Partnership:

- (i) notes updates on Hydrogen initiatives and Stirling Local Rail Development Study and information on Audit Scotland's audit on progress towards reducing car use;
- (ii) considers and approves the proposed response to HITRANS' Draft Regional Transport Strategy, as provided in Appendix A; and
- (iii) notes Tactran officer responses to Stirling Council's Consultation on Local Development Plan Guidance on Sustainable Transport and Access for New Development and Stirling Council's LDP3 Evidence Report Consultation as provided in Appendices B and C.

**2 DISCUSSION****Hydrogen initiatives**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that Tactran has been coordinating a regional assessment of the potential demand for hydrogen and its transport applications for fleets across the region. With changes to the funding landscape, the project had to respond in a range of ways. Tactran has recognised the need to bring hydrogen knowledge into a centralised space, to capture the breadth of existing and new hydrogen learning and help others to build upon it to support the transition to net zero carbon transport.

- 2.2 The Partnership will continue to build collaborations with partner organisations to source new contributors to the (regional) network. The ultimate aim of this approach is to gradually turn the Tactran and Tayside Hydrogen Project into a (regional) network to bring together expertise, to encourage its members to share knowledge for the benefit of each other, help each other to build upon it to collectively draw down funding to develop hydrogen and, turn Tactran into a knowledge intensive organisation.
- 2.3 Officers have engaged with Heriot-Watt University on their research into a strategic hydrogen refuelling network for HGVs in Scotland; Dundee University on their research on the scalability of green hydrogen on small rural projects and Strathclyde University on their assessment of the evidence base for hydrogen policy in Scotland.
- 2.4 A next meeting of the Project Group will be scheduled over the summer months.

### **Stirling Local Rail Development Fund Study**

- 2.5 Tactran were awarded funding from Transport Scotland's Local Rail Development Fund (LRDF) to undertake three studies (Stirling; Bridge of Earn; and Tay Cities) to consider all options, with particular focus on rail solutions, that could help address strategic connectivity issues.
- 2.6 The Stirling study considered the potential of new rail based park and ride sites to:
- Improve access to further education, health services and employment opportunities for the residents of Plean, Cowie, Fallin, Bannockburn and Cornton;
  - Reduce car mode share in the south, south east and north of the Stirling City area;
  - Deliver public transport journey times from major new development sites to Glasgow/ Falkirk/ Edinburgh which are comparable with car journey times.
- 2.7 Stirling Council's Environment, Transport and NetZero Committee of 28 March 2024 considered the study's final report, supported the principle of a new rail station within the vicinity of Bannockburn and Cowie, and approved the submission of the study to Transport Scotland asking them to consider this option further in line with the pipeline process as set out in Transport Scotland's Rail Enhancements and Capital Investment Strategy.

### **Audit Scotland: Progress towards reducing car use**

- 2.8 Audit Scotland is currently completing an audit that considers the progress the Scottish Government and councils are making in delivering the target to reduce car use. The audit aims to answer the following questions:

1. How well do national and local government work together to achieve a reduction in car use?
  2. Is it clear how much funding the Scottish Government and other national and local bodies are spending on reducing car use and how that is being targeted?
  3. What progress have the Scottish Government and councils made in reducing car use and what are the challenges?
- 2.9 Tactran is one of the sample public bodies selected by Audit Scotland. A series of interviews both with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Tactran were conducted in May and Officers were also interviewed.
- 2.10 The work will be carried out throughout 2024 and the audit report will be published in early 2025.

### **Consultations**

#### HITRANS Draft Regional Transport Strategy Consultation

- 2.11 The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) is currently consulting on their [Draft Regional Transport Strategy](#). With comparable issues pertinent to both regions, Tactran will work with HITRANS on the actions that necessitate an interregional approach and will support HITRANS in relation to measures that will facilitate increased rail service frequency, particularly between Inverness and Edinburgh and Glasgow, and measures that will prepare the network for the impact of extreme weather events and increase the resilience of the rail network to the impacts of these events.
- 2.12 Tactran will also offer support and work collaborative with HITRANS to address issues that present operational challenges on the strategic road network that impact on the efficiency and reliability of the strategic corridors, including the A9, A82 and A85.
- 2.13 Much of rural Scotland continues to rely on supported local bus services, and communities within the Tactran region are dealing with the reduction and demise of many routes in their areas. Tactran agrees with HITRANS that the national funding schemes for local bus services in Scotland tend to favour urban areas and areas operating with commercial services. As such, Tactran welcomes that HITRANS will continue to articulate the need for dedicated national funding streams for rural transport.
- 2.14 The consultation on the Draft HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy closes on 14 June 2024. Tactran's proposed response is attached as Appendix A, which the Board is asked to consider and approve.

### Stirling Council Local Development Plan Guidance on Sustainable Transport and Access for New Development

- 2.15 Stirling Council consulted on changes to the Sustainable Transport and Access for New Development Planning Guidance (February 2024). The consultation closed on 21 May 2024.
- 2.16 Officers submitted a consultation response, highlighting the requirement for Councils to perform their functions as they relate to transport consistently with the respective Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).
- 2.17 The Local Development Plan is to support delivery of NPF4 policies in the local context. It subsequently provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for sustainable development. The requirements detailed in the planning policy guidance, subsequently, also should be intended to aid implementation of NPF4 and support delivery of the Development Plan for Stirling.
- 2.18 Officers felt that the Draft Planning Guidance did not provide the required detail that (at the least) states the minimum expected requirements of a development. It merely repeated the relevant NPF4 policy framework without providing local guidance to provide for sustainable access and accessibility of developments at a local level. As such, it was considered that the Draft Guidance was not specific enough to allow for a local interpretation of NPF4 and officers recommended that it should be clearer in specifying the exact transport requirements needed for the requirements for new development in Stirling.
- 2.19 Tactran further noted that the guidance on walking, wheeling and cycling, only addressed cycling, even though access to and from the closest public transport interchange by walking and wheeling was essential if a development site was to be classed as fully accessible by modes other than the private motor vehicle.
- 2.20 A copy of the Tactran officer response is provided for information at Appendix B, which the Partnership is asked to note.

### Stirling Council Local Development Plan 3: Evidence Report Consultation

- 2.21 [The Scottish Government's Local Development Planning Guidance](#) notes that stakeholders expected to inform the preparation of LDP Evidence Reports include Regional Transport Partnerships.
- 2.22 Tactran provided an officer response in May 2023 to the consultation on Stirling Council's Participation Statement in relation to the scope of the evidence base for their Third Local Development Plan.

- 2.23 The scope of the evidence report seeks evidence only in relation to sustainable travel and active travel. In doing so it risks failing to understand the baseline and forecast issues relating to greenhouse emissions, accessibility to services, and impact of traffic and accessibility on economy, tourism and town centres, and hence the potential implications of new development on these issues. Appendix C includes the response to Question 2 and Question 3 of the respective Engage Stirling survey, which the Partnership is asked to note.
- 2.24 It is also worthwhile noting that Tactran officers were approached by Angus Council to help inform the development of the evidence base for their Third Local Development Plan. Officers provided a scoping note setting out the evidence bases which could be useful in preparing an Evidence Report.

### **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**

For further information email [markspeed@tactran.gov.uk](mailto:markspeed@tactran.gov.uk) or tel. 07919 698611

### **NOTE**

No 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 this Report.

**HITRANS DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY****Tactran's Response**

Tactran welcomes the opportunity to comment on HITRANS' Draft Regional Transport Strategy.

Tactran is looking forward to working with HITRANS on those strategic actions that are regionally significant and will address the issues intrinsic to both the HITRANS and Tactran regions.

Much of rural Scotland continues to rely on supported local bus services, and communities within the Tactran region are dealing with the reduction and demise of many routes in their areas. Tactran agrees that the national funding schemes for local bus services in Scotland tend to favour urban areas and areas operating with commercial services. As such, Tactran welcomes HITRANS continuing to will continue to articulate the need for dedicated national funding streams for rural transport.

Tactran agrees that the resilience of the rail network from climate change poses a significant challenge that needs to be addressed and will continue to offer support in this matter. There is a considerable opportunity for rail to address many of the transport challenges in the Tactran region. Tactran further supports measures that will facilitate increased rail service frequency, particularly between Inverness and Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow and, supports the commitment to electrify the Highland Mainline.

In addition to the strategic rail corridors, Tactran's Regional Transport Strategy also identifies a number of strategic road corridors, including the A9, A82 and A85. These routes are the key long-distance corridors, connecting regional economies and carry significant levels of freight and goods. Collaborative working between the local, regional and national stakeholders is required to address pinch points that present operational challenges that impact on the efficiency and reliability of these strategic corridors in both the HITRANS and Tactran regions. Tactran will accordingly support HITRANS in this matter.

Tactran notes that HITRANS refers to issues around tourism at locations of outstanding natural beauty and subsequent high seasonal demands impacting on the regional transport network. With the Cairngorms National Park being considered as a destination of national and international importance, Tactran believes that any actions to address such issues are regionally significant. As such we would recommend strengthening the required cooperation with the Cairngorms National Park Authority and are looking forward to working with both partners.

We look forward to further working with you on the interregional transport aspects in developing and implementing both SPT's and Tactran's Regional Transport Strategies.

**Stirling Council's Draft LDP Planning Guidance: Transport and Access for New Development**

**Tactran response (submitted online via the Engage Stirling Portal)**

Tactran welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Stirling Council's Draft Planning Guidance 'Sustainable Transport and Access to New Development'.

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the national spatial strategy for Scotland, incorporating spatial principles and national planning policy. The purpose of the Local Development Plan is to support delivery of NPF4 policies in the local context. It, subsequently, provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for sustainable development. The requirements detailed in the planning policy guidance, subsequently, also should be intended to aid implementation of NPF4 and support delivery of the Development Plan for Stirling.

The Planning Guidance is aimed at providing consistent guidance to developers with regards to transport and access requirements for new developments in Stirling.

It is a requirement for Councils to perform their functions as they relate to transport consistently with the respective Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The Draft Tayside and Central Scotland RTS has now been approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and will be adopted at the Tactran Board Meeting on 11 June 2024. It is worth noting that the RTS suggests that reducing the car dependency of new developments (Action1) may be achieved by the development management process "ensuring new development is realistically accessible by a range of modes". The purpose of this principle is not just that development is realistically accessible by more than just the car, but it also reflects - importantly for a council area like Stirling - that as it is unlikely that a rural development will be accessible by all modes, then there must be an emphasis on making it accessible by as many modes as realistically possible.

The Draft Planning Guidance as consulted on, unfortunately, does not provide the required detail that (at the least) states the minimum expected requirements of a development. It merely repeats the relevant NPF4 policy framework without providing local guidance that specifies the sustainable access and accessibility requirements of developments at a local level. Tactran, subsequently, feels that the Draft Guidance will not support the development management process to determine planning applications against the respective policies of NPF4 and to determine how these are expected to be applied at a local level.

Tactran further notes that the guidance on walking, wheeling and cycling, only addresses cycling. The ability – for people of all abilities - to walk or wheel to or from the closest public transport interchange is essential if a site is to be realistically accessed by most people by any other mode than the motor vehicle.

## Stirling Council's LDP3 Evidence Report Consultation

### Question 1:

In reference to the scope of the Evidence Report, do you generally agree with the prioritised policy areas / topics highlighted for focus in the preparation of the Evidence Report, considering that these components are likely to be significant components of LDP3?

**Tactran's response:** No.

### Question 2:

Please provide comments to explain your response.

**Tactran's response:** Development plans determine the location of new development and set the parameters for how the travel demands of developments are met. Development plans can also identify and protect sites for transport infrastructure.

Tactran, subsequently, objects to the approach that has been outlined in relation to the preparation of the Evidence Base for Stirling's Third Local Development Plan, as it omits key questions which the evidence base should seek to answer to inform a comprehensive policy approach towards the location of development and addressing the travel demands of development through a:

1. Thorough understanding of problems, opportunities, issues and constraints
2. Thorough understanding of the existing and potential capacity of the transport networks

A comprehensive review of a relevant data sources will provide the required intelligence that will help identify both the transport and travel implications of new development within Stirling.

Otherwise, Stirling Council's Third Local Development Plan risks not fully understanding the transport and accessibility impacts of its proposals.

Tactran can provide a comprehensive list of relevant data sources to help inform the evidence base, including datasets relating to active travel, and can help scoping the transport and access data requirements. We can email a scope outwith this survey format to [ldp@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@stirling.gov.uk).



### Question 3:

Please use the boxes below to share any comments regarding the scope of the policy areas / topics.

#### **Tactran's response:**

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact of new development on climate change without knowing the baseline and forecast implications of existing and new transport (specifically impact of traffic on greenhouse gas emissions) e.g. existing and forecast traffic levels and ULEV adoption.

Biodiversity and Nature: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on biodiversity and nature without knowing the baseline data in relation car ownership or the current capacity of the road network.

Sustainable Transport - Active Travel and Public Transport: The Evidence Report seeks data on sustainable transport modes. The ability of sustainable travel to meet the travel demands of development will be informed by distance travelled by mode share; proportion of people who walk, cycle or use public transport regularly; location of services (employment, education, healthcare, retail etc) and the ability to access these services by public transport (i.e. frequency and timing of public transport); the origins of the workforce and the destination of the working age population, and the average travel times to work.

In addition, the ability to meet the travel demands of development by sustainable modes will be informed by the barriers that people face to using sustainable travel such as cost; physical ability (e.g. disabilities); safety and security. .

Local Living: As noted above in relation to sustainable travel, but also risks to the viability of communities such as risk of transport poverty.

Quality Homes: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on quality homes without knowing the baseline data in relation to (traffic related) noise levels (see Scotland's Noise Mapping), air quality – although it is worth noting that there are currently no declared AQMAs in Stirling - and accident statistics.

Community Infrastructure and Services: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on community infrastructure and services without knowing the baseline data in relation to, for example, existence of and ability access to services for all in the community.

Play, Sport and Recreation: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on play, sport and recreation without knowing the baseline data, e.g. in relation the walking distance to the nearest usable green or blue space.

City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on centres without knowing the baseline data in relation to, for example, traffic levels (including congestion and journey times), wider connectivity and origins and destinations of the relevant travel to work areas.

Business and Industry: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on business and industry without knowing the baseline data in relation to, for example, traffic levels (including congestion and journey times), wider connectivity and origins and destinations of the relevant travel to work areas as well as average travel to work times.

Tourism and Culture: Difficult to understand the scale of the problem and the potential impact new development can have on tourism and culture without knowing the baseline data in relation to traffic levels (including congestion and journey times), wider connectivity and origins and destinations of the relevant travel to work areas, for example.