

**EMERGENCY POWERS – COVID-19**

**6<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

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**1 DECISION(S) REQUIRED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1.1 I recommend that approval is given to:**

- (a) the Council’s involvement in the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Group that has been established in response to the letter issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity (attached at Appendix 1); and**
- (b) the terms of reference for the operation of the group (attached at Appendix 2).**

**2 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

- 2.1 In a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020 (Appendix 1) informing all local authorities of the Scottish Government’s preparation of a national Transport Transition Plan to address transport issues expected as Covid-19 lockdown easing phases are implemented, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity acknowledged the particular pressures that will be experienced in the Edinburgh and Glasgow regions.
- 2.2 Accordingly, he asked that Transport Scotland engage directly with the local authorities in those city regions at an operational officer level; thereby providing a basis for the local authorities to collaborate in the preparation and implementation of appropriate measures.
- 2.3 In the Edinburgh City Region, it was considered that the already established City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board (TAB) comprising officer representatives of the six constituent local authorities, the regional transport partnership (SEStran), and Transport Scotland, would provide the most effective way of addressing these pressures on the regional transport network. In order to ensure sufficient focus the TAB has formed itself into a Regional Transport Transition Group, and has invited officer representatives of Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils onto the Group, as they fell within the SEStran grouping of local authorities.
- 2.4 The report seeks approval for the Council’s involvement in the group and of its terms of reference as set out in Appendix 2.

South East Scotland Regional Transport Transition Plan Group

- 2.5 The primary terms of reference for the Group are to focus on an increase in travel demand and capacity; and to identify associated regionally specific and cross cutting issues, challenges and opportunities. Resulting from that work will be a co-ordinated programme of prospective measures, including cost estimates, agreed by the Group as recommended for phased implementation. The Group is not a decision making body and is not able to commit any local authority either individually or collectively in terms of policy, implementation of measures, or spending. Any specific roads related measures will still require the agreement of the relevant Council as local roads authority.
- 2.6 Survey work, modelling and analysis is being conducted by Transport Scotland and, together with data held by SEStran and partner Councils, can provide a robust basis upon which to identify priority actions. The full range of possible interventions has yet to be established. In broad terms there will be a need for measures that seek to flatten the peak periods of demand for travel, and those which maximise the supply and attractiveness of public transport as well as the opportunities for safe other modes of travel (walking and cycling) to reduce reliance upon, and discourage increased use of, the private car. By way of a few examples, measures to flatten demand could include encouragement of continued high levels of home working, and the varying of workplace operating hours. Measures to maximise public transport and active travel could include more road space given over to bus lanes on arterial routes, more 'bus gates', and extensions to existing, or temporary additional, park and ride sites.
- 2.7 Engagement with operators of public transport in the region will be essential, and the well-established links to these operators can be readily used to ensure a collectively sound, focused and comprehensive approach. Meetings of the Group are being held on a weekly basis, with one of the first tasks being to agree a project plan of urgently required transport measures and interventions.
- 2.8 It is intended that the full range of measures developed by the Group will be reported to the City Region Deal Joint Committee at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 for approval. However, it is important to note that as the sequential phases of the easing of the lockdown are implemented, it is essential that measures are in place to address issues of increasing demand for public transport services which will be operating at reduced capacity; together with the risk of a substantial increase in private car usage. Of particular significance is the need for many measures to be in place prior to the reopening of schools from 11<sup>th</sup> August, and this has been strongly endorsed by the public transport operators in their ongoing liaison with the Group.
- 2.9 Having regard to this need for urgency, it is expected that each local authority will determine the level of any delegation to its officer representative on the Regional Transport Transition Group, as well as their own internal decision making and reporting procedures.
- 2.10 The provisions of the regional TTP will also be aligned with the principles set out in current and emerging national, regional, and local transport strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change, and to ensure that improvements to the transport system recognise and seek to reduce inequalities in access to employment, education/training, and services.
- 2.11 If the TTP is to be effective in supporting the region's economic recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions it is essential that operational

transport measures and interventions are prioritised and implemented quickly. Transport Scotland have advised that, where possible, they should be programmed for implementation over the next few weeks. This will therefore also require an ongoing communications strategy to inform and engage with communities, transport operators, and transport users.

### Terms of Reference

2.12 A copy of the draft terms of reference prepared by Transport Scotland for the purposes and operation of the TTP Group, and which were considered at the meeting of the Group on 10<sup>th</sup> June are attached to this report at Appendix 2. They are due for consideration and approval by the City Region Deal Executive Board on 18<sup>th</sup> June.

2.13 The Group is established as a vehicle for providing and sharing information and expertise, developing proposals and making recommendations. It is not a decision-making body and will not be able to commit partners collectively or individually in terms of policy and spending.

2.14 It will be for partners to determine the extent of authority to be delegated to their representatives and their own internal decision-making and reporting procedures. In the case of Scottish Borders Council, it is intended that officers will provide input into the group but that decisions on interventions identified within regional TTP that affect the Scottish Borders will be reported to members.

## **3 IMPLICATIONS**

### **3.1 Financial**

- (a) There are no immediate financial implications in approving this report and Officer involvement will be accommodated within existing budgets.
- (b) There is no specifically allocated finance for the preparation or implementation of the TTP, although there are current funding streams within Transport Scotland that could be regarded as potential sources. Councils and partner organisations will also need to consider how best to use existing operational budgets, including the potential pooling of finance.

### **3.2 Risk & Mitigations**

If the TTP fails to address adequately the transport challenges posed by the impacts of the Covid-19 restrictions it will impair the ability of the national, regional and local economies to recover, with a particular impact on our more disadvantaged communities.

### **3.3 Equalities**

In the preparation of the National TTP as well as any contributory regional strategies, regard will need to be had to the statutory requirements of the equalities legislation, as well as such plans being demonstrable in their attention to the needs of those within the protected characteristics categories.

## **4 CONSULTATION**

4.1.1 The following officers were consulted and their comments incorporated into the report:

- Graeme Johnstone – Lead Officer Transport & Access
- Gordon Grant – Team Leader Transport Services

- Brian Young – Infrastructure Manager

The Convener, the Leader of the Administration and the Leader of the Opposition are being consulted and any questions will be responded to by relevant Officers and any comments received will be considered by the Chief Executive in arriving at her decision.

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Ian Aikman	Chief Planning & Housing Officer

**APPROVED:**

Executive Director: David Robertson Date: 17 July 2020

Having consulted -

Leader of the Administration: Cllr Shona Haslam Date: 6 July 2020

Convener: Cllr David Parker Date: 6 July 2020

Leader of the Opposition: Cllr Stuart Bell Date: 6 July 2020