

**South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership
Strategic Action Group on Transport (SAGT)
15 November 2023, 10:00 - 12:00 (via Microsoft Teams)**

DRAFT ACTION NOTE (for approval at next meeting)

Item No.	Item
1.	<p>WELCOME</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to this inaugural SAGT meeting and invited a roundtable of introductions.</p> <p>Apologies: <i>Alan Glasgow (REP Housing); Elaine Thornton-Nicol, Jeff Ace (NHS); Karen Birch (REP).</i></p>
2.	<p>DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE – FOR AGREEMENT</p> <p>The Group approved its Terms of Reference (TOR), with a minor amendment to emphasise (at 3.1) that the Group would ensure it did not duplicate work or discussion being taken forward elsewhere. Its aim was to add value to current structures and to bring constructive challenge where appropriate.</p> <p>WAYS OF WORKING</p> <p>The Group explored in more detail its ways of working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing arrangements <p>The Group agreed the proposed approach to chairing – rotating between the two Local Authorities, with Councillor Linehan taking the chair initially with a discussion to be had around which DGC councillor should take the chair at the appropriate time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership <p>The Group discussed membership and reflected that this would require further discussion as areas of focus were agreed. Members should go beyond REP members where necessary to bring in appropriate expertise and the TORs provided for that (at bullet 7 of 3.1).</p> <p>Other potential members suggested were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Scotland (TS) – recognising though that the Group would be seeking to influence TS it would be important to get the right person, but there was value in having them as part of the discussion; • Local Authority active travel officers; • SWestrans – important that SWestrans chief officer able to attend; • Other expertise might be required depending on themes and approaches – e.g. around data.

- User groups – it was suggested that it would be important to ensure user groups were involved in the work of the SAGT, with the DGC bus group (Laura Moodie) suggested as one key group that would have good perspectives.

Action – group to give further thought to shape of membership.

As this had been the first time for the Group to come together, it would be helpful to share contact details (including people's organisations) to support further discussion and conversation.

Action – REP secretariat to circulate share details of those attending (and those unable to make it).

- **Operating Principles**

While the proposed 8-weekly meeting schedule might be appropriate when fully established, the Group agreed that to maintain momentum, it was important to meet shortly after the festive break – with a meeting to be arranged in January.

Action – REP secretariat to find a date in January for next meeting.

Members of the Group would drive the work forward, it was recognised that officer support would be needed – with appropriate expertise drawn in.

The Group would return to a discussion about how it took forward its areas of focus, including the possibility of sub-groups or other ways of working. In the immediate term, there was value in the full group meeting to shape future focus and direction to make best use of breadth of expertise and views.

Action – group to give further thought to shape areas of focus and best approach to taking forward consideration of those themes.

The Group had a general, initial discussion about its **areas of focus** and agreed the three key priorities identified in the TOR:

- *Make the case for transport investment in the South;*
- *Ensure a data-led approach;*
- *Enable sustainable transport connectivity as a vital means to achieve economic and social prosperity in the South.*

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Agreed that the Group needed to reflect further on how it added value (in line with its remit) e.g. bringing a strategic focus;
- Recognition of the complexity of the policy landscape and officers would share the presentation giving an overview of transport issues that had been shared at summer briefing session;
- Importance to recognise unique nature of rural transport – use, opportunities and challenges – eloquent nature of challenge – 14 hours to travel across

region on public transport, challenges of “last mile” access to public transport routes. It was important to capture the economic benefit of rural transport, and building a viable system;

- Good to understand how other rural regions were tackling transport connectivity by making use of Group’s individual contacts – the set of Regional Transport Partnerships which could provide evidence and insight (including) HITRANS (Highlands and Islands), Nestrans (Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire) and ZetTrans (Shetland) – and also to make use of links with HIE and other Group members’ individual links. Recognised a need to look beyond Scotland, to other parts of UK and beyond;
- Important to explore communities’ role in provision of transport solutions – how to develop a proper partnership with public sector provision, ensuring that they were seen as real partners and to look at how community transport provision was funded;
- Potential to look at role for how community benefit from windfarms might support transport solutions – consider whether there was an opportunity for a rural transport fund;
- Need to be innovative in approaches, taking thinking further than current solutions – e.g. demand responsive transport – PINGO and dial a taxi bus were good examples of different ways of thinking about provision;
- Need to take account of different users’ needs e.g. young people and visitors to the region (recognising that what was good for residents also improved the offer for the visitor). VisitScotland (VS) would have survey information capturing the visitor transport experience;
- The Group should challenge where necessary:
 - e.g. the legislation that established the boundaries of RTPs was over 20 years old and might benefit from a refresh, although recognising that would take time. If agreed, how could current structures work as effectively as possible together;
 - Other Scottish Government legislation – the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 allowed local transport authorities to run their own bus services, franchise bus services or enter into bus improvement partnerships. Some work had been done to explore what this might mean and there was an opportunity for learning across the region;
- Need to be clear on outcomes for the Group and how to evaluate progress against achieving those outcomes;
- Evidence and data – important for the Group to understand what on offer, how it could be used (e.g. not just who was using a bus, but its route), and where there were gaps – using that data would be important to inform the case for investment and to shape future solutions. Partners had access to different sources of data – e.g. as part of the Edinburgh and SE Region Deal and as part of councils’ work e.g. SBC’s recent bus reviews and RTPs’ new regional

	<p>transport strategies. This kind of data would be valuable in strengthening our case – and to push beyond passenger numbers, return on investment and cost benefit ratios.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share presentation giving an overview of transport policy landscape by way of introductory guide (as well as note of summer’s briefing meeting and slides that had accompanied meeting discussion. • Members to reflect further on outcomes and ways of evaluating progress to inform a discussion at the next meeting. • All to identify data sources to take forward discussion on the data strand of the TOR .
3.	<p>FOCUS ON PRIORITY 1 - MAKE THE CASE FOR TRANSPORT INVESTMENT IN THE SOUTH.</p> <p>The Group recognised the need to return to how it would take forward its remit, informed by a brief overview of an approach to making the case for investment in the SOS, which highlighted things that could be explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towards a shared vision & what success looks like for transport connectivity in the South; • Target audience; • Consider intended outcomes; • Upcoming events & opportunities to influence; • Easy wins – collective influencing principles.
4.	<p>AOB</p> <p>There was nothing additional to raise.</p>