

Transport and Travel Statistical Advisory Committee minutes – 30th July 2015

Chair: Chris Newson (CN)

Secretary: Ben Collier (BC)

Attendees:

Kathy Johnston (KJ) – Transport Scotland
Charlie Lewis (CL) – Transport Scotland
Wojciech Hupert (WH) – Transport Scotland
Stephen Cragg (SC) – Transport Scotland
Fiona Docherty (FD) - Transport Scotland
Chris Campbell (CC) – Road Haulage Association
Neil Sturrock (NS) – Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Alan Rehfish (AR) – Scottish Parliament Information Centre
Paul White (PW) – Confederation for Passenger Transport
Derek Halden (DH) – Derek Halden Consultancy
David Connolly (DC) - SYSTRA
Alistair Short (AS) – SESTRANS
Tom Hart (TH) – Scottish Transport Studies Group
Robert Raeside (RR) – Transport Research Institute, Napier University

On conference call:

June Bowman (JB) – Department for Transport, UK Govt.
Matthew Tranter (MT) – Department for Transport, UK Govt.

Introductions

CN welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that he would be taking over the position of chair from Matt Perkins. Introductions were given around the table.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, were accepted by the group. CN ran through the action points carried over from the previous meeting. All actions were complete other than:

Action 2: Business trips. This is ongoing as part of broader work on the representativeness of the SHS travel diary.

Action 5: Similarly to be considered as part of the wider work on the travel diary.

Action 7: Accessibility stats. FD explained that these had not been developed as there was no internal need, however DH commented that this issue had been ongoing for 19 years, with England and Wales publishing far more data on this topic than Scotland (e.g. in WIMD). KJ noted the increased policy interest in rail connectivity. There was a general consensus around the table that this data would be very useful for planning and transport assessments. NS added that this data

would be useful in health policy for, e.g. locating new health centres. AS commented that there was a need for data for SESPLAN strategic development and PW mentioned accessible buses. CN noted that SIMD already includes some data on accessibility and DH and DC agreed that this could be a good starting point, but pointed out that this was based on a fairly old methodology.

DC commented that the development of new measures should be considered as well as expanding reporting on existing measures. NS noted the importance of this for analysis of integrated ticketing. DH noted the possibility of linking SIMD data more into other transport statistics provided by Transport Scotland. CN suggested that Transport Scotland put together a paper setting out existing sources of access data to see where the gaps were and this was agreed as an action point. JB agreed to put TS in touch with DfT contacts to help with accessibility data.

Action: TAS to put together a paper setting out existing sources of accessibility data for Scotland

Action 10: Road network distance – TS is working with IPSOS on this and will give more info after the publication of TATIS.

LATIS update

FD gave update on LATIS – Scottish Road Traffic Database in the process of being replaced by National Traffic Database, which will launch in August. There will be a lot of opportunities to develop this and it may evolve to incorporate other existing datasets. LATIS collects a lot of Ad Hoc data, which will ultimately be incorporated into the National Traffic Database. This data has for now been collated into a set of Google Fusion tables, access details for which have been included in the covering email which accompanies these minutes.

FD told the committee about LATIS' work with the urban big data centre in Glasgow. They have asked for TS data to put together a database and TS will be sharing this with them. This centre have been carrying out a Glasgow Household Survey which will be released at the end of the year, which includes an SHS-style social survey and travel diary as well as GPS trackers and automatic camera activity loggers which take a photo every 30 seconds. This will cover roughly 1,300 households, and 2 people within each of these where possible. SC noted that it would be an interesting comparator for the Scottish Household Survey travel diary.

FD finished this section by updating the committee on LATIS' work procuring mobile phone data. TS has been given access to a month's worth of data from an existing mobile phone database (data is from March 2015), which we will be getting access to in early August this year. This will be useful in validating LATIS. Data is not GPS, rather it is mast carrier signal records and provides outputs at intermediate zone level. Plans are to set up a 5 year database – this is early access and covers only road travel. SC noted that there may be issues of coverage in rural Scotland, where phone signal may vary – DC said that there was the potential for underreporting journeys in rural areas and SC noted a potential to underreport short trips and that distinguishing mode was difficult. DH added that in his experience a major source of error was in urban areas for, e.g., lorries which may make several stops, and

suggested Google's Location API as a possible avenue for exploration (though this is not available for commercial or governmental use). DH also offered to share his experience working with this kind of data. DC noted that info on goods traffic was very useful and suggested more in-depth Euroclass data be collected (e.g. age, emission profile of vehicles).

SHS update

BC gave an update on the TS project looking at producing annualised estimates of personal travel from the SHS travel diary. BC introduced this paper and explained that the project was undertaken following the discontinuation of the Scottish sample from the National Travel Survey (NTS). The SHS Travel Diary records around 30% fewer journeys per person than the NTS and various potential benchmarking strategies were outlined.

DC asked for clarification on processing of multi-stage journeys or "series of trips". A wider discussion followed regarding undercounting of journey types and MT warned against making the same assumption for undercounting for all journey purposes, suggesting further investigation into estimates of travel by journey purpose. MT suggested possible discussion over work ongoing in DfT around short journeys. DH expressed surprise that the results were so close to those in the NTS and welcomed further investigation.

CN welcomed further comments by e-mail and TS will consider how to progress and reply to users advising of proposed action.

Action: TAS to continue to develop these estimates using feedback from stakeholders with the aim of publishing them as data under development when a suitably rigorous methodology has been arrived at

BC referred to paper 4 containing proposed new questions and changes to questions for the 2016 SHS questionnaire.

DC questioned why the Green bus question was being included. KJ explained that the new green buses were proving to be popular in Edinburgh with increased patronage. It was unclear whether this was mainly due to them being new and cleaner buses. DH questioned whether people outwith the transport community would know what a Green Bus/Travel Plan actually was – do these "awareness" questions in the Scottish Household Survey actually test knowledge or simply test awareness of government policies?

The question relating to change in travel mode since the 2014 Commonwealth Games was felt to be of little value due to the time lapse since the event.

SC explained that the mobile phone question could potentially help understand the mobile phone location data better, as well as any gaps in coverage. DC suggested that the mobile phone question be worded "Do you normally carry your phone with you?" to capture people who may leave phone in car or at home.

TH commented that he had been experiencing difficulty accessing SHS data recently. CN stated that the data would be available soon on the UK data service, with 2012 data having recently been uploaded and work ongoing to make the 2013 data available. CN said that the on-line questionnaire change survey was open until 19th August and welcomed further comments at the following link:

<https://response.questback.com/scottishgovernment/iubecwlhug>

Action: TTSAC members to provide any suggestions for changes to the SHS questionnaire, with a final set of recommendations collated by TS, circulated to TTSAC members and published on the TS website shortly afterwards.

TATIS update

CN noted the upcoming publication of TATIS 2014 and informed the group of the publication date and time – 9.30 on the 26th August 2015. This year, TATIS will have a modernised look and include more charts and infographics. TAS are currently discussing acquiring historical road network data with the contractors and will be launching a consultation on the changes to TATIS (including the use of road network distance) after publication.

Action: TAS to circulate a stakeholder consultation on the changes to TATIS 2014 to TTSAC members online

Scottish Transport Statistics 2014

CN opened discussion with a call for feedback on the changes made to STS 2014, which included adding infographic summary sheets, replacing the fact card with a data browser tool and moving all notes to the back of the publication. SC noted that moving notes and methodology online could potentially make them harder to access. CN said that this might be a good way to save space but that we would need to increase signposting in the publication if we moved the notes online. RR suggested that as publication is Official Statistics, we ought to have clear links to notes as near to the data as possible to prevent misuse. DC argued that it was not efficient to publish the same set of notes every year and he would rather lose the notes than lose the hard copy altogether. SC said he mostly used the paper copy. DH said that he rarely if ever used the paper copy. TH suggested cutting the publication to 200 pages maximum by restructuring chapters and moving notes online. TH also suggested changing the structure to include a chapter on walking and cycling (supported by DC), while transferring chapters with little year-on-year change to be internet-only. DH suggested less emphasis on “modes”, bringing the freight sections together in one chapter, and more emphasis on people and freight. DH said that it was regrettable that the Personal and Cross-Modal chapter seemed to be shrinking rather than expanding. AR added that removing the notes made the publication more appealing to non-experts, who could ask an expert if they needed clarification on methodology.

CC said that he liked the infographics and found them useful, especially for members of the public and schools – AR said that they were useful for communicating with

MPs and asked if TS could do more work on presenting trends (RR added that trends displayed should have an indication of significance). SC and TH didn't make use of the infographics. SC said that he found the hard copy very useful for finding out if a data source existed for a given question, which DC agreed with. CN thanked the committee for their feedback and said that comments would be taken onboard ahead of the publication of STS 2015. He also outlined plans to consult users on changes to STS later in the year. CN also asked members to provide any further comments by email.

Action: TAS to keep TTSAC informed of progress on changes to STS

Action: TTSAC members to provide any further comments on STS to transtat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

TS research update

WH gave an outline of some of Transport Analytical Services' recent research projects.

AOB

BC gave a brief update on how to access data from the Scottish Census – links included below:

Data from the Census (safeguarded and some unsafeguarded tables) are published on the [UK Data Service](#) alongside [commuting flow data](#). Area profiles and further information and tables are available from the [Census website](#) and information on and links to the various types of census commuting flow data available can be found [here](#).