

NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY - CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT

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CHAPTER 1 – BACKGROUND

1. The 2004 Transport White Paper, *Scotland's Transport Future*, outlined a commitment to develop a National Transport Strategy (NTS) which would:

- Cover the medium to long term;
- Be strategic in nature, and provide a longer-term “direction of travel” for Scottish transport;
- Be based on widespread consultation;
- Cover all travellers and all modes; and
- Be supported by the Regional Transport Strategies.

2. Consultation has been integral to the overall development of the strategy and a number of different elements have formed part of the consultation process including:

- Pre-Consultation Stakeholder Events;
- Written Consultation;
- User Consultation; and
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation.
- An external reference group, including representation from local authorities, regional transport partnerships, transport operators, community transport and transport users was set up to oversee the consultation process for the NTS.

3. The development of the NTS has been broadly welcomed by stakeholders and the wider public. The NTS is considered to be of importance to the future direction and delivery of transport in Scotland and the consultation process followed by the Scottish Executive in the development of the NTS has been generally positively received by the stakeholder community and wider public. The overall transparency and comprehensive nature of the process were acknowledged for particular credit.

4. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the consultation process, highlighting the different stages and emerging themes and views which have in turn informed the development of the NTS. The following chapters provide further information on the different strands to the consultation process.

CHAPTER 2 - PRE-CONSULTATION STAKEHOLDER EVENTS

Introduction

1. In the early stages of the development of the NTS a series of pre-consultation stakeholder events were held to benefit from the expertise of the stakeholder community and gather information on the key issues. In summary, the events focused on:

- Various themes – the environment, economy, health etc;
- Other regions of Scotland – working with the regional transport partnerships (RTPs) to consider how the NTS should address regional issues and how the Regional Transport Strategies should address cross-RTP and national issues; and
- Individual modes of transport – sometimes using existing forums, for example the Scottish Rail Stakeholder Forum.

2. In total, eighteen events took place between August 2005 and April 2006, Table 1 provides a breakdown. In addition, two business breakfasts also took place in late April/early May, the outputs from which are represented within this summary report. The series of stakeholder consultation events concluded with a national Conference, *Scotland's National Transport Strategy Conference* which took place on 30 May 2006 in Dunblane which was an integral part of the overall consultation process.

Table 1: National Transport Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Programme

Themed Consultation	
Transport and Health	15 August 2005, Dunblane
Growing the Economy	5 September 2005, Clydebank
The Promotion and Delivery of Sustainable Transport	8 September 2005, Dundee
Rural Transport	9 September 2005, Inverness
Innovation and Research	14 September 2005, Edinburgh
Social Inclusion in Urban and Regeneration Areas	22 September 2005, Dundee
Business Breakfasts	27 April 2006, Glasgow & 3 May 2006, Aberdeen
Regional Consultation	
North East Scotland Regional Transport Partnership	30 June 2005, Aberdeen
Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership	25 August 2005, Nairn
West of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership & Strathclyde Passenger Transport (now Strathclyde Partnership for Transport)	29 August 2005, Glasgow
South East Scotland Regional Transport Partnership	12 September 2005, Edinburgh
Dumfries and Galloway Regional Transport Partnership	15 September 2005, Dumfries
Tayside and Central Regional Transport	17 February 2006, Perth

Partnership	
Mode Specific	
Walking and Cycling	7 September 2005, Glasgow
Rail (in conjunction with the Scottish Rail Strategy Stakeholder Forum)	19 October 2005, Edinburgh
Bus	28 October 2005, Glasgow
Ferries	2 November 2005, Oban
Roads	10 November 2005, Stirling
Powered two wheelers	21 February 2006, Edinburgh

3. In addition to the events detailed, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) also hosted a business lunch in Inverness and three smaller meetings in Argyll, the Western Isles and Orkney. These events were organised by HIE to provide an opportunity to focus specifically on key issues for the business community in the Highlands and Islands and their outputs contributed to the consultation process.

Methodology

4. The format adopted for most of the events detailed in Table 1 included a number of presentations to provide contextual information and also workshop sessions to provoke thought and discussion. In summary, the events sought to provide the opportunity for:

- The Scottish Executive to share information about the NTS process;
- Consultees to identify key issues for the NTS;
- Consultees to share information which might be useful in preparation of the NTS; and
- Consultees to consider how key issues might be addressed in the NTS.

Outputs

5. A report for each event was prepared to ensure key ideas and suggestions from the stakeholder community were fully captured and fed into the development of the NTS. Both the summary reports and presentations can be accessed on the NTS pages of the Scottish Executive website via the following link - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Transport/NTS/Events>. Hard copies of this material can be made available on request from transport@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or 0131 244 0611.

Overview

6. Our overview of the key issues arising from discussions with the stakeholder community during the pre-consultation process is based on the three strategic outcomes of the NTS:

- Improve journey times and connections;
- Reduce emissions; and
- Improve quality, accessibility and affordability.

Improve Journey Times and Connections

7. The inherent tension between the objectives of growing the economy and protecting the environment were acknowledged by many stakeholders. Stakeholders widely recognised the importance of continued economic growth but most recognised this must be seen in the wider context of *sustainable* economic growth.

8. Congestion was regarded as a particular problem, especially in terms of its impact on the reliability of journey times which was seen by some stakeholders to be more important than reducing actual journey times. Congestion issues were also considered problematic in relation to local air quality in towns and cities.

9. Improving connections to international markets with more direct routes to mainland Europe and improved links to Edinburgh and Glasgow airports were highlighted for consideration. There was mixed opinion regarding the Air Route Development Fund with the business community being fully supportive of further expansion while others, in particular the environmental community, viewed air travel to be unsustainable and that sector were of the opinion that it should not be endorsed on any grounds.

10. Demand management issues were also considered important by stakeholders and it was suggested that to work effectively demand management measures need to be packaged alongside other measures, such as improvements to public transport and behaviour change programmes.

11. The good record of road safety in Scotland was acknowledged by stakeholders, however it was stressed this should not allow for complacency with continuation of support and funding for initiatives across Scotland being considered important.

Reduce Emissions

12. Environmental issues, in particular carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and local air quality, were viewed by stakeholders to be of key importance for the NTS.

13. It was recognised that the dispersal of homes, work and leisure has served to result in people travelling more frequently and over longer distances giving rise to greater dependency on the private car. Improved integration between transport and land use planning was highlighted as a key issue for the NTS to consider, particularly in relation to CO₂ emissions. On this point it was also noted that transport issues need to be embedded into the decision making process and fully taken into account when decisions are being made in relation to the location of services. The centralisation of health services was provided as an example by some to illustrate the complications presented where decisions are taken in isolation of the associated transport implications.

14. Improved integration between transport and land use planning was also considered to be of importance in terms of encouraging travel by public transport, walking and cycling. Issues relating to personal safety, investment and maintenance of appropriate facilities and infrastructure, integration, reliability and availability of information were identified as key considerations for the NTS in terms of promoting modal shift.

15. In considering more sustainable modes there was also discussion by stakeholders of the “carrot and stick” approach. The role of smarter measures, that is interventions which seek to give better information and opportunities aimed at helping people to increase their travel options and reduce their dependence on the private car for some journeys, was discussed by stakeholders and considered to be of importance to changing travel behaviour with sustained support and investment critical to their success. It was however questioned whether people would change their behaviour voluntarily and on this basis it was suggested that such measures need to be packaged alongside demand management initiatives, such as road pricing, for maximum benefit to be realised.

16. Biofuels and new technologies were also discussed by stakeholders in relation to reducing emissions. It was felt by some that biofuels were of importance to reducing emissions in terms of increasing the range of options within the transport fuel mix, together with their wider benefits in terms of, for example, employment opportunities. Some stakeholders highlighted that together with their benefits the environmental impact of biofuels needs to be fully recognised with cultivation and land use practices having the potential to increase rather than reduce overall emissions. It was also noted by some that development of biofuels would not necessarily address the overriding issues of increased propensity to travel and greater dependency on the private car.

Improve Quality, Accessibility and Affordability

17. Improving the attractiveness and viability of alternatives to the private car was considered to be an important factor by stakeholders. Key points raised in this respect included personal safety, the provision of appropriate infrastructure and readily accessible information, cost of public transport relative to the private car and integration between different services and modes.

18. Alongside improvements to the transport system, the issue of improved access arose at a number of the consultation events and was recognised as a key priority for the NTS to address. Access to services and opportunities was considered a particular issue for rural and disadvantaged communities and certain sectors of the population, in particular the elderly and disabled. However, it was also stressed that access is an issue which can affect everyone, including those living within more urban communities and accordingly the NTS should adopt a broad focus in considering accessibility and look to improve access for all.

19. It was felt that a more integrated approach in the planning and delivery of services, not just in relation to transport but across all sectors, in particular health, education and social services was critical to improving access. In this respect improved joint working within and between sectors was advocated together with greater clarity in terms of what services are available, where responsibility lies for providing the different services and eligibility criteria in relation to their usage. On the last point note was also made of the limitations posed by the existing regulatory framework which was felt to be somewhat restrictive towards certain areas of the transport spectrum, particularly in relation to recent developments within the flexible transport market. A number of examples were provided by stakeholders to illustrate this point, including the exclusion of fully flexible transport services from the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) and provisions which do not permit social work vehicles to be used for education purposes and so forth. Addressing such issues was stressed as a key consideration for the NTS to take into account and act upon accordingly if transport provision is to be administered in a more efficient manner across all sectors.

20. In relation to the above point it was felt that the role of the community and the voluntary sector needs to be better valued in the spectrum of transport services available with greater recognition being given to the wide range of transport solutions available to tackling social exclusion. In discussing community transport there was widespread consensus amongst stakeholders of the need for greater support and continuity in contrast to the piecemeal approach of pilot projects and short-term funding which occurs at present.

21. The importance of lifeline services to support remote and fragile communities in the Highlands and Islands was also highlighted. In planning for Scotland's transport future it was felt the focus should not just centre on urban areas in the central belt but that due consideration and investment should be afforded to all areas of Scotland.

Summary

22. In summary, the series of stakeholder consultation events were well received with the opportunity to influence the development of the NTS so early in the overall process being particularly welcomed by stakeholders and viewed to provide added meaning to the consultation process as a whole. It may be that further value could have been obtained from the events organised, particularly those of a thematic nature, had there been greater representation of opposing views at the different events leading to more informed debate and discussion. For example, the inherent tension between economic growth and protection of the environment was recognised but the audience profile at the growing the economy event did not provide for a debate of this nature to take place.

CHAPTER 3 - WRITTEN CONSULTATION

Introduction

1. The NTS Consultation Paper was launched on 20 April 2006 for a 12 week public consultation which concluded on 13 July 2006. Over 600 copies of the consultation paper were distributed to a wide range of organisations and individuals with an interest in national transport policy. In addition, over 500 copies of a summary version of the consultation paper were also distributed.

2. In total 324 responses were received from a wide range of individuals and organisations with an interest in national transport policy. The Research Shop were commissioned to undertake an analysis of the responses received. The aims of the analysis were to interpret and analyse the comments contained in written responses to the consultation on Scotland's Transport Strategy, exploring the range and depth of views submitted.

Key Findings

3. A range of issues and themes were raised in the written consultation. The key findings are summarised below:

- There was much support for the vision, aims and high level objectives from Scotland's Transport Future to be repeated in the National Transport Strategy, as proposed in the consultation document.
- It was considered that the future balance of investment on transport should be shifted more in favour of the maintenance of existing transport infrastructure rather than funding new developments.
- A recurring theme was that closer integration of transport and land-use planning was required to address many transport problems.
- Whilst some respondents favoured improving international connections by air, others opposed this on environmental grounds. However, most agreed that it would be beneficial to the economy and the environment to improve cross-border rail links, and in particular, develop a faster Scotland to London rail service.
- Much support was expressed for Demand Responsive Transport although many respondents identified operational barriers as presenting the biggest hurdle for future expansion of these services.
- There was much support for the consideration of accessibility planning for local or regional transport strategies. Much support was also expressed for the production of travel plans by larger employers.
- The maintenance of lifeline air and ferry networks was seen as vital by many respondents.
- Many consultees considered that walking and cycling should receive a much higher profile within the final National Transport Strategy.
- It was considered that buses would be more attractive if more attention was paid to the quality of service provided and fares were more competitive. Calls were made for rail fare structures to be simplified.
- There was much support for the promotion of integrated ticketing between different transport operators.

- Around three-quarters of those who commented supported national and/or local road pricing. However, many stressed that high quality alternative transport options should be put in place first.
 - Respondents recommended the future promotion of the uptake of biofuels and called for these to be made more widely available at an affordable cost.
 - It was recommended that a robust evaluation framework should accompany the implementation of the National Transport Strategy which should be reviewed on a 4-yearly cycle.
4. The full report can be accessed via www.scotland.gov.uk/NTS/Analysiswrittenconsultation.

Summary

5. In summary the NTS consultation paper was broadly welcomed as an important step in the development of a National Transport Strategy for Scotland:

“The consultation paper on Scotland’s National Transport Strategy is an important and wide-ranging document which signals the likely direction of the first National Transport Strategy to be prepared for Scotland” (Local Authority)

“You are to be congratulated on the production of this draft NTS, which we see as a crucial move in the direction of an integrated, coherent approach to transport strategy in Scotland” (Representative Organisation)

6. Given the level of pre-consultation undertaken, a small number of respondents expressed their disappointment that the document took the form of series of questions on the direction of future policy rather than firm proposals with possible options for their delivery. However, to ensure the development of the NTS followed as open and transparent a process as possible it was felt a consultation paper would be more appropriate than a draft strategy and accordingly this format was adopted.

7. The high number of consultation questions was also raised, the document was considered to be too long and general by some. The Executive’s view is that because of the breadth of issues addressed by the NTS it would have been difficult to consult on all the issues with a fewer number of questions. However, it is acknowledged that it would have been helpful to provide respondents with the opportunity to submit their comments directly onto a standard online response form. This is something which has been noted and will be considered fully for any future consultation exercises carried out by the Executive relating to transport policy in Scotland.

CHAPTER 4 - USER CONSULTATION

Introduction

1. It is recognised that a number of audiences – primarily the general public – will typically not provide their views to a consultation. In order to ensure the views of transport users fed into the development of the NTS, George Street Research were commissioned to undertake independent and objective qualitative research that placed a focus on understanding the views of the general public, particularly “hard to reach” audiences who are transport users.

2. The specific objectives of the research were as follows:

- To ensure that a cross-section of the public are consulted to allow an insight into the range of views available;
- To ensure the views of specific “hard to reach” groups are included in the consultation process;
- To identify the type and nature of unmet mobility needs of different groups;
- To gather views and experiences on key issues in the strategy relevant to the target groups;
- To learn of people’s interests and concerns;
- To hear people’s ideas about policy options; and
- To understand the strength of feeling on particular issues.

3. Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative approach was adopted. A series of 11 focus groups and a further 40 individual/double/triad in-depth interviews among respondents were held across Scotland. Focus groups were held among the general public, young people, old people, women and those on low income. Interviews were held among disabled, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people (LGBT) and minority ethnic individuals. These focus groups and discussions took place in May and June 2006.

Key Findings

4. A range of issues and themes were raised in the discussions which took place. The key findings are summarised below:

- Different groups of respondents tended to have relatively similar points of view, with any different opinions being based primarily on their overall experiences of using transport or their attitudes towards certain key issues such as the importance of the environment or whether car drivers could be actively penalised.
- Respondents agreed on the overall need for a National Transport Strategy, but many felt the consultation document was aimed at stakeholders rather than the general public.
- While the overall objectives of the NTS were welcomed, many respondents found it difficult to think in strategic terms, with most basing their opinions on their immediate experiences and perceptions.

- Despite broad acceptance of the objectives of the NTS, respondents found it difficult to prioritise these and there was some cynicism over how the strategy would be implemented in practice.
- While economic growth was recognised as being important for Scotland, respondents found it difficult to suggest ways in which transport could facilitate economic growth, although there was some recognition that it could lead to more employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, and an increase in tourism.
- Accessibility was seen to be an important issue by all respondents, with public transport being felt to be irregular and infrequent, particularly in rural areas and outwith rush hour.
- Cost of transport was seen as too high and inconsistent across providers, although the concessionary travel scheme for older and disabled persons was welcomed. Some respondents noted problems in terms of service delivery on the part of transport providers and a lack of co-ordination between transport providers.
- There were requests for increased choice in public transport and availability of more and better information (especially real-time information).
- Improving and increasing public transport and providing incentives to increase its usage were the most favoured means of managing demand, with less support for schemes that disincentivised car travel, for example road pricing.
- Respondents were concerned that amenities and retail parks were often sited on the outskirts of cities without adequate thought being given to the transport implications.
- Road safety was considered a vital part of the Strategy, with support for a range of road safety initiatives.

5. The full report can be accessed via www.scotland.gov.uk/NTS/Userconsultation.

Summary

6. In summary, the user consultation exercise was positive received and allowed the Scottish Executive to complete as broad a consultation as possible which included the views of transport users who do not necessarily always provide their views to a consultation.

7. While most respondents did not find the NTS consultation paper easy reading or particularly inviting they did appreciate that a summary document had been written to make the NTS more accessible and felt they were more likely to read that than the full document. The overall perception was that the main consultation document was written for stakeholders or those with a professional interest in transport, rather than for members of the general public.

“It was quite, it was quite you know like easy to understand in the sense of the summary was but that, that (consultation document) was just a lot to read.”

Minority ethnic, urban

8. In view of the positive comments received regarding the summary booklet it is our intention to also publish a short leaflet summarising the final strategy to ensure it is also accessible to the wider public.

CHAPTER 5 - STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment is a new requirement which extends the assessment of environmental impacts from individual projects to the wider perspective of public strategies, plans and programmes. There was no legal requirement to undertake a SEA of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) on the following grounds:

- The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 do not apply as the NTS is not required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions; and
- The first preparatory act for the NTS was undertaken prior to the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 being enacted.

2. However, it was considered that the SEA process would be extremely valuable to the overall development of the final NTS and it was therefore applied to the NTS on a voluntary basis. As part of the SEA process an Environmental Report was prepared and published for public consultation on 22 May 2006 with a closing date for comments of 13 July 2006.

3. In total 12 responses were received to the consultation on the Environmental Report and these can be viewed at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/21173256/0>.

Key Themes

4. The responses received varied in content, from those which briefly acknowledged the proactive approach taken by the Scottish Executive in applying the SEA process to the NTS on a voluntary basis to more detailed comments covering a number of issues.

5. In general there was broad support for the Scottish Executive in their decision to apply the SEA process to the NTS consultation paper on a voluntary basis. Particular note was made by one respondent that this would provide the Executive with a stronger basis from which to address environmental issues at an early stage in the development and delivery of more sustainable transport policy.

6. A number of key issues emerged in the responses received, including:

- Timing of the SEA process;
- Scope of the Environmental Considerations;
- Evidence Base;
- Regional and Local Dimension; and
- General Comments.

Timing of the SEA Process

7. While there was broad support for the Scottish Executive in undertaking a SEA of the NTS consultation paper on a voluntary basis concerns were raised about the robustness of the findings in light of the assessment having been applied to a consultation document based on high level policy ideas rather than any specific policy commitments.

8. One respondent suggested that ideally the Scoping Stage of the SEA should have occurred at the time the NTS consultation document was produced with the Environmental Report being completed when the proposed policies for the NTS are produced.

9. In terms of progressing the SEA, and in particular for account to be taken of the subsequent changes as the NTS progressed from a consultation paper to a final strategy there was general consensus that, while there is no obligation for a further Environmental Report to be prepared, it would be desirable for any significant changes to be picked up in terms of their potential to have significant environmental effects. It was suggested that the SEA Post-Adoption Statement, required around the time the strategy is adopted, could include analysis of the final policies of the NTS assessed against each SEA objective, together with proposed mitigation measures and a monitoring programme.

10. An alternative suggestion was for a minimum four month consultation on a narrowed list of policy options to be carried out before the NTS is finalised.

Scope of the Environmental Considerations

11. There was criticism by some respondents that carbon emissions and air quality were given precedence within the Environmental Report. It is recognised that environmental issues are all encompassing and cover a wider range of parameters, including for example cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscape.

Evidence Base

12. Allied to issues raised in relation to the timing of the process, comment was also made by a number of respondents about the key points and outcomes reported in the Environmental Report being based on subjective judgement, the view was that further quantitative analysis was required of the different policy options and alternatives considered, for example in terms of the carbon saving potential and congestion benefits of different measures.

Regional and Local Dimension

13. The Environmental Report provided a steer for more detailed environmental assessment which would be expected to be taken forward at the regional and/or local level and this was welcomed by some consultees. A number of respondents commented that there was a need for greater detail at the national level in framing environmental assessments for other plans or strategies in the transport hierarchy. Particular note was made in relation to the identification of environmental issues and appropriate mitigation measures.

General Comments

14. In addition to the points outlined, responses also included a number of general comments concerning more technical aspects of the Environmental Report. For example, clarification was sought in relation to some of the data used to inform the environmental baseline. Other related issues included the exclusion of aviation emissions with the recommendation that this lack of data should be identified as an omission and remedial measures recommended for future assessments. A few respondents also commented on the need for a fuller description of the current baseline surrounding, for example, biodiversity and urban air pollution and health.

15. Some comments were also made with regard to general layout. There was a suggestion for the inclusion of a section within the Environmental Report summarising the key points from the screening and scoping stages. It was also suggested that a summary table be included which links each adverse environmental effect with the mitigation option cited and identifies the lead authority in terms of implementation.

Summary

16. In summary, application of the SEA process to the NTS on a voluntary basis was broadly welcomed. There was however a degree of criticism concerning the robustness of the assessment given that the Environmental Report was based on a series of policy ideas rather than fixed commitments. The issues and limitations posed by basing the SEA process on a consultation paper are recognised and highlights areas for consideration where the policy development process does not include a formal draft document stage for consultation. This aside, the undertaking of the SEA process and associated consultation is still regarded to have been a valuable exercise in terms of the overall development of the NTS.

17. A SEA Post-Adoption Statement has been prepared which provides more detail on how the Environmental Report and corresponding consultation influenced the final NTS, it can be accessed at www.scotland.gov.uk/NTS/SEApstadoptionstatement.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS

18. The consultation process followed in developing the NTS has been broadly welcomed. The pre-consultation events provided stakeholders with the opportunity to air their views about transport issues at an early stage in the process of the development of the NTS. These events were extremely helpful to the Scottish Executive in identifying early views about what issues the NTS would need to address. They also helped to highlight the cross cutting nature of transport.

19. The written consultation allowed the Executive to consider the views of a broad range of direct and indirect stakeholders as well as members of the general public. It was interesting to note that a significant percentage of the responses received were from members of the public. The independent analysis of the responses received, carried out by the Research Shop, allowed us to take account of the views of particular sectors as well as the individual responses and the outcomes from the written analysis were integral to informing the development of the final NTS.

20. The consultation undertaken with transport users and corresponding report prepared by George Street Research enabled us to ensure that the views of users, including hard to reach groups, were taken into account in developing the final NTS. It was interesting to note that the views of the different groups consulted as part of this research did not differ in any substantial way in terms of the key transport issues raised.

21. The SEA consultation allowed us to obtain views on an aspect of transport which concerns many – the environmental effects. We are hopeful that the Environmental Report prepared on the NTS will help other transport policy makers, at both the regional and local level, when they are developing their own transport policies.

22. Scotland's National Transport Strategy is being published alongside this consultation report and copies have been distributed to a wide range of transport stakeholders as well as to all those who participated in the consultation process whether they attended an event, submitted a written response or took part in the user consultation. The NTS can be accessed via www.scotland.gov.uk/NTS/Publication.