



National Transport Strategy - Update

Date of meeting 6 March 2020

Date of report 18 February 2020

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

The object of this report is to update the Partnership on the publication of the new National Transport Strategy (NTS) and its implications for the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) currently in development.

2. Background

Members will be aware that a new National Transport Strategy has been in development since early 2017¹, and that SPT has been actively participating in that process through engagement, and participation on various working groups. A formal public consultation exercise on the draft NTS was held between July and October 2019, to which SPT responded². The final version of the NTS was published on 5 February 2020³.

It is worth highlighting that, during the latter stages of development of the NTS, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 came into effect and made the NTS a statutory document. Significantly, the Act places a responsibility on Scottish Ministers, in considering the content of the NTS, to have regard to various factors including human rights, social and economic wellbeing, the environment (including meeting the emission reduction targets set out in Part 1 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009), and health and wellbeing.

Members will be further aware that alignment of the developing RTS with the new NTS has been recognised as essential from the outset of the process to develop the new RTS, and the publication of the final version of the NTS provides a further opportunity to strengthen the RTS in this regard.

3. Update

The NTS as published sets out a new 20-year vision for transport in Scotland, and provides a strategic framework which will guide future decision-making. The NTS Vision is underpinned by four inter-connected Priorities, each of which has three associated Outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 1:

¹ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/rtp310317_agenda8.pdf

² http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SPTP200919_agenda8a.pdf

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>

Figure 1: NTS Vision, Priorities and Outcomes:



The NTS also sets out twenty-four Policies which nest underneath each of the four Priorities noted above.

Some key points to note from the NTS as published include:

- A key change in the NTS Priorities is that what was previously titled “Promotes Equality” has become “Reduces Inequalities”. This change of emphasis is intended to reflect the need to address the significant inequalities which exist across Scotland, from health to deprivation and isolation.
- There is a significant emphasis throughout the NTS on addressing climate change, and achieving the change to ‘net-zero’.
- The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy is prominent within the new NTS and will be embedded in decision making about transport. The Hierarchy prioritises the most sustainable travel methods over less sustainable methods, from walking and wheeling to the private car.
- Aligned with the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy is the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy, which will inform and guide decision-making on investment in future, and is illustrated in Figure 2:

Figure 2: The NTS Sustainable Investment Hierarchy



- Continued implementation and further development of Scotland’s Accessible Travel Framework is a key policy of the new NTS, recognising the need for different approaches for Scottish regions, cities, towns and rural, remote and island communities.
- In terms of delivering inclusive economic growth, there is a strong focus in the NTS on increasing resilience and asset management across the transport system, development and deployment of beneficial innovation and emerging technologies and increasing Scotland’s competitiveness. Better cross-sector integrated decision-making is also identified as important to creating a more efficient transport system, and maximising wider benefits.
- Through policies which seek to improve health and wellbeing, there is a strong focus within the NTS on increasing safety and improving security on the transport system. For example, the NTS notes that a new Road Safety Framework is in development which will look to reduce fatalities on roads and active travel networks to zero and greatly reduce serious injuries.
- It is worth highlighting that there is a reduced level of reference to governance in the new NTS in comparison with the draft NTS, although mention is made of continuing the previously established NTS Roles and Responsibilities group to look at opportunities for change in that regard. SPT represented the Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland on the previous iteration of the group and is continuing in that role in future.
- The NTS sets out a strategic framework for the transport system over the next 20 years and specifically does not set out individual projects, schemes or interventions. An NTS Delivery Plan will be developed in 2020, which will provide detail on how the Priorities and Outcomes will be achieved. The updated Climate Change Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review will be key parts of the Delivery Plan. Developing regulations and guidance around bus provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 are also likely to feature in the Delivery Plan.

4. Implications for the RTS

To date, significant efforts have gone into seeking to ensure alignment with the NTS and the developing RTS through engagement with Transport Scotland and other partners. The imperative to continue doing so has been enhanced by the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 which make the NTS a statutory document. Further, as has been highlighted in earlier reports⁴, the RTS Issues and Objectives stage has been extended and consultation delayed so that the final NTS (and work relating to the Strategic Transport Projects Review) could be reviewed and taken account of prior to the full public consultation on the RTS Issues and Objectives report.

This stage of RTS development is the main evidence gathering stage, seeking to identify and agree the specific transport issues and wider social, environmental and economic factors on which the RTS should focus as it goes through future stages of development. After review, there are no significant gaps between the challenges identified in the NTS and the RTS key issues as they currently stand, although it is recognised that the forthcoming consultation on the RTS Issues and Objectives report will help further inform the understanding of the nature of these challenges for the SPT region specifically. As regards the NTS strategic framework – the Vision, Priorities, Outcomes and Policies – and the current version of the RTS strategic framework, again the broad themes covered are of a similar nature.

However, just as the NTS emphasis changed in regard to reducing inequality and climate action between draft and final version, there may be similar changes arising from the consultation on the RTS Issues and Objectives report, in order, for example, to give them a more direct west of Scotland focus.

5. Conclusions

The NTS will be used to guide transport policy, plans, strategies, business cases, and decision-making at national level in Scotland for the next 20 years, and therefore its importance in how the country develops during that time period is significant. It will also influence other national level policy, for example the new National Planning Framework (NPF4). SPT has been fully involved in the NTS development process through various means and has sought to ensure that the new RTS develops in line with the NTS to deliver consistency and an integrated approach at national and regional levels.

There is much to be welcomed in the new NTS; for example, on those issues which could be considered to be most keenly felt in the west of Scotland, such as inequality and deprivation. The stronger focus on addressing transport's contribution to climate change is also to be welcomed, as the climate emergency emerged as the most critical issue to be addressed during the time of NTS development. As with any strategy, however, the most challenging part remains its delivery, and SPT stands ready to support and assist Transport Scotland and other partners in ensuring the vision, priorities, outcomes and policies of the NTS are realised.

The RTS Issues and Objectives report has been updated in line with the new NTS and the full public consultation process will begin soon. Following that exercise, any necessary changes to the RTS strategic framework will be made, and officers will keep members updated as the RTS development process continues. The RTS remains on target to be delivered in 2021.

⁴ Section 3.2.1 of the Strategic Issues Report to the Strategy and Programmes Committee, February 2020: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP070220_Agenda11.pdf

6. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to:

- Note the publication of and agree SPT's support in principle for the new NTS; and
- Note that the NTS has been taken account of in the current stage of RTS development on Issues and Objectives.

7. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>The developing RTS will take account of the new NTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>An NTS priority is "Reduces Inequalities".</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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