

**ANGUS COUNCIL****PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE  
ROADS COMMITTEE****24 APRIL 1997  
24 APRIL 1997****SUBJECT: KEEPING SCOTLAND MOVING  
SCOTTISH TRANSPORT GREEN PAPER****REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND DIRECTOR OF ROADS**

**Abstract:** This report discusses the Scottish Transport Green Paper - Keeping Scotland Moving and forms the basis of a suggested response to the Scottish Office on the Green Paper. Particular concern is expressed at the lack of target setting at the national level which would provide a framework for local strategies.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) note the report for its interest; and
- ii) agree that this report be submitted to the Scottish Office as Angus Council's response to the Scottish Transport Green Paper - Keeping Scotland Moving drawing attention to the comments set out in Section 6 of this Report, including various key points highlighted.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Scottish Office issued its Green Paper - "Keeping Scotland Moving" in February 1997. A copy of the Green Paper has been placed in the Members' Lounge at The Cross, Forfar. Views were invited by 18 April 1997 and accordingly a draft copy of this report, was forwarded to the Scottish Office by the due date, with the proviso that confirmation or amendments to the report will be sent following the Committee meetings.
- 2.2 The Green Paper purports to give "an indication of the directions in which the Government expect to move in transport policy" over the next 20 years. To do this the paper looks at various modes of transport and transport infrastructure.
- 2.3 It is perhaps worth noting at the outset that regardless of whatever transport measures are in place it is the effect of peoples individual choice of mode of travel which impacts on the move towards sustainable development which is the Governments ultimate goal. It is perhaps for these reasons that the green paper concludes by emphasising:-
  - "there are no easy solutions";

- "transport policy should not make sudden changes of direction ..... but should ..... develop within the principles, and through the initiatives, proposed".

### 3 OUTLINE OF DOCUMENT

- 3.1 This section outlines the contents of the chapters in the Green Paper.
- 3.2 Chapter 1 outlines the existing debate on transport matters, notably the Green Paper for England "Transport - The Way Forward" and Scottish Office draft National Planning Policy Guideline on Transport which was reported to the Planning and Transport Policy Committee 29 August 1996, report 614/96 refers. It also reiterates the Government's commitment to transport policies which extend individual choice and also pledges that transport policy will support the sustainable development strategy.
- 3.3 Chapter 2 assesses Scotland's transport needs, reviews key trends and assesses the impact of our travel behaviour and looks at prospects 20 years on. Some key points from the chapter include:-
- The key issue for the Green Paper is to look forward at how trends might develop and to ask what we want Scotland to be like 20 years from now.
  - Scotland's geography and settlement distribution have a strong influence on our travel patterns.
  - Scotland lags behind England in terms of traffic congestion which should be viewed as an opportunity for avoiding the problems encountered elsewhere rather than as an excuse to do nothing.
  - There is no sign of traffic growth easing.
  - Traffic growth at current levels cannot be matched by a corresponding increase in the supply of road infrastructure.
  - The Government accept that motorists should meet the full costs of the trips they make.
  - The challenge is to determine traffic growth and then to influence it through different mechanisms.
  - There are prospects for reducing the need to travel.
  - The prospects for encouraging more environmentally friendly modes of travel will be critical to achieving a satisfactory outcome.
- 3.4 In Chapter 3 the need to adjust existing transport policy is recognised and the chapter sets out future transport objectives and the Scottish Office's view on how the transport sector will achieve these. In discussing the objectives the document states that account will be taken of the needs, amongst others, of rural communities. Mention is also made that local authorities should develop demand management

programmes and incorporate principles for reducing the need to travel into their land use plans. Partnership working between local communities, local authorities, service providers and government is advocated and one proposed means of this is the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

- 3.5 As the Government are "aiming at a balanced approach to transport policy" Chapter 4 outlines some existing initiatives that contribute to this - covering such topics as appraisals, road safety initiatives, trunk road improvements, public transport provision, land use planning and air quality.
- 3.6 Chapter 5 titled "Options for Further Change" looks at the pros and cons of various policy ideas such as targets for traffic levels, incentives and disincentives, and ways of dealing with congestion and city centre problems. It also poses the Government view that "it is generally inappropriate and undesirable to seek to manage traffic growth in rural areas, given the suitability of car travel".
- 3.7 The final chapter sets out the action which the Government thinks is required to secure transport services that will continue to support a good quality of life in Scotland and, suggests targets for other key players. Much of this chapter is dealt with under the different mode of transport headings.

#### **4 THE SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE**

4.1 The Scottish Office recognises that transport policies in Scotland will be broadly similar to those in England as outlined in the "Transport - The Way Forward" Green Paper which identified 5 key themes:-

- better planning of transport infrastructure;
- making more efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- empowering local decision making; reducing dependence on the car, especially in towns;
- switching emphasis in spending from roads to public transport;
- reducing the impact of road freight.

4.2 However there are also particular aspects which need to be taken into consideration for a Scottish transport strategy including the distance from markets particularly when considered in a European context and the distances for rural and peripheral areas of Scotland in terms of accessibility to services. The importance of tourism to the Scottish economy also needs to be recognised particularly as much of this is based round touring rather than the one centre type holiday. Increased travel is also generated by the decline of population from major urban centres and population growth in many rural parts.

4.3 In developing transport policies the Scottish Office has 2 primary principles:-

- to proceed as far as possible by the voluntary principle;

- to have as the ultimate goal, sustainable development

and included within the objectives of provision of transport and transport infrastructure are:-

- taking into account the needs for deprived, rural, remote and inland communities;
- protecting, and where possible enhancing, the environment, quality of life, safety and public health, taking account of wider costs and benefits by minimising pollution, noise, danger and intrusion and the use of non-renewable resources.

- 4.4 The Scottish Office also places great importance on the principle of partnership for both demand management programmes and means to implement transport infrastructure projects.

## 5 THE ANGUS CONTEXT

- 5.1 In Angus the network of towns and villages fall in three broad areas namely the coastal corridor, with its major road and east coast rail links and harbours at Arbroath and Montrose; Strathmore with the key strategic road the A90T, passing through; and the Glens which in transport terms are cul-de-sacs. The differing circumstances in each of these areas is reflected in the different transport needs. Local transport movements are also influenced by the proximity of Dundee. In European terms the area is peripheral but has the advantage and potential of the North Sea shipping routes to various European ports.
- 5.2 Air transport is not available within Angus but the area has the advantage of being within reasonable distance of all the airports including the facilities available from the third level airport in Dundee.
- 5.3 Angus has some 1,200 miles of road network ranging from the heavily trafficked A92 to sparsely trafficked access roads to the Glens. Traffic volumes on main routes are generally on the increase and a number of both main and secondary routes have significant road safety problems. Lack of capital funding is having a serious effect on the sustainability of the road network infrastructure.
- 5.4 Angus does not experience significant road traffic congestion problems in comparison to urban parts of Scotland. There is therefore the danger that important aspects of the transport debate could be ignored by the various agencies and public alike. However traffic trends, which continue to indicate increasing numbers of vehicle movements, show no sign of abating and it is essential therefore that awareness is raised and action taken now.

## 6 DISCUSSION

(Note page numbers appearing in bold are references to the Green Paper. Text highlighted in italics summarise key points which it is suggested be drawn to the attention of the Scottish Office).

- 6.1 An effective transport network is essential for the economic development prospects of the Angus area as acknowledged by the Tayside Structure Plan 1993 and TPP for 1995-2000 which recognise the need for improving both road and rail links for both short and longer distance journeys. This includes the upgrading of the A92 coastal road to tackle traffic volumes, road safety issues and to encourage economic development in the coastal corridor.
- 6.2 A national transport strategy has long been awaited and although various actions are suggested in the Green Paper there is no clear vision provided or overall targets set for the country as a whole which could be used as a framework for developing local strategies. Rather the government looks to local authorities to review the road traffic situation in their own areas and to decide whether or not to set local targets for future traffic levels. [page 38]
- 6.3 The major issue for the Green Paper is seen as the determination of traffic growth and the development of measures to influence it [page 17] but there is little evidence of this in the forward looking chapters 5 and 6. A closely related topic is that of target setting. Despite the recognition that there is no sign of traffic growth easing and the knowledge that this will have adverse effects on the health, safety and the environment in which people live, the Scottish Office has chosen not to set targets [page 38]. This is despite the recommendations from the government advisors on the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution and the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development that this is the preferred approach. The existing cycling target [page 31, 46] of doubling the level of cycling by the year 2002 has proved very successful in stimulating action and targets for other modes of transport could help raise awareness of the transport issues and have similar beneficial effects. Similarly further improved targets for Road Safety would be welcomed [page 26] and for comparison purposes the measurements currently being used should be retained.

*Angus Council would encourage the Scottish Office to reconsider setting transport targets which would provide a framework for local authorities when developing local strategies including local targets. This could help to avoid neighbouring councils setting incompatible targets. Guidelines should be set for local targets to assist in comparison studies; both in terms of the "areas of study" eg modal shift, and the appropriateness eg meaningful, measurable, nature of the target.*

- 6.4 The futility of building roads to keep pace with road traffic growth has been recognised [page 17] and this would suggest that the majority of financial resources would therefore be targeted at maintaining the existing infrastructure. The allocation of expenditure on transport in Scotland as illustrated [on page 21] in the Green Paper however shows that new construction and improvement of motorway and trunk roads, which represent only 5% of the road network, receive more money than the net capital allocations to all local authorities which cover the remaining 95% of the network.

*There is clearly an imbalance in the distribution of resources and a need to focus more resources to road maintenance (to avoid major reconstruction works) and to other aspects of lighting, safety, traffic calming etc in order to provide for an integrated approach to transport provision.*

- 6.5 The use of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for new transport infrastructure projects is also advocated [page 22] and Angus Council has already responded to this opportunity.

*However the key difficulties experienced so far in attempting to combine funding arrangements would indicate a clear need for guidelines on i) linking Challenge Fund monies and the PFI when undertaking projects and on ii) how Councils will receive revenue support on such projects, fundamental to the affordability issue to Local Authorities.*

- 6.6 Whilst agreeing that the "fit for purpose" approach [page 25] needs to be taken when appraising potential projects it is felt that this should be applied to 'new build' projects only. Any transportation targets set (as discussed in para 6.3) would help in assessing projects in an appraisal system. However it is considered that the corridor based appraisal is only suitable in an inter-urban area scenario and therefore has little relevance to rural areas.

- 6.7 The Green Paper states that "transport policy should place great importance on the principle of partnership" [page 22]. This approach is advocated in the recently approved Tayside Structure Plan 1993 as a proposal for the rural areas. Angus Council has been instrumental in establishing a Transport Forum comprising representatives of Voluntary Organisations, Community Councils, Bus and Taxi Operators and Bus Users. The Forum seeks to increase awareness and share information on public transport provision, identify transport needs and find solutions to meet the needs identified. Scottish Office Rural Challenge Funding and European Leader II have enabled a Rural Transport Development Officer to be appointed to work with communities to establish their needs and possible solutions. It is unlikely however that the Council will be able to fund services to meet all the requests likely to be identified.

*It must be recognised that by encouraging Partnerships to consider transport needs many of the solutions proposed will require funding from the very limited resources of the local authority. It is unlikely in regard to the Angus Transport Forum, that all the requests for transport services will be met regardless of the identified need.*

- 6.8 The Tayside Structure Plan 1993 recognises the role land use planning can make in minimising the need for travel through the careful location of new development. The endorsement of this in the Green Paper [page 34] and the draft NPPG Transport and Planning is welcomed. It must be recognised however that new build or redevelopment will only impact on a small proportion of total transport movements in the short term and should therefore be viewed as part of the solution for the longer term. In the short term it has to be acknowledged that development location decisions are often dictated by other factors. In rural areas like Angus which has a

dispersed settlement pattern the transport/development dilemma is particularly complex.

- 6.9 The ability to encourage a shift from road to rail freight is another aspect of transport strategy which requires to be addressed. A recent study, commissioned by CREATE (Campaign for Rail Electrification Aberdeen to Edinburgh) highlighted that there are significant rail freight opportunities in the CREATE area.

*However maximisation of the use of the East Coast Rail Line is hampered by lack of route clearance for various types of rail freight wagons. There is a need for a major investment in infrastructure to rectify this.*

- 6.10 The maintenance and enhancement of transport facilities in rural areas is a particular challenge for local authorities given distances involved, high and increasing levels of car ownership and falling bus patronage. The costs involved are revenue based as few, if any, of the services are economically viable. Despite high car ownership levels there is still a strong need for the continued subsidy of many bus routes, particularly for sections of the community who remain dependent upon public transport provision, including many elderly people.

*The image portrayed in the Green Paper of a profitable and vibrant bus network [page 30] is at odds with that experienced in Angus. Since deregulation, unlike in the more urban areas, there has been little or no competition between operators, increase in the frequency of services or investment in high quality vehicles. Spending on subsidised services continues to increase as passenger numbers continue to decline and services are no longer viable.*

- 6.11 To improve the attractiveness of the bus, services need to be enhanced through speed, reliability, improved availability of information and vehicle quality [page 31]. In addition lower fares and more frequent services may be required. Within Angus it is unlikely that such public transport provision would ever be commercially viable and would be almost impossible to achieve under the current legislative framework which artificially separates the commercial from the supported services and is designed to prevent fares from being used as an instrument in Transport policy.

*Quality partnerships [page 45] are a potential means for providing high quality vehicles but funding for this is limited and guidelines are required to ensure Local Authorities are seen to be equitable in entering into partnerships with various operators.*

- 6.12 The government view that "it is generally inappropriate and undesirable to seek to manage traffic growth in rural areas, given the suitability of car travel" [page 39] is noted, but the need to maintain the rural road network needs to be recognised.

*The Scottish Office are asked to recognise that the maintenance of the rural public transport and rural road network is paramount and that enhanced funding is required to secure the future fabric of rural facilities.*

## **7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **9 CONCLUSION**

9.1 The lack of a clear vision at the national level and the sparsity of proposals for rural areas in the Green Paper is disappointing particularly as the Scottish Office regard local authorities as key players.

9.2 The success of target setting exercises, for example those set for cycling and road safety, have proved very successful both in terms of raising awareness of the issue and getting work carried out on the ground. It is suggested therefore that further transportation targets should be set and guidelines devised which could be refined and applied in the development of local transport strategies.

9.3 Given the desire to provide a more sustainable approach to transport there is a need to ensure the maintenance of the existing transportation fabric. This should clearly be reflected in the allocation of a larger share of financial resources to local authorities which have responsibility for 95% of the road network and need to work towards a more integrated transport system.

9.4 It is suggested that the comments contained in this report should be submitted to the Scottish Office as the Council's response to the Green Paper.

## **NOTE**

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report.

- Keeping Scotland Moving - A Scottish Transport Green Paper - The Scottish Office, February 1997.

AA/PC/SP  
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