



**Community  
Transport  
Association**

**Response to  
Consultation on  
South West of Scotland Transport Partnership  
Draft Strategy**

7th February 2007

The Community Transport Association

The CTA is a rapidly growing national charity giving voice and providing leadership, learning and enterprise support to member organisations, which are delivering innovative transport solutions to achieve social change. CTA UK promotes excellence through providing training, publications, advice and information on voluntary, accessible and community transport.

Voluntary and community transport exists to meet the travel and social needs of people to whom these would otherwise be denied, providing accessible and affordable transport to achieve social inclusion.

The CTA is the representative body for third sector passenger transport operators in the UK. CTA Member organisations are involved in the provision of transport, especially accessible services.

The CTA is part-funded by the Department for Transport, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland).

### **CTA's Response to Consultation**

The CTA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership's Draft Regional Strategy. The responses to the questions asked in the report are shown on the following pages.

### **Contact Details**

Any queries regarding this response should be directed to:

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#### QUESTION 1

What are your overall views on the draft Regional Transport Strategy?

**CTA feels that the strategy is reasonably comprehensive in that there is some coverage of the transport issues which the people of the South West RTP area will have. In some areas however, there is a mere acknowledgement of issues but little in the strategy on how these will be taken forward. Community transport, for example, is acknowledged as providing the services which some people will need but the document is lightweight on measures which the RTP will take to tackle these issues. The importance of social inclusion is acknowledged but little insight is given into how the strategy will cater for those in the RTP area who are most marginalised. A recently produced report from the Disability Rights Commission indicated that one third of disabled Scots lack confidence in public transport despite new laws designed to make it more accessible to them. CTA does not feel that the strategy will allay the concerns of such people.**

#### QUESTION 2

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROJECTS SUGGESTED TO BE TAKEN FORWARD THROUGH THE STRATEGY

**IN CTA's view, analysis of the projects should be done within the context of the Scottish Executive's guidelines which has three main strands – namely measures which promote economic growth, good environmental practices such as carbon emission reduction and social inclusion. Whilst all the projects highlighted will lead to, at least to some extent, an improved transport system in South West Scotland, they are not explicit about how they will improve the economy, the local environment, and services for socially excluded people. Thus the Scottish Executive's framework does not appear to have been closely adhered to. For example, accessible buses and increased service frequencies on rural bus networks are itemised as projects but there is no further expansion on these points. A sparse and largely rural population is one of the particular features of the South West Scotland Partnership area. Transport in rural areas has its own difficulties and the solution to these difficulties is often to be found in demand responsive and community transport yet there is little in the document on how the needs of such people will be provided for. The voluntary sector has a particularly useful role to play in rural areas and CTA would suggest that the strategy could be strengthened by including a higher level of commitment to community transport and other voluntary sector providers.**

### QUESTION 3

Are there any issues which you consider have not been covered or addressed in the draft strategy that should be included?

**The strategy identifies access to healthcare as a key issue and CTA agrees with this, but we feel that the extent of the problem is underestimated not just in South West Scotland, but across the country. SWSTP has a key role in joining the local ambulance service, local authority social services transport and community transport together to work out solutions for access to health. From the community transport point of view, there is a willingness in CT operators to help solve this growing problem. However, inadequate or non-existent funding often prevents them from providing the level of service that users might require.**

### Question 4

Any other comments on the draft strategy?

**CTA would suggest that RTP strategies should take a lead from the National Transport Strategy for Scotland as it conveys a balanced approach to transport's contribution to economic growth, reducing carbon emissions and social inclusion. This balance, in our opinion, does not come across as strongly in the SWSTP draft strategy. CTA aspires towards good transport services for all and our particular sphere of interest is the needs of those who are most marginalised in our society. It is these people's needs which are most likely to be missed in the work of an RTP unless its work is guided by robust policies and an effective strategy. We would therefore suggest that the document should give a lot more commitment towards supporting community transport and other initiatives for people who may be socially excluded.**

**CTA would welcome the opportunity to assist SWSTP with the formation of its strategy for community transport. Many CT operators are moving towards a social enterprise model for the delivery of their services and we would encourage SWSTP to consider how it can assist voluntary transport providers in this regard.**