

NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT POST-ADOPTION
STATEMENT**

DECEMBER 2006

COVER NOTE - SECTION 1

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COVER NOTE - SECTION 2

A Post-Adoption SEA Statement is attached for the plan/programme entitled:-

NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY (NTS)

The Responsible Authority is:-

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

COVER NOTE - SECTION 3

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signature
is acceptable)

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POST - ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – SECTION 1

Post-Adoption SEA Statement for:-

NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY (NTS)

Adopted on:-

5 DECEMBER 2006

Responsible Authority:-

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION

This document (referred to here as the Post-Adoption SEA Statement) has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 20(2) (3) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

POST-ADOPTION SEA STATEMENT – SECTION 3 AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

WEBSITE

The full plan/programme as adopted, along with the environmental report and Post-Adoption SEA Statement are available on the Responsible Authority's website at:-

www.scotland.gov.uk

OFFICE ADDRESS

The plan/programme, as adopted, along with the environmental report and Post-Adoption SEA Statement may also be inspected free of charge (or a copy obtained for a reasonable charge) at the principal office of the Responsible Authority:-

Contact name, address and tel

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Times at which the documents may be inspected or a copy obtained:-

MONDAY – FRIDAY, 9am – 5pm

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a new requirement for public plans and strategies, arising from EU Directive 2001/42/EC which was adopted by the European Council and Parliament in 2001. Following from this legislation the Environmental Assessment Act (Scotland) 2005 came into force on 20 February 2006 which repealed the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004 that were in force prior to the Act. Responsible Authorities who had already started preparing plans and programmes on or before the 19 February 2006 were able to continue following the provision set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

The National Transport Strategy

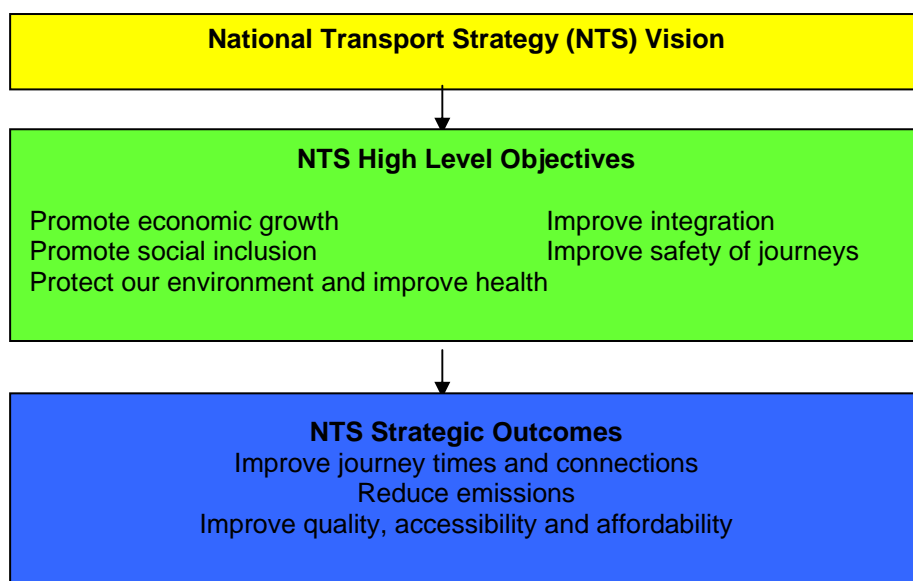
2. The National Transport Strategy (NTS) Consultation Paper was published on 20 April 2006 for a 12 week public consultation which concluded on 13 July 2006 with the final strategy being published on 21 November 2006.

3. There are a number of challenges facing transport in Scotland, including increasing globalisation, growing congestion and rising carbon emissions. The NTS is a high-level strategic document that sets out how these and other challenges are to be addressed through three strategic outcomes. They are to:

- **Improve journey times and connections:** to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on our high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety;
- **Reduce emissions:** to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on our high level objective for protecting the environment and improving health; and
- **Improve quality, accessibility and affordability:** to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services which are value for money and a viable alternative to the car.

4. The development of the strategic outcomes follow on from the eight transport goals around which the NTS Consultation Paper was based. Figure One outlines the linkages between the overall vision, high level objectives and strategic outcomes of the strategy.

Figure One: Structure of the National Transport Strategy



The Strategic Environmental Assessment Process

5. There was not a legal requirement to apply the SEA process to the NTS because:
- The provisions of 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.

6. However, the SEA process was considered to be extremely valuable to the overall development of the NTS and was therefore applied to the strategy on a voluntary basis under the terms of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004. As part of the process the following activities have been undertaken:

- Consideration of the views of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland regarding the scope and level of detail that was appropriate for the Environmental Report.
- Preparation of an Environmental Report on the likely significant effects on the environment which included consideration of:
 - the baseline data relating to the current state of the environment;
 - links between the strategy and other relevant plans, programmes, policies and environmental objectives;
 - existing environmental problems affecting the strategy;
 - the strategy's likely significant effects on the environment (positive and negative);
 - the mitigation measures envisaged;
 - an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives chosen;
 - monitoring measures to ensure that any unforeseen environmental effects will be identified allowing for appropriate remedial action to be taken.
- Consultation on the Environmental Report.
- Consideration of the Environmental Report and the results of the consultation in making final decisions regarding the NTS.
- Commitment to monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan to identify any unforeseen adverse significant environmental effects and to taking appropriate remedial action.

2. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT – CONSULTATION

Background

1. The SEA Environmental Report was published for consultation on 22 May 2006 for an 8 week public consultation which concluded on 13 July 2006. In total 12 responses were received to the consultation with submissions being made by the following organisations:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- Fife Council
- Halcrow Group Ltd
- Historic Scotland
- North Lanarkshire Council
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Association for Public Transport
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK) Scottish Policy Group
- WWF Scotland

2. A copy of the responses received to the consultation can be accessed via the following web link: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/21173256/0>.

3. Following the publication and subsequent consultation on the Environmental Report this Post-Adoption Statement has been prepared to provide an update on the environmental information included in the NTS, how consultation comments have been taken into account and methods for monitoring the significant environmental effects arising from implementation of the NTS.

Summary of Responses

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. There were a number of recurring concerns raised in relation to the Environmental Report, including:

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

7. The purpose of this section of the Post-Adoption Statement is to highlight the main comments received to the consultation and how they have been taken into consideration in the development of the final NTS.

Timing of the SEA Process

8. Concern was expressed by a number of respondents regarding the robustness of the Environmental Report as a result of the Environmental Report having been based on a consultation paper outlining high level policy ideas rather than detailed policy commitments. It was argued by some that the selection and adoption of final policy proposals should follow a more detailed assessment of the environmental impact of different options together with further consultation.

9. Issues presented by the timing of the SEA process were discussed at earlier stages with the Consultation Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Historic Scotland) and it was felt that it would not be appropriate to delay the SEA process as there were no plans to publish the NTS in draft form. Since publication of the Environmental Report, further analytical work has been completed which has informed the development of the final NTS and which should address some of the concerns raised in the responses to the consultation. This additional work, in particular the detailed assessment of final policy proposals and the availability of quantitative information, is discussed in further detail in the next section.

10. Furthermore, the SEA process is promoted as a policy-aiding rather than policy-making tool which should be applied as early as possible in the policy development process. Extensive consultation was integral to the development of the strategy and there has been close engagement with a range of stakeholders over this period, including organisations and other bodies from the environmental sector.

Scope of the Environmental Considerations

11. There was some criticism by 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. However, in view of increasing energy consumption and growing carbon

emissions from transport when the contribution from other sectors is decreasing, climate change and air quality are regarded as the significant environmental issues (although not the only ones considered) within a transport context at the national and international level. Accordingly, this position has been reflected in the environmental steer taken within the NTS and in keeping with the high-level strategic focus of the strategy this was reflected through to the SEA process.

12. It was stated within the Environmental Report that in transport terms the impact on a lot of the environmental criteria within the scope of the SEA would be more appropriately considered at the regional and local level where detail concerning the location and exact specifications of individual projects would be available. This position is maintained and it would be expected that due consideration is provided to the scope and direction suggested in the Environmental Report by those applying the SEA process to other policies within the transport hierarchy and also conducting environmental appraisal through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process at the project level.

Evidence Base

13. A number of respondents expressed concern at the evidence base and in particular the lack of quantitative analysis detailed within the Environmental Report, especially in relation to carbon emissions.

14. It was stated within the Environmental Report that environmental appraisal would form an integral part of the information gathering process undertaken to inform the evidence base for the final NTS and therefore separate analytical work to inform the SEA process was not commissioned. The development of the evidence base had not been completed at the time of publication of the Environmental Report and therefore it was not possible to integrate this information into the report. These issues were discussed with the Consultation Authorities during the drafting of the Environmental Report.

15. Since the publication of the NTS Consultation Paper and corresponding Environmental Report, research which comprised an appraisal of policy options for the NTS has now been completed. The research entailed a review of the transport measures most likely to satisfy economic development objectives without unsustainable increases in transport activity and emissions. Policies were ranked in terms of their impact (high and medium) relative to each other and grouped in accordance to their timetable for implementation i.e. short (0 – 3 years), medium (3 – 10 years) or long-term (over 10 years). This research has informed the development of the strategy and the findings presented can be accessed via: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Transport/NTS/introduction>.

16. To measure progress of the NTS against reducing emissions a “carbon balance sheet” for transport is to be presented in future reviews of the NTS. This will present the impact of all Scottish transport policies and projects (current and future) expected to have a significant impact on net carbon emissions, whether positive or negative. Further details on the balance sheet can be found in section 3.

Regional and Local Dimension

17. It was suggested by some respondents that a greater steer could have been provided within the Environmental Report in terms of the environmental issues and mitigation measures to be considered at the regional and local level.

18. While the NTS outlines the direction of transport policy at the strategic level and provides the framework for policy development at other levels in the transport hierarchy the Environmental Report was not intended to be overly prescriptive or to provide formal guidance on issues which should be scoped within the SEA process when applied at other levels within the transport hierarchy. Responses from some Local Authorities suggest that the Environmental Report has been helpful in providing direction on the appropriate scope and level of detail:

“It has therefore been of value to us to have the opportunity to consider the direction you have taken in the preparation of the Environmental Report for the NTS, and I would offer the following comments....the report is simple to understand and clearly sets out the approach to the assessment...the scope and level of detail appear to be appropriate”.

General Comments

19. A number of general comments were also made in relation to the scope of the environmental baseline, data sources and overall presentation of the report. There is not a requirement to directly update the Environmental Report following the outcome of the consultation process, however these issues have been noted for any future environmental appraisal which may be undertaken in relation to the NTS.

How the SEA Process has influenced the NTS

20. The Environmental Report and corresponding public consultation have been of importance to the overall development of the NTS. The SEA process and associated work has directly influenced the final strategy through the following:

- Development of a strategic outcome to reduce emissions, the focus of which is to tackle climate change, air quality and health improvement all of which impact on our high level objective to protect the environment and improve health.
- Further development of the evidence base to inform the final strategy:
 - Appraisal of Policy Options for the NTS.
 - Climate Change Discussion Paper.
 - Decoupling the link between economic growth, transport growth and carbon emissions in Scotland.
- Development of a number of policy options (recognised to have a positive environmental impact) from the NTS Consultation Paper into policy commitments in the final NTS including:
 - Work with UK Government to deliver the biofuels target by 2010 and beyond.
 - Promote and encourage new vehicle technologies.
 - Continue to work with the UK Government on proposals for a UK based road pricing scheme.
 - Promote better synergies between transport and land use planning.
 - Develop travel awareness and marketing campaigns to promote Smart Measures on all journeys, focusing on the commute to work.
 - Promote cycling and walking, especially for short journeys.
- Inclusion of additional policies demonstrated to have a particular positive impact on the environment, for example the undertaking of a Scottish specific appraisal of stricter adherence to national speed limits on trunk roads and motorways to identify potential environmental benefits, including carbon savings.
- Commitment to develop a carbon balance sheet to demonstrate the impact of all projects and measures on carbon emissions, both positive and negative.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Background

1. The NTS will be reviewed every four years. This process will include consideration of whether the strategy needs to be amended as Scottish Minister's priorities, understanding of transport issues, available resources and other circumstances may have changed significantly over a four year period. Also, if required, specific revisions will be made to the strategy to take account of further experience and improved knowledge.

Monitoring

2. A number of potential performance indicators are included in the NTS and from an environmental perspective include:

- Carbon emissions from the transport sector;
- Tonnes of carbon saved; and
- Average distance walked and cycled per person per year.

3. Air quality is monitored locally by local authorities. Transport projects planned at national, regional and local level and for which Scottish Executive support or approval is required will undergo a STAG appraisal and where necessary, an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Carbon Balance Sheet

4. In addition, a “carbon balance sheet” will also be developed in future reviews of the NTS. This will present the impact of all Scottish transport policies and projects expected to have a significant impact on carbon emissions with a holistic overview being presented that shows both positive and negative impacts. Additional modelling and analysis will be required to deliver this but it will provide a means through which to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of different transport measures in Scotland on carbon emissions.

4. CONCLUSION

5. This Post-Adoption statement has been prepared as part of the SEA process applied to the NTS on a voluntary basis. The SEA process has been an important element to the development of the NTS and has informed different aspects of the final strategy as detailed within this statement.

6. The NTS will be reviewed on a four yearly cycle, which will include consideration of the environmental impacts of the different policies implemented over the period.