

PE1626/A

SEStran letter of 23 January 2017

Thanks for the letter from the Committee and opportunity to provide evidence. The timescale doesn't allow SEStran to consider the request at a Board level, so I offer the following comment as a Chief Officer. During 2016/17 Partnership Board meeting, there was a number of discussions, in the context of the Planning Review and the emerging Programme for Government, of SEStran moving from a Model 1 to a Model 3 RTP and becoming a passenger transport authority or combined authority.

The Board has previously highlighted the increasing disaggregation of strategic transport planning across Scotland. Identifying that, with the expected growth of Edinburgh City Region up to 2050 there should be active consideration and evaluation of some form of strategic integrated authority for all forms of transport for the SEStran area to ensure prosperity and accessibility into wider North of England labour markets. The recent Edinburgh City Region Deal proposals included the suggested creation of a Passenger Transport Authority.

The Board has previously recognised that collaboration in the design and delivery of services moving forward will be critical to tackling these challenges successfully, including an acceptance that in some forms of public services, intelligent centralisation of services through joined up approaches are the only way forward if we are to continue to deliver best value public services in Scotland. This may involve service aggregation from more local tiers of governance currently. Crucially required is an acceptance of the need for further devolution from nationally held and delivered services to deliver responsive outcomes vital for future economic, social and environmental prosperity.

Currently SEStran is a Model 1 RTP, with a primary duty to produce a regional transport strategy. A Model 3 is an enhanced method of partnership delivery as described in previous paragraphs. In the light of the City Region Deal proposals relating to transport and infrastructure, active consideration by Chief Officials is being given to utilising the provision in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 for the Regional Transport Authority to become a Model 3 authority. In effect this would mean assuming the powers of a Passenger Transport Executive. This would require agreement between the member authorities and support from the Scottish Government and consent from the Scottish Parliament. The outcome of the initial consultation process with constituent councils should be known by March 2017.

As part of the Model 3 consideration process, the SEStran board consider Professor Tom Rye of Napier's Transport Research Institute to undertake an initial analysis, a link to the report is included below:

<http://www.sestran.gov.uk/files/1482242589.pdf>

The Board set a number of high-level criteria for Prof Rye's research to focus upon:

- Planning and delivering transport solutions for all modes of transport across the region;
- The short, medium and long-term impacts and benefits of a change to a Model 3 Regional Transport Partnership and within this a high-level analysis of the prioritisation of actions to address current constraints on regional transport outcomes;
- Impact on positive pricing, multi-modal journey integration and economies of scale through regional travel planning, procurement and asset management;
- Improved cross-regional mobility for regional labour, training and employability;
- Improved community connectivity where there are no commercial services presently or services are under pressure;
- Provision of transport for people with disabilities and intersectionality across groups; and
- Contribution to the health, employability and welfare reform agendas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.