

Smarter Choices Action Plan Summary

“A Catalyst for Change”

The Regional Transport Strategy for the west
of Scotland 2007-2021

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Purpose

This Smarter Choices Action Plan is one of a series of action plans developed as part of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), approved by Scottish Ministers. Smarter Choices represent a range of measures designed to support sustainable travel by reducing dependency on the car, improving and protecting the environment. This Action Plan sets out the key issues, objectives and recommendations for encouraging more sustainable travel in the SPT area. It summarises work undertaken in analysing the issues and challenges for encouraging sustainable travel, and is intended to set out a clear programme of action to take forward.

Issues, Constraints and Opportunities

The following issues, constraints and opportunities were identified following analysis by SPT and consultation with SPT member councils and stakeholders as part of the RTS development process.

- **Attitudes to sustainable transport**
Smarter Choices (or soft measures) are not seen as being as attractive as large infrastructure projects and it was recommended that sustainable transport is given more priority in the RTS and that marketing and promotion are critical.
- **Travel behaviour and how change can be encouraged**
The need to understand what motivates people is important and this is where the work on perceptions of travel awareness can help. It was recognised that this needs to be a long-term programme and that some 'sticks' should be considered. There is an opportunity to target the market segments most likely to transfer from the car to sustainable transport. Raising awareness among young people is seen as vital.
- **Car culture**
There is a concern that owning and driving a car is something people aspire to and that motoring is easier and cheaper than using public transport.
- **Social inclusion**
The social inclusion benefits of facilitating sustainable travel to areas of employment, education, healthcare and leisure facilities were highlighted. Car ownership in many parts of the region is relatively low. Therefore, improvements which benefit car use, effectively exclude those people who do not own a car. It is also necessary to recognise that sustainable travel can be more difficult in rural areas where alternatives to car use are more limited.

- **Land-use Planning**
Reducing the need to travel is important and this can be achieved through better land-use planning. For example, out-of-town shopping centres encourage car use and owning a car allows people to live far from their workplaces and discourages cycling and walking.
- **Funding**
Funding was seen as a constraint and this applies to staff, measures and marketing across a range of organisations. There are limited resources available to organisations across the public and private sectors to take forward travel planning and Smarter Choices measures. Linked to this is a perceived lack of political and corporate support across organisations, with more emphasis given to major infrastructure projects.
- **Policy limitations**
Stakeholders saw policy limitations and a lack of national targets as a key constraint. Better policy integration across government, developers and with other agencies is needed.
- **Lack of control over bus services**
The lack of control over bus services was identified as a constraint which impacts on social inclusion. The quality and affordability of public transport was seen as a problem for modal shift.
- **Capacity**
Insufficient capacity on the public transport network is seen as a potential constraint, limiting the opportunity for people to transfer to more sustainable forms of travel.
- **Environment**
An important issue is the need to improve and protect the environment. Air quality and noise were seen as particularly important.
- **Targeting shorter journeys**
Targeting short journeys was identified as an opportunity to transfer to more sustainable modes. In the region 18% of journeys are less than 1km and a further 15% are between 1 and 2kms. Linked to this was the need to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and to consider safety issues.
- **Effective management of road space**
Effective and efficient management of road space is critical to meeting the environmental, economic and social inclusion goals of national, regional and local transport policy. The adoption of Smarter Choices can help release road space, freeing it up for use by more sustainable modes and business users. However, it is important that this freed capacity is not simply filled up by more private cars.

- **Car parking policy**
A regional Car Parking Policy could play a part in maximising the efficient use of road space. However, the policy should reflect local conditions in different parts of the region.
- **Land use planning**
The use of land use planning to maximise gain from developers and curtail unsustainable development is an opportunity that should be optimised.
- **Travel Planning**
There was support for more widespread travel planning with recognition that community involvement is necessary and that travel plans for business and schools are important.

Objectives

The vision for the Smarter Choices Action Plan is to:

- Encourage a shift to more sustainable and active travel in order to improve quality of life and enhance the environment for people of all ages and abilities.

The objectives are to:

- Implement a range of Smarter Choices measures to encourage more sustainable travel for people of all ages and abilities to education, employment, healthcare and leisure facilities.
- Take account of the role of restraint measures in the implementation of Smarter Choices measures e.g
- Enhance and protect the environment by promoting and assisting with the development and implementation of travel plans for businesses, schools, communities and individuals.
- Raise awareness of Smarter Choices measures and encourage behaviour change to more sustainable travel modes.
- Encourage more cycling and walking, particularly for shorter trips.
- Improve health by encouraging active travel.

Recommendations

The following recommendations will be developed in partnership with member councils and key stakeholders. These recommendations were approved by the Strategy and Programmes committee on 25 January 2008.

Travel Planning

- Support and promote school travel plans
- Support the ongoing development and promotion of workplace travel plans

Travel Awareness

- Raise awareness of travel options and encourage behaviour change

Information

- Improve sustainable transport information and marketing

Initiatives

- Improve and promote the regional walking network
- Improve and promote the regional cycling network
- Investigate the establishment of Transport Management Organisations (TMOs)
- Introduce a programme of personalised travel planning
- Support the introduction of sustainable travel demonstration town(s)
- Implement a regional car-sharing scheme
- Support the introduction of a regional car club network
- Promote options that reduce the need to travel
- Support active travel initiatives to improve the health of individuals

Target

To develop a programme for the implementation of the Smarter Choices Action Plan through SPT's Business Plan.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the agreed programme will be incorporated within SPT's Business Plan monitoring process.

Further Information

Related reports are available on our website www.spt.co.uk and further information is available from rts@spt.co.uk or by contacting:

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Policy and Strategy Department
Consort House
12 West George Street
Glasgow, G2 1HN
Phone: 0141 333 3219
Email to: rts@spt.co.uk

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Policy and Strategy Department
Consort House
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Glasgow G2 1HN

phone: 0141 332 3219
email: rts@spt.co.uk

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