Transport in Key Areas and Sectors of the South West

5.1 Supporting Key Locations in the Region

The RTS, in line with the principles set out in the Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan, emphasises the need to support key locations in order to maximise economic prosperity and social inclusion. It focuses on the transport outcomes required for the region's communities if they are to fulfil their potential, rather than individual transport projects in isolation.

Ensuring that the Regional Transport Strategy is focussed on these outcomes is critical if the region to play its full part in promoting the Government's objectives to create a Wealthier and Fairer Scotland.

In addition, since the South West of Scotland is composed of a number of diverse local communities, which face a variety of opportunities and constraints, the RTS has to balance its

focus on supporting the National Purpose (of increasing the rate of sustainable economic growth) with facilitating a fair share of this growth which the Scottish Government wishes to see across all of the country's communities. This means that in the same way that transport policies suitable for Edinburgh or Glasgow are unlikely to be easily applied to the South West, there will need to be appropriate variation in policy between the different



geographical communities of the South West itself. The sections below examine a number of these in turn.

Dumfries - "regenerating the regional capital"

Dumfries and Galloway Council and its partners are working towards the comprehensive economic regeneration of Dumfries Town Centre in view of its importance as the largest economic hub within the region. Key issues for the RTS emerging from this include:

- Quality of access / penetration to key commercial and other service activities in the town centre by each transport mode;
- Role of town centre parking availability and charging as measures for managing traffic levels, modal split and environmental quality, especially in relation to the level of bus fares for journeys to/from Dumfries;
- Limited number of river crossings with implications for access to certain key locations, especially between the town centre and the Crichton Campus area in south Dumfries;
- Congestion in the Dumfries Town network, especially during morning and evening peaks, and the environmental impacts of traffic;
- Limited road space and the difficulty in implementing effective priority measures for buses;
- Lack of integrated public transport interchange facilities.

Each of these issues constrains the development potential of the town centre. If employment, retailing, leisure and "evening economy" activities are to be enhanced, these constraints will have to be addressed so that transport facilitates rather than limits high value economic growth.

In terms of wider regional economic development, there is a clear strategic need to recapture investment and expenditure from Carlisle, which has substantially increased its sphere of influence over recent years. It is envisaged that the priorities set out in the RTS will play an important role in maximising the level of investment, expenditure and revenue retained in the region.

Such a strategy for enhancement of Dumfries as the regional capital implies a more "urban role" than might have been the case previously. Although this presents opportunities for growth, many of the transport problems already faced by urban centres, such as congestion, poor air quality and impact on the public realm, will become more apparent in Dumfries, without appropriate transport management.

These problems are already apparent around the Crichton/Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary (DGRI) site (a large development of university / medical / business facilities) in southern Dumfries, which is facing a rising congestion problem due to network constraints.

There are opportunities for promoting modal shift using the new Kirkpatrick Macmillan Cycle/Pedestrian Bridge for linking communities to the Crichton/DGRI. There is also a need to consider the transport implications of the North West Dumfries Area Regeneration Strategy which is being developed by Dumfries and Galloway Council and its partners.

In considering longer term trends, traffic growth in Dumfries was modest after the A75 bypass was opened in 1990, and more closely followed National Low Growth predictions. Since 2000, the rate of traffic growth has increased and is expected to grow steadily and a study into the implications of the Local Plan predicts an 8% increase in background traffic between 2004 and 2009.

A SCOOT traffic management and control system was introduced in 2000. A before-and-after survey found that the system had delivered a 10% reduction in queues and delays against a background of 5% increase in traffic between the survey periods. Nevertheless, including traffic that would be induced if the Nithsdale Local Plan were fully implemented the expected increase in traffic up to 2009 and beyond is to be between 34% and 42%. Traffic demand historically reflected the traditional commuting profile, but changing patterns of development around Dumfries have resulted in increased traffic across the network for longer periods. With traffic set to rise substantially within Dumfries, a balanced approach to the overall management of traffic demand is required, consistent with highlighting the role of Dumfries as the regional capital. This means that although some modest increases in traffic levels elsewhere in the region might need to be accommodated to sustain employment and accessibility to deep rural areas, this should be offset by road traffic reduction in Dumfries and the surrounding area where the potential to deliver high quality alternatives to car travel is most apparent.

Stranraer and Loch Ryan

Stena Line have advised that they have not abandoned plans to re-locate ferry services on Loch Ryan and are looking at various options for the future.

The potential planned relocation of the Stena Line ferry operations to Cairnryan presents a complex set of transport problems and opportunities for the wider Loch Ryan area and its communities. The existing Loch Ryan ferry links bring over 1100 local jobs and £21million a year into the local community. There is currently significant competition from other Great

Britain to Ireland routes, which is increasing given significant transport investment elsewhere such as the A5/A55 expressway to Holyhead and the current road building programme in the Republic of Ireland. Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway and Dumfries and Galloway Council have led a development framework for the Stranraer Waterfront, which seeks to grasp the opportunities for renewal presented by the shift in port activities to



create a new future for Stranraer. A £2.35 million Scottish Executive award has been secured by Dumfries and Galloway Council for a new Public Transport Interchange to link rail and bus services with ferry operations and other local transport needs.

In its response to the Scottish Government on the National Planning Framework 2 Discussion Draft, Swestrans proposed that a Loch Ryan Ferry Ports Enhancement Project be considered for inclusion in NPF2 as a National Development. This proposal would primarily include enhancements to ferry ports but also include the need for upgrades to A75 and A77 Trunk roads and rail link enhancements.

The Stranraer Waterfront development concept, which covers a 26 acre site, consists of a series of development areas comprising of new business, residential, leisure and retail, anchored by the marina development.

The marina development plans to have 400 berths to meet anticipated future demand. It is important that the level of rail services to Stranraer is protected and enhanced following the possible relocation of Stena Line to Cairnryan.

Gretna – Lockerbie – Annan Triangle

The area was dealt a potentially significant blow in 2002 with the announcement of the cessation of power generation at the Chapelcross Nuclear Power Station, with the loss of up to 450 jobs directly and a total economic impact of up to £18 million per annum in lost wages to the locality.

A strategy has been taken forward to develop new economic opportunities and a broader vision for the area. Scottish Enterprise is



committed to delivering the strategy, which has 6 themes including Connectivity. The strategy could generate £265 million in Gross Value Added over a 10 year period. The area has the potential to become a centre of decommissioning excellence.

Naturally, there are some transport issues related to developing the Gretna-Lockerbie-Annan triangle and Chapelcross, whatever form it takes, and investment in infrastructure is likely to be required.

The Gretna-Lockerbie-Annan Economic Regeneration Project is a project of national scale with the opportunity to exploit a £50 billion UK Nuclear Decommissioning Market. Twenty civil nuclear sites in the UK are scheduled for decommissioning over the next 50 years and Chapelcross will be one of the first of these sites.

Delivery of a strategic action plan over five years will support the restructuring of the Gretna-Lockerbie-Annan economy following the decision to cease power production at Chapelcross.

There may be a potential opportunity to re-instate a section of railway line between the site and the Glasgow and Southwestern Line at Annan to assist potential freight movements to and from the site.

The competitiveness of the Biomass Plant at Steven's Croft adjacent to the A74(M) will require good connections, mainly on local roads to the major forest materials suppliers in the region; indeed the potential impact of this sector on the local road network in particular should not be underestimated. With its location on the key west coast motorway and railway routes, the area is within relatively good travelling time of many key locations, particularly the western part of the central belt; nevertheless, connections to key ports, to the east coast and to the Edinburgh area are weak and could constrain future business development.



The A74(M) motorway covers a distance of 40 miles in Dumfries and Galloway and forms part of a critical central UK corridor for transporting goods and services. Various settlements are located adjacent to the route; however of particular note are Lockerbie, Ecclefechan and Gretna, all of which have both North and Southbound access.

Economic opportunities identified in a review of commercial transport and logistics undertaken by Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway in 2004 included the creation of distribution centres to collect, assemble and distribute goods. This together with associated services for hauliers, creates a new Gateway development corridor. Initial developments such as Steven's Croft at Lockerbie demonstrate the potential to co-locate processing and manufacturing facilities adjacent to the motorway and the West Coast Main Line.

Remote Rural Communities

Upper Nithsdale is a deep rural area identified in the Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan as particularly fragile, and which is therefore an emerging economic and transport development priority for Dumfries and Galloway. In particular, development of the existing rail infrastructure could assist economic development, potentially by offering an alternative to the West Coast Main Line and/or taking advantage of enhanced infrastructure required to accommodate increased coal-related activity.

As for many former industrial areas, commuting provides one of the most realistic options for connecting local residents with new employment opportunities, and sustaining local communities. For Upper Nithsdale, links to Ayrshire and Clydeside are likely to be at least as important in this respect as intra-regional connections to Dumfries. Therefore, the scope for management of the key rail corridor through the valley to provide for more regular commuting opportunities is likely to be essential in order to tackle social exclusion.

Other remote rural communities in the region face similar problems, but without the potential advantages of rail access. Along with Upper Nithsdale, the Machars area is identified by the Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan as being particularly vulnerable to economic decline, with its low employment rate and dispersed population. The delivery of flexible transport services, most likely based on some sort of Demand Responsive Transport, is likely to be crucial to enhance access to employment, health care and other essential services. Here, as elsewhere in the most rural parts of the region, increased (rather than reduced) car use might be an essential component of an effective, balanced transport strategy that seeks to maximize economic and social opportunity.

Dumfries and Galloway Council in partnership with various community and voluntary bodies, has encouraged the development of community transport initiatives. Much of the development work is co-ordinated through the Accessible Transport Forum, which brings together voluntary organisations, the Council and other public sector organisations.

5.2 Supporting Key Sectors

Timber

Dumfries and Galloway has the highest amount of forestry activity in Scotland, and 28% of the land mass of Dumfries and Galloway is covered in forests.

Timber and timber harvesting, already worth £30 million to the local economy, is expected to double over the next 5 to 10 years, however, there is a need for issues relating to timber extraction to be given a higher national profile.



Annually, timber production generates around 100,000 lorry movements in the area, plus a further 30,000 through journeys from other areas (around 400 movements per day). Like most rural areas, the local road network in the South West was not designed to accommodate wide, heavy modern freight vehicles such as those used for timber transport.

In view of the projected substantial increase in timber harvesting in coming years, integrated transport solutions will have to be developed as well as local roads requiring substantial investment.

In an attempt to mitigate the impact of timber traffic, Dumfries and Galloway Council in partnership with industry stakeholders has defined an Agreed Routes Map for timber traffic, focusing movements on those routes best able to cope with large vehicles. However, this is not statutorily enforceable, and depends on the cooperation of the timber industry to work effectively, through a Partnership Charter

Timber transport not only impacts on the physical state of the road network, it also affects quality of life in communities inconvenienced by vehicle movements. The doubling of production over the coming years will more than double road traffic as it is likely that brash will also be transported to the biofuels plant at Steven's Croft, which became operational in early 2008.

There is also likely to be a potential impact from and increase in timber movements associated with a growing biomass energy sector, which will place increasing pressure on the transport infrastructure, whilst at the same time presenting economic opportunities.

Tourism

As for many areas of rural Scotland, tourism is an increasingly important industry in the South West. Tourism supports local jobs, provides income directly to fragile rural communities, and helps sustain local service provision by increasing the demand for goods and services beyond the purchasing power of local people alone. Growing and developing tourism, whilst minimising its impact on the local environment, is clearly an economic development priority for the region.



There are a number of tourist attractions that contribute significantly to the local economy. Dumfries and Galloway is home to a number of themed towns and popular outdoor attractions. Scottish Enterprise and Dumfries and Galloway Council are promoting the case for Dumfries and Galloway to host Scotland's Marine National Park, which would be a significant tourist attractor to the area.

As a result of the possible developments in Stranraer and Loch Ryan additional opportunities will arise to attract visitors from Northern Ireland to existing and new tourist attractions.

The South West suffers from being a "transit" region; home to several key gateway corridors and ports, so that many journeys pass through the region rather than stop in it. This means that opportunities for easy diversion off main routes are essential if revenue is to be retained in the region rather than exported to adjoining areas.

The quality of transport infrastructure is of critical importance to tourists' decisions over where and when to travel. Poor quality roads encourage people to complete their journey to its destination, rather than having the confidence to break their journey at an intermediate stop. Bus and rail timetables need to be flexible enough to permit stopovers en route, and the design of interchanges should make it simple for people to access nearby tourist facilities such as town centres or visitor attractions.

Other Sectors/Freight

In addition to Timber and Tourism, other sectors have a significant impact on freight movements and are important to the region's economy. The value of the local Food and Drink sector is significant, particularly milk, meat and fish/shellfish for sale elsewhere in the UK and overseas. It has very time sensitive logistics chains dependent on road transport, and is exposed to significant risks of lost revenue if the transport network is significantly unreliable. The road



haulage sector is also important in terms of both local employment and the distribution of raw materials and manufactured goods to and from the region. Road Freight movement between Dumfries and Galloway and points outwith Dumfries and Galloway in the UK were on average around 3.4 million tonnes exported and 3.8 million imported for the years between 1998 and 2002. There are a number of large road haulage distribution depots based in Dumfries.

There is an opportunity to develop a Freight Action Plan to include input from Partner Organisations, which would consider all aspects of freight movement and reflect the Scottish Government's expectations in the Freight Action Plan for Scotland.

Improving Health

A significant innovation of the Regional Transport Partnership is the level of integration between transport policy and health. For single local authority partnerships such as SWestrans, local health boards have a particular role as a statutory partner member reflecting the critical links between transport and health at the community level.



Funding from the Scottish Government for the SWestrans Workplace Travel Plan Coordinator was available in 2007/08 subject to specific deliverables including working with NHS Dumfries and Galloway to ensure that a travel plan was in place. A Travel Plan has been developed by NHS Dumfries and Galloway for Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary and Crichton Royal Hospital. SWestrans, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Dumfries and Galloway College have also developed a travel sharing website to allow journeys to be matched up.

Health services are significant generators of transport demand, but there is also the role that more active, integrated transport can play in improving people's sense of wellbeing, their health, and their quality of life. Enabling people to make more active transport choices through the actions of the Regional Transport Strategy is an important contribution to the Scottish Government's priority of creating a Healthier Scotland.

More specifically, the transport problems of the region impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the NHS in the South West in the following ways:

- NHS based trips are made largely by car (approaching 150,000 trips per annum);
- External trips are required for care in areas where there is no regional clinical capability
 (advanced cancer care, scanning etc.). This situation is likely to persist for the foreseeable
 future, with many patients continuing to receive treatment in the Central Belt or further
 afield, although some additional facilities (notably MRI) will be coming to the region as
 part of NHS Dumfries and Galloway's ongoing investment strategy.

Although the local NHS in the South West has aspirations to deliver more services at the local level, overall demand for health services is rising, offsetting any reduction in journeys from localising service delivery. Acknowledging new priorities set out in the National Transport Strategy (NTS), stakeholders will be required to better integrate patient transport and other transport services, including scheduled and demand responsive bus services, and other quasipublic transport such as community transport.

Active travel also has an important role to play in promoting a Healthier Scotland. There are opportunities to increase physical activity levels through active travel. With two thirds of Scotland's population currently not getting enough physical activity, promoting active travel is an excellent opportunity to positively influence the health and quality of life of people in the South West of Scotland area. Just 30 minutes of daily physical activity (which can easily be achieved by substituting short car journeys by walking and cycling) can significantly reduce the risk of many serious health conditions including obesity, heart disease, diabetes and mental health problems.

The importance of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP17) in promoting sustainable travel is welcome and SWestrans supports improvements to the built environment that encourage and facilitate active travel.

6. Land Use Planning



The first National Planning Framework (NPF) (2004) set out the previous Scottish Executive's strategy for Scotland's long term spatial development. Following the publication of a Monitoring Report in September 2006, and a series of consultation seminars with key stakeholders from across the country the Scottish Government published the Consultative Draft of NPF2 in January 2008.

In replying to the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 Discussion Draft, SWestrans response included a proposal that a Loch Ryan Ferry Ports Enhancement Project be considered by the Scottish Government for inclusion as a National Development. This proposal primarily includes enhancements to ferry ports but also includes the need for upgrades to A75 and A77 Trunk roads and rail links.

The final version of the revised NPF2, which is due towards the end of 2008, will be placed on a statutory footing. As such, it will be a central focus of the Scottish Government's vision of a Smarter Scotland, acting as a guide for high quality, locally sensitive and nationally appropriate development. Also important is Scottish Planning Policy 17, "Planning for Transport" (SPP17) which picks up from SPP1. The Planning System reinforces the Scottish Government's commitment to the development of integrated land use and planning. SPP17 sets out how development plans should allocate land for new development in the knowledge of the capacity of the transport network. In dealing with planning applications, a system is promoted whereby



each application contains details of the likely transport impacts and the proposed means of mitigating those impacts through design, investment or sustainable travel plans. SPP17 is therefore a key tool for delivering sustainable travel by reducing the need to travel and by encouraging sustainable modes.

The development plan system for Dumfries and Galloway consists of a Structure Plan and four Local Plans. The Guiding Principle of the Structure Plan is "to encourage the growth and development of sustainable communities in Dumfries and Galloway", and is therefore closely aligned to the Scottish Government's wider economic and social development targets. There is a transportation section in the Structure Plan which includes policy guidance on the Location of Development, Trunk Roads and Motorways, A74 Upgrading, A75 Upgrading, Implementation of Route Action Plans, Regional Strategic and Distributor Road Network, Stranraer Transport Strategy, Local Public Transport, Rail Services, The North Channel corridor and Loch Ryan Ferry Ports, Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities, National Cycle Route Network, Forestry Roads, Harbour Development and Roadside Facilities. The Local Plans also contain a transport section with specific General Policies covering Freight Transport, Safeguarding former Rail Transport Routes, Town Centre Accessibility, Traffic Management and Road Safety, Local Road Network, Cycling, Road Design, Passenger Transport, Access to Transport Facilities and Protection of established Harbours and Slipways. The Transportation Policies in the Structure and Local Plans have been prepared taking into account national planning guidance. There are also Policies in the Structure and Local plans which provide protection for the Natural and Built Environment.

A real impact of the Smarter Scotland objective can be seen in the promotion and management of development that protects our environment. Smart development builds in public transport services at the beginning of the design process, and makes it easy for people to improve their health by everyday walking and cycling. Alongside this are other types of efficient and sustainable transport investment, such as in the planning of roadworks and landscaping which minimise emissions, reduce the consumption of resources and enegy, and take advantage of recycling opportunities as available.

Reducing emissions contributes to tackling the issue of Climate Change, for which the Scottish Government has the ambitious target of reducing carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Road transport remains by far the biggest source of emissions from a selection of transport modes. There are opportunities to influence emission levels by encouraging walking and cycling and effective public transport options. There are also opportunities to minimise the environmental impact of roads through design, construction and maintenance, and in doing so to make them more resilient to future adverse weather events.

Legislation for reform of the planning system has now been passed, though not yet fully brought into effect. Draft Regulations on Development Planning were published for consultation at the end of October 2007 by the Scottish Government. The new Development Planning system will not come fully into effect until the final Regulations are published by the Scottish Government towards the end of 2008. In Dumfries and Galloway the new arrangements will mean the replacement of the current two tier Development Plan system by a single tier Local Development Plan.

The Regional Transport Strategy supports and underpins a number of local strategies including the emerging Local Development Plan, the South of Scotland Competitiveness Strategy and the Dumfries and Galloway Economic Development Strategy.

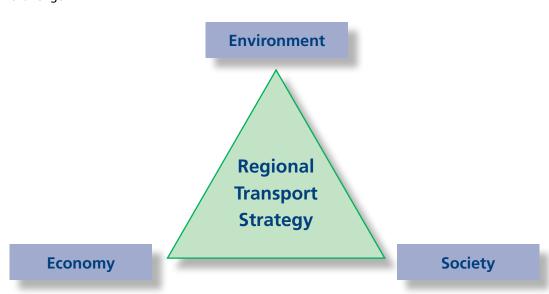
7. The South West Of Scotland's Transport Future

Whilst the nature and scale of the issues facing Dumfries and Galloway are significantly different from those arising in Scotland's large urban centres, the development of an overarching RTS is no less important. The identification of explicit transport outcomes linked to broader economic, social and environmental goals remains highly significant if the region is to benefit from sustained but responsible economic growth. Key to this responsibility is not only the achievement of stringent social inclusion and environmental objectives, but also the contribution the South West can make to the wellbeing of the Scottish economy as a whole.

These broad principles of course require enhancements to the region's connectivity with the vibrant Central Belt economies and with other important markets, particularly the north of England and Northern Ireland. It is likely that some road enhancement will be both necessary and justified given the particular circumstances of the South West region. The key will be to pursue demand management and other measures (such as targeted public transport improvements) in the principal towns and along key corridors capable of offsetting as far as possible the impact of upgrading the road network in Dumfries and Galloway.

7.1 The Sustainability Triangle

The Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan's focus on the Brundtland Commission's exploration of the concept of sustainable development was both bold and visionary. Creating the conditions for genuinely sustainable development is not easy; at once not compromising future generations' resources whilst at the same time safeguarding the quality of life and economic and social opportunities of current residents and visitors is a particularly difficult challenge.



In order to address these concerns as far as possible, the concept of the sustainability "triangle" is useful, and summarises the approach taken in the RTS. The triangle recognises that economic, environmental and social development are mutually dependent, and that progress towards sustainability in each policy element is required if sustainable development overall is to be made real. This means that effective transport interventions are those that sustain the economy, facilitate community life through access to friends, family, neighbours and services, whilst at the same time minimising impacts on the natural environment, especially carbon emissions.

The RTS therefore advances an approach capable of achieving defined transport outcomes within a framework of broader economic, social and environmental objectives. As such, it does four things:

- Assists in underpinning regional economic growth, by setting out transport policies and
 projects which improve transport links within Dumfries and Galloway and provide fast and
 reliable journey times to significant markets including the national economic centres of
 Edinburgh and Glasgow;
- Strikes a balance between policies that maximise this economic growth whilst minimising social exclusion and environmental impacts;
- Assists the Scottish Government in delivering on the objectives set out in the National Transport Strategy. In particular the RTP must set out the Region's position on and contribution to the Ministers' key transport target of national traffic stabilisation;
- Demonstrates that major infrastructure schemes will add value to the broader Scottish economy and underpin national economic growth.

As a sparsely populated rural peripheral region of 147,000 people, the policies and initiatives brought forward in the RTS will have to be tailored to specific local characteristics. What is required in Edinburgh and Glasgow is not necessarily what is required in the South West.

There is a high dependency on road transport and private car use, and it may be neither as practical nor desirable to discourage this across Dumfries and Galloway per se, the same way as government policy promotes in large urban areas. A fragile economy needs to be underpinned by investment in strategic transport links, balanced by effective sustainable transport measures in locales where these are appropriate.

7.2 Focusing on Economic Development

Central to the region's sustainable future will be the support of a robust regional economy. With a projected decline in overall population and labour force levels, securing increased prosperity and improved quality of life for the region's residents will requireinnovative interventions to stimulate the local economy, create jobs and position the region in growing market sectors.

One of the key priorities in the Dumfries and Galloway Corporate Plan is the development and implementation of the new Five Year Economic Development Strategy which makes specific links between a good transport system and economic development. Transport is critical in supporting jobs located in the region itself, including the growing service sectors in



Dumfries, port and related activity in Loch Ryan, timber and biofuels production in deep rural areas or myriad other activities across the region. Without improved connections between the region's communities, and between the region and its main external markets, the competitiveness of each of these components of the local economy could be undermined.

The Government Economic Strategy indicates that "An efficient transport system is one of the key enablers for enhancing productivity and delivering faster, more sustainable growth. Enhancing transport infrastructure and services can open up new markets, increase access to employment and help to build a critical mass of businesses that drive up competitiveness and deliver growth."



7.3 Creating Vibrant Places

From the outset, the RTS has focused on the role of transport enhancement as a means to an end. With a balanced, sustainable approach which supports a robust local economy, the main role of transport investment in the South West as facilitated by the RTS needs to be the creation of vibrant places that provide the employment, healthcare, educational and other services that people need and want, so that their quality of life is maximised. Accessibility is crucial to this, as transport facilitates (or restricts) the consumption of each of these life opportunities.

We have focused on the specific requirements of particular locations in the region, but several key themes emerge across the South West of Scotland area. First is to reduce the constraint of peripherality, both between the region's main settlements and its outlying areas, and between the region and its external markets. Second, the needs of often conflicting transport demands will need to be reconciled, whether these be local commuters and long distance freight flows around Dumfries, local passenger rail traffic and heavy load coal, or Loch Ryan ferry passengers and the demands of emerging new economic activities in the Stranraer waterfront.

Third is how the South West can play its role in safeguarding the wider environment. In fragile rural communities especially, it is often the case that more, not less, transport is required to sustain local economies and ways of life. Therefore any stimulus to increased transport use in these areas must be balanced by alternative approaches in those locations where different transport policies focused on minimising car use are both more appropriate and more effective. This is most likely to be the case in Dumfries, but potentially also in Stranraer, where improving the public realm and the quality of walking and cycling routes can both reduce motorised travel, and add vibrancy and a genuine sense of place to the town centre. To be genuinely "regional" in its outlook, the RTS will need to reconcile these competing needs to present a balanced overall approach.

Social inclusion cannot be tackled merely through a combination of conventional bus services and concessionary fares. Fostering social participation depends on innovative arrangements for access to and from small settlements; community transport and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) are important, as is closer joint working between stakeholders to better integrate transport provided by the Ambulance Services, the Primary Health Care Trust, Social Services, the voluntary sector and the business sector.

7.4 Safeguarding the Environment

Whilst traffic levels in the South West contribute little to Scotland's overall climate change inventory, the RTS cannot ignore the environmental impacts of transport. SWestrans supports the Scottish Government's Sustainable Development Strategy and Climate Change Programme. At the same time, the need to reduce the carbon impact of transport should inform policies that target those journeys and locations where the potential benefits of intervention are greatest and can help contribute most directly to the sustainability triangle. In other words, a realistic and balanced analysis is required to determine whether or not the region justifies a (slightly) higher level of road vehicle kilometres travelled per person than might be the case elsewhere, given its rural character.



The NTS looks forward to the possible introduction of carbon 'budgets', which more clearly account for the carbon emissions produced across the Scottish economy. One possibility in the context of a broader transport and/or sustainability strategy is the introduction of a wider carbon balance sheet such as a 'carbon credit', which could 'reward' Dumfries and Galloway for the amount of forested land under its jurisdiction. These credits or rewards could take the form of higher acceptable levels of road traffic in those deep rural areas where this is genuinely valuable in promoting economic sustainability and community cohesion. There is the possibility that 'carbon sinks' such as newly-planted forestry could be used to offset the deleterious environmental effects of carbon dioxide production associated with some increased traffic growth in the area, as long as they are pursued alongside the promotion of other sustainable transport approaches such as improved parking management, the introduction of Green Travel Plans and a further enhancement in the quality of the bus services. However, the real benefits of 'carbon sinks' requires further detailed investigation.

In particular, the work being progressed by SWestrans on Workplace Travel Planning will act as a catalyst for the promotion and encouragement of sustainable travel choices. The initial targets for Green Travel Plans are public sector employers, with the possibility of extending the project to include other key employers in the region. SWestrans is also a partner in the "Transport 2 Employment" project which supplies transport to work where conventional public transport is not available.

Other initiatives which are being developed as a means of reducing the need to travel include Car Clubs, Wheels to Work and Car Sharing.

SWestrans and its partners NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Dumfries and Galloway College have developed a travel sharing website to allow journeys to be matched up.

7.5 Developing Main Corridors

A key issue for the South West is the presence of critical long distance corridors in the region. As noted earlier, this can be a double edged sword; although some of these routes, most notably the A74(M) and the WCML have received substantial investment in recent years, this is mostly to the benefit of traffic transiting the region, rather than doing business inside its boundaries. Capitalising on these improvements to create new transport services, nodes and development opportunities will be critical to an effective RTS.

Of particular importance is the quality of links from the region to the Central Belt and the rest of Scotland, compared to those towards England. Improved longdistance connectivity could be encouraged and easier access to other Scottish markets could result from targeted investment in road and / or rail development.



A key strategic choice for the region will be how to focus priority on competing long distance corridors. Ministers have made it clear that the Regional Transport Strategies must be visionary in their outlook. Translated into practical planning terms this means that the Strategies must demonstrate how investment in improved transport links can benefit the economy at both regional and national levels. Thus it is critically important for the RTS to show how investment in transport in Dumfries and Galloway can benefit the performance of the Scottish economy as well as that of the region itself. Making a persuasive case for investment in the long distance corridors serving wider national needs will be central to this.

The RTS addresses several alternatives in this respect. At the broadest level, the region could be seen to house two alternative south west – north east strategic routes, along the A77 and A75/A709 corridors respectively. Equally, a good quality bus service from Dumfries Railway Station to the WCML at Lockerbie which integrates with WCML services would allow a quick and reliable link to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Setting the Policy and Performance 8. **Context**

The Regional Transport Strategy has been developed in the context of:

The Scottish Government's High Level Objectives

These are:

- · Wealthier and Fairer Scotland;
- Healthier Scotland;
- Safer and Stronger Scotland;
- Smarter Scotland;
- Greener Scotland.

8.2 The National Performance Framework

The National Performance Framework sets out the Government's overall Purpose to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through sustainable economic growth.

PURPOSE PURPOSE TARGETS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

NATIONAL OUTCOMES

NATIONAL INDICATORS AND TARGETS

8.3 The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy

The Scottish Government's Economic Strategy sets out the context of economic development activity across Scotland and high level Purpose Targets.

Indicator	dicator Target	
Economic Growth (GDP)	c Growth (GDP) To raise the GDP growth rate to the UK level by 2011 To match the growth rate of small independent EU countries by 2017	
Productivity	To rank in the top quartile for productivity amongst our key trading partners in the OECD by 2017	
Participation	To maintain our position on labour market participation as the top performing country in the UK and to close the gap with the top five OECD economies by 2017	
Population	To match average European (EU15) population growth over the period from 2007 to 2017, supported by increased healthy life expectancy in Scotland over this period	
Solidarity	darity To increase overall income and the proportion of income earned by the three low income deciles as a group by 2017	
Cohesion	To narrow the gap in participation between Scotland's best and worst performing regions by 2017	
Sustainability	To reduce emissions over the period to 2011 To reduce emissions by 80 per cent by 2050	

8.4 National Outcomes

There are fifteen National Outcomes:

National Performance Framework

The Government's Purpose

To focus government and Public Services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth

High Level Targets Relating to the Purpose

Growth Productivity Participation Population Solidarity Cohesion Sustainability

Strategic Objectives

Wealthier and Fairer , Smarter, Healthier, Safer and Stronger, Greener			
National Outcomes	1	We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	
	2	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	
	3	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	
	4	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	
	5	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	
	6	We live longer, healthier lives	
	7	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	
	8	We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	
	9	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	
	10	We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	
	11	We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	
	12	We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	
	13	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	
	14	We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	
	15	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs	

8.5 The Concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA

The Concordat sets out the terms of a new relationship based on mutual respect and partnership. It underpins the funding to be provided to local government over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. The package includes that there will be a move towards a Single Outcome Agreement for every Council, based on the agreed set of national outcomes underpinned by agreed national indicators.

RTPs are rightly recognised as part of the local government "family".

8.6 The Single Outcome Agreement being developed by Dumfries and Galloway Council and its Community Planning Partners

The agreement identifies the key characteristics of the region, and sets out areas for improvement in delivering public services in Dumfries and Galloway that should make a real difference to people's lives and make Dumfries and Galloway the best place in Scotland to live, learn, work, visit and grow.

The Single Outcome Agreement:

- Supports delivery of the shared Dumfries & Galloway 2020 vision, and the new Community Plan 2009-2012;
- Establishes shared outcomes to be achieved in Dumfries & Galloway and the indicators that will measure progress and achievement;
- Sets out how partners and national government will work with the local authority to deliver the shared outcomes;
- Supports the new relationship built on partnership and mutual respect established in the Concordat between Scottish Government and COSLA and underpins funding to be provided to local government over the period 2008-2011;
- Provides a clear link between the Scottish Government's strategic objectives and national outcomes and the specific needs of the rural communities of Dumfries & Galloway, by translating national priorities into local outcomes.

As a Comunity Planning partner SWestrans are working with Dumfries and Galloway Council and its other Community Planning partners in the development of the Single Outcome Agreement and this is set out in Chapter 13.

8.7 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework and the National Planning Framework 2 are discussed in Chapter 6.

8.8 The National Transport Strategy

The National Transport Strategy focuses on delivering the Key Strategic Outcomes endorsed by the Scottish Government of:

- · Improved journey times and connections;
- · Reduced emissions;
- Improved quality;
- · Accessibility and affordability.

Throughout the preparation of the revised RTS, SWestrans has worked closely with the Scottish Government to ensure that the interventions proposed for the South West's transport networks are aligned with national policies and objectives. In particular, the RTS has been designed to:

- prioritise the National Purpose of increasing the rate of sustainable economic growth;
- propose transport interventions in the context of national as well as regional boundaries, policies and priorities;
- outline project aspirations in the "visionary" manner encouraged by Scottish Ministers whilst being mindful of the likely future availability of funds and project resources;
- demonstrate clear linkages between chosen projects and the Scottish Governments five cross-cutting national prioities set by national policy;
- appraise and prioritise investment options according to the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

As part of this process, the set of projects proposed in the RTS Delivery Plan has been closely aligned to specific objectives and strategic outcomes set out in the Scottish Government's recent transport policy statements.

The five high level objectives for transport we have identified as central to the Region's future are:

- Promoting economic growth by building, enhancing managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency and reliability (Wealthier and Fairer Scotland);
- Promoting social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities to jobs and services, and increasing the physical accessibility of the transport network (Wealthier and Fairer Scotland, Safer and Stronger Scotland);
- Protecting the environment and improving health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise carbon emissions, local air pollution and the consumption of resources and energy and natural resources (Greener Scotland, Healthier Scotland);



- Improving the safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety
 of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff (Safer and Stronger Scotland); and
- Improving journey quality by investing in modern vehicles and promoting integration by
 making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connections
 between different forms of transport so as to achieve the "seamless journey" (Smarter
 Scotland).

In addition to these high level objectives, the National Transport Strategy of 2006 identifies three strategic outcomes that the RTS must focus on to achieve its vision for the South West of Scotland. These 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 and value for money for an alternative to the car.

8.9 Regional Transport Strategy Guidance

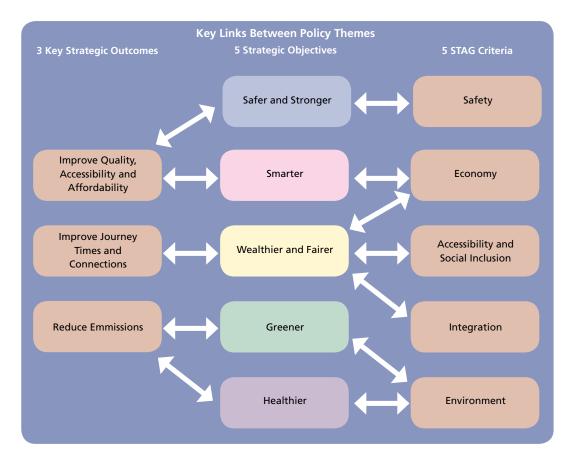
The former Scottish Executive published detailed Regional Transport Strategy Guidance to ensure the RTPs' plans are aligned with the objectives and strategic outcomes outlined in the NTS and related policy statements.

8.10 Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)

STAG was used as a best practice template for the production of the RTS and focuses on objective led transport appraisal looking across the five criteria of:

- environment;
- economy;
- safety;
- integration;
- · accessibility and social inclusion.

8.11 Key Links between Policy Themes



8.12 The South West's Contribution to Scotland's National Performance

Improved transport links can play an important role in the development of any region, but it should be remembered that transport improvements will only be one part of any successful strategy for economic, environmental and social improvement. In developing this RTS, we have been careful to recommend transport interventions that are explicitly derived from and linked to key regional and national economic, social and environmental objectives, articulated in documents such as the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy, the current Dumfries and Galloway Structure Plan, the revised National Planning Framework, the Sustainable Development Strategy and the Scottish Climate Change Programme.

Sustainable development in the South West needs to balance each aspect of the sustainability triangle, but with a clear focus on sustaining the local economy. This approach closely reflects that of the Scottish Government for the country as a whole. It may be necessary to accommodate additional traffic generation where road improvements are allied to broader economic development objectives in the pursuit of economic sustainability, whilst at the same creating opportunities to minimise negative environmental and social impacts. While improved road access will bring local economic benefits, any proposed transport enhancements should also be framed within the broader context of increasing the rate of sustainable economic growth across Scotland recognising the role of the A77 and A75 in protecting port activities, and new road or rail links north east from Dumfries to bind the regional capital more strongly to the centres of Scotland's economic growth in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Such an approach is also consistent with the Scottish Government's targets to reduce traffic levels, and carbon emissions. The widespread introduction of SMART measures (measures which encourage sustainable travel) such as green travel plans should reduce commuting by car and general car use within the region's towns, especially Dumfries, as it develops its more "urban" role as the regional capital. The great successes of the bus, DRT and community transport networks can be built upon to further improve social inclusion for those without cars within the region. Community rail partnerships and better integration and coordination of non-emergency health care travel provision can also help. In other words, such measures can be designed to offset any increase in traffic generated by trunk road / rail route improvements.

In promoting the RTS, SWestrans faces a delicate balancing act. There is a growing need to act at the local level to combat congestion. Local road improvement schemes may be justifiable for economic reasons, but some offsetting of the increase in traffic they will generate will need to be considered. However, with Dumfries and Galloway Council looking to attract economic activity at a time when the Scottish Government is committed to arresting a national increase in car use, it is inevitable that measures that could help ameliorate a projected rise in car use such as bus priority and increased parking management must be considered as part of the strategy. It will be important to consider the level of public transport fares and possible car parking charges as a coherent, joined-up response to these issues.