

**Minutes of the Transport and Travel Statistics Advisory Committee (TTSAC)
Tuesday 16th September, Redwood House, Napier University, Edinburgh**

1 Apologies, minutes of the previous meeting, and matters arising

Present:

Chairman: Mr Frank Dixon	Transport Statistician, Scottish Executive (SE)
Secretary: Mr Stephen Hinchliffe	Transport Statistics Branch, SE
Mr Scott Brand	Transport Statistics Branch, SE
Mr Paul Davison	Derek Halden Consultancy
Dr Iain Docherty	Urban Studies Department, Glasgow University
Mr Duncan Gray	Senior Statistician, SE Development Department
Mr Tom Hart	Chair, Scottish Transport Studies Group
Mr Ron Hunter	SPT, <i>representing</i> COSLA Planning, Economics & Transport R & I Group
Mr Ian Kernohan	Transport Policy, SE
Mr Diarmid Lindsay	Network Planning Branch, SE
Dr David McGuigan	Colin Buchanan and Partners
Dr Robert Raeside	Transport Research Institute, Napier University
Mr Glyn Rhys-Tyler	TRL Limited
Ms Antonia Roberts	Transport Statistics, Department for Transport
Mr Jock Robertson	Robertson Consulting Ltd, <i>representing</i> TSUG
Mr Alan Shirley	Strathclyde Passenger Transport
Mr Alistair Short	West Lothian Council, <i>representing</i> COSLA and SCOTS

Apologies for absence

Mr Alan Clark	SE Network Planning (represented by Diarmid Lindsay)
Mr Hamish Clark	SE Social Research
Dr David Connolly	MVA
Mr Anthony Craggs	Strategic Rail Authority
Insp. Graham Dick	Lothian & Borders Police, <i>representing</i> ACPOS
Mr Stewart Dick	Institute of Logistics and Transport
Dr David Gray	Centre for Transport Policy, Robert Gordon University
Mr Derek Halden	Derek Halden Consultancy (represented by Paul Davison)
Mr Clive Marchant	Logistics Research Centre, Heriot-Watt University
Mr Gerhard Mors	Tourism Statistician, SE
Ms Marjory Rodger	Confederation of Passenger Transport

1.1 Mr Dixon began by expressing his thanks to Napier Transport Research Institute for providing the room free of charge, and to Napier's staff for setting it up.

1.2 3 changes of membership were noted:

Antonia Roberts replaces Mike Hughes as the representative of the Department for Transport.
Alan Shirley replaces Neil Sturrock as the representative of Strathclyde Passenger Transport.
Stephen Hinchliffe replaces Esta Clark as the Secretary.

1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed on 17th February. No one had raised any points since then. They were accepted as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

1.4 A list of the "action points" from the previous meeting had been sent out, the most recent version being dated 5th September. It sets out what was (or was not) done in each case. Mr Dixon asked if there were any points that anyone wished to make on these matters or any other matters arising from the minutes.

1.4.1 *Action Point 2 for non-SE/DfT members:* Mr Hunter asked to know who else had expressed an interest in attending a discussion on Neighbourhood Statistics, so that he could pursue this further with them. No one present stated an interest. Mr Gray promoted the new Scottish Executive website, and stated that links to the Neighbourhood Statistics pages could easily be followed by those with an interest.

Secretary's note: the address is:

<http://www.sns.gov.uk/>

The site holds National Statistics information, with Census information to be added in the Autumn. A full update of data is planned for April 2004. He mentioned recent developments in Neighbourhood Statistics, including the development of a deprivation index, which will be available through the website around March 2004.

1.4.2 *Action Point 3 for SE/DfT:* Mr Hart suggested that another note on Scottish Tourism "gains" and "losses" would be of interest.

Action: Mr Dixon to ask Mr Mors if an updated note on Scottish Tourism "gains" and "losses" can be provided to members of TTSAC.

1.4.3 *Point 2 for members to note:* Mr Hart asked about the availability of quarterly data for Calmac ferries, and for rail passenger numbers, for the "Scottish Transport Review".

Action: Mr Dixon to ask the Strategic Rail Authority, and SE colleagues who deal with Calmac, whether quarterly data can be provided.

1.4.4 The provision of contact details for further information on notes sent to members was welcomed.

2 Recent and forthcoming developments - paper TTSAC (03) 1

2.1 Mr Dixon presented the paper on recent and forthcoming developments of the Scottish Executive Transport Statistics branch, and invited comments. He stated that the bulletins of SHS results will appear at least one month later than the paper says, due to the effects of sick leave.

2.2 Mr Hunter requested that bus patronage figures for regions of Scotland be made available on the website before the publication of "Bus & Coach Statistics" (*para. 3.6*). Mr Dixon stated that SE would make them available earlier, some time after DfT has published its bulletin.

Action: Mr Dixon to arrange the publishing of bus patronage figures for regions of Scotland on the SE website.

2.3 Mr Dixon asked if there were any other requests for data to be made available on the website. There were none.

3 Key developments in Transport statistics for DfT - paper TTSAC (03) 2

3.1 Ms Roberts presented the paper on key developments in Transport Statistics at the Department for Transport. She confirmed that "Transport Trends" would be updated electronically in December 2003 (*para. 9*). She invited feedback as to whether it would be useful to have more regular updates, as data becomes available.

3.2 Mr Davison referred to a project for DfT on accessibility planning, and the development of indicators which cut across themes, such as transport, education and health.

4 Scottish Executive Tourism Statistics update - paper TTSAC (03) 3

4.1 Mr Dixon suggested that, as no one present from the SE worked on Tourism statistics, any questions or comments on this paper should be directed to Mr Mors, whose contact details are to be found at the end of the paper.

Action: Anyone with questions or comments on the paper to direct them to Gerhard Mors

5 Progress indicators and their implications for statistics - paper TTSAC (03) 4

5.1 Mr Dixon introduced the two parts of the paper on progress indicators. The first part of the paper is on the Executive's Transport Progress Indicators, which were published in December 2002. He stated that the Executive is reviewing the indicators, and aims to publish an updated document in December. Ian Kernohan of the Executive's general Transport Policy branch is leading the review. Mr Dixon invited comments on the indicators, and their presentation, as well as possible developments and improvements, and implications for the collection of data.

5.2 Mr Kernohan explained the consultation he intended to take for the review of the indicators. While there was no formal consultation process, he had already received some feedback from SCOTS, and would be identifying key people to approach, including TTSAC. He would welcome the views of members of the Committee. He added that many of the targets had come from the 2002 Spending Review and that these would be revised again later this year as part of the 2004 Spending Review.

5.3.1 It was pointed out that 2002-03 had been a bad year for rail travel (*para. 5 bullet 1*). Hence the target using 2002-03 as a base year was not very demanding. Mr Dixon said that the target had been set well before results for 2002-03 were known. It was suggested that it is more useful to look at time series, rather than compare against a single base year.

5.3.2 The possibility of showing rail and bus passenger kilometres, rather than journeys was suggested (*para. 5 bullets 1 & 2*). Mr Dixon stated that, because of the way the ATOC computer system worked, this was possible for the ScotRail network, or for the whole of Great Britain, but not for rail journeys originating in Scotland only. No information is available from operators on the lengths of bus journeys, although the DfT does estimate bus passenger kilometres for the whole of Great Britain, perhaps by using figures from the National Travel Survey.

5.3.3 Clarification was sought on the definition of a journey (*para. 5 bullet 2*). Mr Dixon stated that when a trip involved more than one bus between the origin and destination, each separate boarding was counted as a journey in the statistics used for the indicator on local bus passenger journeys.

5.3.4 It was suggested that the indicators were light on the rail sector (*para. 4*), given the large amount of public money spent on this sector. Indicators could include aspects of performance, taken from the Strategic Rail Authority. Mr Dixon stated that it would be possible to use SRA indicators to look at ScotRail performance, but not necessarily at the performance of Virgin and GNER services operating across the border.

5.3.5 Mr Dixon asked whether SE should publish similar performance indicators for other modes of transport. However, concerns were raised about “sailing” and “punctuality” indicators for ferries, as they are occasionally deliberately delayed because of the weather, for safety reasons. Mr Gray thought that the targets probably took this into account.

Action: Mr Dixon to ask colleagues about the ferry targets.

5.3.6 The list of key targets (*para. 5*) could be expanded to include targets on freight levels and accessibility, as well as rail targets for 2010 from the technical notes to the 2003-04 budget statement, and the target to stabilise road traffic at 2001 levels by 2021. It was noted that the only freight target was the lorry-miles “saved” by the Freight Facilities Grant, and Mr Kernohan explained that the Executive does not have the policy “levers” to control freight traffic.

5.3.7 There was general agreement that a significant omission was any indicator on the proportion of single occupancy vehicles, as they have a considerable effect on congestion. Mr Dixon stated that some information on this was available from the Scottish Household Survey, or from the smaller sample of the National Travel Survey. However, these would not give precise figures at local level. Mr Dixon agreed to explore the use of the SHS for such an indicator.

Action: Mr Dixon to look at SHS data for use as an indicator on single occupancy vehicles.

5.3.8 The absence of targets and indicators on cycling and walking was also queried. Mr Dixon stated that there was a target to increase cycling, which was measured using data from the National Travel Survey. Mr Kernohan added that there were no national targets on walking because the relevant working group felt that the only targets should be local ones. Walking and cycling are both included in travel to work and travel to school indicators (*para. 4 bullet 9*). However, it was suggested that “headline” indicators are also needed.

5.3.9 The issue of indicators on car ownership was discussed. Mr Kernohan stated that the Executive would not set targets on such. It was agreed that car use was more of an issue than car ownership. Mr Dixon stated that SHS figures on car ownership are published.

5.3.10 Accessibility indicators were discussed. Problems with definitions were recognised. SHS information on the walking time to the nearest bus stop, and the frequency of service, does not indicate whether the routes and destinations meet people’s needs, such as accessibility of employment. The SHS also asks about the convenience of some services. It was suggested that “accessibility” should also include “affordability”. The SHS collects limited information on income, expenditure on fuel, etc. Changes in the balance between housing and travel costs would affect commuting patterns. Mr Gray stated that the cost of a large survey, which included good quality income information, could be prohibitively high. However, the Executive is currently considering ways of getting more from its national surveys.

5.3.11 It was suggested that one should distinguish between indicators (a) monitoring developments generally; (b) linked to SE policy aims; and (c) relating to specific targets; and

that more clarity was needed on (b) and (c). Having the indicators updated before the 2004 spending review would be helpful.

5.4 It was suggested that it would be worth considering the production of a pocket card to disseminate the results to the media and the public. It was noted, however, that these indicators, looking at trends and, in some cases, progress towards a target, tend to be better presented in the form of charts.

5.5 Mr Dixon explained that the second part of the paper follows the ScotStat Board's request that the Committee consider the 44 Transport "key statistics, targets and performance indicators". He asked if there were any concerns about these key statistics, targets and indicators, in terms of quality, fitness for purpose and inconsistencies between different targets.

5.6 It was agreed that there was room for more discussion of the 44 indicators. There was an argument for consistency across different modes of transport, for example, that reliability should be an indicator not just for ferries and rail, but also for air and buses. It was suggested that information on the total "person-time" lost was needed for economic analysis, and noted that there could be data collection problems in pursuing this. Issues were also raised about whether it was appropriate to apply the indicators at a local level (e.g. it might not be possible to meet some national standards in areas of low population), and whether it would be possible to look at the indicators in a more integrated way, rather than each mode separately.

5.7 It was agreed to set up a working group, as suggested in paragraph 10. This could look into such matters in more detail. It would inform the Committee of progress and seek members' views on particular points. It would not report directly to the Committee, since we may only meet once a year. A working group could also advise the Executive on possible changes to key statistics and indicators, and on the implications for the collection of statistics. Mr Hart, Mr Hunter, Dr McGuigan and Mr Robertson expressed an interest in being on such a group. Ms Roberts said the DfT would be interested, and mentioned that the Statistics Commission also had an interest in indicators.

Action: Mr Dixon to make arrangements for the setting up of a working group on "key statistics, targets and performance indicators", noting the interests expressed above.

6 Congestion monitoring on Scottish trunk roads - paper TTSAC (03) 5

6.1 Mr Gray introduced the paper on congestion monitoring on Scottish trunk roads. He stated that it was still early days, and no data was available yet, but invited comments on the paper. He was also keeping a close eye on developments in this area by the DfT.

6.2 Mr Gray confirmed that the counters should be able to record traffic volume 24 hours a day, all year round, although the reliability of the counters was still to be proven. They should be able to provide information about the "variability" of congestion for the relevant parts of the trunk road network. They would not provide much information about urban congestion, because trunk roads often did not go into cities.

6.3 Differing perceptions of congestion across the country were discussed. From April 2003, the Scottish Household Survey asks whether journeys were affected by congestion.

6.4 The use to which congestion information would be put was questioned. One member was concerned that it might be used as a tool to increase road capacity. It was suggested that it should be limited to a research tool. Mr Gray confirmed that at present, it was intended to fill a

gap in our knowledge. Future use of the information had not been decided: for example, data on the distances between vehicles might be useful for road safety work.

7 Other possible needs for statistics - paper TTSAC (03) 6

7.1 Mr Dixon introduced the paper on possible needs for statistics, other than those covered elsewhere on the agenda. He invited views on the needs for more statistics on Transport; the uses of such additional information; the practicalities of obtaining, processing and analysing new kinds of data; and the priorities of the different possibilities.

7.2 The implications of freedom of information law were discussed. One member suggested that, where the government acts in a regulatory capacity, people have the right to ask it for data.

7.3.1 Information on fares was discussed, including the usefulness of information on the numbers using season tickets or buying walk-on tickets, etc. Mr Dixon stated that some figures on rail ticket types, from the ATOC database, were published in "Scottish Transport Statistics". Some information on bus fares was made available to the DfT by bus operators.

7.3.2 Availability of information on road delays and their causes (e.g. accidents, breakdowns, road works, utilities' work, etc.) was discussed. NADICS might have some information, but it would relate only to trunk roads. The Police were not required to include information about the "time lost" in the injury road accident statistics returns – and this had not been sought in the recent Quality Review. Indeed, many (non-injury) accidents were not reported to the Police. Breakdown companies might have information about the incidents that they attended.

7.3.3 Information on changes in mode of travel were discussed. Mr Dixon stated that questions on whether the mode of travel to work had changed in the previous 12 months, and if so, why, had been introduced into the Scottish Household Survey in April this year. Mr Dixon confirmed that the questions in the SHS were reviewed every two years, and consultation would take place next year for changes to be made for the two-year period 2005/2006.

7.3.4 An enquiry was made regarding GDP. Mr Dixon suggested that this be directed to a contact who could be found by looking at "Scottish Economic Statistics" or other publications in the Economy section of the Scottish Executive Statistics website.

8 The Transport part of the Scottish Executive Statistics Plan - paper TTSAC (03) 7

8.1 Mr Dixon introduced the paper, which details the current plans for 2003-04 to 2005-06 of the Scottish Executive Transport Statistics branch. As it is part of the Scottish Executive Statistics Plan, it does not include other Transport Divisions' plans. He invited comments on the paper, in particular responses to the questions it posed.

8.2 It was suggested that figures for flows to and from Scotland could be published. Mr Dixon stated that figures for road and rail freight appeared in "Scottish Transport Statistics". He would look into the possibility of getting more detailed rail passenger figures, but road passenger figures are not available. It was asked whether useful information might be available from roadside interview surveys. Mr Lindsay felt that this was not the case, as there were only occasional spot checks for modelling purposes, but no real statistics. However, the new Transport Model for Scotland would show the pattern of cross-border flows, and new and improved tables from TMfS are to be included in the next "Scottish Transport Statistics". Mr Lindsay added that the new Transport Model for Scotland should become operational in March 2004. He invited anyone to contact him if they wanted more information on the modelling.

Action: SE to include tables on cross-border flows, from TMfS, in the next edition of “Scottish Transport Statistics”

8.3 It was asked whether “Travel by Scottish Residents” should appear more often than triennially (*para 2.1 final bullet*). Mr Dixon referred to the advice at the previous meeting that it should only be published more regularly if there were major changes in the “overall figures”.

8.4 Mr Hart and Mr Hunter felt that the SHS Travel Diary results bulletin should remain annual (*para. 2.2*).

8.5 The style and format of publications was discussed. There was a suggestion that there should be fewer tables and more graphs in paper publications, and that the website could be expanded to provide the other tables. It was noted, though, that many members of the Transport Statistics Users’ Group prefer to use paper publications. Glossy reports with lots of charts were considered useful for getting headline information over to the media, but made it harder to get at the actual data. It was agreed that it was essential to have the raw data available, through the provision of detailed tables on the website. “Signposting” the availability of information, and ease of use of the website, were also considered important, as was ensuring charts were linked to data. Mr Gray expressed concerns that extremely useful background information (about the sources and their limitations, etc.) could be lost if publications were reduced in size.

8.6 It was agreed that there was no need at present to set up an ad-hoc group on publications. Members of the Committee were asked to provide further comments by email, and a group may be formed, or a paper put to the next meeting, depending on the responses received.

Action: All to provide any further comments to Mr Dixon on the publications listed in the Statistics Plan

9 The UK Transport, Travel & Tourism Theme Work Plan for 2005-05 onwards

9.1 Ms Roberts spoke about the UK Transport, Travel & Tourism Theme Work Plan, which is to be published shortly, having been cleared with Ministers. DfT will ask for comments on the proposals, to feed into the 2004 Spending Review. She did not feel that a solely web-based consultation process would engage all users. Meetings were also needed to obtain a wider range of views. DfT were considering a workshop involving TSUG, RSS and others. Mr Dixon agreed to send links to the Plan once it is published, to enable Committee members to comment on it. If necessary, a meeting could be arranged to discuss it.

Action: Mr Dixon to provide TTSAC members with links to the National Statistics Work Plan, once it is published.

10 The remit of the Committee - paper TTSAC (03) 8

10.1 Mr Dixon introduced the paper on the remit of the committee, and invited comments on the options. It was agreed to adopt the shorter remit, given in paragraph 5, with the one amendment that “sub-groups” be changed to “working groups”.

11 The membership of the Committee - paper TTSAC (03) 9

11.1 Mr Dixon introduced the paper on the membership of the Committee. He stated that we appear to have representatives of each of the suggested categories, but invited comments on any perceived gaps in the membership.

11.2.1 It was suggested that a representative of the Traffic Commissioners (now supported by the staff of the Vehicle and Operational Services Agency) be invited. Mr Dixon stated that, although we currently have no statistical dealings with them, they may hold useful data, and so will be invited.

11.2.2 It was suggested that representatives of the regional transport partnerships would be a useful addition. Mr Kernohan agreed to provide contact details, although it was noted that, due to limited resources, they may prefer just to receive papers for comment.

11.2.3 It was also suggested that an organisation with an interest in cycling and walking, such as Sustrans, should be represented on the Committee. The name of Tony Grant was given as a contact.

11.2.4 It was suggested that Local Authority representation on the group is rather light, when they are major suppliers and users of data. However, it was noted that this would be addressed (at least in part) by including representatives of regional transport partnerships (which involve local authorities, and some other organisations).

Action: Mr Dixon to invite representatives of the Vehicle and Operational Services Agency, the regional transport partnerships and Sustrans to join the Committee

12 Any other business

12.1 The frequency of meetings was discussed. It was agreed that these should be whenever members feel they are of use. At present, there appeared to be no need to meet before next Autumn, unless as part of the consultations on the UK Theme Work Plan. Therefore the next meeting will probably be on the same day as the next TSUG seminar.