

SEStran's response to West Lothian's Main Issues Report

Initially I would wish to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Main Issues Report and the meeting held on 29th September 2014 on the above. This response reflects the discussion at that meeting.

The SEStran Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) focuses on the need for development plans to recognise the importance of sustainable locations in relation to travel requirements. The process described within the MIR very much reflects this approach, but it is also appreciated that this is not the only issue that has to be taken into account in locating development. It is also noted that this approach applies to non committed sites that have been previously allocated. The ability to access jobs, education, health facilities, etc. can be a key issue in the decision to use a car, if public transport facilities are inadequate. My main concern is the potential continuation of the "Lowland Crofting" concept, which seems to be totally contrary to the aim of reducing the reliance on the car and improved accessibility by sustainable means.

Through our work on European based Dryport project we identified the need for a distribution centre near Bathgate to distribute rail based freight from the proposed "Dryport" in the Coatbridge area, to destinations throughout the SEStran area. Initial suggestions have identified a site associated with an existing rail siding in the Bathgate area.

One of the key elements in our RTS to encourage the use of public transport especially in areas where the road network is congested is the provision of strategically placed park and ride sites. The MIR recognises the need for the provision of sites mainly related to commuter routes into Edinburgh linked to proposed development in West Lothian. This is welcomed as a contribution to the overall strategy for park and ride facilities within the SEStran area

The associated transport appraisal recognises the importance of adequate rail based park and ride facilities and improved strategic road links including the Avon Gorge and the new Forth Replacement Road Crossing. SEStran very much supports the Strategic Development Plan Action Programme Projects for inclusion in the Local Development Plan including increased park and ride provision, motorway bus lane provision and improved motorway access. The provision of a new railway station at Winchburgh along associated park and ride facilities and motorway access is also an important inclusion.

In general the MIR recognises the main aims of our RTS and has identified the key transport issues for future development of the West Lothian Development Plan.