

**Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS Board**

**NHS Board**  
**Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

**Paper No. 06/35**

**Head of Community Engagement & Transport**

### **Consultation on National Transport Strategy**

#### **Recommendation**

The NHS Board is asked to:-

- 1) Note that the Scottish Executive is consulting on the National Transport Strategy (Summary attached).
- 2) Endorse the significant elements of an NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde response to the strategy as outlined in this paper.
- 3) Acknowledge the importance of transport to aspects of public and individual health, access to health care and wellbeing, economic prosperity and environmental concerns.

#### **1 Introduction and Purpose**

- 1.1 The Scottish Executive has issued a consultation which sets out the key questions about Scotland's transport future, which are to be addressed on the development of a National Transport Strategy. Comments are sought by 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2006
- 1.2 Transport provides many with access to health and healthcare facilities, enables staff to travel to work, opens up amenities and opportunities to individuals, underpins economic growth and impacts on the environment. The provision of public transport is also of major concern to certain communities, especially where car ownership is low. Poor public transport limits access to health and wellbeing opportunities and health facilities. Over-reliance on private car use can also be a contributory factor to obesity and other diseases.
- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to highlight concerns which have previously been highlighted about public transport in Greater Glasgow and to outline critical points for our response which will be developed further through the Corporate Planning, Policy and Performance Group

#### **2 Particular concerns with public transport in the NHSGG&C area.**

- 2.1 Certain communities have expressed concerns regarding the provision of public transport and the impact this has on access to healthcare facilities. In 2005/06, in response to these concerns, NHSGG&C requested that the

Community Engagement Team work with communities to ascertain the nature of the difficulties being experienced and to ascertain what steps may improve the situation. NHSGG&C Community Engagement Team formed a Community Enquiry Project in partnership with a number of Community Groups and Charities. The Project Advisory Group was chaired by Mr Paul Martin, MSP. This Project – Fare4ALL – listened to the views of over 1,500 people in geographic communities and communities of interest. Key findings of this project included:

- Significant disparity between the levels of public transport between geographic communities, with poorer communities often experiencing poorer provision.
- Lack of bus services outwith the main commuting routes and times, creating difficulties for patients, visitors and staff and discouraging individuals from reducing car use.
- A lack of co-ordinated information on bus services.
- A lack of co-ordination between various aspects of public transport provision, including route and timetables, infrastructure, ticketing and pricing.
- Fear of using public transport at night, especially amongst the elderly.
- Reluctance to use buses due to variations in driving standards and the policy and practice of allowing child buggies to be boarded on buses.

### **3 Initial Points for an NHSGG&C response to the consultation on a National Transport Strategy**

3.1 A full and detailed response will be submitted to the Scottish Executive commenting on the 65 questions posed by the consultation document. It is proposed, however, that the following critical points will be included in the Board's response which will be further developed as outlined in section 1.

- The Board notes that the current model underpinning the operation of commercial bus services is not working to the benefit of some commuters, impacting negatively on staff travel and patient access to health and healthcare. The Board, therefore, suggests that the Scottish Executive considers adopting a regulatory framework similar to the one underpinning Transport for London. (In this regulated regime, the London bus network is planned with the purpose of providing a “safe, integrated, efficient and economic service.” Private bus companies bid to run packages of routes, some routes will be highly profitable, some will make a loss but, nevertheless, provide much needed services to deprived or less accessible areas).
- The Board welcomes the free bus travel that is now available to the over 60s in Scotland and notes the opportunities that this extends to many older people. However, the Board notes that many older people, either through infirmity or disability, or through living in an area poorly served by public transport, cannot make use of this scheme. The Board asks the Scottish Executive to ensure that a social inclusion audit be undertaken with all new major transport initiatives to ensure equity of outcome for all citizens and, in relation to the needs of older people unable to benefit from the concessionary travel scheme,

that sufficient funding be given to Regional Transport Partnerships to ensure parity of access for all older people.

- The Board acknowledges the complexities and, at times, contradictions inherent within a single National Transport Strategy. There is an acceptance for the need for behavioural change to minimise the impact of transport and related emissions on the environment. However, to achieve this change requires a strategy driven by inclusion that engages with all individuals and communities. It requires a strategy that seeks to address their needs and concerns and empowers them to play an active role, individually and collectively.
- Social inclusion and access to health and healthcare will be key elements to the formal detailed response of the Board to the consultation. However, the Board acknowledges the importance that transport plays in economic growth and the key role it plays in environmental issues. The Board believes that sustainable economic growth is fundamental to the health of the people of the West of Scotland. The Board also recognises growing public concern over environmental pollution and climate change and the threat this may pose to long-term public health. The Board's response to the consultation on a National Transport Strategy will, therefore, be informed by these concerns: equitable and effective access, social inclusion, economic growth and environmental concern.

#### **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Transport Scotland Act 2005 has placed a legal responsibility on Health Boards to engage with the newly-formed Regional Transport Partnerships. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has worked well with Strathclyde Passenger Transport, and our local authority partners, in the past and is committed to building on this relationship in the future. In particular, the Board welcomes the overtures by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to form a strategic relationship with the Board in order to work collaboratively towards improving transport services for patients, visitors and staff. The Board welcomes the development of Scotland's first National Transport Strategy, notes that it will set the strategic context for Regional Transport Strategies, and will shape the way public monies are spent over the next seven years on transport initiatives. Due to the importance of transport in all aspects of life, the Board will submit a detailed response to the National Transport Strategy consultation and will encourage its staff, partners, community groups and voluntary organisations, and members of the public to do likewise.
- 4.2 A copy of the formal response will be submitted to Members for information.

EMBARGOED UNTIL MEETING

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