

Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

Date of meeting 29 November 2024

Date of report 19 November 2024

Report by Head of Policy and Planning

1. Object of report

The object of this report is to provide an update on strategic-level issues affecting transport in the west of Scotland.

2. Background to report

Members will be aware that a wide range of policy, planning and delivery initiatives are currently underway within transport and related sectors across Scotland at national, regional and local levels. The effects of these initiatives on the people, communities and transport network of the west of Scotland could be significant and therefore it is important that SPT continues to monitor developments and seek to influence outcomes in order to maximise benefits for our area. This report summarises current key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

3. Outline of proposals

3.1 National

3.1.1 Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

Further to the update to the Committee in June 2024, Transport Scotland (TS) has provided further advice on the regulations and guidance relating to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (“The 2019 Act”).

- The Transport Partnerships (Transfer of Functions) (Scotland) Order 2024, which transfers functions in relation to local authority run services, BSIPs and franchising to ‘Model 3’ RTPs (SWestrans, ZetTrans and SPT) was laid in the Scottish Parliament on 26 March 2024 and was subsequently passed by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on 30 April 2024. The Order has subsequently been passed by the Scottish Parliament and came into force on 4 June 2024.
- The Bus Services Improvement Partnerships (Multi-operator Travel Cards) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 were laid in the Scottish Parliament on 12 September 2024 and scheduled to come into force on 8 November 2024. This instrument defines the term “multi-operator travel card” in line with the purposes of the Competition Act 1998 (Public Transport Ticketing Schemes Block Exemption) Order 2001 (“the Block Exemption Order”).
- A suite of regulations transferring appeals against Traffic Commissioner decisions in relation to section 39 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 into the Scottish Tribunal system as well as regulations establishing a route of appeal against service standard decisions in relation to Bus Services

Improvement Partnerships (BSIP) were laid in the Scottish Parliament on 20 September 2024.

- As part of the franchising model under the 2019 Act, the Traffic Commissioner must form a panel of three people to review franchising proposals from local transport authorities. These regulations make provision with respect to the panels to be convened by the Traffic Commissioner and set out the detail about how these panels should be made up and operate. The Local Services Franchises (Traffic Commissioner Notices and Panels) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 were laid in Parliament on 5 September. The regulations were subject to additional parliamentary scrutiny and passed by the Parliament on 30 October 2024, coming into force on 1 November 2024.

SPT continues to engage with Transport Scotland through a joint working group with TS and ATCO (Association of Transport Coordinating Officers) which provides an opportunity for discussion and feedback on the regulations and guidance for the 2019 Act.

3.1.2 Local Governance Review – Democracy Matters

Since 2019, the Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA, has been undertaking a Local Governance Review under the banner 'Democracy Matters'. The aim of the review is to ensure Scotland's communities and places have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most and considers how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities. A first phase of engagement showed there was strong support from communities for greater control over the decisions that matter most to them.

In August 2023, the Scottish Government and COSLA launched phase two of the Democracy Matters engagement process. Views and comments were sought on what a future sphere of more local decision making should look like, including: Powers; Representation; Accountability and Participation.

The consultation closed in February 2024 and received a total of 166 responses including a response from SPT. On 19 September 2024, the Scottish Government and COSLA published the findings from the second phase Local Governance Review - Democracy Matters¹ conversations alongside a joint statement² setting out the next steps for the process.

The consultation responses included comments on a wide range of public services including transport, with some respondents suggesting that communities could run local transport initiatives, repair roads, and maintain green spaces. Levels of desired community involvement varied from more influence to full-service delivery. While respondents felt that bodies should only retain certain powers, regional transport networks were cited as an area that should be retained given the need for centralised planning and coordination.

SPT's response was supportive of community decision-making while emphasising that it is essential that Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) including Regional Transport Partnerships retain their current powers. The response also made clear that proposals to strengthen local decision-making must reinforce and support the

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-analysis/2024/09/democracy-matters-phase-2-analysis-responses/documents/democracy-matters-phase-2-analysis-responses/democracy-matters-phase-2-analysis-responses/govscot%3Adocument/democracy-matters-phase-2-analysis-responses.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-governance-review-joint-statement-september-2024/>

critically important role that LTAs play in shaping and delivering effective transport policy, service delivery and investment.

Key findings from the engagement and consultation were as follows:

- Arrangements for community decision-making should be flexible and responsive to the needs of the community and place.
- Decision-making bodies should be a platform to influence decisions and shape services in a structured and meaningful way. They should be representative of their community, including groups with protected characteristics.
- Ensuring accountability and building trust was seen as critical and could be done through transparent and accessible communication and effective planning, priority setting and evaluation.
- Clear participative mechanisms should be in place to make decisions, with various approaches used to maximise accessibility and encourage participation.
- A decision-making body should have a sustainable budget that can be directed independently.
- Community capacity building and skills development will be important to enabling communities to deliver more.

The Joint Statement sets out how the Scottish Government and COSLA intend to take forward the Local Governance workstream. This will include the establishment of a cross-sector Democracy Matters steering group made up of Local Government representatives, community leaders and democratic innovators. This group will help develop ambitious decision-making systems and consider how these can be tested on the ground with local people.

The Local Governance Review is also recalibrating how powers, responsibilities and resources can be shared at a Local Authority and Community Planning Partnership level to maximise, and make best use of, the collective resource in each area. This will involve partners in participating Local Authority areas to produce a detailed place-specific prospectus for a Single Authority Model in each area. The new local governance arrangements aim to strengthen and streamline local democratic decision-making and deepen the integration of public services.

Officers will continue to engage with the Local Governance Review and Transport Scotland's concurrent Transport Governance review (a recommendation from their recent Fair Fares Review) and provide further updates to the Committee as matters progress.

3.1.3 Transport to Health Delivery Plan

Building on earlier recommendations by the Mobility & Access Committee for Scotland³, the Scottish Government has recently published its Transport to Health Delivery Plan. The Plan sets out the Scottish Government's planned commitments to improve transport to health and social care, through a cross-portfolio approach that aims to bring transport planning and health planning together.

The delivery plan has identified 16 commitments to be taken forward, based on their feasibility, deliverability and affordability. Key to this approach is to maximise the existing structures and policy delivery to better effect, without replicating forums and policies that are already in place.

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47020/subgroup-transport-to-health-report.pdf>

There are a number of commitments which have a direct impact and relevance to Regional Transport Partnerships:

- Commitment 11: NHS Boards to ensure that accessibility and transport needs are integral to planning and delivery of their services including how best to work with Regional Transport Partnerships and transport officers from local authorities.
- Commitment 12: Transport Scotland will encourage Regional Transport Partnerships to have appropriate stakeholder groups with a remit on Transport to Health, which includes appropriate representation from local NHS Boards.
- Commitment 19: The Scottish Government will support Regional Transport Partnerships to develop their own plans around Transport to Health.

Other commitments emphasise the need for NHS Boards, when providing non-emergency patient transport services, to work closely with community transport providers.

Officers will consider the report in further detail and liaise with the Scottish Government, NHS colleagues and other partners to take forward the commitments set out in the report.

3.2 Regional

3.2.1 People and Place Programme Update

Following approval of the People and Place Programme 2024/2025 in June 2024, all projects within the programme have been progressing well with SPT continuing to work closely with all 19 programme partners to ensure efficient delivery of initiatives. To date, both Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 reports have been issued to Transport Scotland where progress with the programme and delivery outcomes so far have been well received. To date, circa £0.9m in grant claims have been received from partners for progress on projects.

Work has commenced with Transport Scotland and delivery partners to begin developing the programme for 2025/2026, which has a broadened remit to include aspects of sustainable travel, as well as increased function to include funding for community organisations. Transport Scotland has, however, advised that there will likely be a smaller People & Place Programme fund available in 2025/2026. SPT has organised a programme workshop on 12 November 2024 to review this year's programme with the delivery partners and begin work towards developing the 2025/2026 programme.

3.2.2 Rural Transport Study

SPT is carrying out a Rural Transport Study which will examine the transport needs of the SPT region's rural, remote and island communities, appraise a range of options to improve transport in these areas and develop an action plan to take forward recommended options. The study commenced in January 2024 and is jointly funded by SPT and Transport Scotland through their Community Bus Fund (2023/2024). The study will consider a wide range of services, infrastructure and delivery models that could improve transport for rural, remote and island areas. SPT appointed consultants Stantec to support delivery of the study with the 'option development & appraisal' stage expected to complete by spring 2025 and the subsequent 'rural transport action plan' in summer 2025.

3.2.3 Buchanan Bus Station Masterplan

Members will recall from previous updates to this Committee⁴ and the Partnership⁵, SPT's proposal to develop a masterplan for Buchanan Bus Station (BBS) and the surrounding city block.

Officers have been working closely with the AtkinsRéalis team and colleagues from Glasgow City Council to take work forward on baselining, benchmarking and identifying project priorities as well as examining the commercial property environment, and public / stakeholder engagement, including with bus operators. A report on progress of the BBS masterplan will be provided to a future Committee.

3.2.4 SPT Climate Change Strategy & Net-Zero Action Plan

In response to SPT's evolving approach to addressing climate change and the approval of SPT's Climate Change Strategy, work is underway to ensure successful delivery and implementation of the Net-Zero Action Plan.

- Net-Zero Action Plan

SPT's Net Zero Action Plan focuses on addressing key emissions hotspots for SPT. The immediate priority is to reduce emissions across SPT's estate including from natural gas, which is our largest contributor to Scope 1 emissions. Work to develop a comprehensive delivery plan has now begun. Key tasks include energy efficiency audits, building assessment reports and equipment surveys to inform a comprehensive baseline review of our estate.

- Climate Change Governance

As part of our work to help integrate climate considerations across the organisation, we have reviewed and updated our governance arrangements to align closely with our strategic priorities. These enhancements establish robust structures that strengthen oversight, accountability and transparency in climate-related decision making at SPT. SPT's Carbon Management Working Group (CMWG) has been superseded by the Net-Zero Delivery Group (NZDG) to take forward implementation and delivery of the Net-Zero Action Plan. Group progress is regularly reported to SPT's Strategy group, helping to embed climate-related decision making at all levels.

- Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act places a duty on public sector bodies to take action to contribute to achieving Scotland's climate change targets. In addition, as a public sector body, SPT must report annually to the Scottish Government on their greenhouse gas emissions and action to tackle climate change through the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN). This includes mitigation actions to reduce emissions, as well as adaptation action to adapt to current and future climate change impacts.

SPT recently submitted its 2023/2024 report to the Sustainable Scotland Network which provides a comprehensive overview of SPT's progress on mitigation and adaptation, as well as strategic priorities for the coming years. For 2023/24, SPT emissions are up 4.65% (subject to confirmation) from the previous year, mainly due to Scope 2 emissions (purchase and use of energy) increasing despite less consumption owing to an increased

⁴ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/3mvp1fyc/sp090623_agenda5.pdf

⁵ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/03nhxyvl/p151223_agenda5.pdf

emission factor. However, over the longer term, SPT has reduced its emissions by 66.5% from the 2008/09 baseline. SPT has made steady reductions in emissions over the last 10 years, and through our Climate Change Strategy and Net-Zero Action Plan have now taken steps to improve the accuracy of our Scope 3 carbon accounting and reporting.

We are committed to refining our data collection processes to align with our Climate Change Strategy, and work is on-going to employ improved methods for co-ordinating and tracking emissions data across the organisation. This supports enhanced transparency, auditability and traceability for Greenhouse Gas reporting to both the Strategy Group and public bodies reporting.

- Climate Resilience and Adaptation

Climate Resilience and Adaptation is a core priority area for delivery within SPT's Climate Change Strategy (Delivery Theme 5). The Strategy sets out our approach to adaptation and climate risk, focusing on understanding our climate vulnerabilities and taking proactive, prioritised actions to reduce adverse impacts on our staff, passengers, infrastructure, and services and to be a key partner in ensuring the transport network is reliable and resilient.

To support this work, SPT has gained consultancy support to develop and deliver a Climate Change Risk Assessment and Climate Resilience and Adaptation Action Plan for SPT. The key purpose of this work is to enhance SPT's resilience to climate change impacts across SPT's physical assets, transport services, projects and key infrastructure dependencies. The assessment will enable improved integration of climate resilience objectives into our operations and explore opportunities to enhance biodiversity, support a green recovery and promote sustainable, nature-based solutions where possible. Work is expected to complete in 2025.

Additionally, SPT continue to engage with climate adaptation groups in the region to inform our adaptation approach and knowledge base, notably the Public Sector Climate Adaptation Network (PSCAN) which helps facilitate cross sector collaboration and provides capacity building, access to expert insights, practitioner knowledge, and training and mentoring to support SPT to adopt the Adaptation Capability Framework. We also continue to support the delivery of the Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan as a member of Climate Ready Clyde and joint chair of the Regional Transport Climate Resilience Group (RTCRCG).

SPT is a member of the Sustainable Glasgow Green Economy Hub, a group of organisations who are committed to being leaders in the race to Net Zero and who are dedicated to delivering a sustainable Glasgow together. The group recently held a Sustainable Mobility Conference where SPT attended to present a keynote speech on current and future initiatives for delivering transport solutions across the west of Scotland, making sustainable mobility possible for people and businesses. SPT also supported the event with travel information to promote, bus rail and Subway services.

Key objectives of the day were:

- To present the vision for future sustainable mobility in Glasgow City region to a business audience.

- To provide practical advice and transport solutions to encourage wider business adoption and drive sustainable mobility within the region.

The event was successful with a high turnout and excellent feedback from attendees and the organisers are considering the scope for future events to promote the benefits of sustainable transport.

3.2.5 Regional Transport Strategy Transport Governance Workstream

Further to earlier reports, officers continue to progress this workstream working in close partnership with our constituent councils through the Transport Governance Steering Group and supporting Subgroup. A key element the work of the group is to understand in detail the current framework for transport delivery in Scotland including the key legislation, and delivery mechanisms to provide an agreed baseline for work going forward.

To support this work, SPT, in agreement with our local authority partners, has prepared a brief for focussed consultancy support to develop this baseline. This will enable the review to move forward on a fully evidenced basis to a wider consideration of the most appropriate governance model, including any proposals for additional powers. Officers will provide a further update to this Committee as this work progresses.

4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>All workstreams noted in this report are in line with the policies of the new Regional Transport Strategy.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>The impact of the issues identified could be significant for equalities groups. Due process in terms of statutory impact assessments will need to be undertaken by responsible parties to ensure appropriate mitigation of any matters identified.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>The impact of the issues identified could be significant and due process in terms of statutory impacts assessments will need to be undertaken by responsible parties to ensure appropriate mitigation of any matters identified.</i>

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