



Strathclyde Bus Alliance – progress update

Date of meeting 9 December 2016

Date of report 15 November 2016

Report by Assistant Chief Executive (Operations)

1. Object of report

The object of this report is to:

- provide a progress update regarding the establishment of the Strathclyde Bus Alliance (SBA); and
- recommend approval of the “Strathclyde Bus Alliance – A Proposal” document (attached at Appendix 1) to be sent to potential members of the SBA for their consideration as the base document, and to inform wider dialogue as the SBA is developed and agreed.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Strategy and Programmes Committee in May 2016¹, members approved the establishment of the Strathclyde Bus Alliance (SBA), a partnership which would seek to reinvigorate bus as the most flexible public transport solution, seek to address the decline in bus patronage in the west of Scotland over recent years by 2020, and subsequently aim to generate growth in patronage.
- 2.2 Early in 2016, SPT wrote to the main operators in the west of Scotland regarding the principle of establishing the SBA and received positive responses from all. Since then, officers have continued to develop and promote the establishment of the SBA, including to Community Planning Partnerships when providing the update on SPT’s Transport Outcomes Reports, and through ongoing dialogue with Transport Scotland, operators, the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland and other relevant stakeholders.

3. Outline of proposals

- 3.1 This work has culminated in the creation of the “Strathclyde Bus Alliance – A Proposal” document which is attached at Appendix 1. This document outlines the proposed way in which the SBA would initially work in practice, its key priorities, and anticipated membership. The legislative context on which the SBA would be based is also highlighted within the proposal document, namely a developed version of the current Statutory Quality Partnership framework established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001.

¹ See http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/sp200516_agenda7.pdf

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- 3.2 It is proposed that this document is sent to all potential members of the SBA for their consideration, and to inform wider dialogue as the SBA is developed and agreed.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The creation of the SBA has the potential to be one of the most significant steps forward in the bus market in the west of Scotland for many years. SPT has been keen to take a passenger and partnership focused, inclusive approach to the development of the SBA, and the sending of the “Strathclyde Bus Alliance – A Proposal” document to potential partners for consideration is the next step forward in its development. The SBA will be circulated to a wider group of stakeholders and politicians across the political spectrum, for their information and support.
- 4.2 Officers will continue to progress work on the SBA and provide updates to the Partnership as appropriate in future.

5. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to:

- Note this report; and,
- Approve the “Strathclyde Bus Alliance – A Proposal” document attached at Appendix 1 to be provided to potential members of the SBA for their consideration as the base document and to inform wider dialogue as the SBA is developed and agreed.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the Regional Transport Strategy.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>The SBA would be based on and seek to maximise opportunities available through current legislation regarding Statutory Quality Partnerships.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present, although resources may be required to ensure efficient operation of the SBA.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>The effects of the decline in the bus market are having a direct impact on some of the most deprived areas and excluded groups in the west of Scotland.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>If no action is taken to address the problems in the bus market, there is a significant risk the current situation could deteriorate further causing social, economic and environmental concerns.</i>

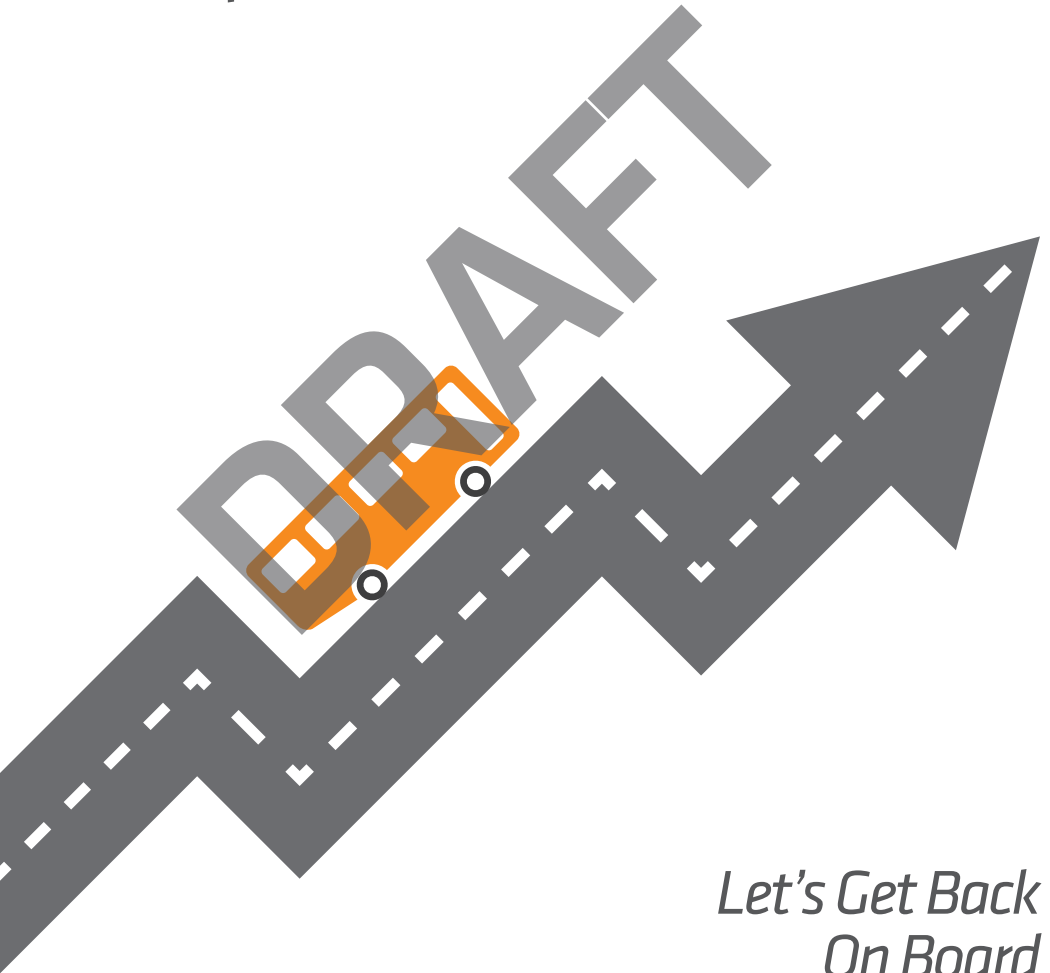
Name Eric Stewart
Title Assistant Chief Executive (Operations)

Name Gordon MacIennan
Title Chief Executive

For further information, please contact *Bruce Kiloh, Head of Policy and Planning* on 0141 333 3740.



The Strathclyde Bus Alliance A Proposal



*Let's Get Back
On Board*

**Strathclyde Partnership
for Transport**

November 2016

spt.co.uk

Executive summary

Why bus passengers need the Strathclyde Bus Alliance...

The people and communities of the west of Scotland need a strong bus network – for sustainable economic growth, social cohesion and reducing carbon emissions.

But the west of Scotland's bus network is struggling – 49 million passengers down¹ over the last 10 years, with the size of the network reducing by 24 million kilometres² over the same time period. (In contrast, the south east of Scotland has seen passenger growth of 5m over the same period, with no decline in network size³).

But even with these reductions, more people still travel to work by bus than all other public transport modes put together – 77% of public transport trips⁴ – and people across the UK use buses to make shopping & leisure trips to a value of £27.2billion per year⁵.

However, the Strathclyde bus network is facing more and more challenges – increased operational costs, competition for road space, more congestion on the streets, fares / affordability, more people shopping online, significant access issues in rural and outlying areas to name a few...and crucially, buses actually going where people want them to go!⁶

So our bus network is facing significant problems not being experienced as severely elsewhere in Scotland, at this present time.

And that's why we need the Strathclyde Bus Alliance (SBA).

An equal partnership between passengers, SPT, operators, councils, and all those with a role to play in arresting decline and creating growth in Strathclyde's bus market.

Subject to approval, the SBA would be based on an enhanced or advanced SQP⁷ model and initial focus would be on:

- Providing a route for the views of people and communities who rely on bus to be heard
- Reducing congestion affecting buses, improving bus priority and journey times
- Making sure that public transport provision is considered as early as possible in the planning process, when bus is generally the easiest, most flexible solution.
- Where there are issues on the road network e.g. roadworks, bus is not an afterthought
- Working together to deliver an integrated multi-operator, multi-modal smartcard
- Seeking to ensure that bus subsidies – Bus Service Operators Grant, Green Bus Fund etc – goes where it is needed most and are targeted to stimulate new routes.
- Where operators benefit from public sector intervention – e.g. bus priority measures – then those benefits are shared between SBA partners.

A successful SBA will also bring significant benefits for the people and communities of the west of Scotland. And the SBA is a first step towards delivering the bus network we all need.



We also believe that a successful SBA will be a huge step forward in meeting many national, regional and local outcomes, including the Regional Transport Strategy Outcomes of 'Improved Connectivity', 'Attractive, Seamless, Reliable Travel', 'Access for All', and 'Reduced Emissions', and will support the bus industry to better meet these needs. For too long bus has been seen as the poor relation of our transport network, so...

Let's get back on board!

Why Bus Matters...

It is important to remember the value of bus to our communities:

- More people travel by bus than all other public transport modes put together – 77% of all trips⁸.
- One in ten bus commuters would be forced to look for another job, or give up work altogether, if they could no longer travel by bus⁹.
- **Support for socially necessary bus services (such as those provided by SPT) can generate benefit in excess of £3 for every £1 of public money spent¹⁰.**
- **In UK metropolitan areas, bus networks generate an estimated £2.5bn in economic benefits** against public funding of £0.5bn¹¹.
- The best used bus services in urban centres may be **reducing carbon emissions from road transport by 75% or more¹².**

So bus matters...but why is its use declining in the west of Scotland?



The Problem

- **Fewer and fewer people are using bus** - Bus patronage in west of Scotland is down by 49 million passengers over last 10 years. There is no single reason for this worrying fall; the impact of the financial crisis of 2007-08, cheap car deals, out of town/internet shopping, easy access to free or low-cost parking, and the growth in rail patronage in Scotland over the same period will all have contributed to it.
- **The bus network is shrinking** - The size of the west of Scotland bus network has shrunk by 24 million kilometres over the last 10 years, with many routes lost or reduced in urban, rural and outlying areas. How can passengers use the bus when there isn't one there to use?
- **Congestion in our towns and cities is killing bus** – bus speeds in Glasgow are declining at a rate of 1.5% per annum, worse than London, Edinburgh and Manchester . People won't use buses if their journey keeps getting slower.
- **Is there too much competition for road space? Too many vehicles on the streets? Too many car parks in the city centre?** – all these issues need to be objectively examined to ensure that local authority priorities are respected and that the hierarchy of sustainable transport is proportionately applied – walking and cycling, then bus.
- **Bus routes around the city are convoluted** - the complexity of the road network that buses are forced to use when they reach the city is frustrating passengers and costing operators time and money, and adding to pollution, poor air quality, and congestion.
- **Buses in rural areas are often few and far between** – rural areas and many outlying towns and suburbs have faced some of the greatest challenges in bus access. SPT and community transport organisations have sought to address these through initiatives such as MyBus and the West of Scotland Community Transport Network but much, much more needs to be done.
- **Bus can often be almost forgotten in the land-use planning process** - Time and again significant issues are identified too late and all too often little is done to address them.

So what can we do? How do we get people back on board the bus?



The Strathclyde Bus Alliance – A Proposal

SPT proposes the creation of the Strathclyde Bus Alliance (SBA), with a clear aim and 2 simple objectives:

Aim: Get people back on board the bus!

Objectives

- **Arrest decline in bus patronage in the west of Scotland by 2020**
- **Achieve 3% year on year growth post-2020.**

Key themes of the SBA would be:

- **Delivering a comprehensive network** – that meets passenger needs
- **Maximising network performance and standards** – using less resources to move more passengers
- **A properly integrated network**
- **Promotion and simplification of the network**
- **Ensuring continuity of a safe and secure network**
- **Delivering a greener network.**

The SBA would be chaired by an independent person with the appropriate knowledge and drive to deliver positive results. It is proposed that governance arrangements based on an 'enhanced/advanced Statutory Quality Partnership' will be brought forward for approval.



Members of the SBA would, in the first instance, include:

- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- Passenger representative(s)
- Local authorities
- Major Operators (First Glasgow, McGill's, Stagecoach)
- Smaller Operators – designated representative
- West of Scotland Community Transport Network.

Key stakeholders would include:

- Traffic Commissioner for Scotland
- Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland
- NHS boards
- Scottish Roadworks Commissioner
- Bus Users Scotland
- Police Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- ClydePlan
- Glasgow & Clyde Valley City Deal and Ayrshire Growth Deal
- The ScotRail / Network Rail Alliance



Initial areas for discussion would include:

- Working with councils and developers to ensure an early stage 'pre-planning' Transport Assessment is made mandatory and conducted in consultation with SBA members.
 - All road / utility infrastructure works to be mandatorily communicated more efficiently through the SBA.
 - Focused work by SBA members to reduce congestion and improve bus running speeds and priority delivering a more reliable service using less resource.
 - SBA members to sign up to one agreed integrated, simplified smart ticketing product.
 - SBA members to agree to work together on a rationalisation of main corridors/routes coupled with a package of social responsibility for non-commercial routes.
 - A focus on how to maximise the return for the traveling public of the current public funding put into bus.
- A commitment from SBA members to 'open data' to ensure solid evidence bases are created for SBA actions.
 - SBA members to commit to delivering a more streamlined administrative process for the registration of bus service changes.
 - A commitment by SBA members to work in partnership with third sector and public sector bus providers e.g. Community Transport, local authority social transport fleets to deliver a better holistic service for the passengers and communities who need it most.
 - Seek to ensure rural and outlying areas are better served by bus.
 - Maximising the benefit of the totality of members collective investment in bus infrastructure, vehicles and services through such initiatives as the Glasgow City Region City Deal.

It would be expected that the first meetings of the SBA would focus on developing an



agreed 'Charter' for partners to sign up to. The above points are intended only as a starting point for discussions.

The SBA – Who Benefits?

Everyone...

The Public	better – and more – services to more places at the times they want, higher quality vehicles, more certainty on fares and a simple smartcard ticketing system, better integration, less emissions and much, much more.
Operators	maximising investment, less operating costs through reduced congestion, better reliability, revenue growth – and a mechanism to sort out issues before they become problems.
Public sector partners	a better return for their significant investment in bus, and a more stable network.

Next steps

SPT wrote to operators early in 2016 to gauge what their views were on the concept of the SBA and they responded positively.

We now want to work towards terms that can be formally agreed, delivered and monitored.

We want your organisation to participate in the SBA and would ask that you write to us at the address below to confirm your agreement:

Eric Stewart
Assistant Chief Executive (Operations)
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
131 St Vincent Street
Glasgow G2 5JF

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. We look forward to working with you in delivering a brighter future for the Strathclyde bus network...

...Let's get back on board!

Endnotes

- ¹ Transport Scotland (2016) Scottish Transport Statistics no.34. Figure is for 'South West and Strathclyde' (Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire) and is comparison between 2004/05 and 2014/15.
- ² Transport Scotland (2016) Scottish Transport Statistics no.34. Figure is for 'South West and Strathclyde' (Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire) and is comparison between 2004/05 and 2014/15.
- ³ Transport Scotland (2016) Scottish Transport Statistics no.34. Figure is for 'South East Scotland'(Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, Edinburgh City, West Lothian).
- ⁴ Transport Scotland (2016) Scottish Transport Statistics no.34. Figure is for Scotland.
- ⁵ PTEG (2013) 'The Case for the Urban Bus'
- ⁶ Glasgow City Council (2016) 'Community Engagement Evaluation Report Glasgow Bus Services', Appendix B – Desired Bus Services: this provides an example of public views on where they believe buses should be going.
- ⁷ Statutory Quality Partnership. See <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/277937/0083501.pdf> for more information.
- ⁸ Transport Scotland (2016) Scottish Transport Statistics no.34. Figure is for Scotland.
- ⁹ Institute for Transport Studies (2012) 'Buses and Economic Growth'
- ¹⁰ PTEG (2013) 'The Case for the Urban Bus'
- ¹¹ PTEG (2013) 'The Case for the Urban Bus'
- ¹² Greener Journeys (2012) 'What is the environmental value of investment to increase the use of buses?'
- ¹³ Greener Journeys (2016) 'The impact of congestion on bus passengers'

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