Partnership report

SPT

Glasgow Connectivity Commission – Phase 1 Recommendations

Date of meeting   14 December 2018   **Date of report**   29 November 2018

Report by Senior Director

1. Object of report

To update the Partnership on the recommendations from the Glasgow Connectivity Commission Phase 1 Report[1].

2. Background

2.1   Members will recall[2] that in November 2017, the leader of Glasgow City Council announced the establishment of the Connectivity Commission, an independent body with a remit to *"generate bold, fresh ideas to transform Scotland's biggest city; making it a more liveable and breathable place which is even more attractive to visitors, businesses and citizens."*

2.2   The Commission is chaired by Professor David Begg and its members include Iain Docherty, Professor of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Glasgow; Anne Ledgerwood, General Manager of the St Enoch Centre and Chair of the City Centre Retail Association; Ross Martin, Independent Adviser on regional economies; Stuart Patrick, Chief Executive, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce; Damien Henderson, Scottish Affairs and Media Manager, Virgin Trains; Gareth Williams, Head of Policy, Scottish Council for Development and Industry; and in an observer role, Bill Reeve, Director of Rail, Transport Scotland.

2.3   At an event at Glasgow City Chambers on 29 November 2018, the Commission launched the first of what is proposed to be two reports on their conclusions and recommendations based on work undertaken so far. This first report focuses on the 'city' and states that it *"covers proposals which fall within the jurisdiction of the City Council: land use, roads hierarchy and bus policy."*

2.4   The second report, likely to be published in Spring 2019, will *"consider policies which are crucial to connectivity within the city, but are primarily the responsibility of agencies operating at the regional and national levels, including the city region Cabinet, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, and Transport Scotland."* The report will address improvements to the road and rail network across the travel to work area and will *"comment on the current transport governance structure and whether its level of subsidiarity is fit for purpose."*

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[1] 'Glasgow Connectivity Commission, Connecting Glasgow: Creating an Inclusive, Thriving, Liveable City' – Phase 1 Report: https://glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=43556&p=0
[2] Section 3.2.6 of this report: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/sp020218_agenda9.pdf

2.5 In preparing its report, the Commission took oral and written evidence from a range of stakeholders, and members will recall[3] that SPT officers participated in an evidence session with the Commission in May 2018. The presentation given to the Commission at that time was based on the significant work undertaken by SPT over recent years in seeking to improve the transport network, including, for example, the West of Scotland Public Transport Conurbation Study[4], the various iterations of SPT's bus policy, Fastlink, Subway Modernisation (including smartcard ticketing), and work on the Strathclyde Bus Investment Programme, SPT's project within the Glasgow City Region City Deal.

2.6 It is heartening, therefore, to see much of what SPT has been promoting for many years referred to in the Connectivity Commission's report – for example, greater recognition of the importance of bus, an integrated multi-modal approach, bus priority measures, use of bus termini/hubs, allocation of road space, progressive parking policies and others.

3. Outline of proposals

3.1 The Commission's report concludes with the following recommendations:

- *"As a matter of policy principle we recommend that Glasgow City Council adopts and adheres to the recognised transport hierarchy for street space prioritizing the movement of people, cyclists, public transport use and private vehicles, in that order.*

- *The acceleration of the Avenues project and its extension into other parts of the city centre such as George Square, Argyle Street, Cathedral Street and High Street.*

- *Glasgow City Council presses ahead with plans to build a roof over the M8 at Charing Cross, creating a new pedestrian space outside the Mitchell Library.*

- *A strategic repurposing of the road network to prioritise people-friendly public spaces and the transport hierarchy and repurposing the inefficient grid system to a smart grid.*

- *Glasgow City Council actively engages with the Vacant and Derelict Land Commission to bring back dead spaces back into productive use.*

- *The repurposing of Glasgow's roads grid to prioritise pedestrians, active travel and public transport should be aligned with and support the council's policy to repopulate the city centre.*

- *The completion of a network of safe, high quality, segregated cycling arterial routes connecting the city centre to suburbs and peripheral neighbourhoods.*

- *The creation of safe, high quality, segregated cycling corridors through the city centre which connect to these arterial routes, undertaken as part of the repurposing of Glasgow's road grid.*

- *A partnership is created between Glasgow City Council and taxi associations which drives improvements in service standards and better strategic placement of taxi ranks.*

- *The new partnership[5] between Glasgow City Council and bus operators should:*

  > *Accelerate journey times and provide journey certainty through the rapid roll-out of bus priority measures and reducing dwell times at bus stops;*

  > *Improve the quality of the fleet, meeting Glasgow's LEZ requirements and driving up service standards;*

  > *Improve ticketing and customer information for all bus services, introduction of multi-operator 'Cheapest Day Saver' tickets across the city, and half-price fares for Apprentices and the Under-19s;*

  > *Better enforcement of existing bus lanes to deliver faster, more reliable journeys; and*

  > *Deliver patronage growth of 25% in the first 5 years.*

- *Better monitoring of traffic volumes and speeds on Glasgow's local road network.*

- *Local authorities in Scotland should be given the powers in the Scottish Transport Bill to introduce non-residential parking charges.*

- *Glasgow City Council should propose the transport projects that could be funded from this revenue stream and assess the economic, social and environmental case for using these powers.*

- *A particular emphasis should however be placed on supporting city centre retail and leisure at a time of intense pressure from online platforms and appreciating the impact policy can have by creating an uneven playing field against both online and out of town alternatives.*

- *Glasgow City Council should lead by example and review whether council workers should be given free or subsidised car parking.*

- *Better use of strategic bus terminals and car parks to reduce journeys through the city centre."*

4. Conclusion

4.1 Glasgow is at the heart of our region, and its ability to thrive is a key factor in the success of Strathclyde as a whole. SPT therefore welcomes the initiative shown by Glasgow City Council in establishing the Commission, and therein its commitment to addressing the transport and connectivity issues the city faces.

4.2 The Phase 1 recommendations of the Commission are considerable, wide-ranging, and in some cases, radical and very challenging. For example, the aspiration to deliver 25% bus patronage growth over the first 5 years of the Glasgow Bus Partnership will require deep and fundamental changes in how, collectively, public and private sector partners approach Glasgow's bus market to make it significantly more attractive to the public.

4.3 Further, at a strategic level, we welcome the Commission's recommendation that Glasgow City Council re-affirm its commitment to the transport hierarchy first outlined in the Glasgow City Centre Transport Strategy of February 2015[6], with pedestrians and public transport having primacy over private car use.

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[5] The "Glasgow Bus Partnership" established by Glasgow City Council in November 2018, attended by Glasgow City Council, bus operators, the Confederation for Passenger Transport, and SPT.
[6] Glasgow City Centre Transport Strategy 2014-2024, February 2015, page 33:
https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=27887&p=0

4.4   At the launch event for the report, Glasgow City Council committed to reviewing the Commission's Phase 1 recommendations and considering next steps in how they will respond to them. SPT look forward to continuing work with Glasgow City Council in that regard, and in doing so will at all times take the necessary co-ordinated and integrated regional approach to maximise future benefits for the people and communities of our 12 Strathclyde area councils. Indeed, the recommendations of the Connectivity Commission will provide a hugely useful input and strength to the ongoing development of the new Regional Transport Strategy.

4.5   The Commission's Phase 2 report, due in Spring 2019, will consider how to improve rail and road connectivity in the Glasgow travel to work area and also comment on whether current transport governance structures are fit for purpose. Members will be aware that SPT has long advocated a more effective and integrated approach to the planning and delivery of transport in our region and indeed, a separate paper to this meeting in relation to the Local Governance Review is the latest opportunity to input to such debates. Given the potential implications for SPT of the Commission's Phase 2, we look forward to working closely with them over coming months to assist them in their deliberations. Officers will keep the Partnership appraised of progress in this key area as the Commission works towards its conclusions.

5. Partnership action

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

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	*None at present.*
Legal consequences	*None at present.*
Financial consequences	*None at present.*
Personnel consequences	*None at present.*
Equalities consequences	*None at present.*
Risk consequences	*None at present.*

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