



Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

Committee Strategy & Programmes

Date of meeting 7 February 2020

Date of report 28 January 2020

Report by Chief Executive

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

Further to earlier reports¹, members will be aware that there are a range of strategic-level policy, planning and delivery initiatives underway within transport and related sectors in Scotland at present, across national, regional or local levels. The impact of these on the people, communities and transport network of the west of Scotland could in some cases be significant, and it is therefore essential that SPT seeks to monitor progress and influence outcomes to maximise benefits for our area. This report summarises current progress on key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

3. Update

3.1 National

3.1.1 UK exit from the European Union

Having gained Royal Assent at the end of January, the UK Government's Withdrawal Agreement Bill became the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act. The Act enables the UK to leave the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, followed by an 11-month transition period during which the UK and EU would seek to negotiate the form of their future relationship and trade deals. Officers continue to liaise with colleagues at national and local levels on potential transport and wider implications of the UK exiting the European Union and will update the Committee as matters progress over coming months.

¹ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP221119_Agenda7.pdf

3.1.2 2020 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference – 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26)

Members may be aware through recent media coverage that Glasgow has been identified as the host city for the next UN Climate Change Conference – known as COP26 which is due to take place from 9-19 November 2020. Around 200 world leaders and in the region of 50,000 delegates are expected to attend the event, which will be the biggest of its kind ever held in Scotland. Officers have had initial dialogue with Transport Scotland (TS) and Glasgow City Council in relation to transport preparations for the event, and hosted a visit from UK COP26 representatives, including the UK Government Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Cabinet Office at Buchanan Bus Station on 15 January. Discussions continue in regard to SPT's role in preparation for COP26 and officers will keep the Committee updated as work progresses in this regard.

3.1.3 ScotRail franchise

In December 2019, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Mathieson MSP, made a statement to the Scottish Parliament informing them that a 'break clause' had been triggered to end Abellio's contract to run the ScotRail franchise in 2022, three years earlier than planned. Mr Mathieson outlined the reason for this as being that the Scottish Government was not satisfied that the additional subsidy Abellio were seeking from them to run the franchise from 2022 onwards would deliver sufficient benefits for passengers, communities, and the economy. The Scottish Government is now considering other options for the future operation of the franchise, including potential bids from the public sector. The Scottish Government also highlighted that the outcomes of the UK-wide Williams Rail Review², established to identify the most appropriate organisational and commercial frameworks for rail services and the rail network, are awaited. SPT will continue to monitor the situation and update the Committee as necessary in due course.

3.1.4 Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

Commencement orders, guidance and regulations are awaited on various elements of the Act, these being expected in early 2020. The Scottish Government is currently undertaking a consultation on regulations and guidance for Low Emission Zones; this is the subject of a separate report to this Committee. Officers continue to have dialogue with various parties including constituent councils in relation to the provisions of the Act and will present a review of potential opportunities to the Partnership in March.

3.1.5 National Transport Strategy/Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)

SPT is guided that Transport Scotland plan on formally publishing the new National Transport Strategy (NTS) in early February, alongside various reports and background materials relating to STPR2. In relation to the latter, TS held an engagement session with SPT Partnership members on 24 January in relation to the development of the STPR2.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-williams-rail-review>

3.1.6 Infrastructure Commission for Scotland

On 20 January, the Infrastructure Commission published its first phase report³, intended to provide advice and recommendations to Scottish Ministers on a 30-year, long term strategy for Scotland's infrastructure. In the report, the Commission makes seven recommendations, which cover Leadership, Place, Making the most of existing assets, Heat and Transport, Regulation, Digital & Technology, and The Role of the Public.

In relation to transport, the Commission recommend that the new National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 should focus on delivering a net zero carbon economy through aligning strategic investment decisions to support demand management and greater use of active travel, public transport and shared mobility, and that investment in roads should focus on improving existing infrastructure rather than building new roads.

The Commission also recommend that guidance on investment decision-making – including Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) should be updated to reflect new priorities, particularly in relation to carbon emissions. Further, the Commission recommend that the UK and Scottish Governments should replace the existing road and fuel taxation regime with a new form of charging/payment system and also develop a more stable long term investment regime for the management and maintenance of road infrastructure.

The Commission now plan further work throughout 2020 on the delivery challenges facing infrastructure and will report in due course.

3.1.7 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

On 9 January, the Scottish Government published a 'Call for Ideas' for NPF4⁴, inviting responses on a range of themes, specifically:

- *“What development will we need to address climate change?”*
- *How can planning best support our quality of life, health and wellbeing?*
- *What does planning need to do to enable development and investment in our economy to benefit everyone?*
- *How can planning improve, protect and strengthen the character of our places?*
- *What infrastructure do we need to plan and build to realise our long-term aspirations?”*

Noting that there would be further, more formal consultation on NPF4 as it developed, the Scottish Government emphasised the 'Call for Ideas' is the initial stage of an engagement process which will also include a range of events. The overall timeframe remains to have an outline NPF4 in place by summer 2020. Officers will continue to liaise with relevant partners, including Clydeplan, in relation to the implementation of various elements of the Planning Act, including this initial 'Call for Ideas' stage.

³ <https://infrastructurecommission.scot/page/key-findings-report>

⁴ <https://blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture/2020/01/09/national-planning-framework-4-npf4-early-engagement-now-underway/>

3.1.8 Scottish Government - Protecting Scotland's Future: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020 (PfG)

Officers continue to liaise with Transport Scotland in regard to accessing the £500million bus investment announced in the PfG in late 2019. TS representatives attended a meeting of the officer-level SPT-Councils Liaison Group on 16 January and advised that details of the application process would be announced soon. In line with advice previously received, TS further emphasised that any PfG funding is likely to be conditional on there being fully functioning and effective governance arrangements in place within the applicant partnership, and that it would be seeking to fund large-scale, strategic interventions. In line with this, officers continue to liaise with the Glasgow Bus Partnership and other partners throughout the region to seek to ensure that the west of Scotland is in a robust position to make a strong application for the bus funding when bidding processes are announced.

3.2 Regional

3.2.1 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

Further to the report to the Committee in November⁵, good progress continues to be made in developing the Regional Transport Strategy. Members will recall that, as much as possible, the RTS development process would seek to dovetail with that of other partners, particularly Transport Scotland's NTS and STPR2. As noted earlier, given that the NTS publication date is now scheduled for end of January, the consultation on the RTS Issues and Objectives report has been paused to allow for that to happen and will commence in February. This realignment of programme has allowed officers time to undertake early development work in preparation for future stages of the RTS, and it remains on target for publication in 2021.

3.2.2 Clyde Corridor Place Mission

At the 22nd State of the City Economy Conference held in Glasgow on 10 January 2020, Derek Mackay MSP, the Scottish Government Finance Secretary, announced plans for the creation of a 'place mission' for the Clyde Corridor, from South Lanarkshire through to Inverclyde. The Scottish Government is looking to dedicate resources to this along with partners, with the aim being revitalisation, greater use, and 'greening' of the River Clyde and its waterfront areas. Further details are awaited on this proposal and officers will update the Committee as matters progress.

3.2.3 Glasgow Metro

In advance of the same conference above, Glasgow City Council and Renfrewshire Council announced plans to develop a 'Glasgow Metro' with a link between Glasgow Airport and Paisley Gilmour Street station being the first phase of that project. Noting that the full project was of a scale which would require Scottish Government support, at the conference the leader of Glasgow City Council highlighted that the councils were prepared to invest City Deal funding in the development of the proposal, and that this initial feasibility and analysis would be conducted over the next year.

SPT officers will continue to engage with relevant partners in relation to this project with a view to ensuring that a regional, multi-modal, strategic approach is taken to any feasibility, analysis and business case development, seeking to

⁵ Section 3.2.1 of this report: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP221119_Agenda7.pdf

maximise wider benefits of a Metro-style approach. While such discussions are at an early stage, and given that elements of what was proposed for a Metro by the Connectivity Commission were based on previous work undertaken by SPT, we will seek to provide information to assist the project. Officers will in any case keep the Committee updated as discussions continue.

3.2.4 Rail update

The following section provides an update on rail projects and initiatives SPT is working on with partners:

- **Hairmyres Rail Station and Park & Ride**
SPT is in early discussions with South Lanarkshire Council, Transport Scotland, and Network Rail in relation to improving the above, in alignment with wider TS plans for improvements to the Glasgow Central to East Kilbride line. Officers will keep the Committee updated on progress in this regard.
- **Clydebank Transport Interchange**
SPT and West Dunbartonshire Council hope to finalise the Outline Business Case for improving transport connections in Clydebank town centre by end of January and will consider next steps, including discussion with Transport Scotland, on completion.
- **Motherwell Rail Station Redevelopment**
Work continues between SPT, North Lanarkshire Council, ScotRail and Transport Scotland in relation to the above, including arranging to have discussions with Avanti West Coast regarding their future involvement in the project, with progress remaining positive.
- **Robroyston Rail Station and Park & Ride**
The new Robroyston rail station and park & ride was opened on 15 December 2019 as part of ScotRail's 2019 winter timetable, with all partner agencies in attendance and positive media coverage. Partners will closely monitor the use and impact of the station and park & ride from a lessons learned perspective.

3.3 Local

3.3.1 George Square Conversation

Media reports on 21 January noted that, based on the results of the George Square Conversation, Glasgow City Council's (GCC) preferred way forward is:

- Remove traffic from and pedestrianise the two sides of the Square in front of the Merchant's House and City Chambers respectively (the 'East' and 'West' sides of the Square);
- Restrict traffic on the 'North' and 'South' sides of the Square to bus, taxi, private hire and cycles only between 0700hrs and 1900hrs; and,
- Remove all parking spaces on the Square.

Formal confirmation of the above is awaited, but SPT's initial view is to be broadly supportive of the proposals, while being mindful of any potential issues the changes may have on the bus network, and the need to develop alternative solutions to these as soon as is practically possible. At a strategic level, SPT

also believe that any changes such as those to George Square should be developed as part of a wider, integrated and co-ordinated plan for transport in the city centre. Officers will continue dialogue with GCC and operators in regard to the above.

4. Conclusions

There is significant potential for change in transport and related fields at present within Scotland at a strategic level as a result of many of the initiatives outlined in section 3 above. SPT is involved in many of these, and officers will continue to seek to ensure that SPT's views are taken into account and will update the Committee as matters progress.

5. Committee action

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

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>The new RTS will need to take account and/or address matters raised in this report.</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>None at present.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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