

Annual Statement on Sustainable Economic Growth 2023/24

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, section 32(1)(a) requires listed public bodies to publish a statement on sustainable economic growth as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

The following statement sets out the steps that Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has taken in 2023/24 to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of its functions. Further information is available at:

spt.co.uk/about-us/who-we-are/documents/finance/.

Introduction

SPT was established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 which created Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs). SPT's role involves planning and delivering transport solutions for all modes of transport across the west of Scotland, in conjunction with our 12 constituent councils and industry partners.

Sustainable economic growth and contribution to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework

SPT, working with our partners, contributes to sustainable economic growth by: setting a regional transport policy framework that aims to contribute to a healthier environment, inclusive economic growth and improved quality of life; planning and delivering regional transport projects, and operating and funding transport services. SPT also works closely with its constituent councils, Transport Scotland and others to ensure that transport projects and programmes are co-ordinated, integrated and delivered efficiently across the 12 local authorities in our region.

Our new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), approved by Scottish Ministers in July 2023, sets out five objectives that our services, projects and investment programmes will help to achieve up to 2037. These objectives, collectively, aim to ensure that everyone - including people with protected characteristics, households on lower incomes and people living in rural, remote and island communities - can use our transport system, in the most sustainable and accessible way possible, to participate fully in our society and economy including getting to work, attending school, college or university, caring for others, shopping, accessing healthcare and services, and enjoying family, leisure and social activities. These objectives also recognise the needs of business both for accessible labour markets and sustainable connections between our region's towns, passenger and freight transport hubs and key economic centres. A key focus of the delivery of the new RTS will be improved active travel connectivity and better bus services.

In 2023/24 we invested £42.412 million in regional transport improvements (including £22.136 million on Subway Modernisation) that help to deliver the RTS Policies and that are aligned with the following RTS Objectives:

- to improve accessibility, affordability, availability and safety of the transport system
- to reduce carbon emissions and other harmful pollutants from transport in the region
- to enable everyone to walk, cycle or wheel and for these to be the most popular choices for short, everyday journeys

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- to make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone
- to improve regional and inter-regional connections to key economic centres and strategic transport hubs for passengers and freight

Expenditure was lower than had been originally planned mainly due to re-phasing of the delivery programme from 2023/24 into future years caused by unexpected delays. Issues highlighted by our local authority partners included the availability of contractors, delays in the procurement process and staff resource constraints.

In terms of operation of transport services we incurred net expenditure of £36.976 million in direct support of transport services in 2023/2024. This included £15.525m million of support from SPT and funding partners to join up communities by subsidising local bus services in areas not served by the commercial bus market, an increasing challenge given the significant recent decline in bus patronage and market contraction. SPT's Subway service carried 13.4 million passengers (2022/2023: 11.9 million) in 2023/2024 against a pre Covid patronage of 13.2 million in 2019/20 so patronage is now exceeding pre Covid levels. Buchanan Bus Station, the largest bus station in Scotland, typically handles around 12 million passengers per year and over 1 million bus service departures departed from SPT bus stations in 2023/2024, enabling vital access to employment, education, services and key retail centres across the country.

In terms of SPT's own staff training and development policies, these result in a highly trained and professional workforce which is ideally placed to meet the future needs of the economy.