



## Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

**Committee** Strategy & Programmes

**Date of meeting** 19 February 2021

**Date of report** 25 January 2021

### 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 reports<sup>1</sup>, members will be aware that measures to address the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and a range of policy, planning and delivery initiatives are underway within transport and related sectors in Scotland at present, across national, regional and 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 Covid-19 response

As we approach the milestone of one year since the first lockdown, responding to the impacts of the pandemic continues to be the primary focus for transport stakeholders across the west of Scotland. SPT, both in terms of operations and planning, remains focused on playing our part in the collective response to Covid-19, and a report will be presented to the Partnership in March which provides a full update on progress in that regard. At the time of writing, and at the request of constituent councils, SPT is providing assistance in relation to any transport issues arising as a result of people needing to access vaccination centres. A meeting between SPT, NHS and ScotRail has taken place in relation to that, and following dialogue with constituent councils, SPT has instigated a daily call with relevant partners (including councils, NHS and operators) in to address any 'live' issues that may arise.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP201120\\_Agenda8.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP201120_Agenda8.pdf)

### 3.1.2 2020 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference – 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) – Glasgow

The senior-level internal SPT group continues to meet on a regular basis, receiving updates from officers on the COP26 working groups for Bus (which SPT chair), Communications, Rail/Subway and external partners as necessary. While it is anticipated that the pandemic will not impact on planning for the event, SPT is guided that any final decision on whether COP26 will go ahead will be taken in February. Indeed, it is worth highlighting that the scale of the event, in terms of likely attendance from around the world, may be more significant than previously thought, particularly given recent news suggesting a renewed focus on environmental issues by the USA<sup>2</sup>.

SPT is also exploring opportunities to promote our activities through COP26. For example, an application has been made to the United Nations for SPT to attend the official COP26 event, and discussions are continuing with partners such as Glasgow City Council, Climate Ready Clyde, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the Urban Transport Group in relation to any potential joint opportunities. SPT also approached the UITP<sup>3</sup> (The International Association of Public Transport, of which SPT is a member), who are attending the event, and positive early dialogue has taken place with them in relation to potential promotional events and initiatives for COP26. Officers will continue to update the Committee on this and other related matters as the event moves nearer.

### 3.1.3 National Transport Strategy (NTS) Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)

Transport Scotland (TS) published the NTS Delivery Plan 2020-22 on 17 December 2020<sup>4</sup>. The Plan sets out the actions being taken across the Scottish Government over the next 2 years to take forward the NTS, including addressing the impacts of COVID-19. TS noted that the Plan will remain live on their website, ready to be updated so as to retain flexibility and reflect the ongoing response to the pandemic, and further noted that updated versions of the Plan will be published on an annual basis. Additionally, TS also updated that an NTS “Working with Partners” document will be published early in 2021, which will be developed in partnership with others including Regional Transport Partnerships and will highlight the role of external partners in the delivery of the NTS.

Furthermore, a meeting of the NTS Delivery Board took place on 2 February 2021, at which SPT (at officer-level) represents the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) of Scotland, with the Chair of Nestrans representing the Chairs of the RTPs. Discussions at that meeting covered climate change, monitoring and the STPR2.

STPR2 is the subject of a separate report to this Committee. SPT continues to chair the Glasgow City Region STPR2 Regional Transport Working Group (RTWG), a meeting of which is being scheduled for late February. SPT is also a member of the respective STPR2 RTWGs for Ayrshire & Arran and Argyll & Bute. Officers will continue to update members on both the NTS and the STPR2.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/20/paris-climate-agreement/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uitp.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-nts2-delivery-plan-2020-to-2022/>

### 3.1.4 Scottish Government Climate Change Plan Update

The Scottish Government published “Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: Climate Change Plan 2018–2032 – Update” (CCPu) on 16 December 2020<sup>5</sup>. The CCPu has been updated to reflect the ambitious targets set by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, and also to try and take account of the impacts caused by the current pandemic. The CCPu is framed around a series of key themes: public and private sector investment; green jobs (including training and reskilling); adaptation and resilience; encouraging and maintaining positive behaviours; and, adopting a place-based approach.

With regards to transport, which remains the single biggest emitting sector for harmful emissions in Scotland<sup>6</sup>, and in addition to previous announcements about investment in bus, active travel, and the decarbonisation of rail by 2035, through the CCPu, the Scottish Government makes a series of commitments, including:

- Reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030;
- Phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, with a commitment to work with public bodies to lead the way by phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles by 2025;
- Establish a Zero Emission Heavy Duty Vehicle programme; and
- Decarbonise scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040.

The commitment in relation to reducing car kilometres – in essence, reducing car traffic - has naturally generated the most attention but, while acknowledging the scale of its ambition and the fact that it is one of the most far-reaching targets in relation to that issue in the world, the Scottish Government believe it is a necessary step to deliver the change required. Within the CCPu, they further commit to producing a “roadmap” on how the reduction in car kilometres will be achieved. Officers continue to review the CCPu and engage in dialogue with TS and others in relation to it, including the required reduction in car kilometres, and importantly will seek to take account of its proposals and commitments in the developing Regional Transport Strategy.

### 3.1.5 Strategic Transport Group

Given the significant workstreams underway, such as those noted above and in the rest of this report, and the ongoing pressures of the pandemic response, it is essential that a co-ordinated, integrated and complementary approach is taken to ensure effective delivery. To that end, following consultation with other stakeholders, a Strategic Transport Group (STG) has been formed comprising Transport Scotland, SPT and Glasgow City Council. The STG is co-chaired by the Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis of TS, the Chief Executive of Glasgow City Council, and SPT’s Assistant Chief Executive. The STG meets on a quarterly basis, and has so far proved very helpful in providing a forum for open dialogue and seeking to ensure a co-ordinated strategic approach.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/carbon-account-for-transport-no-12-2020-edition/emissions-trends-for-scotland/>

## 3.2 Regional

### 3.2.1 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

Further to the detailed update provided to the previous Committee, the RTS “Case for Change” document is nearing completion for the forthcoming consultation. Engagement with council officers on a “long list” of options for interventions and projects to deliver the RTS and to be included in the Case for Change has been completed. The draft RTS Case for Change will be brought to the Partnership in March prior to the public consultation commencing in early April.

### 3.2.2 Transport Transition, Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

The focus of the Glasgow City Region Transport Transition Plan group remains the delivery of the £1.8million programme of projects which were successfully bid for through TS’s Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund. Similarly, the Glasgow Bus Partnership has begun the development of a bid for Transport Scotland’s Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) and now meets on a fortnightly basis to ensure momentum is maintained in developing a robust bid in time for the deadline in mid-April. It is also worth highlighting that, further to earlier work on the transport transition, SPT re-convened an officer-level meeting with Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire councils in relation to bids for the BPF and dialogue continues with them in that regard. Work also continues on the Managed Motorways project led by TS and given its significant potential positive impacts for bus priority, emphasis is being given to ensuring that bids for the BPF and the Managed Motorways project are complementary.

Transport Scotland previously advised that the development of guidance and regulations in relation to the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (including franchising, municipal bus companies and Bus Service Improvement Partnerships) would take place along the same timelines as bidding for the BPF. While there have been initial meetings with various parties in relation to the provisions, these are at an early stage and it is likely that further work will continue over the summer before the public consultation on the draft guidelines and regulations takes place. Officers will advise of any updates on this and the other issues noted above as work progresses.

### 3.2.3 Glasgow City Region Metro Project

SPT officers continue to attend a regular fortnightly meeting with the Glasgow City Council Metro project team and the Metro Strategic Advisory Group. The current stage of development of the project is that a consultant is being procured to assist with the development of the scope for the Metro feasibility study due to be undertaken through 2021. Officers continue to monitor the development of the Metro project in seeking to ensure that other significant strategic projects, such as the developing RTS, STPR2 and any BPF bids are complementary to the Metro project and vice versa. Officers will continue to update the Committee on this potentially significant project as work continues.

## 3.3 Local

### 3.3.1 Officers continue to liaise with councils, Community Planning Partnerships and other partners in relation to a range of plans, initiatives and projects, including the developing RTS, Local Transport Strategies, delivery of projects from SPT’s capital programme and those mentioned elsewhere in this report, as well as

undertaking liaison with relevant organisations in relation to the pandemic response.

3.3.2 A good example of such liaison is the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Business Resilience Council (BRC) which has met on a weekly basis since early in the pandemic and which SPT officers attend. As well as providing a useful forum for dialogue and debate about the significant challenges facing the business community and organisations that support it, including transport operators, the BRC has offered the opportunity to hear from those at the heart of Scotland's response to the pandemic, including Professor Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director of the Scottish Government. Knowledge gained from such liaison proves useful in shaping SPT's operational and planning response to the pandemic across the region, and officers will continue to update the Committee on such matters as they progress.

### 3.3.3 Glasgow City Council Connecting Communities programme

A report to a Glasgow City Council (GCC) committee in early February updates on the results of the "public conversation" held in recent months in relation to the various transport strategies being taken forward under GCC's Connecting Communities programme. The results of the survey are of interest to SPT, local and regional stakeholders from a range of perspectives given that it is our region's main urban centre, and that while 83% of the 2,899 respondents were residents of GCC, 14% were not but regularly travelled into the city and 3% were from business or community organisations. Key highlights from the results include:

- Over 50% thought Glasgow's transport system was inadequate for their needs;
- Almost 60% indicated they could not cycle for everyday journeys as much as they wanted to;
- In terms of the public transport on offer, strongest level of dissatisfaction was with buses, followed by the Subway, then rail;
- Issues with buses were related to reliability, cost, not going to where people needed to go, and frequency/times;
- Different ways to travel are not smart and integrated, including ticketing;
- High cost of transport particularly public transport;
- Safety concerns over cycling on road and lack of a complete cycling network;
- Rising traffic levels and congestion;
- Poor air quality and health problems from vehicle emissions;
- Disability related problems with transport including a lack of physical accessibility;
- Problems with personal safety on public transport including discrimination; and
- Vehicle-dominated design and spaces in the city, with people walking and cycling competing for the same restricted space, and inadequate walking environments.

The outcomes of the survey will form a useful insight for the developing RTS and in the planning and delivery of SPT operations.

#### 4. Conclusions

The dominance of the Covid-19 pandemic on workloads and resources in transport and other sectors continues into 2021, but the parallel focus of the various organisations on taking forward the initiatives mentioned in section 3 is to be welcomed. SPT and partners will have a key role to play in positively shaping and influencing how the future unfolds and officers will keep Committee members updated on developments 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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