



Shaping the Future of Transport in Scotland

Date of meeting 11 December 2020

Date of report 1 December 2020

Report by Chairs

1. Object of report

To advise the Partnership of a forthcoming public discussion paper by the Chairs, to be developed with input from Partnership members, which is intended to stimulate engagement with the forthcoming Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) consultation in early 2021, and encourage positive debate about the policy options and strategic opportunities which could help deliver *transformational* change towards an available, accessible, affordable, ecologically and economically sustainable, efficient, integrated, and safe transport network for the people and communities of the west of Scotland to enjoy.

2. Background

- 2.1 As the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for the west of Scotland, with a range of operational and planning responsibilities, and covering an area which has around 43% of the Scottish population and accounts for around 70% of public transport trips in Scotland, SPT has a key role to play in influencing national debate in Scotland on transport matters. A past example of this was SPT's strong approach on bus policy¹ – including the “Ten Point Plan”² – which could be considered to have been a significant catalyst for the focus on bus provisions within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 2.2 SPT's Partnership Board, with representation from across the political spectrum and the region's 12 local authorities, and with a wide range of experience from appointed members, has and continues to be a forum for robust debate on strategic transport issues as well as a venue for consensus building and facilitation of mutually agreeable solutions. At the SPT Board Development session in February 2020, as well as subsequently in the course of debate, board members have expressed the wish for SPT, and specifically the Chair, to raise the challenges of transport at a more strategic level, and more generally for SPT to lead a more ambitious public debate on how best to address those challenges.
- 2.3 As members are aware, the current context within which transport operates is unprecedented in terms of its range of complex challenges and concerns. Public transport must navigate and assist with these challenges – including the climate emergency, long-term impacts of COVID19, strained public finances, wider economic disruption as well as the critical social issues of poverty and deprivation. Alongside these sit concerns about the future facing different transport modes, the need for

¹ SPT response to Scottish Government consultation on bus:
[http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/sp241117_agenda7\(b\).pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/sp241117_agenda7(b).pdf)

² A report on SPT's bus policy / “Ten Point Plan”:
http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/sp280314_agenda7.pdf

modal shift, and the deliverability of the ambitions set through the National Transport Strategy.

- 2.4 Development of the new RTS is underway and, in line with Scottish Government guidance, the final strategy will be an evidence-based, objective-led plan for transport in the west of Scotland intended to be applicable over the next twenty years. While the timeline for the RTS is due to complete in early 2022 – noting the first of two public consultations on the RTS will begin in early 2021 – existing work, previously reported to Partnership and based on survey and technical analysis, has progressed sufficiently to identify some key themes (see 3.1).
- 2.5 Without question, the next five to ten years will be a period of great change across many sectors of society, directly and indirectly linked to transport. Engagement on positively shaping that change, and the transformative impacts that it may have, is essential. Within that context, it is therefore right that SPT shows leadership and vision with respect to transport in the west of Scotland, as well as playing its key delivery role facilitating transport improvements which benefit everyone in our region.
- 2.6 In order to deliver on this for the Partnership, the Chairs propose to issue a Chairs' discussion paper early in 2021 (likely in January or February) to stimulate public debate around the time of the launch of the RTS consultation. This preliminary paper below sets out some key themes and issues which the Chairs intend to emphasise, and is presented here to Partnership in order that the Board has the opportunity to formally feed in to that work. Given the timing of the RTS launch it is noted that timelines may preclude routine committee review, however, in the event that the Chairs' discussion paper does not come to committee prior to issue, the Chairs undertake to table it at the next appropriate committee.

3. Proposed themes

- 3.1 To ensure consistency and continuity with the developing RTS, the discussion paper is anticipated to feature emerging RTS Key Themes, roughly:
 - Emissions (noting transport remains the largest sector for harmful emissions, significantly impacting on health and contributing to climate change);
 - Access for All (noting that for many people and communities, access to transport services continues to be a major issue; physical access onto transport vehicles/infrastructure needs significant improvement; affordability remains a concern);
 - Public Transport Quality & Integration (this covers many issues including ticketing, integration across modes and operators, quality of journey);
 - Regional Connectivity (noting that for an inclusive vibrant economy, the transport links for passenger and freight transport are vital between communities across the region); and
 - Active Living (this covers broadly 'active travel', encouraging people to walk, cycle and wheel – it is anticipated that this will recognise the primary and critical role of local authorities in placemaking to deliver ambitions).
- 3.2 Alongside these issues, the Chairs intend to comment on the critical opportunities and future disruption which may be afforded by:
 - the use of digital technologies for demand responsive transport (including Mobility as a Service (MaaS)) and for transport infrastructure planning;

- changing approaches to transport modes and infrastructure (both large and small scale; imminent and speculative) which have the potential to impact on the nature, reach and performance of the transport network for people and goods.

3.3 Finally, the Chairs intend to comment on the value of having a well empowered public transport authority with sustainable revenue funding, noting:

- the value of dynamic control of the public transport network by a transport authority;
- the challenge of acceptable means of revenue fund raising for subsidy; and
- the importance of engaging the interests of all stakeholders (from the public, to government bodies / funding partners and operators).

4. Conclusion

4.1 Given the great uncertainty about the future across many facets of society, as the RTP for the west of Scotland, and a major player in the Scottish transport scene, it is right that SPT seeks to engage the public and influence key stakeholders with a view to delivering positive change for our region. The forthcoming Chairs' discussion paper is intended to stimulate debate and encourage engagement in both policy matters and projects which have transformative capability.

4.2 Notwithstanding the engagement on key transport issues arising from the proposed discussion paper, the developing RTS remains a top priority and will continue to be progressed in line with all statutory guidance. The RTS remains scheduled to be brought for Partnership approval in early 2022, for submission to Scottish Ministers, in line with best practice and due process.

5. Partnership action

The Partnership is asked to note the contents of this report, discuss the themes raised and provide feedback to the Chairs.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>None directly – paper is anticipated to stimulate public discussion, not define policy, in line with supporting development of the new RTS. Paper will be tabled at future committee in order to allow consideration of any policy development.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly – paper may present future scenarios which require statutory support. Paper will be tabled at future committee in order to allow consideration of any policy to pursue any enabling legislation.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly – paper may present future scenarios which would require financial support for development as well as providing options for potential future revenue mechanisms. Paper will be tabled at future committee in order to allow consideration of any financial requirements for any further policy development not within existing budgets.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly – paper may present scenarios</i>

which may be anticipated to have additional personnel requirements.

Equalities consequences

Paper is anticipated to consider transport inequalities and therefore may be anticipated as contributing positively to addressing equalities issues. New RTS is being developed in line with due process to take account of any impacts on equalities groups.

Risk consequences

Reputational risk – any intervention in public debate carries with it a reputational risk in the event that the public or stakeholders disagree. There is however a reputational risk associated with failing to address the public needs and engage in leading debate.

Carbon Management consequences

Paper is anticipated to consider matters relating to systemic reduction in carbon emissions and therefore may be anticipated to contribute positively to addressing climate emergency and reducing carbon/climate impactful emissions.

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