



### A Call to Action: SPT's Transport Summit 2022 – Update

**Committee** Strategy & Programmes

**Date of meeting** 25 November 2022

**Date of report** 2 November 2022

#### Report by Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

To update the Committee on the outcome of “A Call to Action – SPT’s Transport Summit 2022”.

#### 2. Background

Further to the report to the Partnership in September 2022, the Summit was held at the Mercure Glasgow City Hotel on 27 October 2022. The agenda for the Summit was as follows:

- 0930-0935: Welcome and Introduction: Councillor Stephen Dornan, Chair, SPT
- 0935-1000: Keynote Speech: Fiona Brown, Interim Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis, Transport Scotland
- 1000-1100: Session One: “The Right Road to Recovery? Covid, Cost of Living, Climate Change”

Host: Councillor Alan Moir, Vice Chair, SPT

Speakers: Stuart Patrick, Chief Executive, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce; Bruce Whyte, Public Health Programme Manager, Glasgow Centre for Population Health; and Kevin Rush, Director of Economic Growth, Glasgow City Region.

Q&A Panel members: Speakers plus Valerie Davidson, Chief Executive, SPT; Kevin Kane, Executive Director, Glasgow Economic Leadership; and Professor Iain Docherty, Dean, Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Stirling.

- 1100-1200: Session Two: “Back on Board? - The Future for Bus”

Host: Gordon Dickson, Head of Bus Strategy and Delivery, SPT

Speakers: Fiona Docherty, Managing Director, Stagecoach West Scotland; Greig Mackay, Director for Scotland, Bus Users UK; and Ralph Roberts, President, Confederation of Passenger Transport.

Q&A Panel members: Speakers plus Catherine De Marco, Partnerships Director, First UK; Colin Howden, Director, Transform Scotland; and George Hazel, Director, George Hazel Consultancy and Appointed Member, SPT Partnership Board.

- 1200-1210: Summing Up: Valerie Davidson, Chief Executive, SPT

### 3. Update

The event, which was invite-only in order to manage numbers, was attended by 47 people. There were representatives from across the region and beyond, private and public sectors, elected members and senior officers, business and academia, passenger representatives and from campaign groups. A summary of key points of discussion from each part of the Summit is noted below:

- Keynote Speech

The Transport Minister, Jenny Gilruth MSP, had originally agreed to give the keynote speech at the Summit but unfortunately was subsequently unable to attend. In the Minister's place, Ms Brown's speech highlighted that £1 billion had been invested by the Scottish Government to support the public transport network through the pandemic. She also noted the importance of bus services as the largest public transport mode with two thirds of all public transport journeys made by bus. Ms Brown noted the financial pressures faced by the bus industry including the impact of inflation and current labour shortages which has resulted in a reduction in the number of bus drivers with resultant impacts on services. Despite these challenges, the industry continues to make progress on the target to decarbonise the majority of the bus fleet by 2024. Ms Brown also further emphasised the important role of the wider public transport network in supporting a sustainable economy.

In the Q&A that followed, Ms Brown emphasised the current focus of the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland is on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable people by mitigating the impacts of the cost of living crisis. In particular, Transport Scotland will bring forward the outcome of its' Fair Fares Review which will make recommendations on how to improve the affordability of the bus network.

- Session One: "The Right Road to Recovery? Covid, Cost of Living, Climate Change"

Key points from speeches and the panel Q&A included: the crucial importance of achieving climate change targets; the need to ensure timely delivery of transport projects including Clyde Metro; the health and wellbeing benefits of investment in active travel; the need to act with urgency in terms of transport policy and delivery as change needs to happen now; the huge impact of the cost of living crisis on people on the lowest incomes; that we need to strive and embrace the 'new normal' post pandemic. In the Q&A that followed, panel members emphasised the need to reflect the true costs of road use; the need for and valuable contribution of good institutional assets including SPT; the need to re-densify our urban areas, particularly Glasgow City Centre but also our suburbs; and the need to redefine what public transport looks like in a post pandemic world.

- Session Two: "Back on Board: The Future for Bus"

Key points from speeches included: welcome support for the bus measures in the Transport Scotland Act 2019 but recognition that funding will be critical to implementation; a recognition that 'today gets in the way' when trying to deliver change in the transport system whether this be the impacts of war in Ukraine or

economic impacts; the need to ensure the right balance of bus services that meet the needs of urban and rural areas and that there is no 'one size fits all' solution; modal shift is no longer 'optional' but a necessity if we are to achieve our climate change targets; congestion is a major factor to be addressed in delivering an affordable and attractive bus offer; all speakers agreed that key to all of this will be effective re-allocation of road space to meet the needs of bus and active travel.

- In the Q&A that followed there were a range of views expressed on transport governance: from the need for further regulation of the bus industry to drive integration and tackle the cost of bus fares, to a plea that we should concentrate on partnership working rather than revisiting 'old debates'; a key message throughout discussion was that significantly increased resources would be required to fund a step-change for bus.
- **Summing Up**

In summarising key points and actions from the Summit, SPT's Chief Executive thanked all the organisations and individuals for their attendance and contribution to what was a valuable discussion, and one that that does not always happen enough through work and time pressures.

The Chief Executive emphasised that the Summit was not only about the issues facing the city region but also about the wider region including Ayrshire and Argyll & Bute as well as wider Scotland; that there is a broad consensus on the outcomes we want to achieve i.e. an affordable, accessible, high quality and integrated transport network; however, there remain challenges to overcome in how we deliver this but what is clear is that we cannot carry on as we are.

For its part, Ms Davidson said SPT will conclude the consultation on the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) reflecting the feedback from the Summit and the wider public consultation responses and begin the development of the RTS Delivery Plan. However we cannot do this in isolation; it will require strong partnership working. We also need to tackle the pressing issues around the cost of living and staff shortages faced by the industry and wider transport sector. We need a stronger role for transport in helping to set economic policy; and we need to address declining bus patronage; including by improving the actual and perceived safety of the transport network. Above all we need to meet the target of reducing road mileage by 20% by 2030 and as a sector, we only have seven years in which to do this.

Reflecting on this, Ms Davidson said SPT would take away some initial actions from the Summit, including a commitment to enhance partnership working through undertaking further dialogue with our elected members and local authority partners. This will include discussions with SPT Board members, and seeking to open up a conversation with the Transport Minister on ways to achieve mutual outcomes.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Initial feedback from attendees to the Transport Summit has been positive. SPT will reflect further on the output and feedback from the Summit and reflect this in forward discussions with transport stakeholders. The scope to organise a rural/islands transport summit in the first part of the new year is also being examined and officers will report back on this to a future Committee.

#### **5. Committee action**

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

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>The output from the Transport Summit will be taken into account as SPT finalises the Regional Transport Strategy and in further dialogue with elected members and wider transport stakeholders.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

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