



Scottish Government “Spaces for People: Making essential travel and exercise safer during Covid-19” fund – Adapting Glasgow City Centre

Date of meeting 26 June 2020

Date of report 11 June 2020

Report by Assistant Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To inform the Partnership of the Scottish Government’s “Spaces for People” fund (SfP)¹, with a focus on temporary measures being introduced in Glasgow city centre initially.

2. Background

In support of Transport Scotland’s Transport Transition Plan (TTP)², the Scottish Government has established the SfP fund to make it safer for people who choose to walk, cycle or wheel for essential trips and exercise during and as we move out of Covid-19 lockdown, to support commuting and the restart of the economy. The fund, which is being administered by Sustrans, will support such measures as temporary walking and cycling routes, and footway widening / removal of parking. Up to £30m is available from the fund to support initiatives for the phases of the route-map out of lockdown, and bids can be accepted from local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships. Many of the councils in the SPT area have bid or are considering bidding, and SPT is liaising with them in that regard, and is also considering potential joint applications.

While the situation regarding the various SfP proposals in the SPT area remains fluid at the time of writing, Glasgow City Council (GCC) has been awarded £3.5m from the SfP for measures in the city centre and neighbourhoods around the city. Given the strategic importance of Glasgow city centre in the region, and its key role as the hub of the public transport and strategic road network, this report summarises the measures proposed in that regard. However, SPT remains mindful of the other key corridors within the SPT area outside Glasgow and will continue to work with local authorities to support these.

The SfP fund does not include support for temporary bus priority infrastructure (e.g. temporary bus lanes / bus gates). This is however being considered separately by Transport Scotland, with discussions on-going with Local Authorities, RTP’s and the Bus Industry.

3. Outline of proposals

The GCC SfP proposals include:

¹ www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2020/scotland/spaces-for-people-making-essential-travel-and-exercise-safer-during-coronavirus/

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/>

- Implementation of the George Square Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO);
- Removal of on-street parking to facilitate widened pavements to provide more space for walking and cycling, queuing for shops and main public transport hubs;
- Where widened pavements interface with bus stops, temporary 'bus boarders' will be constructed to ensure that boarding/alighting arrangements remain compliant and convenient for bus passengers;
- Changes to waiting and loading restrictions;
- Selective road closures, where feasible;
- Increase to the pedestrian 'green time' at junctions and / or reduction in the traffic light cycle times to aid pedestrians;
- Changes to pedestrian crossings to be automatically set at green and requiring to be activated by vehicles, rather than on pedestrian demand;
- Investigate the potential to increase the number of bikes and electric bikes available in the NextBike bike hire scheme; and,
- Installing additional on street cycle parking where space is available.

SPT is guided that within the city centre, a street-by-street approach is being taken with temporary measures introduced to allow priority to be given to pedestrians around transport hubs, core shopping streets and any identified pedestrian pinch points. Notably there is a focus on George Square, St Vincent Street, North Hanover Street, Renfrew St, Union Street, Jamaica St, Oswald St, and Hope St, which are all key transport corridors for bus services within the city. Proposed measures at North Hanover St, Gordon St and Argyle St at Central Station are intended to make provision for queuing/footfall associated with Queen Street and Central Stations. Further detail on the plans are available at the Glasgow City Council website³.

In addition, within local neighbourhood centres there are plans for temporary re-allocation of road space for physical distancing outside shops and at high footfall urban centres. Areas under consideration include Partick, Shawlands, Maryhill, Dennistoun, Pollok, Drumchapel, Easterhouse, and Castlemilk.

Adding to temporary active travel routes that have already been implemented on the Broomielaw (incorporating the Fastlink route) and Kelvin Way, the GCC plans also include;

- Further temporary active travel routes to deal with key congestion hotspots on the network where walking/cycling space is under pressure and temporary cycle lanes can be implemented (primarily by converting road space to cycle lanes).
- To develop additional routes that could serve essential journeys or areas currently being used for exercise.
- To identify possible Park and Walk / Park and Cycle routes that could be developed.

³ <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=97370>

- To identify possible temporary routes through Glasgow parks currently under pressure, e.g. Glasgow Green, Pollok Park, and which may tie in to other on-road temporary routes (e.g. Glasgow Green/Clyde Street).
- Where possible, GCC also seek to accelerate existing active travel schemes.

GCC have sought views and suggestions from the public on their plans utilising the Commonplace Portal⁴. SPT officers are in regular contact with GCC colleagues on the development and implementation of the above temporary measures to ensure a co-ordinated, multi-modal and complementary approach is taken, and to support on-going dialogue and consultation with operators, particularly the bus industry, as the programme develops. GCC have highlighted that measures will be kept under review and may be refined following installation in order to respond to any subsequent local and / or regional issues that may arise.

In respect of timescales, it is anticipated the above measures will be rolled out in coming weeks utilising emergency Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) powers as necessary and aligning with the Scottish Government’s Covid-19 TTP arrangements.

SPT and councils are represented on the Transport Scotland and Glasgow City Council co-chaired Glasgow City Region advisory group for the TTP at which SfP proposals are discussed in order that a co-ordinated approach is taken. Should a temporary bus priority infrastructure programme be introduced, it is anticipated a similar approach will be adopted.

4. Conclusion

SPT has invested heavily in active travel initiatives in recent years through its capital programme, and walking and cycling will likely feature to a significant level in the developing Regional Transport Strategy. It is essential that any temporary active travel initiatives arising out of the SfP remain in line with a strategic, integrated and multi-modal approach, and officers will continue to work with councils and others in that regard. It is hoped that the SfP funding will play a significant part in easing the route out of lockdown in a safe way, including specifically facilitating social distancing, in order to protect public health, support accessibility and stimulate economic activity during the lockdown removal. SPT officers continue to support GCC in the implementation of their plans, as well as supporting applications by other councils, and engaging with TS on the development of a temporary bus priority support programme. Officers will keep the Partnership updated as matters progress.

5. Partnership action

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

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the RTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>The measures being implemented through the SfP will need to take account of the needs of equalities groups.</i>

⁴ <https://glasgowspacesforpeople.commonplace.is/>

Risk consequences

None at present.

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