



## Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

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**Date of meeting** 14 June 2024

**Date of report** 4 June 2024

### Report by Head of Policy & Planning

#### 1. Object of report

The object of this report is to update the Committee on strategic-level issues affecting transport in the west of Scotland.

#### 2. Background to report

Members will be aware that a wide range of policy, planning and delivery initiatives are currently underway within transport and related sectors across Scotland at national, regional and local levels. The effects of these on the people, communities and transport network of the west of Scotland could be significant and it is therefore important that SPT continues to monitor developments and seek to influence outcomes in order to maximise benefits for our area. This report summarises current key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

#### 3 Update

##### 3.1 General

Further to the update to the previous Committee in February 2024<sup>1</sup>, efforts to grow public transport patronage continue. Subway patronage continues to perform well and is now 7% up on the pre-Covid average. Most recent reported figures to the Operations Committee show patronage on SPT-supported bus services is up around 3% on the pre-Covid average. For the commercial bus network, passenger numbers remain around 90% of pre-Covid levels. Patronage on ScotRail services is improving but remains down 18% on pre-Covid figures.

##### 3.2 National

Further to the update to the previous Committee in February, Transport Scotland (TS) has provided further advice on the regulations and guidance relating to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. TS has advised that substantive regulations dealing with information to develop a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) or franchise came into force on 1 April 2024. The regulations relate to information that can be obtained by a local transport authority from a bus operator to support the introduction or exercise of a BSIP or franchise agreement. Areas covered include passenger data, revenue and information on vehicles.

At the previous Committee it was noted that TS had written to SPT and constituent councils in relation to a Transfer Order to allow SPT to formally take over the Local Transport

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.spt.co.uk/media/wfwdcvc/sp230224\\_agenda8.pdf](https://www.spt.co.uk/media/wfwdcvc/sp230224_agenda8.pdf)

Authority (LTA) status of its previous incarnation, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority (SPTA), thereby facilitating the potential use of the 2019 Act powers by SPT. SPT and councils have since confirmed to TS their support for this transfer. The Transport Partnerships (Transfer of Functions) (Scotland) Order 2024, which transfers functions in relation to local authority run services, BSIPs and franchising to Model 3 Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) (SWestrans, ZetTrans and SPT) was subsequently laid before the Scottish Parliament on 26 March and was subsequently passed by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on 30 April. The Order comes into force on 4 June 2024.

SPT continues to engage with TS through a joint working group with ATCO (Association of Transport Coordinating Officers) which provides an opportunity for discussion and feedback on the regulations and guidance on the 2019 Act.

### 3.3 Fair Fares Review

TS has published the findings of its Fair Fares Review announced in 2021 with the intention to make public transport more accessible, available, and affordable. SPT's Head of Policy and Planning represented the RTPs on the Review's Expert Stakeholder Advisory Group. The Review is presented as a suite of documents, including the overarching 'Main Report' alongside four supporting papers which set the direction for achieving a public transport system that is financially sustainable in the long term and which provides affordable, frequent, and integrated services.

The Review highlights the challenges facing public transport and presents options on the immediate, short- and medium- to long-term actions that are available to reform our current transport offering to deliver more effectively, including:

- Develop a proposal for a bus flat fares pilot for an area-based scheme to provide flat fares on bus travel, or reduced fares on zonal integrated travel for consideration in future budgets.
- Develop policy to consider the best way to provide free bus travel to people seeking asylum.
- Develop the feasibility of a pilot project to extend free travel on rail services for companions accompanying eligible Blind Persons Concessionary Travel cardholders.
- Monitor and evaluate the ScotRail Peak Fares Removal Pilot.
- Transport Governance Review to be recommenced with specific action on identifying changes to support improved public transport (Reference is made to this in a separate paper to the Committee on RTS Transport Governance).
- Consider establishing a National Forum on the Future of Public Transport, to coordinate improvement of delivery of a quality, accessible, available and affordable integrated public transport system.
- Receive advice from National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board on the strategic development of smart ticketing in Scotland, including advice on the national technological standard to improve smart ticketing integration between modes, as well as advising on schemes.
- Develop the proposal to extend the existing National Ferry Concessionary Scheme to under-22-year-old island residents.
- Consider options and develop the business case for introducing a national and/or regional integrated ticket and fare structure.
- Publication of the refreshed Smart & Integrated Ticketing Strategy Delivery Plan in early 2024 and progression of its associated actions and policy deliverables.

- Develop a bus service improvement plan and delivery framework over the next 18 months to improve future availability of bus services across Scotland.
- Develop proposals for a new fare offering aimed to encourage continued increase in rail market share, reflecting changing travel patterns and the needs of different markets for rail including commuting, business, leisure and tourism.
- Consideration of concessionary travel support for those experiencing financial poverty.
- Consider options for national bus or multimodal travel scheme and fare structure which could encourage more people to use bus and the wider public transport system, particularly when commuting.

TS also advised it is committed to finding ways to make sustainable travel modes more attractive and supporting people to take fewer journeys by car. They recognise that to achieve this, the cost of motoring relative to public transport needs to be addressed. The report advises that the forthcoming route map to 20% car kilometre reduction will aim to set out its approach to support this recommendation.

The report also refers to a number of proposals which were considered but which TS will not be taking forward, including expansion of the National Concession Travel Scheme in a range of ways including to SPT Subway and Edinburgh Tram, rail services, Community Transport and to students and unpaid carers. Members will recall that SPT made representation to TS calling for the expansion of NCTS to the Subway.

In terms of next steps for the Review, TS has advised that the recommendations and actions will be considered alongside overall spending commitments on transport within Scottish Government budgets and will require demonstration of the benefits and impacts of the proposal through the usual business case and appraisal process required for investment of public funds.

### 3.4 Active Travel Funding

A separate report to this Committee updates on SPT's People and Place Programme for funding behaviour change and active travel initiatives.

Work is also progressing on SPT's project to investigate the feasibility of enhancements to active travel infrastructure and connections around Subway and bus stations, which SPT was awarded funding for through TS's Active Travel Transformation Fund in late 2023. The study has identified feasible sites for such interventions, and work scoping designs are at an early stage. Funding has been allocated through the People and Place Programme to continue this project through 2024/2025.

### 3.5 Rail update

Fare increases of 8.7% on all rail ticket types were implemented from April 2024. TS's "off-peak fare all day" pilot, which was due to end on 28 June 2024 has now been further extended until 27 September 2024. Throughout the pilot, data has been gathered on changes in travel patterns and wider patronage. The data gathered is in the process of being analysed and will be published once this process is complete, alongside longer-term plans for fare structures beyond September.

Officers continue to engage with ScotRail in relation to timetable changes, including those on Inverclyde services from June 2024. Accelerated journeys will serve the Gourrock line whilst the Wemyss Bay line will see a doubling of service frequencies for the main part of the day on Mondays to Saturdays. In addition, there are minor service frequency reductions on some lines early on Saturdays whilst half-hourly frequencies are to be restored on evening services on the Glasgow South Electrics as well as additional evening

services between Ardrossan and Glasgow and an accelerated peak service with additional capacity on the Largs line.

Engagement with South Lanarkshire Council and rail industry partners in relation to the Hairmyres station relocation project are continuing.

### 3.6 Regional

#### SPT Climate Change Strategy & Net-Zero Action Plan

Following approval of SPT's Climate Change Strategy & Net-Zero Action Plan in March 2024, work is being undertaken to develop an informed approach to successful delivery and implementation of the Net-Zero Action Plan. This will include developing programme led implementation plans for each of the priority actions, and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. Upcoming highlights include assessing the viability of SPT's buildings to connect to Glasgow's proposed heat network, in line with the Heat Network (Scotland) Act 2021; formulating a Strategy communication plan; and undertaking a Strategic Climate Change Risk Assessment for our property portfolio and transport services.

In April 2024, the Scottish Government updated their approach to Net-Zero with removal of the 2030 target, replaced by legally binding, five-year carbon budgets. SPT remain committed to our interim Net-Zero target of 2030 for Scope 1 and 2 emissions, with Net-Zero for our Scope 3 boundary by 2045. This is also in line with Scotland's long-term net-zero emissions target date of 2045 as specified in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

SPT also continue to engage in key collaborative partnerships working to drive sustainable development across the Glasgow City Region. This year SPT is renewing its membership of Sustainable Glasgow<sup>2</sup>, a council-led initiative formed in 2010 to make Glasgow a world-leading centre for sustainable policy, innovation, and action. In September 2024, the group are hosting a Sustainable Mobility Conference to outline the vision for sustainable transport across the city and provide practical and sustainable mobility solutions for a business audience. SPT has been invited to give the keynote address and we await further details on the itinerary.

Officers recently attended the Congress of Business (COB24) conference which brought together key industry leaders and experts from the finance and urban development sectors to discuss pressing global challenges of climate change, and the urgent need to transform business usual and invest in a resilient net zero economy.

SPT is also renewing its membership of the Climate Ready Clyde Partnership<sup>3</sup> which oversees the implementation of the Glasgow City Region Adaptation Strategy. SPT is committed to supporting implementation of the strategy including through our chairing of the Regional Transport Climate Resilience Working Group which brings key transport organisation together to share best practice and drive adaptation planning in the sector.

### 3.7 Regional Transport Strategy Transport Governance Workstream

Further to the report to the Partnership in December 2023 and subsequent update to this Committee in February, officers continue to progress this workstream. Working in partnership with our constituent councils, SPT has now established a Transport Governance Steering Group chaired by the Chief Executive and including senior officers from councils.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://sustainableglasgow.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://climatereadyclyde.org.uk/>

To date, discussions in the Steering Group have focused on the scope of the review, best practice elsewhere, and potential short- and longer-term measures. An update on the Transport Governance workstream is being presented to the Partnership later in June.

### 3.8 Local

Officers continue to liaise with councils, Community Planning Partnerships and other partners in relation to a range of other plans, initiatives and projects, including the Regional Transport Strategy, Local Transport Strategies, and delivery of projects, as well as undertaking liaison with partners in relation to other issues.

## 4. Committee action

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

## 5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>All workstreams noted in this report are in line with the policies of the new Regional Transport Strategy.</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>The impact of the issues identified in this report could be significant for equalities groups. Due process in terms of statutory impact assessments will need to be undertaken by responsible parties to ensure appropriate mitigation of any matters identified.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>The impact of the issues identified in this report could be significant and due process in terms of statutory impacts assessments will need to be undertaken by responsible parties to ensure appropriate mitigation of any matters identified.</i>

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