



Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Delivering for Argyll and Bute



Introduction

Welcome to “Strathclyde Partnership for Transport: Delivering for Argyll and Bute”. In this report you will find out more about Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and what we do across the west of Scotland, and specifically within Helensburgh and Lomond Argyll and Bute. The report covers the period from 2017/18 to now and into the future, and is structured as follows: About SPT: Who We Are, What We Do; The changing context for transport; The importance of SPT’s regional role; Delivering for Argyll and Bute: SPT Operational Activities; SPT Investing in Argyll and Bute; Working in Partnership; and finally, Looking to the Future, which considers upcoming challenges and priorities, and highlights some “asks” of our partners.





SPT: who we are...

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) is the Regional Transport Partnership for the west of Scotland. SPT was formed in 2006 as an outcome of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, and as part of the new transport framework created by the Scottish Government, which is made up of a national transport agency, Transport Scotland and seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs). RTPs bring together local authorities and other key regional stakeholders to take a strategic approach to transport in their region. SPT's Partnership Board is made up of elected members from across its constituent councils along with appointed members with specific knowledge of transport and other sectors.

The SPT area comprises the following council areas:

East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and the Helensburgh and Lomond area of Argyll and Bute. Our area covers 7,000 sq. km and is home to 2.2 million people (around 42% of Scotland's population) living in localities which range from rural and island communities to the most densely populated urban areas of Scotland.

...and what we do

SPT's role involves planning and delivering improvements for all modes of transport across the region in conjunction with our constituent councils, industry partners and others. SPT is at the centre of the region's transport planning, analysing travel needs and developing the transport system now and for the future. One of SPT's key responsibilities is preparation of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), with a new one currently in development.

SPT also has a range of operational responsibilities, some of which are undertaken on an agency basis on behalf of councils or through administrative support, including:

- Managing and operating the Subway;
- Managing and operating Buchanan, East Kilbride and Hamilton bus stations;
- The provision of socially necessary bus services, including the demand responsive transport service, MyBus, and analysing changes in commercial provision to determine any additional support requirements;
- Managing and maintaining bus stop and shelter infrastructure and arranging school transport on behalf of councils;
- Providing travel information, including the roll-out of Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI) displays;
- Providing the secretariat for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS) on behalf of our councils and administering ZoneCard on behalf of participating transport operators; and
- Smartcard ticketing, through our joint venture, Nevis Technologies Limited, the major supplier of commercial smart ticketing in Scotland including for the Subway, ScotRail and McGill's buses.

In line with the RTS and local priorities, another key role for SPT is working with councils and other partners in developing and delivering capital infrastructure projects. Since 2017, SPT has invested £158 million in capital projects across our area, including £114 million on Subway Modernisation. £39 million capital investment is budgeted for the current financial year. Over the same time period, we have invested £58 million revenue funding in supporting bus services and undertaken £155 million of agency work on behalf of our councils.



The changing context for transport

Over the last 5 years, transport in the west of Scotland has experienced a significantly shifting context, with the primary drivers of this change being responding to both the climate emergency and the Covid-19 pandemic. The latter in particular has resulted in a seismic shift in travel patterns and demand, with public transport patronage down, car use going up, bringing with it, significant challenges for the planning, operation and sustainability of our public transport network. The post-Covid future continues to remain very unclear at this stage, but travel demand and behaviours are likely to be affected by the pandemic for some time to come. What is certain is sustainable transport must be at the heart of any green economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The hosting of COP26 in Glasgow gave a global profile to our region, and expectations are high for positive change to achieve ambitious climate targets. While much has been achieved over recent years in transitioning towards a net zero future – e.g. growth in electric bus fleets and increased rates of walking and cycling – transport remains the biggest contributing sector for harmful emissions in Scotland. Addressing this challenge over the coming years will require transformational change in how we travel.

At a strategic level, there has been a welcomed greater recognition of transport's role in our health and wellbeing, and its contribution to place-making. Furthermore, changes in technology and how we use it, more people working from home, legislative changes through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (facilitating franchising, municipal bus operation and bus partnerships) and forthcoming initiatives such as the introduction of free bus travel for under-22s from January 2022, are just some of the other factors contributing to the shifting landscape for transport in our region both now and in the future.

The importance of SPT's regional role

The cross-council boundary nature of transport and travel in the west of Scotland, coupled with the pull of the conurbation and sub-regional towns and villages, results in a complex range of travel needs and behaviours which need to be understood, planned for, influenced, and accommodated, particularly at a regional level. Best practice from across the UK and Europe shows that to ensure your region performs well economically, environmentally and in an inclusive way, a strong regional approach to transport is essential. SPT provides that bridge between the local and the national bringing together key partners, including Transport Scotland, transport operators, local authorities, health boards and above all the public in seeking to ensure our transport system is the best it can be.

SPT's Partnership Board and committees serve to ensure democratic oversight and accountability over transport planning and service delivery in the west of Scotland, making sure that the needs of our communities are catered for in an efficient and effective way. Given the wide range of significant challenges we face, the integrated, co-ordinated and collaborative approach to regional transport, facilitated by SPT, remains more important than ever.

Delivering for Argyll and Bute: SPT Operational Activities

SPT's activities support the regional transport network to the benefit of all residents who travel across the area, for example, our investment in Glasgow benefits residents who may live in another council area but travel to the city for work or leisure, and we continue to deliver a range of services in Helensburgh and Lomond and across the region either directly or on behalf of councils. While the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in significant impacts on our operational activities due to reduced travel demand, the majority of services were maintained to ensure transport remained in place for key workers and those making essential trips. The figures below provide some detail on SPT operations over recent years.



SPT Operational activity



6.1m

bus station departures

Across Buchanan, Hamilton, East Kilbride, Greenock, Braehead and Silverburn (SPT management of departures at Greenock ended in 2019)



200

supported bus services across Strathclyde

Around 200 supported bus services run by around 20 operators on behalf of SPT
6 supported services operating in Helensburgh and Lomond (see appendix for details)



43.7m

Subway journeys undertaken since 2017

(80% reduction in journeys in 2020/21 compared to the previous year, due to the pandemic)



33 MyBus

services operate across the west of Scotland

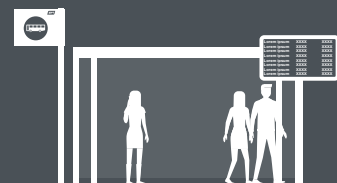
Helensburgh and Lomond area is within the R950 service area (Since January 2019)



4

local bus contract and operator inspections in Argyll and Bute

(Since August 2018)

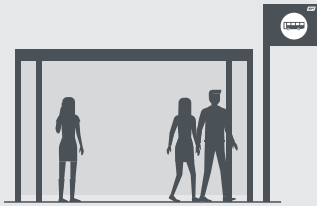


237

pole-mounted information cases maintained

4 Real-Time Passenger Information displays and, 74 new bus shelters installed

SPT agency activity on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council



210
bus stops maintained
in Argyll and Bute



2,781
disabled persons National
Entitlement Card (NEC) renewals
916 first time applications processed
(72% reduction in first time applications
in 2020/21 compared to the previous
year, due to the pandemic)

Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme



31,000
Concessionary
travel cards

SPT administers SCTS on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council and the 11 other SPT local authorities. The scheme provides eligible Argyll and Bute residents reduced fares on ferry, rail and Subway. The cost to local authorities of operating the scheme over the last 5 years has totalled £18.6 million. An estimated 31,000 Argyll and Bute residents hold an NEC, allowing for SCTS discounts.

Administrative activities

SPT administers the SPT ZoneCard on behalf of participating rail, Subway and bus operators, helping Argyll and Bute residents to save money when making multi-modal/multi-operator journeys.



515,000
tickets sold
(since 2017/18)



£37m
revenue to operators
(since 2017/18)



1.4m
weeks of travel sold
(since 2017/18)

76% reduction in tickets and 79% reduction in no. of weeks sold in 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

SPT: Investing in Argyll and Bute

SPT receives capital funding each year from the Scottish Government which we invest in regional projects benefiting those travelling throughout the west of Scotland, as well as projects in council areas, through grants to our constituent local authorities. Examples of regional projects SPT has invested in over recent years include the Subway Modernisation project, our ongoing bus stop and shelter upgrade programme, Real-Time Passenger Information roll-out, enhancements to key interchange locations including those at Motherwell, Govan and Partick, and the refurbishment of Buchanan Bus Station.

Between 2017 and 2021, SPT has provided £0.864 million of capital funding to Argyll and Bute Council to support a range of sustainable transport projects in the Helensburgh and Lomond area, and in 2021/22, capital funding totalling £0.345 million¹ was awarded to the Council to support the continued delivery of these projects. A breakdown showing SPT's five-year transport investment in Argyll and Bute is provided in Table 2 in the appendix and further information on key projects is given below:

Investing in Bus Infrastructure

High quality bus infrastructure not only helps improve the passenger experience but also helps make buses more attractive, more accessible to users and encourages more people to travel by bus, thereby supporting passenger growth. Capital investment by SPT over the last 5 years has supported delivery of high-quality bus infrastructure across the Helensburgh and Lomond area of Argyll and Bute.

Since 2017, SPT has invested £0.496 million in the Helensburgh and Lomond area to help the Council deliver a series of targeted bus improvements. In particular, the Council has focussed bus investment in areas including Helensburgh, Cardross, Rhu and Rosneath and has helped deliver around 70 new shelter replacements, raised kerbs, bus build outs and hard standing areas. These measures help wheelchair users, people with pushchairs and those with reduced mobility to board and alight from buses more easily.

Helensburgh and Lomond Cycleways

SPT continues to demonstrate commitment to improving active travel routes and promoting walking, wheeling and cycling as a sustainable mode choice by funding active travel infrastructure across the west of Scotland.

SPT's capital programme continues to support Argyll and Bute Council's long-standing ambition to deliver the Helensburgh and Lomond Cycleways project and since 2017, SPT has provided funding totalling £413,000 in support of this project towards design and construction. The route will provide a cross-boundary dedicated high quality walking, wheeling and cycling route linking Helensburgh and Dumbarton via Cardross.

The project is to be delivered in two main phases with Phase 1 connecting Colgrain, Helensburgh to Geilston Burn, Cardross. The second phase will see the delivery of Phase 2 connecting Ferry Road, Cardross with Dumbarton.

The project involves a number of complexities due to the proposed route passing through several privately-owned areas of land and there is, therefore, a need for on-going landowner negotiations and agreements to be reached in order to deliver the route in full.

A major milestone in the project was however reached in 2020/21 with construction works commencing on a 285m section of the route, linking Cardross Station to Geilston Burn as part of phase 1. This section is routed via Geilston Park, Cardross Playing Fields and Cardross Park and works have included the construction of a new permanent bridge over the burn.

The project has been widely supported by local residents and communities along the route and in an effort to ensure this continued support, as well as opportunity to input into route options, the Council has carried out extensive public consultation and community engagement events including most recently in December 2021, an online consultation seeking views on the full routes proposed for both phases.

The new path when completed will connect to the National Cycle Network Route 7, linking to Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, and east-ward to Glasgow and Edinburgh. The completed path is due to be opened by 2028.

Helensburgh Park and Ride

Park and Ride facilities have an important role in promoting sustainable travel choices and help reduce the need to travel longer distances by car.

In 2017/18, SPT provided funding of £300,000 for the construction of Helensburgh park and ride built on the former gasometer works and located between East Princess Street and Grant Street. The facility was built to help ease pressure on town centre parking caused by commuters with the site chosen due to its ideal location for easy access to Helensburgh Rail Station and to nearby bus services.

¹ This figure may include any budgetary amendments approved by committee during the course of the financial year at the request of the Council.



Working in Partnership

As a partnership body, SPT understands and values the benefits of strong partnership working and we continually strive to ensure collaboration with and between our member councils, transport operators, Transport Scotland and other key stakeholders. The nature of our transport network necessitates this for example, buses run by commercial operators or supported by SPT use public roads maintained by councils. Partnership working is therefore at the heart of what we do. Through building strong and effective relationships, we work with councils and a wide range of other partners to progress the delivery of capital projects, upgrade infrastructure, support planning and regeneration, support access to healthcare and other initiatives, working collectively through such forums as the Regional Active Travel Group and the SPT/Councils Liaison Group meetings, the HMNB Clyde Transport Options Working Group and through joint working with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority. SPT is also a member of Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group, a sub Group of the Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership (CPP). SPT's activities support the CPP's overall objective that Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population.

HMNB Clyde - Faslane

HMNB Clyde, Faslane is undergoing significant change and investment. The Maritime Change Project is a £1.3 billion development at the largest single-site employment location in Scotland, which will support approximately 7,500 jobs. This investment will see an increase in personnel at the base over the next five years, creating significant opportunities both locally and beyond, although there will also be the potential for significant challenges in terms of demand on local services and infrastructure, including challenges associated with connectivity and sustainable access. Work is underway to support the development of the base including infrastructure improvements to accommodate the increase in personnel and their families, while mitigating the impacts on the wider transport system.

HITRANS, the RTP for the Highlands and Islands are leading the development of a study aimed at considering options to address problems and explore opportunities to support the investment in the base. SPT is part of a multi-party working group and is providing support in relation to the public transport and active travel aspects of the study.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) attracts millions of visitors every year. The volume of visitors it receives, especially the numbers arriving by car creates challenges for the Park, at times putting significant pressures on the most popular parts of the Park, on its communities and the surrounding transport network. Without management and intervention, the impacts of unsustainable travel behaviours are likely to harm the visitor experience as well as have adverse effects on the Park's communities and the local environment.

The Park Authority recognises the need to provide attractive and sustainable transport alternatives through improved active travel and public transport options to popular destinations. SPT, alongside Tactran, the RTP for Tayside and Central Scotland, are supporting the LLTNP to take forward a transport options appraisal to encourage sustainable access, both to and within the Park area, alongside managing growth in visitor numbers.

Looking to the Future

The key challenges of stimulating a green economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, achieving national climate targets, and more fundamentally, getting people back onboard public transport, means it is more important than ever that partners in the west of Scotland work together to improve our transport network, promote behaviour change towards more sustainable modes, and help create better places and opportunities for all. On-going investment in our transport network will continue to provide connections for people and communities in Argyll and Bute in support of a growing population and economic success.

This section takes a look at some key workstreams underway which could help facilitate the above, and ends with some “asks” of partners as we move into the future.

Delivery

SPT will continue to play a key role in delivering improvements to the region's transport network and positive progress is expected in our own projects and initiatives, such as the next stages of the Subway Modernisation programme, developments in smart ticketing, including the roll-out of smart ZoneCard, and the review of our MyBus demand responsive transport service. We also remain focused on our ‘day job’, including the provision of socially necessary bus services where there is no commercial provision, the MyBus service for people for whom accessing mainstream bus services is difficult, the management and maintenance of bus stops, shelters and Real-Time Passenger Information displays and the roll-out of new bus information standards to ensure accurate and consistent information provision across the region, the provision of school transport, the operation of bus stations, continued support for Community Transport and much more.

Capital Investment

In Argyll and Bute, through our capital programme and over the coming year, we look forward to supporting the Council in progressing the design and delivery of further sections of the Helensburgh and Lomond Cycleways Project. We will also work alongside the Council to develop and deliver active travel routes at other key locations including the Council's proposals for the Rosneath area.

Recent years has seen major investment by SPT in bus infrastructure, resulting in an extensive programme of shelter replacements completed within the Helensburgh and Lomond area. We will continue this work with the Council to identify further opportunities for bus infrastructure investment as well as support measures that will improve bus priority, particularly at key junctions.

We will continue to work with the Council, HITRANS and other partners to deliver sustainable travel improvements in support of the expansion of the HMNB Clyde and with LLTNP, Tactran and others towards sustainable access for visitors and residents to and within the National Park.

Regional Transport Strategy

The new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and the Delivery Plan which flows from it will set the policy framework, targets and strategic programme of projects and initiatives for all partners in the west of Scotland for the next 20 years. Development of the new RTS is well underway, with councils and other partners having been fully involved in the process to date. The Draft RTS will be published for a 12-week consultation over summer 2022, and following that, and upon approval by SPT's Partnership Board, will be submitted to Scottish Ministers when, if approved, it will become a statutory document.

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) sets out a high-level, strategic programme for national level investment in major transport projects over the next 20 years. SPT and council partners have been heavily involved in the development process, and the draft STPR2 has now been published for a 12-week consultation. This, along with the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) will help set in place a framework for positive growth in sustainable transport over coming years. Key measures in the STPR2 include the Clyde Metro and measures to stimulate growth in bus and rail.

Bus Partnership Fund

The £500million, five-year Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) announced by Transport Scotland in 2019 presents a huge opportunity to deliver a much needed step-change in bus services, standards and infrastructure for the people and communities of the west of Scotland. Following announcement of successful bids to the first round of the BPF, work is now underway developing business cases for future investment and delivering projects on the ground. In line with Transport Scotland guidance, new Bus Partnerships in Glasgow City Region and in Ayrshire are also developing, providing forums for a new level of partnership working across the industry and indeed, other provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 in addition to Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) are ready to be explored if necessary.

Continuing changing context

There are also a range of other changes happening in transport in 2022, such as the new Scottish Government-managed ScotRail taking over operation of the rail network from April. These changes, plus ongoing work in relation to initiatives like the Glasgow City Region City Deal, the Ayrshire Growth Deal and the Argyll and Bute Rural Growth Deal, and projects from and bids to the new Levelling Up Fund, mean that the transport landscape is evolving at pace, and it is essential that any positive momentum is maintained if we are collectively to address such challenges as those noted earlier.



SPT's "Asks" of Partners

In March 2020, SPT's Chair and Vice-Chairs published their vision of the future of transport in our region – the "Transport for Strathclyde" report. This sought to stimulate debate about key issues in light of the new Regional Transport Strategy being developed. That debate will naturally continue and SPT believes it is an essential part of the process of positive change. In that spirit, and in concluding this report, SPT would like to put forward three "asks" of partners in the west of Scotland as we move into the future:

1 Help us build a strong project pipeline

SPT and councils have an impressive track record of project delivery across the west of Scotland over many years, but we need to do more. In seeking to deliver our current and developing new Regional Transport Strategy and Local Transport Strategies, we need a strong project pipeline, from early project development through to any "quick wins" or "shovel ready" schemes. SPT stands ready to assist where necessary in helping partners come forward with future ideas which deliver the change our region needs and deserves.

2 Let's take partnership working to a new level

Transport can seem a complex business and there are a wide range of organisations involved in policy, planning, project delivery and operations across the west of Scotland, so partnership working is an essential part of any future success. While there are many good examples over recent years, the sheer scale of some of the challenges we collectively face, from achieving climate change targets, to getting people back onboard public transport after the pandemic, means that how we work together in future needs to go to the next level. SPT looks forward to increasing its engagement with partners over 2022 to explore how we can make that happen.

3 Resources – Let's make the most of what we've got

A lack of funding is a key challenge which has faced the transport sector for many years now. But the time has come to face it head on – are there new sources of funding we can attain? Are there ways we can do the "day job" even better, more efficiently, smarter? Can we jointly resource some activities, both in terms of finance and staff? Is there opportunity for cross-discipline, inter-organisation approaches in fields such as planning, regeneration, economic development, climate change and transport, or for specific projects? SPT believes that these are questions which now, more than ever, we need to develop a collective response to and look forward to increasing dialogue with partners in that regard in the near future.



SPT hope that you have found this report useful in understanding how we are Delivering for Argyll and Bute. If you have any follow-up queries or comments, please direct them to enquiry@spt.co.uk and visit www.spt.co.uk for updates on our work.

Appendix

Table 1: SPT supported bus services operating in Helensburgh and Lomond, September 2021.

Service no	Route	Operator	Support	Operating Area
302	Carrick Castle - Lochgoilhead Primary - Helensburgh	Garelochhead Coaches	Full Support Partly funded by Argyll & Bute Council	Argyll and Bute only
305	Luss - Alexandria	Garelochhead Coaches	Full Support Partly funded by Stirling Council	Operates into West Dunbartonshire
306	Helensburgh - Alexandria	Garelochhead Coaches	Full Support Partly funded by Stirling Council	Operates into West Dunbartonshire
315	Helensburgh - Churchill	Garelochhead Coaches	Partial Support (Sunday daytime only)	Argyll and Bute only
316	Helensburgh - Coulport	Garelochhead Coaches	Partial Support (Mon - Sat early & late journeys. All Day Sunday)	Argyll and Bute only
340	Helensburgh/Vale of Leven Hospital - Royal Alexandra Hospital	Carrs Loch Lomond	Full Support Partly funded by NHS	Operates to Renfrewshire & West Dunbartonshire

Table 2: SPT Capital Funding provided to Argyll and Bute Council 2017/18 - 2021/22.

Project	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	Total spend	21/22 Grant Award
	£000's					
Bus Infrastructure Upgrades in Helensburgh Area	99	23	98	126	346	150
Helensburgh and Lomond Cycleways	26	20	68	103	217	195
Helensburgh Park & Ride	300				300	
Total	425	43	166	229	863	345

Partnership members

(As of 1 December 2021)

Dr Martin Bartos

Chair, Glasgow City Council
Independent

Alan Moir

Vice Chair, East Dunbartonshire
Labour

David Wilson

Vice Chair, Inverclyde
Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Malcolm Balfour

Glasgow City Council
SNP

Greg Beecroft

Appointed Member

Richard Bell

Glasgow City Council
SNP

Colin Cameron

North Lanarkshire Council
Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Graham Campbell

Glasgow City Council
SNP

Ian Cochrane

South Ayrshire Council
SNP

Maureen Devlin

South Lanarkshire Council
Labour

Jenna Dickson

Appointed Member

Jim Finn

West Dunbartonshire Council
SNP

Provost Jim Fletcher

East Renfrewshire Council
Labour

Anne Follin

Appointed Member

William Goldie

North Lanarkshire Council
SNP

Graham Hardie

Argyll and Bute Council
Liberal Democrats

Dr George Hazel

Appointed Member

Graham Johnston

Appointed Member

Ed McGrachan

Appointed Member

Marie McGurk

Renfrewshire Council
SNP

James McNally

Appointed Member

Michael McPake

North Lanarkshire Council
Labour

Richard Nelson

South Lanarkshire Council
Scottish Conservative and Unionist

Donald Reid

North Ayrshire Council
Labour

Anna Richardson

Glasgow City Council
SNP

Jim Roberts

East Ayrshire Council
SNP

David Shearer

South Lanarkshire Council
SNP

Andrew Walters

Appointed Member

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