

Update on Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (GCRBP)

Date of meeting 22 August 2025

Date of report 12 August 2025

Report by Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery

1. Object of report

To update Members on progress and activities relating to the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (GCRBP), including governance developments, delivery priorities, and funding activity.

2. Background to report

The Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (GCRBP) was formally established in 2021 and is a voluntary collaboration between the following organisations.

- First Bus
- Stagecoach Western
- Glasgow Citybus
- McGill's (withdrew from GCRBP in March 2024)
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- East Dunbartonshire Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Inverclyde Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council

The Partnership is led by Glasgow City Council (GCC), with senior level support from SPT. Its objective is to reverse the long-term decline in bus patronage and support a just transition to more sustainable and inclusive public transport across the Glasgow City Region. Further details on the GCRBP are available at the following link

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/5027/Glasgow-City-Region-Bus-Partnership>

Separate to the GCRBP local bus operators have also formed the Glasgow Bus Alliance. This includes the three operators who currently participate in the GCRBP and a number of SMEs. The stated vision is *'to enhance the bus travel experience to, from, and within the City to make it faster, smarter, and easier to use for everyone'*. Further details are available at <https://glasgowbusalliance.com/>

In March 2025, Dr George Hazel OBE was appointed as Independent Chair of the GCRBP, taking over from Joan Aitken (former Traffic Commissioner for Scotland) who served until 2024.

Members will recall that Dr Hazel previously served as an appointed member on the SPT Partnership and brings extensive experience in transport strategy, integrated mobility, and stakeholder engagement. Dr Hazel chairs the GCRBP Board and Steering Group and acts as a key advocate for partnership working across public, private, and community sectors to deliver improvements for bus passengers.

Following cancellation of the £500 million Bus Partnership Fund by the Scottish Government, in April 2025 the GCRBP applied for £4.39 million funding support from the replacement Bus Infrastructure Fund. GCC are the lead applicant on behalf of the GCRBP.

The GCRBP forms a key delivery mechanism within the broader context of the draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy, ahead of any wider Bus Reform, should that be approved. Further details available at <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>

In support of the GCRBP, SPT is represented at officer level on the Board, Steering Group and Working Group(s). SPT also provide secretariat to these groups and to the Chair, Dr Hazel.

3. Outline of Proposals

3.1 Membership

In terms of scope of membership, the GCRBP now consists of the eight GCR Councils, SPT and three participating local bus operators (First Bus, Stagecoach, and Glasgow CityBus), following McGill's withdrawal in 2024.

In terms of Governance, following the appointment of Dr George Hazel OBE as Independent Chair it was agreed that a number of groups would be established to support the work of the GCRBP, including the following;

- GCRBP Board (comprising senior reps from the eight GCR Councils, SPT and three participating local bus operators, meeting bi-annually).
- Steering Group (comprising senior reps GCC (Lead), SLC (representing other GCR authorities), SPT and First Bus (representing local bus operators) meeting monthly.
- Specific Issue Working Groups x6.

Further details on the role, remit and focus of the GCRBP Working Groups is set out below.

3.2 Working Groups

(i) Governance

Chaired by Dr Hazel, this group is focused on the preparation of a formal Voluntary Partnership Agreement. A draft agreement is under development. The group are also reviewing the Terms of Reference (ToR) and governance structures to support effective and timely delivery with clear accountabilities.

Membership includes representatives from First, Glasgow City Council and SPT.

(ii) Projects

Chaired by South Lanarkshire Council, the group is focused on overseeing progress of a variety of projects across the Glasgow City Region that will improve infrastructure and aims to reduce bus journey times and enhance passenger facilities.

Membership includes representatives from First, Stagecoach, Glasgow City Council and SPT.

(iii) Network Management and Enforcement

Chaired by Glasgow City Council, the group aims to minimise the impact to bus reliability arising from roadworks and on-street obstructions (including events) upon the bus network.

Membership includes representatives from First, West Coast Motors, Glasgow City Council and SPT.

(iv) Data

Chaired by SPT, this group is focused on collectively determining what data should be used to measure performance of the bus network and how this can be collated, analysed, and shared with Partners to support improved outcomes for bus passengers.

Membership includes representatives from First, Glasgow City Council and South Lanarkshire Council.

(v) Promotion and Events

Chaired by First Bus, this group looks to establish and develop a robust programme of activity focusing on the promotion of bus use across the Glasgow region through collaborative volume growth and brand building campaigns with other sectors.

Membership includes representatives from West Coast Motors, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and SPT.

(vi) Safer Buses

Chaired by First Bus, this group is focused on work to improve safety on buses across Glasgow and the wider city region and the perception thereof.

Membership includes representatives from Glasgow City Council, Stagecoach and SPT.

In addition to providing secretariat to the GCRBP Board, Steering Group and Chair, SPT provide Project Management support to the above Working Groups to monitor progress against the aims and objectives, within available budgets and agreed timescales.

3.3 Bus Infrastructure Fund Bid

In April 2025, the GCRBP applied for a total of £4.39 million funding support from the Bus Infrastructure Fund. GCC are the lead applicant on behalf of the GCRBP. The bid was submitted on behalf of the GCRBP and consists of five projects:

- Pollokshaws Road Bus Priority Proposals with Bus Detection & Artificial Intelligence Trial
- Paisley Road West Bus Priority Proposals with Bus Detection and Artificial Intelligence Trial
- Review of Glasgow City Region Bus Lane Times of Operation and Enhanced Enforcement
- Minor Bus Stop Enhancements City-Wide and Royston Road
- Extension of Fastlink (Hardgate Road to Bogmoor Road) – Design Works

The bid includes funding for Delivery, Preliminary Design, Consultation and Data Analysis, and amounts to a total value of £4.39 million. At the time of writing, there has been no decision on funding awards from Transport Scotland. Given the delay in receiving approvals, GCC have indicated that a number of the above planned works are now at risk for delivery in 2025/2026.

3.4 Next Steps

In terms of next steps, the GCRBP continues to review and refine the Governance arrangements, following the appointment of Dr Hazel and establishment of the Steering Group and Working Groups, as detailed above.

Securing adequate funding in order to take forward initiatives identified by the GCRBP and supported by the draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS), remains a significant challenge. Engagement with Transport Scotland on the Bus Infrastructure Fund continues, with a view to delivering bus priority improvements in 2025/2026 and development of projects for delivery in coming years.

Ensuring a smooth transition from the work of the GCRBP towards any wider Bus Reform, should that be approved via the SRBS is a further consideration. Within this context SPT is supportive of the aims of the Partnership in terms of promoting bus usage, delivering improved bus infrastructure (including bus priority), and traffic management for the benefit of bus passengers now and in the future.

Officers will provide further updates on the progress of the GCRBP in due course.

4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note this report.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>SPT membership of the GCRBP supports the vision and priorities of the RTS</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly at this time.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>SPT budgeted resource being used to support the voluntary Partnership, including dedicated project management resource and significant officer time.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>GCRBP aims to promote the aspirations, wellbeing and differing needs of passengers including with regard to affordability and accessibility.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>GCRBP supports measures to reduce congestion, noise, and air pollution.</i>

Name Gordon Dickson
Title **Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery**

Name Valerie Davidson
Title **Chief Executive**

For further information, please contact *Gordon Dickson, Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery* on 0141 333 3407.