



## Glasgow City Centre Low Emission Zone – Update

**Committee** Operations

**Date of meeting** 06 November 2020

**Date of report** 09 October 2020

### Report by Assistant Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

The object of this report is to provide an update on the development of the Glasgow City Centre Low Emission Zone (LEZ) introduced on 31 December 2018 by Glasgow City Council (GCC).

#### 2. Background

Members will recall details of GCC's plans to introduce an LEZ in Glasgow City Centre were reported to the Partnership in May 2018, and updates provided in December 2018 and December 2019. The stated primary aim of the LEZ is to address the air quality issues within the city centre which it is assessed contribute to the early deaths of 300 citizens of Glasgow every year. The initial target of the Glasgow LEZ is local service buses, with emissions from other vehicle types including trucks, vans and cars to be considered from 2022 onwards, as facilitated by the 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act. The LEZ spans the area between the M8 motorway, River Clyde and High Street as shown in Appendix 1.

Subsequent to the above, The Scottish Government's Programme for Government sets out a commitment to "consult on Scotland's ambition to make the transformative shift to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030 by engaging extensively with key sectors, in particular with the bus sector". In 2019 Glasgow City Council declared a Climate Emergency and have approved targets of becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030. Both will require substantive changes to the bus fleet in order to meet these targets.

Relatedly, Transport Scotland has launched the Scottish Ultra Low Emission Bus Scheme and is in the process of establishing the Scottish National Investment Bank which will initially focus on the provision of funding to operators for Zero Emission Buses and infrastructure.

#### 3. Outline of proposals

##### 3.1 Traffic Regulation Condition

Members will recall details of GCC's plans to introduce an LEZ in Glasgow City Centre were reported to the Partnership<sup>1</sup> in May 2018, and updates provided in December 2018<sup>2</sup> and December 2020<sup>3</sup>. The stated primary aim of the LEZ is to address the air quality

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/sp180518\\_agenda7.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/sp180518_agenda7.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p141218\\_agenda10.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p141218_agenda10.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SPTP131219\\_Agenda9.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SPTP131219_Agenda9.pdf)

issues within the city centre which it is assessed contribute to the early deaths of 300 citizens of Glasgow every year. The initial target of the Glasgow LEZ is local service buses, with emissions from other vehicle types including trucks, vans and cars to be considered from 2022 onwards, as facilitated by the 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act. The LEZ spans the area between the M8 motorway, River Clyde and High Street as shown in Appendix 1.

Subsequent to the above, The Scottish Government's Programme for Government sets out a commitment to "consult on Scotland's ambition to make the transformative shift to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030 by engaging extensively with key sectors, in particular with the bus sector"<sup>4</sup>. In 2019 Glasgow City Council declared a Climate Emergency and have approved targets of becoming a carbon neutral city by 2030. Both will require substantive changes to the bus fleet in order to meet these targets.

Relatedly, Transport Scotland has launched the Scottish Ultra Low Emission Bus Scheme and the Scottish Government are in the process of establishing the Scottish National Investment Bank which will initially focus on the provision of funding to operators for Zero Emission Buses and infrastructure.

Members will recall that Glasgow City Council applied for a Traffic Regulation Condition (TRC) in order to enforce certain percentages of bus trips through the LEZ area to be compliant, increasing in stringency year on year. The proposed phasing being as follows:-

- Condition 1 – (Applicable from 31 December 2018) - 20% of trips undertaken by Euro VI \* (\* or equivalent via retrofit);
- Condition 2 – (Applicable from 31 December 2019) - 40% of trips undertaken by Euro VI \* (\* or equivalent via retrofit);
- Condition 3 – (Applicable from 31 December 2020) - 60% of trips undertaken by Euro VI \* (\* or equivalent via retrofit);
- Condition 4 – (Applicable from 31 December 2021) - 80% of trips undertaken by Euro VI \* (\* or equivalent via retrofit);
- Condition 5 – (Applicable from 31 December 2022) - 100% of trips undertaken by Euro VI \* (\* or equivalent via retrofit);

During 2019 the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland approved Condition 2 of the TRC (40% of bus trips) thereby facilitating the continuation of the LEZ on 31 December 2019. The three remaining conditions have not as yet been formally approved. Due to the current circumstances regarding Covid 19, and following discussions between GCC and the Traffic Commissioner, SPT understands it is unlikely that the TRC to support Condition 3 (above) of the third year of Phase 1 LEZ will be progressed at this time.

Notwithstanding the above, a number of operators have secured funding from Transport Scotland's BEAR phase 3 fund (further details below). SPT, understands that this funding will facilitate retrofitting of a substantial number of buses operating within the Glasgow LEZ area, and therefore operators are likely to be able to meet the target of Condition 3 above (60% of trips undertaken by Euro VI), subject to successful completion of their retrofit programmes within this timescale.

### 3.2 LEZ Complementary Measures

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/>

As GCC has previously highlighted<sup>5</sup>, in addition to any emissions restrictions introduced as a result of the TRC, essential to the success of an LEZ are complementary measures such as improving bus running speeds, bus priority and other traffic management measures within the city centre and on key radial bus corridors to the city. To this end, bus gates were successfully implemented at two locations within Glasgow city centre on 2 September 2019; Union St at Gordon St and Oswald St at Midland St.

Members may recall that these measures were promoted by SPT and GCC as part of the Fastlink improvements in the vicinity of Union Street and Argyle Street. Additional bus priority measures such as these are likely to be required to support the bus journey time improvement targets which were set out in GCC's LEZ TRC application: City Centre – up to 50% improvement; Key Radial Bus Corridors – up to 20% improvement. SPT remains in dialogue with GCC in respect of other potential interventions, associated with the city centre Avenues project, to improve bus journey speeds.

Relatedly, GCC have recently been awarded funding under Transport Scotland's Bus Priority Rapid Development Fund (BPRDF) for a number of measures within Glasgow City Centre, including the following: additional bus lanes on Bothwell Street between West Campbell Street and Hope Street; additional bus lanes on Renfrew Street between Cambridge Street and Renfield Street. This will add to the bus lane introduced on Cochrane Street and new bus gate at George Square south, introduced as part of the Spaces for People programme<sup>6</sup>. There may be scope for these measures to become permanent in due course in furtherance of the aims and objectives of the Glasgow LEZ, subject to formal processes.

### 3.3 Transport (Scotland) Bill

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 received Royal assent on November 2019.

Alongside a range of other topics, the Act makes provisions for the establishment, modification, effect, and operation of Low Emission Zones by Local Authorities. The Glasgow LEZ is however already established for bus operations only, utilising the method of a Traffic Regulation Condition, compliance with which is required under the terms of each company's Operators' Licence. The Act will allow the Glasgow LEZ to be expanded to all applicable vehicles from 31 December 2022.

SPT understands that due to Covid 19, introduction of the full LEZ provisions by Transport Scotland has now been delayed until summer 2022. At this point it is intended that all other applicable vehicles would fall into scope of the LEZ, i.e. cars, vans, LGVs, motorcycles etc., and enforcement of these vehicles by means of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) will occur. As the Transport Act mandates a one year minimum grace period between scheme introduction and enforcement, it is therefore unlikely that enforcement of LEZ's for such vehicles can occur until summer 2023.

### 3.4 Bus Emissions Abatement Retrofit Programme (BEAR)

Members will recall that BEAR funding has been available to licensed bus and coach operators, local authorities and community transport operators located in, or operating eligible vehicles based on routes within, one of Scotland's cities identified in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2017 LEZ commitment (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow), and/or one of Scotland's Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The Energy Saving Trust charity administers the BEAR scheme on behalf of Transport Scotland.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewSelectedDocument.asp?c=P62AFQDN2U2UUTDN2U>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/spacesforpeople>

Following earlier phases, BEAR phase 3 funding during 2020 awarded £9.75m across Scotland, allowing 594 buses to be upgraded to Euro VI standard. This followed EU State Aid approval, allowing 95% of the cost of retrofit to be funded by the scheme. Of these 594 buses, approximately 250 are likely to be in operation in the Glasgow LEZ area, (First Glasgow: 165 buses, McGill's Bus Service: 72 buses, and West Coast Motors: 8 buses)<sup>7</sup>. SPT understand plans for a further BEAR Phase 4 scheme are also being considered by Transport Scotland.

### 3.5 Bus Fleet Replacement / Zero Emission Buses

Members will recall that SP Energy Networks awarded First Glasgow £1.5 million to support the purchase of two zero emission electric buses to be operated on the M3 Service (Milton to Glasgow city centre via Springburn & Possilpark) and associated depot charging equipment to support 20 electric buses in total. These vehicles were delivered in early 2020 and have been in service since that time, including within the LEZ area.

### 3.6 Scottish Ultra Low Emission Bus Scheme (SULEBS) & Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB)

Transport Scotland's Scottish Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme (SULEBS) is an evolution of the Scottish Green Bus Fund held each year between 2011 and 2018. SULEBS supports the purchase of new buses, and assists with 50%-75% of the cost differential between a standard diesel bus and the equivalent ultra-low emission bus. Support is also available for the infrastructure for this technology of up to a maximum 75% of the capital cost.

A round of SULEBS funding was made available for bids between 19 August and 6 September 2020. This resulted in five successful bids, totalling £7.4 million for the introduction of 41 ultra-low emission buses, and for infrastructure to support the running of ultra-low emission buses across Scotland. These include successful bids from First Glasgow and McGills Bus Service, both of which operate within the Glasgow LEZ area.

The Scottish Government are also in the process of establishing the Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB) to support investment in low carbon technology, including zero-emission buses & associated infrastructure, as highlighted in the Programme for Government. SPT understands that Discussions remain on-going with local bus operators in respect of the SNIB financial offering, including those who operate within the LEZ area.

## 4. Conclusions

4.1 Establishment of the Glasgow City Centre LEZ remains a significant step towards addressing the air quality issues which it is suggested contribute to the early deaths of 300 citizens of Glasgow every year. As previously described, for the bus sector, this is being addressed by means of the TRC. Covid 19 has brought additional challenges to the bus sector, in terms of drastically reduced patronage levels and income streams, and consequently fleet investment programmes being cancelled or reduced. Accordingly, 2021/22 will be a most challenging period for operators, as many of the remaining vehicles will need replaced or are not economical to retrofit, whilst the requirements of the LEZ become more stringent year on year. Further BEAR & SULEBS funding and finalisation of the arrangements in relation to the SNIB would assist in furtherance of this aim.

4.2 Bus gates proposed for Renfield Street and Oswald Street as part of the City Centre elements of the Fastlink project, are now operational in furtherance of the aims of the LEZ & Glasgow Bus Partnership and are to be welcomed, as are the additional bus priority

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<sup>7</sup><https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/scottish-bus-emissions-abatement-retrofit-fund/>

measures in Cochrane St and George Square south introduced by the Spaces for People programme. And, the interventions and funded by the BPRDF will be welcome as and when they are delivered. Additional measures, similar to this will be required to deliver improved bus running speeds & reliability, to align with accelerated operator fleet investment to meet the LEZ targets. SPT continues to liaise with GCC to achieve of these aims.

- 4.3 Whilst recent investment(s) in new Euro VI (& Electric) buses serving Glasgow is welcomed, the scale of bus retrofitting and accelerated bus fleet replacement challenge required to deliver 100% of trips undertaken by Euro VI Buses by 2022 should not be underestimated. Despite recent BEAR funding and fleet investment, a further c550 buses remain to be either retrofitted or replaced over a relatively short period. SPT understands that plans for a fourth round of funding under the BEAR scheme are underway.
- 4.4 The move towards zero-emission city centres by 2030, driven by the Climate Emergency, will create substantial challenges for bus operators, who are currently investing to meet LEZ standards. Further partnerships (and funding support) between government, the bus industry and utilities providers will be essential in realising such aims. It is therefore essential that progress is made in securing sustainable financial models for such initiatives, including through the SNIB and associated support packages such as recent SULEB scheme.
- 4.5 As a key member of the Glasgow City Centre LEZ Delivery Group, SPT has been in regular dialogue with all partners to identify and deal with any issues timeously and effectively, and will continue to take an active role in this to ensure a co-ordinated and integrated approach is taken to delivery of the LEZ over coming years. Officers will continue to keep the Partnership updated on progress.

## 5. Committee action

The Partnership is recommended to note the contents of this report and SPTs continued stakeholder engagement.

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the RTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>Future contributions may be sought from SPT capital and/or revenue programme.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

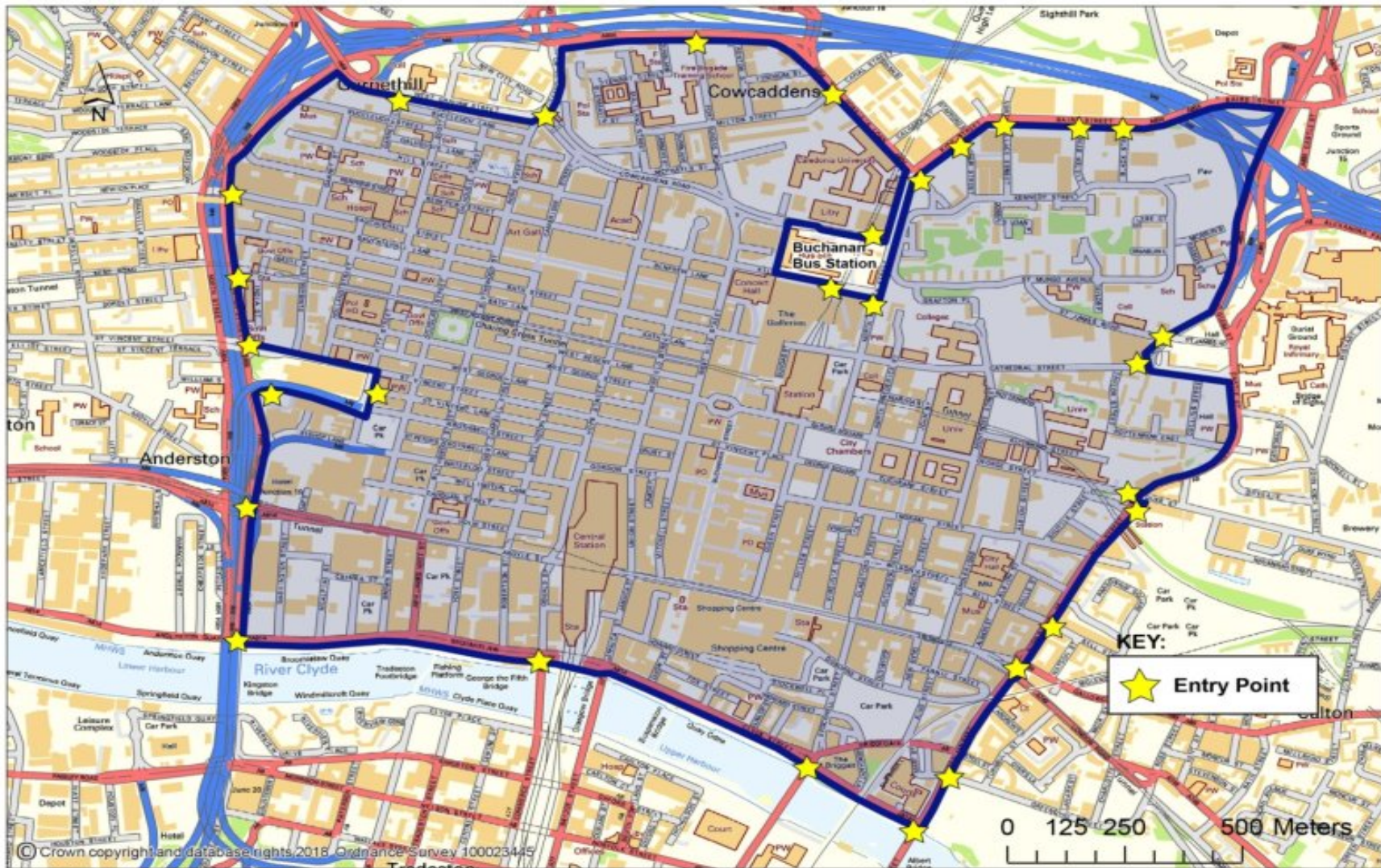
### Name

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# APPENDIX 1 – MAP OF GLASGOW CITY CENTRE LEZ



**GLASGOW LEZ - PROPOSED ZONE**