



## Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

**Committee** Strategy & Programmes

**Date of meeting** 20 November 2020

**Date of report** 3 November 2020

### Report by Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

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

#### 2. Background

Further to earlier reports<sup>1</sup>, members will be aware that in addition, and related to, responding to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are a range of policy, planning and delivery initiatives underway within transport and related sectors in Scotland at present, across national, regional and local levels. The impact of these on the people, communities and transport network of the west of Scotland could in some cases be significant and it is therefore essential that SPT seeks to monitor progress and influence outcomes to maximise benefits for our area. This report summarises current progress on key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

#### 3. Update

##### 3.1 National

##### 3.1.1 Covid-19 response

Responding to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be the dominant issue across all sectors in Scotland. Since the last update in August, a 'second wave' of Covid-19 infections has begun to have significant impacts on society, with the transport sector, and in particular public transport, continuing to be severely affected. In response to this recent increase in cases, the Scottish Government's proposed 5-tiered Protection Level Framework took effect from Monday 2 November 2020.

Officers are currently reviewing the proposed interventions for transport at each tier level in regards to SPT services and the wider transport network, and will continue to work with national, regional and local public and private sector partners in that regard. For example, in relation to any updates to the national Transport Transition Plan, or guidance on physical distancing, SPT will seek to

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP280820\\_Agenda8.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP280820_Agenda8.pdf)

ensure balance between the provision of a safe transport system and continuing to operate services at the appropriate level for the many communities of the west of Scotland who rely on them, with the implications of any national guidelines discouraging use of public transport.

### 3.1.2 2020 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference – 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) – Glasgow

Further to the previous update, which confirmed that the rearranged COP26 will be hosted in Glasgow from 1-12 November 2021, preparations for the event continue to gather pace. A senior-level internal SPT COP26 group has been reconvened to meet regularly and recently received a useful update from the COP26 Stakeholder Manager of Glasgow City Council (GCC). SPT continues to chair the bus group for COP26 and the Subway is a member of the rail group. These groups are continuing to meet regularly, with an increasing focus on ensuring appropriate preparations are agreed and in place in line with the emerging timelines for overall COP26 planning. It is worth highlighting that SPT is currently seeking clarification on funding for provision of any additional services or resource needed for COP26.

In early November, GCC marked “one year to go” until COP26, emphasising that, while national targets were the overriding driver for addressing climate change, it would be at city level where the biggest impacts could be delivered, and that by hosting COP26, Glasgow could put itself at the forefront of global ambition in that regard. It is worth emphasising, however, that despite current positive progress and ambition for COP26, it remains the case that like all events planned for the near future, there is a chance that COP26 may again be postponed in light of the pandemic. Officers will continue to update the Committee on this and other related matters as the event moves nearer.

### 3.1.3 National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan and Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)

Representing the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) of Scotland at officer level<sup>2</sup>, and with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity in attendance, SPT attended the first meeting of the National Transport Strategy (NTS) Delivery Board on 22 October 2020. Members include academics, COSLA, Friends of the Earth, the Scottish Council for the Development of Industry, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and others. The agenda for the meeting was wide ranging, with matters discussed including the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan, the development of the draft NTS Delivery Plan, and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on transport in Scotland. The meeting was useful and informative and the Cabinet Secretary emphasised the important role of partners in the delivery of the NTS and that it is likely there will be a report on this developed by Transport Scotland in early 2021 with input from relevant organisations including RTPs.

In mid-October, Transport Scotland held a series of updates in relation to the development of STPR2. These were then followed by more in-depth meetings of the regional STPR2 groups, including both the Glasgow City Region and the Ayrshire and Arran groups. In light of Covid-19, Transport Scotland is now proposing that a two-phase approach to STPR2 is taken, with Phase 1 focusing on delivery of projects over the next 2-3 years which will aid the economic recovery and “lock-in” any positive behaviour changes which took place as a

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<sup>2</sup> The Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland are represented on the NTS Delivery Board by Councillor Sandra MacDonald, Chair of Nestrans.

result of the pandemic. The draft Phase 1 report is due to be published in December 2020. Phase 2 of STPR2, due to report around the end of 2021, will be focused on the long term (next 20 years) and will consider large scale transport interventions which will maximise economic, social and environmental benefits for Scotland.

Work continued throughout the summer period on the STPR2 regional 'Case for Change' reports and these are programmed to be published in December 2020, accompanied by an addendum on the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The current phase of work on the STPR2 is focused on development of options and the sifting process to identify those with the most merit. Officers will continue to input to the development of STPR2 and keep members updated as progress is made.

## 3.2 Regional

### 3.2.1 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

This is the subject of a separate report to this Committee.

### 3.2.2 Transport Transition Plan

The focus of the Glasgow City Region Transport Transition Plan group continues to be ensuring that, as much as possible, a co-ordinated approach is taken by Transport Scotland, SPT and councils in responding to the pandemic from a transport perspective. The group's joint bid to Transport Scotland's Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund (BPRDF) secured £1.8m and it is anticipated that delivery of the projects approved will begin soon. While SPT is not a recipient of that funding, members will recall that officers played a key role in developing a robust and co-ordinated regional bid. It is also worth highlighting that a useful and productive meeting recently took place between SPT Partnership board members from Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire councils, along with relevant SPT and council officers, in relation to ensuring that the needs of those areas are taken into consideration by the Scottish Government as the response to the pandemic progresses.

### 3.2.3 Glasgow Bus Partnership (GBP) and Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund

The first meeting since March of the reconvened GBP took place on 2 November 2020, with attendees including the four main bus operators (First, Stagecoach, McGills, West Coast Motors), SPT, Glasgow City Council, Confederation of Passenger Transport, Bus Users Scotland and Transport Scotland. The significant current and long-term issues facing the bus industry understandably formed the main thread of discussions throughout the meeting, as well as the need to take a regional approach, and partners remained committed to working together to address these.

The immediate focus for the GBP will be Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund, more details of which are due to be published in November. In anticipation of submitting a joint bid through the mechanism of the GBP, the group will meet each fortnight for the foreseeable future to build momentum and focus on delivering a robust, city region-level bid for the submission date of April 2021. Work undertaken on the recent successful city region BPRDF bid noted earlier will form a useful input to the larger scale Bus Partnership Fund bid.

Transport Scotland's related work on Managed Motorways was also discussed by the group. It was agreed that a representative from the Transport Scotland Trunk Road team should be invited to attend the Partnership to update on

progress with early feasibility work which is focused on the Glasgow motorway network and offers significant potential benefit to express bus services.

Other issues which will form a part of future GBP discussions will include the mechanisms afforded by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and Transport Scotland advised at the GBP meeting that they will be developing regulations and guidance in relation to the Act's provisions in parallel with the bid process for the Bus Partnership Fund.

It is worth highlighting that officers will also be engaging with the Ayrshire councils and Argyll & Bute in relation to bids for the Bus Partnership Fund, and will endeavour to keep the Committee apprised on progress on all matters in that regard.

#### 3.2.4 Glasgow City Region Metro Project

A report providing an update on a feasibility study in relation to a Metro system was presented to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet on 6 October 2020<sup>3</sup>. SPT officers are having regular meetings with the GCC Metro team to seek to ensure alignment and complementarity with the developing RTS, and in relation to the STPR2 and Glasgow Bus Partnership. SPT has been invited to be members of the Metro Strategic Advisory Group alongside such organisations as the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and Glasgow Airport and the first meeting of that group is scheduled for early November. While noting that this project is at an early developmental stage, the scale of and regional nature this project is potentially significant and officers will endeavour to keep the Committee updated as work continues.

#### 3.2.5 Climate Ready Clyde (CRC)

SPT along with other public sector partners is a member of Climate Ready Clyde, which is currently preparing a Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy<sup>4</sup>. The strategy will seek to ensure Glasgow City Region's economy, society and environment is not only prepared but continues to flourish in the face of impacts arising from the climate crisis. Over the summer, the CRC secretariat prepared a draft of the Adaptation Strategy, in consultation with the CRC Board and key stakeholders. The draft has been issued to the CRC Board and also the Regional Economic Partnership for consideration and if approved will be issued for public consultation in November for 6 weeks. SPT will continue to input to the strategy at CRC Board level and will also respond to the consultation and report this to a future Committee.

### 3.3 Local

In addition to regular contact in relation to the Covid-19 response and development of the Regional Transport Strategy, officers continue to liaise with colleagues in councils and Community Planning Partnerships in relation to a range of plans, initiatives and projects. Current examples include the A803 improvements project, Hairmyres Station and Motherwell Interchange.

Glasgow City Council is currently preparing three plans related to transport: Connectivity Plan (Local Transport Strategy), City Centre Transformation Plan, and Liveable Neighbourhoods Plan, and to that end launched a 6-week "Public Conversation" in September to gather views from people in Glasgow on transport in the

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNDX2UT1DXZL>

<sup>4</sup> See sections 3.7 and 3.8 of this report: [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP300819\\_Agenda7.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP300819_Agenda7.pdf)

city now and in the future. SPT has been working closely with GCC in seeking to ensure alignment between the developing RTS and the three plans in development. It is anticipated that a draft Connectivity Plan will be issued for formal consultation in the early part of 2021 and SPT will present a response to it for approval by the Committee at the appropriate time.

#### 4. Conclusions

The events of 2020, and the various key initiatives and plans due to be announced over the next two years (e.g. RTS, STPR2, and others mentioned in section 3), will have significant impacts for the people and communities of the west of Scotland. SPT and partners will have a key role to play in shaping and influencing these impacts towards positive outcomes, and officers will keep Partnership members apprised of developments as matters progress.

#### 5. Committee action

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

#### 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>The new RTS will need to take account and/or address matters raised in this report.</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>None at present.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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