



Climate Change and Carbon Management – SPT progress update

Date of meeting 18 June 2021

Date of report 26 May 2021

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To update the Partnership on SPT progress in relation to climate change and carbon management.

2. Background

2.1 A report to the Strategy and Programmes Committee in November 2020¹ provided an update on various matters in relation to climate change and carbon management, including national initiatives and SPT progress. Since then, various key factors have continued to intensify the focus on such issues, and some of these are noted below:

- Continued growing global concern about the climate emergency, and the international attention on the west of Scotland arising from Glasgow hosting the COP26 conference in November 2021;
- A collective need to achieve the targets set by the Scottish Government in the Climate Change Plan update (CCPu) published in December 2020, including reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030², and wider aspirations for a ‘green recovery’ across all sectors from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, and increasingly, local and regional policy and targets are focusing on climate change, carbon management, and achieving ‘net zero’; the Case for Change³ for the new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), for example, discusses setting regional targets for reducing both emissions and car kilometres;
- An increased emphasis by the Scottish Government on climate change, carbon, and transport through, for example, the wide portfolio created for the new role of Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport⁴, to be undertaken by Michael Matheson MSP, with a supporting Minister for Transport⁵, Graham Dey MSP. The Scottish Government also continues to focus funding on reducing emissions and addressing climate change – an example being the recent Scottish Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme (SULEBS)⁶; and
- As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing concerns about current and future long-term impacts on carbon emissions of, for example, rising car traffic

¹ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP201120_Agenda10.pdf

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

³ www.spt.co.uk/vision

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/cabinet-and-ministers/cabinet-secretary-for-net-zero-energy-and-transport/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/cabinet-and-ministers/minister-for-transport/>

⁶ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/scottish-ultra-low-emission-bus-scheme/>

levels and a significant reduction in public transport patronage. The effects of this are magnified through the fact that transport remains the single biggest emitting sector for greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland (36% of Scottish total), with the private car accounting for the largest proportion of that figure (39% of Scottish transport emissions)⁷.

- 2.2 SPT will have an important role to play for the west of Scotland in each of the above and some current activities in that regard are noted below.
- 2.3 At national level, SPT will seek to be a key partner in discussions relating to Transport Scotland's 'route-map' for achieving the CCPu car kilometre reduction target, and a way forward on the route-map is due to be presented to a forthcoming National Transport Strategy board, on which SPT at officer level represents the Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland. Similarly, as members are aware, SPT is actively involved in both the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and applications to the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF), and while the outcomes of these workstreams are currently awaited, it is anticipated that they will play a significant role in reducing harmful emissions from transport in the west of Scotland, through encouraging greater use of more sustainable travel modes. Members will further be aware of the prominent role SPT has in preparations for COP26 in Glasgow.
- 2.4 At regional level, the RTS remains the key way for SPT to have most influence strategically. Members will recall that "Reduced Emissions" is identified as a Key Issue in the RTS Case for Change currently out for consultation, and that there are various related projects and initiatives suggested in the Case for Change as possible Options to be taken forward for appraisal in the next stages of RTS development. These include: a regional, co-ordinated approach to Electric Vehicle (EV) network charging; promotion of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEVs); transition of bus, freight and taxi fleets to ultra-low emission equivalents; development of alternatives to battery electric vehicles, particularly hydrogen opportunities and for larger vehicles; further implementation of Low Emission Zones; and demand management measures. The recent discussion paper, "Transport for Strathclyde", by the SPT Chair and Vice Chairs voiced strong support for action on carbon and climate change, and it is hoped that similar backing comes through from stakeholders in responding to the RTS Case for Change consultation.
- 2.5 Continued investment in sustainable transport through SPT's capital and revenue programmes will also play a major role in carbon reduction, particularly through the capital programme, which is one of the main ways in which constituent councils and other partners in the west of Scotland can access funding for sustainable transport measures. As can be seen in the current SPT capital programme, significant investment continues to be made in sustainable transport measures for both council and SPT projects, most significantly the Subway Modernisation programme. New opportunities such as the UK-wide Levelling Up Fund⁸ also have potential to provide an avenue for greater investment in sustainable transport, and SPT continues to have discussions with constituent councils about potential bids in that regard.
- 2.6 Corporately, SPT's progress to date on carbon management has been very good, with our footprint for 2019/20 being 11% less than the previous year and a 57% reduction on our baseline year of 2008/09. Notwithstanding that however, for the reasons noted at the start of this section, it is essential that this positive progress is maintained and

⁷ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/49874/scottish-transport-statistics-2020-may-2021.pdf>

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966138/Levelling_Up_prospectus.pdf

improved upon in coming years to ensure SPT continues to deliver towards national, regional and local aspirations.

3. Outline of proposals

3.1 SPT's role and approach in climate change and carbon management remains twofold: firstly, in seeking to reduce our carbon footprint and impact on climate as an organisation through the Carbon Management Plan⁹, and the Actions for Carbon Management therein; and secondly, our wider strategic role in policy, strategy, planning, operations, project development and delivery, and as a funder of sustainable transport measures.

3.2 Members will recall SPT's Carbon Management Plan sets out a vision, objectives and target for carbon management:

SPT's Vision for Carbon Management is:

"Through efficiency, innovation, and collective endeavour through partnership, SPT's organisational activities generate 'net-zero' carbon emissions."

SPT's Objectives for Carbon Management are:

"In pursuit of the 'net-zero' Vision for Carbon Management, in all organisational activities which generate carbon emissions, SPT will:

- Adopt the most carbon-efficient means possible and practicable
- Utilise best practice and beneficial innovative approaches
- Work with partners through collective action, promotion and engagement in:
 - seeking to ensure the required reduction in our direct and indirect carbon emissions
 - through the Regional Transport Strategy, seek to ensure the required wider societal reduction in carbon emissions."

SPT's Target for Carbon Management is:

"To contribute to the delivery of national targets (including interim targets) set by the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Target) (Scotland) Act 2019 no later than prevailing statutory timescales, while also taking into account timescales set by our partners."

3.3 The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have given cause, across many sectors, to review approaches and workstreams to adapt to changed circumstances and prepare for any future uncertainty or longer-term impacts of the pandemic. Coupled with the other factors noted in section 2.1, this provides the opportunity for SPT to strengthen and revitalise its approach, and consequently an internal review has been undertaken in that regard. The outcome of the review has been the creation of a new SPT 'Climate Change and Carbon Management Group'. This new group, led by the Chief Executive and the senior management team with supporting officers, has a strengthened remit in respect of our approach, and this is noted below.

The SPT Climate Change and Carbon Management Group will, in line with SPT's Governance Framework:

- SPT Corporate

⁹ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SPTP131219_Agenda8.pdf

- Lead and monitor the delivery of the SPT Carbon Management Plan, including the approved actions to be taken forward in the supporting Actions for Carbon Management.
 - Agree the scope and lead the development of an SPT Climate Adaptation Strategy.
 - Consider resource implications of Actions for Carbon Management and seek to identify solutions in that regard.
 - As required, establish project-specific groups within SPT focused on the carbon/climate change impacts of a specific project.
 - Monitor SPT's performance in relation to energy and carbon use.
 - Monitor SPT's compliance with statutory requirements relating to carbon management and climate change and resolve matters as appropriate.
- Working in partnership with other organisations

Act as a focal point for SPT external partnership working with Local Authorities, transport operators, Climate Ready Clyde and Sustainable Glasgow. Specifically, work with transport stakeholders to promote joint initiatives to support reduced transport emissions. This will include:

- Participation in a Regional Transport Climate Adaptation Resilience Group being established through the Climate Ready Clyde Adaptation Strategy.
 - Monitoring external factors relating to climate change and carbon management, consider implications for SPT, and identify actions in that regard e.g. in relation to the Climate Change Plan Update, COP26.
- Communications
 - Consider communications matters relating to SPT's involvement in climate change and carbon management, including liaison with external organisations and partners. As appropriate, request work to be undertaken by internal SPT departments or via external consultants.
 - Establish a supporting Communications Plan.

3.4 The group will meet quarterly, and regular updates will be provided to the Partnership and committees as progress is made. It is worth highlighting that a full review and update of the initial Actions for Carbon Management included in the Carbon Management Plan will be undertaken as a primary action for the new group. In terms of funding, any proposed new climate/carbon-related projects or initiatives will be considered in line with due process for SPT funding, and external opportunities and partnerships in this regard will also be explored. It is worth highlighting that a budget of £200,000 has been allocated at Category 2 in SPT's capital programme for the current year, should any projects be brought forward to delivery stage.

3.5 A key factor in the success of SPT's new approach will be the involvement and support of Partnership members and it is proposed that regular briefing sessions are held to allow for dialogue and input in this regard. As a first step, opportunities are being explored for training for Partnership members and senior officers in climate change and carbon matters to aid understanding of current issues and improve knowledge in what is a quickly changing and often complicated field.

3.6 As examples of current work with external partners, it is worth highlighting progress currently being made in relation to Sustainable Glasgow (SG) and Climate Ready Clyde (CRC).

- 3.7 Along with other public and private sector partners SPT is a partner and board member in the newly revitalised and relaunched Sustainable Glasgow initiative. SG has partners from the business, education, enterprise, health and housing sectors. SG aims to make Glasgow a European leader in sustainability, from the installation of electric car charging points to the creation of renewable energy schemes, and promotion of green jobs. As part of its relaunch, SG has established four 'hubs' (focused on transport, economy, greening the city, and housing and health) to take forward activities, promote leadership in the city on climate change, and encourage and support stakeholders to take action while encouraging planning for the long-term.
- 3.8 In addition to being a member of the SG Board, SPT is represented on two of the Hubs: the Green Infrastructure and Transport Hub (GITH) and the Green Economy Hub (GEH). The GEH has prepared a draft 'Green Economy Hub Charter' to promote its activities, with partners being asked to agree to commit to a range of climate activities including transport actions to prioritise sustainable and active regional travel choices by workforces, and invest in a switch to zero emission company vehicles. SPT has signed up to the Charter, and it is due to be formally launched over coming weeks.
- 3.9 SPT is a member of Climate Ready Clyde, along with other public sector partners including all city region local authorities. CRC is a cross-sector initiative funded by its fifteen member organisations to create a shared vision, strategy and action plan to adapt Glasgow City Region to the impacts of climate change. CRC has prepared and consulted on a draft Climate Adaptation Strategy and supporting Action Plan developed over 18 months, including extensive public consultation, setting out a blueprint for a Glasgow City Region that flourishes in a future climate. The Strategy, already endorsed by the Climate Ready Clyde Board, was approved on 1 June 2021 by Glasgow City Region Cabinet. Climate Ready Clyde will formally launch the Strategy on 29 June 2021. The Climate Adaptation Strategy will be a key input to SPT's work, and officers will continue to engage with partners and update members as matters progress.

4. Conclusion

While there is no doubt that climate change and carbon management have been overtaken by the Covid-19 pandemic in the global policy agenda over the last year, it remains a key priority and indeed a 'green recovery' from Covid-19 appears to be considered the most appropriate way forward out of the pandemic. As the Regional Transport Partnership for the west of Scotland, SPT has key roles to play in making that 'green recovery' work from a transport perspective, as a corporate body, operator, project development and delivery agent, and as the custodian of the Regional Transport Strategy. A recent example of SPT's wider strategic role was in the early-stage facilitation of the partnership between First Glasgow and Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) to create the UK's largest electrical vehicle charging hub at First's Caledonia depot in Glasgow, part-funded by Transport Scotland and announced on 8 June 2021.

The need to not just 'build back better' but 'build back differently' appears to be gaining momentum too, giving further cause for SPT to lead the way in making sustainable transport modes the logical choice for travel in future. This report has set out a strengthened approach for SPT to make that happen via the Regional Transport Strategy, the SPT Climate Change and Carbon Management Group, and other means, and officers will continue to update the Partnership as matters progress.

5. Partnership action

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

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Reduced Emissions is an outcome of the current RTS, and measures to assist in achieving net zero are likely to feature prominently in the new RTS in development.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>A Category 2 budget of £200,000 for carbon management is included in the current year SPT Capital Programme for carbon management.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Impacts on equalities groups of future policy and projects in relation to climate change and carbon management will need to be considered and addressed.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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