



## Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

**Committee** Strategy & Programmes

**Date of meeting** 28 August 2020

**Date of report** 6 August 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>, including the Covid-19 crisis update to the Partnership in June<sup>2</sup>, members will be aware that there are a range of strategic-level policy, planning and delivery initiatives underway within transport and related sectors in Scotland at present, across national, regional or 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 crisis

Dealing with the wide-ranging impacts of the Covid-19 crisis naturally remains the dominant priority for all transport organisations in the west of Scotland. The effects of being in Phase 3 of the Scottish Government's route-map through and out of lockdown has seen a rise in public transport patronage by a range of 20-40%, while car use continues to grow to a position very close to pre-Covid levels. The longer-term impacts of the crisis, and how best to resolve them, are now increasingly becoming the focus of attention, including through the development of a Transport Transition Plan for the Glasgow city region, which is the subject of a separate report to this Committee and work with the three Ayrshire councils and Argyll & Bute. Officers continue to engage with a range of partners in relation to the crisis through various forums and will continue to keep members updated as matters progress.

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP070220\\_Agenda11.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP070220_Agenda11.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p260620\\_Agenda9.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p260620_Agenda9.pdf)

### 3.1.2 UK exit from the European Union

Notwithstanding the Covid-19 crisis which has dominated considerations over recent months, the UK government continues to negotiate the form of the future relationship and trade deals with the European Union in relation to the UK's exit. While these negotiations were naturally temporarily affected by the current crisis, the UK government has emphasised that there will be no change to the timetable for full UK withdrawal from the EU, the date of which is set as 1 January 2021. Officers continue to liaise with colleagues at national and local levels on potential transport and wider implications of the UK exiting the European Union and will continue to update the Committee on this over coming months.

### 3.1.3 2020 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference – 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) – Glasgow

Members will be aware that COP26, due to be held in Glasgow from 9-19 November 2020, was postponed due to the current crisis. It has now been confirmed that the rearranged COP26 will be hosted in Glasgow from 1-12 November 2021. The impacts of the Covid-19 crisis on the form and scale of the revised conference are still under discussion, but momentum is building in relation to renewed opportunities to showcase best practice in climate-friendly interventions, and the importance of the event globally therefore appears to be growing. In planning for COP26, SPT is chair of the bus group, and is a member of the rail group, and regular meetings of that forum continue through the on-going crisis.

### 3.1.4 National Transport Strategy, Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

The National Transport Strategy was published on 6 February 2020. Regarding the STPR2, good progress was being made up until the start of the current crisis, with SPT involved in the Glasgow city region STPR2 group, and an event to garner views from Partnership members was held in late January. Transport Scotland then advised that all work on STPR2 was paused in order that resources could be focused on the Covid-19 crisis. In mid-August, TS advised that work would be restarting soon on the STPR2, with an initial focus on commenting on "Case for Change" reports, followed by engagement on options development and appraisal in Autumn 2020. TS further advised that the programme for the STPR2 has been reviewed to take account of crisis impacts and that, in light of this, the STPR2 process would look to complete by end 2021.

Members will recall that the Scottish Government published a 'Call for Ideas' for NPF4 at the start of 2020 with the intention of having an outline NPF4 in place by summer 2020. As with other workstreams, this process and the timeline for the development of a draft NPF4 has been significantly impacted by the current crisis, but officers are guided that the Scottish Government intend to publish an interim position statement in Autumn, with the draft NPF4 intended to be laid before Parliament in Autumn 2021. Interim Regional Spatial Strategies for the Glasgow City Region and Ayrshire, which SPT had input to, have been submitted to the Scottish Government and will inform the development of NPF4.

### 3.1.5 Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan

On 28 July, Transport Scotland published the above Action Plan<sup>3</sup> outlining measures to be taken to achieve the Scottish Government's previously announced goal of decarbonising rail services by 2035. Future work will build on recent major projects to electrify routes across the Central Belt and the provision of new electric trains. Officers are in the process of reviewing the plan, and will continue to liaise with rail industry partners in progressing rail matters across the west of Scotland.

### 3.1.6 Infrastructure Commission for Scotland

Further to its first phase report on "key findings" launched in January, the Commission published its second phase report on 27 July<sup>4</sup>, focused on "delivery". The main recommendations from the report are as follows:

- Creating an Independent, Specialist Body with a remit to provide strategic, long-term infrastructure advice to Scottish Government;
- Enshrining the Place Principle and implementing a one public sector approach to planning and developing sustainable places; and
- Establishing a Construction Accord to strengthen the future relationship between the public sector and the construction industry.

The Scottish Government is currently considering its response to both the Phase 1 and 2 reports from the Commission. The reports will prove a useful input to the developing RTS and officers will continue to keep the Committee updated on any outcomes from the Commission's work.

## 3.2 Regional

### 3.2.1 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

Further to the Covid-19 impacts report to the Partnership in June, work continues on development of the RTS. Current focus remains on evidence gathering and analysis in preparation for the next phase of RTS development, Transport Options, and how best to take account of the effects of the Covid-19 crisis in future scenario planning. A project led by the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, supported and partly funded by SPT and Transport Scotland, is looking at the long-term effects of the Covid-19 crisis on behaviours in transport use. Consideration is also being given to the long-term impacts of the crisis on the bus market in the west of Scotland, which to date could be considered to have been more significantly affected than other modes. A specific, detailed piece of work in relation to this, as part of the RTS development, may be considered necessary as matters progress. A meeting of the RTS Board is being planned for September, and a further update with regard to the RTS will be provided to the next Partnership meeting.

### 3.2.2 Clyde Corridor Place Mission

Members will recall that this initiative, announced in January, came from a desire of the Scottish Government to dedicate resources, along with partners, to the aim of revitalising, encouraging greater use of, and 'greening' of the River Clyde and its waterfront areas. As with other Scottish Government workstreams, the Covid-19 crisis has impacted on progress, although SPT

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/rail-services-decarbonisation-action-plan/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://infrastructurecommission.scot/page/delivery-findings-report>

officers will be meeting with the Place Mission lead officers in September to identify future opportunities for input and joint working in relation to this initiative.

#### 4. Conclusions

There is significant potential for change in transport and related fields at present within Scotland at a strategic level as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and the initiatives outlined in section 3 above. SPT is involved in many of these, and officers will continue to seek to ensure that SPT's views are taken into account and will update the Committee 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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