



### Update on Transport Data Project

**Date of meeting** 18 June 2021

**Date of report** 2 June 2021

#### Report by Assistant Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

To provide the Partnership with an update on SPT's Transport Data Project.

#### 2. Background

Members will recall the previous update to the Operations Committee in August 2019 which highlighted SPT's role in setting bus information standards as per the 2001 Transport (Scotland) Act, works underway to modernise SPT's corporate database of local bus services, ongoing deployment of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) and engagement with local operators to improve information provision at bus stops across Strathclyde.

Consultation by Transport Scotland on the 'information about bus services' provisions included within the 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act are anticipated to commence in Summer 2021. Regulations and guidance on use of the provisions are expected to be finalised in 2022.

SPT's Bus Information Standards (updated 2014) sets the framework for roadside bus stop information provision across Strathclyde for both Commercial and Supported bus services.

#### 3. Outline of proposals

##### 3.1 Upgrade to SPT's corporate database of local bus services (Novus FX Implementation)

The scope of SPT's corporate database of local bus services includes the following activities:

- Network Analysis & Design;
- Network Mapping & GIS Based Gap Analysis;
- Supported Service Contract Management;
- Commercial & Supported Service Roadside Information Outputs;
- Provision of Commercial & Supported Service Information to the Traveline Scotland Journey Planner;

- Provision of Commercial & Supported Service Information to SPT's legacy BIDs System, which informs electronic departure boards at bus stations and supports departure charging; and
- SPT's Bus Infrastructure & Asset Management System & Services.

Works to upgrade SPT's corporate database of local bus services was completed in Q4 2020/21, with details on all bus services across the region now held in the Trapeze Novus FX system platform. As well as supporting the above activities, the system also has the capability to facilitate the production of up to date roadside bus information panels at all 11,500 bus stops in Strathclyde.

The main local bus operators in Strathclyde have confirmed they wish to work in Partnership with SPT on the future production of roadside bus information panels, with SPT offering direct (i.e. bus stop information panel production, print, distribution & installation) & indirect (i.e. supply of electronic file of bus stop information panel only) options to facilitate this.

### 3.2 Bus Information Standards

SPT's Bus Information Standards set the framework for roadside bus stop information provision for over 560 registered local bus services, delivered by 44 operators across Strathclyde. There are c11,500 bus stops and c14,000 bus information display cabinets across the region. It is estimated that there are typically over 40,000 changes to bus service information held in these cabinets in a typical year (including both Commercial & SPT Supported Services).

Alongside works to upgrade the corporate database of local bus services, SPT officers have undertaken a review of our Bus Information Standards which were last updated in 2014. Following this review, a number of changes are proposed to the standards, principally the sections pertaining to the production of bus service printed panel information, which has been incorporated into a revised draft of the standards included in Appendix 1 for reference.

The main proposed changes to the standards can be summarised as follows:

- Any entries (i.e. access to update bus information publicity to cabinets within Strathclyde) going forward from 2021, will be limited to Novus FX (or identical equivalent, subject to SPT approval) output standards only;
- This adoption of Novus FX, alongside the phasing out of older SPT and also Operator productions, unifies the information and publicity standards across the SPT area to the prescribed standard, as well as ensuring provision of consistent and accurate travel information for the travelling public;
- Operators or designated contractors concerned in the supply and/or Installation must not cover, obscure or disturb information provided by SPT or other operators in the information panel concerned. The "patching" over of SPT's Novus FX panels would be strictly prohibited under all circumstances; and
- Revised pricing introduced for production of bus service printed panels by SPT, either directly (i.e. bus stop information panel production, print, distribution & installation) or indirectly (i.e. supply of electronic file of bus stop information panel only).

Under the terms of the 2001 Transport (Scotland) Act, SPT are required to consult on any changes to our Bus Information Standards with local bus operators, the Traffic

Commissioner for Scotland and other interested parties. SPT therefore intend to commence a consultation on the revised standards included in Appendix 1, with a closing date for representations of 31 August 2021. Following consideration of any representations received, it is intended that a final draft of the revised Bus Information Standards will be presented to the Partnership for approval on 17 September 2021.

Recent discussions with the main local bus operators has confirmed support for the above approach in principle and a willingness to work in partnership on its roll out across Strathclyde to the benefit of the travelling public.

### 3.3 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act

The 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act includes provisions for Local Transport Authorities such as SPT to seek and secure patronage information from local bus operators in the event of a commercial service withdrawal and significant variation.

Consultation to support the establishment of Regulations and Guidance pertaining to these provisions is anticipated to commence in summer 2021, following a delay due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. SPT officers' recently participated in workshops hosted by Transport Scotland, to discuss the issues involved and opportunities created (primarily the ability to share such patronage data with prospective tenderers where the change warrants action in line SPT's Guideline Criteria for Supported Services) by the new legislation.

Ahead of the formal consultation and establishment of forthcoming Regulations and Guidance, SPT's Network Analysis & Design team continue to actively engage with local bus operators on the provision of patronage information in the event of commercial service withdrawals and significant variations, with varying degrees of success.

The 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act also includes provisions on information about the operation of bus services, including real time information about the location of vehicles operating the services and the times at which they stop, or are expected to stop at stopping places, and information about the operation of services in the past. Consultation to support the establishment of Regulations and Guidance pertaining to these provisions is anticipated to commence in summer 2021, following a delay due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. Similarly, SPT officers recently participated in workshops hosted by Transport Scotland, to discuss the issues involved and opportunities (primarily the ability to develop comprehensive RTPI systems including all bus services & operators) created by the new legislation. In advance of the formal consultation and establishment of regulations and guidance, SPT continues to further develop our RTPI system as detailed below.

### 3.4 RTPI Deployment

SPTs regional Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system, which commenced operation in 2016, now encompasses over 800 electronic displays at key bus stops, reporting live service departure information from the 4 main local bus operators, also linking to the Traveline Scotland online journey planner & Glasgow City Council's traffic control system. RTPI has also been rolled out at Bus Stations including Buchanan, Govan, Patrick, Silverburn & Braehead, with East Kilbride, Hamilton and Greenock Bus Stations due to be upgraded in 2021/22.

RTPI is currently provided to SPT by the 4 main bus operators in Strathclyde (First, Stagecoach, McGill's & West Coast / Citybus), with such data being made available to the travelling public via the network of over 800 on street electronic displays and online

through Traveline Scotland. In addition, four smaller operators and two Community Transport operators have recently been added to the system.

SPT officers are also working with Glasgow City Council's Traffcom team to deliver traffic light signal priority, with bus priority requests facilitated by the regional RTPI system. Similarly, historical outputs from the system have been used to highlight average bus running speeds, and traffic hotspots across the city, which have been utilised as part of the Glasgow City Region bid to Transport Scotland's £500m Bus Priority Fund (BPF).

Furthermore, with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and introduction of Social Distancing restrictions on public transport during 2020, SPT worked closely with Transport Scotland to facilitate the provision of live bus capacity information for local bus services in Strathclyde. SPT's RTPI system now provides live bus capacity information to Traveline Scotland which is displayed on their online journey planner and app, to assist the public in planning their journey. In addition, our network of RTPI screens has displayed scrolling messages throughout the pandemic to encourage passengers to observe social distancing and follow national health guidelines.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Good quality, accurate and timely public transport information is an essential prerequisite to encouraging use of local bus services and in planning the efficient delivery of bus networks.

With use of bus services limited to essential trips during the Covid 19 pandemic and social distancing measures in place on board buses, SPT have played a key role in communicating national public health messaging via our RTPI displays, and by supplying live bus capacity data to Traveline Scotland to assist passengers with their journey plans.

The Transport Data project builds upon the Novus FX upgrade and ongoing rollout of the regional RTPI system, to offer the ability to deliver consistent and easy to use printed roadside bus information.

It is essential that SPT's Bus Information Standards are upgraded to reflect these developments, with a fair, consistent and best practice approach to bus service information provision across Strathclyde.

The project further positions SPT to maximise the benefits of the 'information about bus services' provisions within the 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act, to the benefit of the travelling public.

#### **5. Partnership action**

The Partnership is recommended to note:

- progress made in respect of the Transport Data Project;
- SPT's role in supporting public health messaging and facilitating live bus capacity information to passengers during the Covid 19 pandemic;
- continued input by SPT officers to support the development of regulations & guidance pertaining to the bus information provisions within the 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act; and
- the intention to consult on revisions to SPT's Bus Information Standards included in Appendix 1.

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the Regional Transport Strategy.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Revisions to SPT's Bus Information Standards will be subject to consultation and equality impact assessment.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

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