



Regional Transport Strategy – Transport Governance Workstream

Date of meeting 15 December 2023

Date of report 5 December 2023

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To recommend approval of the proposed process and timeline for undertaking the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Transport Governance workstream.

2. Background to report

Members will recall that ‘A Call to Action: the Regional Transport Strategy for the West of Scotland 2023-2038’ (RTS) contained a commitment that “*SPT, in partnership with our constituent councils, will lead work to identify and recommend optimal solutions to the transport governance, roles and responsibilities and funding issues facing our region, drawing upon the existing legislative framework. Once complete, the outcomes of this process will be submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval.*”¹

This commitment reflected the research, analysis, consultation and engagement undertaken in developing the new RTS which consistently highlighted that existing transport governance arrangements and roles and responsibilities in the west of Scotland are complex and fragmented, and not fit-for-purpose to deliver the bold ambition of the RTS.

For example, there appears to be a high degree of overlap and often limited integration between modes as well as with other key sectors like land-use planning, health, and economic development. Further, responsibilities are currently split between the national, regional and local levels with a variety of public, private and third sector bodies responsible for the planning and operation of services and infrastructure. In addition, there is a range of regulatory bodies that also sit alongside these organisations, potentially adding further complexity to arrangements (e.g. Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, Office of Rail and Road, and others).

The complexity of the existing governance arrangements is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

¹ P52, https://www.spt.co.uk/media/nr2c0jtt/spt_regional-transport-strategy-2023-2038.pdf

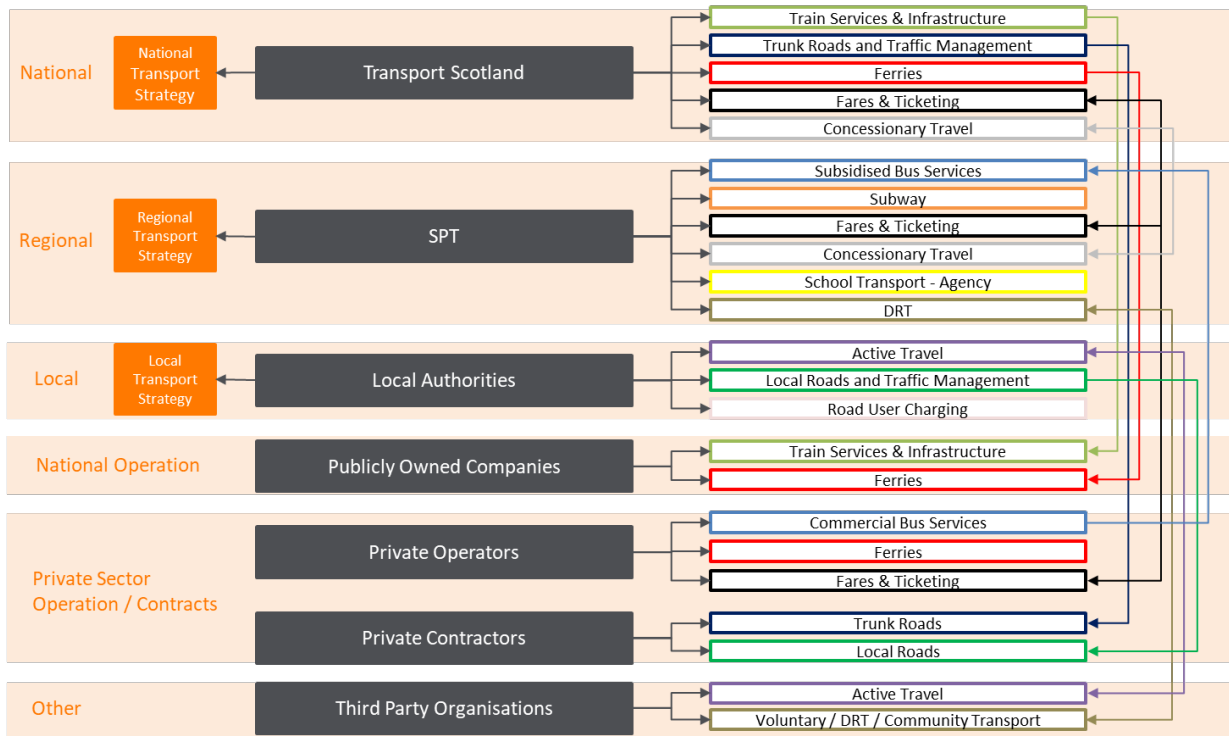


Figure 1 Existing Governance Arrangements and Relationships in Transport in the west of Scotland

Taking this further, when broken down by mode, there is currently no effective coordinated approach to delivery either by body, geographic scale or mode of transport. This is illustrated in Table 1 below. Considerations arising from this include whether services are being delivered by the appropriate body or at the appropriate geographic scale and, in addition, whether multiple organisations operating within the same field creates complexity that can lead to overlapping responsibilities and a lack of accountability. The end result of such issues is our transport network and service operating sub-optimally.

Above all, the complexities and inefficiencies in our current transport governance system are impacting on passengers, fuelling many of the problems that manifest themselves in people’s journeys every day, such as a lack of integration between modes. Promoting public transport as a truly viable option, sufficient to a level to trigger switching to another, more sustainable mode, is made all the more difficult in the current framework.

An ineffective governance structure and unclear roles and responsibilities also poses an impediment to future delivery. Stakeholders, particularly councils, made clear through the RTS consultation that existing governance arrangements present a barrier to meeting outcomes and targets, and impede the ability to deliver the transformational change required to achieve ambitions at national, regional and local level.

Furthermore, delivery of major, once-in-a-generation projects like Clyde Metro, which will rely heavily upon the integration of new modes such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), light rail and metro rail with active travel, bus, heavy rail and Subway for its success, will be extremely challenging under current governance arrangements. Indeed, the Clyde Metro therefore presents a unique opportunity for transformational change to our region’s transport network. However, this can only be achieved with accompanying changes to governance structures that facilitate modal integration and seamless journeys. Similarly, the challenges facing rural and island transport services are varied and complex, and the current governance framework makes addressing these just as challenging as projects such as Clyde Metro.

Table 1 Existing Governance Arrangements by Mode of Transport

Sustainable Travel Hierarchy Mode	Sub-Mode	Ownership / Responsibility	Operation / Maintenance
Walking & Wheeling	Walking & Wheeling	Local Authorities, Third Party Organisations	Local Authorities, Third Party Organisations
Cycling	Cycling	Local Authorities, Third Party Organisations	Local Authorities, Third Party Organisations
Public Transport	Train	Transport Scotland	Publicly Owned Companies
	Commercial Bus	Private Operators	Private Operators
	Subsidised Bus	SPT	Private Operators
	DRT	SPT, Third Party Organisations	Private Operators, Third Party Organisations
	Subway	SPT	SPT
	Ferry	Transport Scotland	Publicly Owned Companies
	Concessionary Travel	Transport Scotland, SPT	Transport Scotland, SPT, Private Operators, Publicly Owned Companies
Taxis & Shared Transport	Taxis	Local Authorities	Private Operators
	Car Sharing	SPT	Private Operators
	Car Clubs	Private Operators	Private Operators
Private Car	Trunk Roads	Transport Scotland	Private Contractors
	Local Roads	Local Authorities	Public & Private Contractors
	Road User Charging	Local Authorities	Not Applicable

KEY: National | Regional | Local | Private | Public Arms Length | Third Party

Alongside this, the work currently being undertaken by SPT on the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) offers the potential to lay the foundation for transformation of the regional bus network, subject to approval by SPT’s Partnership Board of the recommended option(s) from the Options Development and Appraisal process in March 2024. Extensive work is also being undertaken through Transport Scotland’s Active Travel Transformation Programme (ATTP) to realise a step-change in investment in active travel through clearer roles and funding distribution frameworks for relevant organisations. In addition, the aspiration to further develop smart and integrated affordable ticketing to better meet the needs of the modern world could be considered to be being hindered by an ineffective and sub-optimal transport governance, insufficient funding and roles & responsibilities framework.

The timebound targets defined in the RTS in relation to modal shift, a reduction in car kilometres, and emissions reduction make the need for accelerated change and delivery more pressing too. Collectively, these issues necessitate early action and any governance issues resolved quickly to help deliver our obligations.

In addition, funding of future transport improvements is also difficult when there are multiple organisations with overlapping responsibilities competing for limited resources. Continually bidding for funding is inefficient and is not conducive to delivering coordinated progress or helpful in achieving shared targets. Councils highlighted the need for a confirmed and committed long-term funding pipeline as a key priority through the RTS consultation. Further, the relative parity between modes in terms of funding remains a specific area of concern, particularly for bus, whose value as an important mode in achieving economic, social and environmental goals is often underestimated or overlooked.

These problems and others have been clearly articulated and evidenced through the new RTS and its supporting Case for Change. Ultimately, it is clear that the current transport governance system and the roles and responsibilities therein do not create optimal conditions for the delivery of sustainable travel policies set out at national, regional or local levels. There is consequently a strong imperative for change but this is also combined with multiple catalysts which provide an impetus for that change to happen sooner rather than later.

3. Outline of proposals

SPT has committed to jointly working with councils to recommend governance solutions for the region. On this basis, any potential delivery of change would only be possible with the support

of the Partnership and councils across the region. Engagement with, feedback from and, crucially, sign-up by SPT and councils to an agreed way forward is therefore fundamental to taking any proposals to delivery. Alongside this, feedback and support from wider industry stakeholders, and above all, the public and communities of the west of Scotland, will be essential in this process and so consultation and engagement will be a core part of any future work.

The RTS also commits to submitting the outcomes of the Transport Governance review to Scottish Ministers for approval. If Ministers approve any proposed changes (including powers, responsibilities, governance/accountability, funding arrangements etc), the transition process towards creation of a new model based on an agreed framework and timescales could begin. In line with the commitment in the RTS to only utilising existing legislation, any required distribution or transfer of powers could utilise the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005.

In seeking to take forward the above, in the first instance, it is proposed a Partnership members information session is held in January 2024 to discuss background and approach to the workstream. Following this, it is proposed that the SPT Chair would write to council leaders and chief executives across the region, outlining the content of this report and requesting initial views and support for the process. Dependent on responses from councils, a Steering Group chaired by SPT's Chief Executive and made up of senior officers from all councils in our region would be established to progress work. It is anticipated that the first stage of the Transport Governance workstream, seeking approval of the principles of any proposed changes, will be presented to SPT's Partnership Board in June 2024. A timeline for the completion of the workstream, including arrangements for approval by councils, and wider consultation and engagement, will also be presented to the Partnership at that time. Upon conclusion, a submission will be made to Scottish Ministers to seek formal approval of the outcomes of the Transport Governance review.

4. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to approve the proposed process and timeline for undertaking the Regional Transport Strategy Transport Governance workstream as outlined in Section 3 above.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with commitment in the RTS.</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>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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