



## Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

**Committee** Strategy & Programmes

**Date of meeting** 18 February 2022

**Date of report** 2 February 2022

### 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,
- Highlight recent key consultations SPT has responded to; and
- Recommend approval of the draft response to ScotRail's consultation on changes to rail station ticket office opening times.

#### 2. Background

Further to previous reports<sup>1</sup>, members will be aware that a range of policy, planning and delivery initiatives are underway within transport and related sectors across Scotland at present, at national, regional and local levels, not least the ongoing response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects 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 in order to maximise benefits for our area. This report summarises current key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

#### 3. Update

##### 3.1 National

##### 3.1.1 Covid-19 response

The recent impact of the Omicron variant has continued the significant negative effects on public transport of the pandemic with patronage levels still well below pre-Covid levels across all modes. However, the recent easing of restrictions from 24 January should prove positive in countering that and the subsequent announcement by the Scottish Government encouraging businesses to move to a hybrid mix of employees working remotely at home and being in the office will be helpful in encouraging a greater return to public transport.

Notwithstanding the above, and in addition to continuing to deal with the day-to-day impacts of the pandemic on service provision, the public transport industry

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.spt.co.uk/media/lq2cl0yr/sp261121\\_agenda10.pdf](https://www.spt.co.uk/media/lq2cl0yr/sp261121_agenda10.pdf)

remains focused on its immediate future. Members will be aware that the Scottish Government's Covid Support Grant has proved essential in ensuring public transport has been sustained through the pandemic, and the recently announced Scottish Budget 2022-23 provided reassurance to the rail and bus sectors that support will continue into the next financial year.

However, for public sector transport operators such as SPT for the Subway and Transport for Edinburgh for the Trams, no such reassurance has been given. SPT has been in regular dialogue with Transport Scotland in that regard, and SPT's Chair has recently written to the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee to call for action on that issue. The Chair's letter also emphasised the dual impact of removal of Covid support grant and the introduction of 'free' bus travel for Under-22s on Subway patronage, and further called for a more in-depth review of how transport was funded in the future. Officers will continue to update members on this and related issues as matters progress.

### 3.1.2 The 20% Reduction in Car Kilometres Route Map – Consultation by Transport Scotland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

Members will recall from previous updates that, through the Climate Change Plan update (CCPu) published in 2020, the Scottish Government committed to a target to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030. On 13 January 2022, Transport Scotland and COSLA launched a consultation<sup>2</sup> on their proposed "route map"<sup>3</sup> towards achieving that target. Emphasising that modelling has shown that technological solutions alone (such as switching to electric private cars) will be insufficient in reducing emissions to the necessary level, the proposed route map sets out a range of transport and non-transport policies which could be implemented to support car-use reduction, with a focus on changing behaviours towards more sustainable travel.

It is worth highlighting that the route map emphasises the important role of local and regional partners in delivery of these policies and achieving the target, including recommending that Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) adopt the 20% target in their Regional Transport Strategies. Officers are taking that into account in development of the new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and are in the process of preparing a response to the consultation which will be presented to members for approval in due course.

### 3.1.3 National Transport Strategy (NTS2)

Further to the update to the previous Committee, the new format NTS2 Delivery Board met in early December. The Board, co-chaired by the Minister for Transport at that time, Graham Dey MSP, and the COSLA Environment and Economy spokesperson, Councillor Stephen Heddle, now comprises members from the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) and SPT, representing the RTPs of Scotland. The meeting focused on progress in delivering the NTS2, specifically the development of the NTS2 Delivery Plan, due to be published in Spring 2022, and the 20% Reduction in Car Kilometres Route Map referred to in the previous section. The next meeting of the Delivery Board is due to take place in February.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/consultation-on-the-20-reduction-in-car-km-route-map/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50872/a-route-map-to-achieve-a-20-per-cent-reduction-in-car-kms-by-2030.pdf>

SPT, along with Nestrans, also represent the RTPs of Scotland on Transport Scotland's NTS2 Governance and Collaboration group. This new group, building on previous NTS2 groups, met in early January and discussed work undertaken previously on roles and responsibilities, the impact of Covid-19 and Transport Scotland's "Fair Fares" review, which will take an in-depth look at how much passengers pay for public transport. The group will meet every two months and, as with the NTS 2 Delivery Board, officers will continue to update members on key issues and progress.

#### 3.1.4 Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)

A consultation has been launched on the draft recommendations of the STPR2 and this is the subject of a separate report to this Committee.

#### 3.1.5 National Planning Framework 4

Further to the update given to the previous Committee, officers are in the process of preparing a response to the consultation on the Draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4)<sup>44</sup>, the closing date of which is 31 March 2022. Following discussions with Clydeplan and other partners, a key point of SPT's response will be that, while welcoming designations such as "Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks (Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen" as proposed National Developments, the policies included in NPF4, such as Policy 10 "Sustainable Transport" and other sections, could be strengthened. This is particularly important in terms of having a robust basis in planning to be able to develop and deliver proposed projects arising from the STPR2 (such as Clyde Metro), the 20% Reduction in Car Kilometres Route Map, and from the new RTS and Local Transport Strategies. Officers will continue to develop the response in liaison with other partners and present it for consideration by the Partnership in March.

### 3.2 Regional

#### 3.2.1 Regional Transport Strategy

Positive progress is being made in relation to the development of the new RTS and this is the subject of a separate report to this Committee.

#### 3.2.2 Regional Active Travel funding

Following discussions in early January with Transport Scotland, the RTPs of Scotland were invited to submit bids for active travel capital funding for spend in the current financial year, 2022-23 financial year, and longer-term (next 3-5 years). Transport Scotland advised that this funding could be used for feasibility, development, and delivery of active travel projects, and could be used for staff resources for projects should they be required. SPT liaised with constituent councils in relation to the formulation of a bid, and this was submitted on 26 January. Decisions on the outcome of the bidding process are expected later in February and officers will update members on this in due course.

### 3.3 Local

#### 3.3.1 Glasgow City Council Event Day Parking

Glasgow City Council (GCC) is promoting event day parking controls in the areas around Celtic Park/Emirates Arena and Ibrox Stadium. As a result of objections

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-2045-fourth-national-planning-framework-draft/>

received in relation to the draft Orders, GCC is required to hold Hearings on both before deciding how to proceed. SPT is participating in proceedings as an expert witness to provide strategic advice on how the public transport system relates to the proposals. Following delays caused by the pandemic, recent indications are that it is the intention of GCC to resume the Hearings process by the end of January, with further timelines are to be agreed with participants thereafter. Officers will continue to engage with proceedings and keep members updated as matters progress.

- 3.3.2 Officers continue to liaise with councils, Community Planning Partnerships and other partners in relation to a range of other plans, initiatives and projects, including the developing RTS, Local Transport Strategies, delivery of projects from SPT's capital programme and those mentioned elsewhere in this report, as well as undertaking liaison with relevant organisations in relation to the pandemic response.

### 3.4 Responses to Consultations

Below are the key points of recent consultations SPT has responded to:

- 3.4.1 **Transport Focus on behalf of ScotRail – Consultation on Rail Station Ticket Office Opening Hours** (Closing date 2 February 2022. SPT response submitted within deadline)

This response is attached at Appendix 1.

- 3.4.2 **Glasgow City Council - Glasgow Green Deal “Call for Ideas”** (Closing date 14 January 2022. SPT response submitted within deadline)

The Glasgow Green Deal is a nine-year mission aimed at fundamentally reshaping the city's economy and delivering equitable, net zero carbon, climate resilient living by 2030. The associated Routemap sets out a pathway to delivery and stresses that the Green Deal is not a new plan or strategy but providing the governance arrangements and tools to deliver the systemic transformation needed to deliver net zero.

SPT's response welcomed the Green Deal mission and noted that its focus should draw on existing and approved national, regional and local policies around transport, climate change and tackling inequalities. The response highlighted the developing new RTS in that regard, including the RTS Case for Change report which set out a 'long list' of potential interventions that aim to tackle transport challenges including climate change, and that this should be referenced going forward.

- 3.4.3 **Glasgow City Council - Glasgow Low Emission Zone (LEZ) Phase 2 Consultation** – (Closing date: 20 January 2022. SPT response submitted within deadline)

As reported to the Committee previously, Glasgow City Council recently consulted on its proposals for the introduction of Phase 2 of the LEZ which is due to come into effect on 31 May 2022 with a one-year grace period, which means that enforcement of Glasgow's LEZ will start on 1 June 2023.

Details of the final Phase 2 scheme design were published in December 2021. In responding to this consultation, and while not formally objecting to the LEZ

Phase 2 design scheme, SPT reiterated requests for exemption for coaches entering Buchanan Bus Station from the M8 at Dobbie's Loan and for a temporary exemption to enable Community Transport Operators further time to ensure fleet compliance. SPT also noted the potential impacts of the scheme on a number of supported bus services which operate across the LEZ boundary. Glasgow City Council has agreed to a further discussion with SPT on these points and officers will continue to update members as matters progress.

#### 4. Conclusions

Despite the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on the transport sector, SPT and partners continue to progress projects and initiatives which seek to better serve the people and communities of the west of Scotland. SPT has a key role to play in positively shaping and influencing how the future unfolds and officers will keep Committee members updated on developments as matters progress.

#### 5. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report, and approve the response to the ScotRail consultation on ticket office opening hours attached at Appendix 1.

#### 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>

**Name** Neil Wylie  
**Title** Director of Finance & Corporate Support

**Name** Valerie Davidson  
**Title** Chief Executive

For further information, please contact *Bruce Kiloh, Head of Policy and Planning* at [bruce.kiloh@spt.co.uk](mailto:bruce.kiloh@spt.co.uk).

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ScotRail Ticket Office Consultation SPT Response February 2022**

#### **General Comments**

SPT welcomes the opportunity to comment on these proposals. We appreciate the challenges faced by ScotRail in continuing to deliver a safe, efficient, attractive and viable rail service designed to meet the needs of all passengers and that these challenges have been exacerbated by the impact of the Covid pandemic. However, we are concerned that efforts to promote a return to pre Covid, and hopefully beyond, public transport patronage levels, might be compromised by reductions in the attractiveness or perceived safety of the public transport offer.

Given past investments in the rail network across the Glasgow conurbation there exists both a comprehensive and frequent service level serving numerous communities both urban and rural. It is, therefore concerning that many of the proposed ticket office closures, reduced days of operation, and reduced hours of operation are within our part of the network.

SPT acknowledges that there are already many unstaffed stations across the network and that many stations in the area have a "single-shift" presence whereby many are unstaffed in the late afternoons/evenings. However, notwithstanding actual ticket sales, a ticket office with a staffed presence provides reassurance to the travelling public that they can travel safely and securely, have direct access to journey information and the ability to seek passenger assistance, the latter being particularly important for older people, people with a disability including people with a learning disability, or those unfamiliar with the network.

We note that these proposals could result in a loss of access by passengers to some buildings which currently act as places of safety as well as providing heat and protection from the elements. SPT would therefore welcome an assurance that adequate covered facilities will be made available should any ticket office buildings be taken out of use.

We understand the need to achieve best value across the Scottish rail and wider public transport network but we consider that the current proposals run the risk of disincentivising public transport journeys at a time when the need to promote modal shift from private car has never been greater and that, as such, these proposals represent a potential false economy and run contrary to national, regional and local transport policies to promote modal shift and contribute to targets to achieve net zero emissions. We would ask that our comments are taken into account in your deliberations, and would also make a number of more specific comments below.

#### **Ticket office closures**

##### **Clydebank**

The full closure of the ticket office at Clydebank is particularly regrettable given the re-generation proposals around the station. The station fulfils a key access function to the town, particularly to existing town centre facilities but also to newer developments along the river frontage south of the station including the West College Scotland Clydebank Campus, Health and Care facilities including the Clydebank Care Home (opened in 2020) and the recently relocated Clydebank Health Centre (which we understand will open later in 2022). These facilities will be enhanced in future by leisure, recreation and residential developments, all of which will potentially increase footfall at the adjacent Clydebank rail station and interchange.

Issues such as existing bus and rail interchange should also be considered given the proximity of local and longer distance bus stances adjacent to the rail station. In addition, the station

lies within an identified lowest 20% SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) area. In light of the above, SPT would request that this proposal be revisited.

### **Cartsdyke**

SPT would request that the decision to fully close the ticket office at Cartsdyke station also be revisited. The area adjacent to the station has been subject to significant new housing redevelopment as the economic landscape of Inverclyde has changed and, whilst footfall is relatively low, notwithstanding increased footfall due to Greenock Morton football matches at the nearby Cappielow Park, a staffed presence could help to retain, and potentially grow, patronage. As per above, the station also lies within an identified lowest 20% SIMD area and there could be perceived safety issues given the station's relatively remote location with limited passive surveillance from surrounding streets or buildings and within a partial cutting.

### **Woodhall**

In many ways Woodhall is not dissimilar to Cartsdyke in relation to changes in travel patterns and land use over the years. There has been a loss of employment opportunities and some housing stock depletion but there has also been some newer housing established close to the station. Similar to both Clydebank and Cartsdyke, Woodhall also lies within an identified lowest 20% SIMD area and again there could be safety concerns given the station's relatively remote location with limited passive surveillance from surrounding streets or buildings. SPT would request that the decision to fully close the ticket office at Woodhall be reconsidered.

### **Ticket office reduced days of operation**

It is proposed that a number of stations will have a reduced number of days of operation including the following stations on the Strathclyde network. We would make the following comments in relation to these:

- **Springburn** (proposed Saturday closure): The decline in rail patronage on Saturdays has been reported as being less than the decline experienced on Mondays-Fridays, so we seek clarity on the reasoning behind this proposal and request that it be revisited.
- **Cumbernauld** (proposed Friday closure): It is unclear why this particular ticket office closure is being made. We seek clarity on the reasoning behind this proposal and request that it be revisited.
- **Anderston** (proposed Sunday closure): This is concerning given this is a subterranean city centre station with no step free access. We seek clarity on the reasoning behind this proposal and request that it be revisited.
- **Cardross** (proposed Saturday closure): As per our comments re Springburn.
- **Girvan** (proposed Sunday closure): Whilst service levels and patronage are relatively low on Sundays, this is a rural station on a primarily single-track route and the provision of information and a staff presence would be beneficial to passengers especially during the summer. We request that this proposal be revisited.
- **Dalmarnock** (proposed Saturday & Sunday and midweek evening closure): The proposed closures are concerning given the station is heavily used by football supporters attending matches at nearby Celtic Park as well as visitors to sporting venues such as the Emirates Arena on Saturdays and Sundays. Similarly, there has been considerable regeneration in the area, including the refurbishment of the station, as well as new housing and job opportunities. The station is also subterranean and there are potential safety concerns given the lack of any passive surveillance. We request that this proposal be revisited.

### **Reduced hours of operation**

It is proposed that a further 44 stations in the SPT area will have reduced hours of operation which will primarily impact ticket office staffing in the early and later evening, specifically during

hours of darkness. This could further deter patronage due to the perception of a lack of safety and security at some locations. There are a number of major stations & interchanges which are impacted by this, including Partick, Helensburgh, Milngavie, Port Glasgow, Greenock Central & West, Gourrock, Kilmarnock, Hamilton Central and Motherwell. We seek clarity on the reasoning behind these proposals and request that they be revisited.

As some of these are town-based and central or terminus stations, the provision of information and a staffed presence should be a priority in efforts to encourage passengers back to rail services in the wake of the Covid pandemic, particularly at locations which are seen as hubs or important to the locality. As noted above some of the stations affected are subterranean and reduced hours of operation at these locations may cause additional safety concerns for particular groups of passengers including people with protected characteristics.

## **Further Issues**

### **Revenue protection**

SPT supports measures to tackle ticketless travel but the reduction in staffed premises, either all day or part day, has the potential to encourage ticket-less travel. Ticket machines at stations increasingly do not enable cash payment and certain types of ticket, such as concession fares, cannot be purchased using them. The redeployment of station staff might well assist revenue protection efforts as suggested in the consultation document but it would be helpful to understand the methodology behind this.

### **Safety & Security**

As stated, the perception of safety and security, whilst enhanced by CCTV coverage, help-points, long-line announcements and improved lighting, is best served for many passengers, by a staffed station presence, which also acts as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and vandalism at station locations.

### **Passenger Assistance/Help points/CCTV/Station announcements**

It is acknowledged that since the last review of ticket offices opening hours was undertaken that there have been significant improvements to station facilities. However, a staffed presence, particularly at busier stations, at busy times and during hours of darkness, provides passengers with additional reassurance and access to information and promotes a return to rail use as we emerge from the Covid pandemic.

### **Access**

The loss of a staffed presence can also impact on station access including onto and off station platforms. Inclement weather and poor underfoot conditions are a deterrent to travel and could be exacerbated by the lack of a station presence, particularly for regular gritting of paths and platform edges.

### **Equality impacts**

We would reiterate the points we have made in the comments above about the potentially negative impacts that the current proposals may have in terms of safety and security, passenger assistance, information provision and social inclusion which have a disproportionate impact on people with protected characteristics.

We would also note that there is growing public concern about the lack of staffed presence at transport hubs, particularly in the late evenings and at weekends. The loss of such a presence is likely to further deter people from travelling by rail, including those people who rely most heavily on public transport.

Whilst not perhaps an obligation, SPT would recommend that prior to the introduction of any forward proposals, ScotRail undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to establish the



nature and scale of the impacts on people with protected characteristics and to ensure that appropriate mitigations have been considered. To provide public reassurance on this we would also welcome publication of the EIA.

Finally, Concession fares purchases cannot be made at ticket machines for reasons of potential fraudulent use. As such Concession card holders must purchase tickers on train or potentially have to queue at terminal stations. This is something which should be considered as part of this current review.