



Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

Committee Strategy & Programmes

Date of meeting 26 November 2021

Date of report 4 November 2021

Report by Acting 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 previous reports¹, 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 progress on key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

3. Update

3.1 National

3.1.1 Covid-19 response

The impacts of the pandemic continue to dominate the transport sector, particularly public transport. While car use has recovered to above pre-pandemic levels in some instances, patronage on public transport, while showing some encouraging signs, continues to be a major cause for concern. Bus is performing well, reaching around 60-70% of pre-pandemic levels and sometimes beyond. The Subway is reaching similar levels with an average weekly patronage of approximately 70% of pre pandemic levels. Rail, however, is continuing to struggle, with patronage reaching around 50% of pre-pandemic levels.

The long-term impacts of the pandemic on patronage remain to be seen, but with travel-to-work patterns having been significantly affected by continued messaging to work from home (for at least part of the week), and below normal footfall trends in Glasgow city centre, which remains in the 'bottom 10' for footfall

¹ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/mdijzb5t/sp270821_agenda8.pdf

in a league table of comparator UK towns and cities², a return to pre-pandemic levels of patronage would seem distant at present.

The economic, social, environmental, and health and wellbeing effects of a long-term continuation of these trends, coupled with increasing car use, could have major repercussions across society and on our collective ability to achieve national targets, such as those for carbon reduction. The case for a collective and integrated response from transport industry stakeholders therefore remains strong and through such initiatives as those noted in this report and others, it is hoped a recovery to positive, sustainable growth can be achieved. Further, continued financial support to sustain public transport remains a key issue and SPT and partners are in regular dialogue with the Scottish Government and others in that regard. Officers will continue to update members on this and related issues as matters progress.

3.1.2 The Glasgow Climate Pact - Outcome of the 2020 United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference – 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26)

Further to previous updates, and noting that a presentation on the performance of the transport network and SPT activity during the event will be given to the Partnership in December, focus has turned to the implications of the agreement reached at COP26, the “Glasgow Climate Pact”. The main headline from this was agreement to keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C set in Paris at COP21 in 2015, and parties have been asked to review their 2030 national climate targets by the end of 2022 in line with that pledge. Further, key sections of the Pact will have a significant impact on transport, including measures to end fossil fuel subsidies, and doubling investment in climate adaptation measures. The full implications of the Glasgow Climate Pact on the transport sector continue to be deliberated, but the Secretary General of the International Transport Forum³ of the OECD, Dr Young Tae Kim, summarised the scale of the global challenge for our sector in his statement⁴ to COP26:

“By 2050, [global] passenger demand is projected to be more than twice 2015 levels, while freight demand is set to grow by a factor of 2.6 in the same period. Based on the current trajectory, transport CO2 emissions are projected to grow by 16% between 2015 and 2050, reaching nearly 8.7 Giga tonnes. Yet only 16% of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) included specific transport emissions reduction targets.

We already know that current policies will not be enough to reduce transport emissions sufficiently as any advances in decarbonising transport will be more than offset by increased demand for mobility. But more ambitious policies coupled with a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic could put the transport sector on a path to achieving the necessary reductions for the Paris Agreement.

There are six top tasks for policy makers. The first is to increase ambition. The second is to align policies to revive the economy, mitigate climate change and strengthen equity. The third is to focus on accessibility and create seamless trips and increase opportunities. The fourth is to target sectors with strategies geared to their emissions reduction potential. Urban mobility has the highest potential, road freight and aviation are the hardest to decarbonise. The fifth is to support innovation to accelerate technological breakthroughs needed to decarbonise transport. And the

² Data from September 2021, <https://www.centreforcities.org/data/high-streets-recovery-tracker/>

³ <https://www.itf-oecd.org/>

⁴ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/ITF_OECD_cop26cmp16cma3_HLS.pdf.pdf

sixth task is to break down silos and boost collaboration between interdependent sectors, such as transport, energy, tourism and trade. Only stronger cooperation among sectors will enable more ambitious climate action.”

Officers will continue to monitor and take account of any changes as a result of the Glasgow Climate Pact, including in relation to the development of the new Regional Transport Strategy, and will keep members updated as matters progress.

3.1.3 National Transport Strategy (NTS2)

In early November, the Minister for Transport wrote to SPT as a member of the NTS2 Delivery Board, advising that Transport Scotland is currently in the process of establishing a new engagement strategy to inform delivery of NTS2, which will consist of a new Forum bringing together individuals, communities, businesses, stakeholder groups and Scottish Government policy leads. As part of this work, TS are going to refocus the role of the NTS2 Delivery Board away from advising and challenging towards being accountable for joint delivery. To achieve this, TS are looking to focus membership of the Board on organisations with a statutory responsibility to deliver NTS2. Other organisations will be invited to participate in the new Business Partnership and expanded Transport Equality Network which are there to provide advice and advocacy on the NTS2. Officers will continue to update members on NTS2 as progress is made.

3.1.4 Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)

Further to previous updates⁵, Transport Scotland (TS) has advised that the STPR2 remains on track to be published for a full 12-week public consultation during winter 2021/22. Following the consultation and after taking into account comments received and any necessary approvals, it is anticipated that final STPR2 reports will be published in mid-2022. In the meantime, officers continue to engage with TS through the new national-level Regional Reference Group and the Regional Transport Working Groups which have met throughout STPR2 development, all of which met again during November. Officers will continue to update the Committee as matters progress and it is anticipated a fuller update on the STPR2 consultation will be provided to a Committee meeting in early 2022.

3.1.5 National Planning Framework 4

The Draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4)⁶ was laid before Parliament on 10 November 2021 and is now out to consultation until 31 March 2022. The Draft NPF4 contains proposals in relation to a National Spatial Strategy, National Developments, National Planning Policy, and a Delivery Programme. It is worth highlighting that of the proposed National Developments, the following are of significance for transport in the west of Scotland:

- Central Scotland Green Network;
- National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network (Scotland wide);
- Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks (Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen);
- Hunterston Strategic Asset;
- High Speed Rail;

⁵ Section 3.1.4, https://www.spt.co.uk/media/mdijzb5t/sp270821_agenda8.pdf

⁶⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-2045-fourth-national-planning-framework-draft/>

- Clyde Mission; and
- Stranraer Gateway.

Officers will consider and take account of the Draft NPF4 and its implications for the SPT and partners, including the development of the Regional Transport Strategy. A response to the consultation will be prepared and presented to Committee early in 2022 for approval.

3.1.6 ScotRail

Further to the update to the previous Committee⁷, a working group of ScotRail, Network Rail, SPT and Sustrans officers (representing the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) of Scotland) has been established to explore the opportunity of preparing a partnership agreement/concordat between the partners in relation to their future working relationship from April 2022, when the current franchise ends and the new public-sector ScotRail organisation comes into existence. It is hoped that this high-level agreement will facilitate a stronger and clearer role for RTPs in rail in future and a more effective joint approach in general, given the significant challenges facing rail including the impacts of the pandemic on patronage noted earlier, financial constraints and the need to meet national targets on decarbonisation and climate change. Discussions are at an early stage but it is anticipated that a report detailing the proposed agreement will be presented to the Partnership early in 2022.

The ScotRail “Fit for the Future” consultation is the subject of a separate report to this Committee and officers continue to engage with rail industry partners in relation to that and other projects e.g. Motherwell interchange redevelopment. It is worth highlighting, however, the recent announcement by Transport Scotland regarding a proposed re-scoping of the project to dual the East Kilbride line. It is now proposed that the dualling will not go ahead but the line will be electrified. Members will recall that SPT, through the capital programme, is working to support the development of a relocated Hairmyres station, bus facility and park & ride, and while SPT remains supportive of the project, officers are in discussion with South Lanarkshire Council and other partners in that regard to identify any potential implications for the project of TS’s recent announcement. A fuller update on this project will be presented to a future Committee.

3.1.7 Bus Partnerships/Bus Partnership Fund

Further to the previous update⁸, the focus of the Glasgow Bus Partnership remains delivery of the projects which secured funding through Transport Scotland’s Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) announced in June. Discussions with Transport Scotland after the announcement of the successful bids have proved useful, with the current focus being on ensuring appropriate resources are in place to deliver initial workstreams of the proposals. Positive discussions have also taken place in regard to the Ayrshire Bus Partnership and officers will update on this in more detail at the next Committee.

3.2 Levelling Up Fund

In late October, the UK Government announced the successful bidders from the first round of the Levelling Up Fund. In the SPT area, two transport bids were awarded funding:

⁷ Section 3.1.5, https://www.spt.co.uk/media/mdijzb5t/sp270821_agenda8.pdf

⁸ Section 3.1.6, https://www.spt.co.uk/media/mdijzb5t/sp270821_agenda8.pdf

- Infrastructure Improvements on B714 (Transport Infrastructure Improvement Project) – North Ayrshire Council - £23.7million.

The improvements will see a section of the B714 upgraded and realigned, and the construction of a new link between the B714 and the A737(T) close to the Dalry Bypass junction. Active travel and environmental enhancements will also be delivered as part of the programme.

- AMIDS South (Travel Links Improvement Project) Renfrewshire Council - £38.7million.

This project is seeking to deliver a new “gateway route” between Paisley town centre, Glasgow Airport and the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland (AMIDS) and will include new cycle routes and landscaping as well as a bridge crossing at Paisley Harbour for pedestrians, cyclists and road traffic.

Both projects are at an early stage of development, SPT officers will seek to engage with council colleagues in regard to both projects to assist their development. Officers will also continue discussion with partners in relation to any future Levelling Up Fund bids and keep members updated as matters progress.

3.3 Regional

3.3.1 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

Further to the report to the Partnership in September⁹, and following the completion of the Case for Change stage as reported, the methodology and programme for the next stages of development of the Regional Transport Strategy have now been completed and are outlined below.

- Option Groupings

The development of the Option Groupings as previously reported, is ongoing with key studies underway on the topics of Mobility as a Service, road transport decarbonisation, the bus provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and the affordability of public transport fares. The majority of this work is anticipated to be completed by January 2022, with the road transport decarbonisation study completing in February 2022.

- Spatial Approach

The development of the spatial approach to the Strategy is well underway with a set of cross-boundary regional corridors being agreed with local authority partners. This spatial element of the Strategy will set out the parameters by which policies and actions will be implemented spatially, as well as setting out key committed schemes and alignment with other relevant strategic workstreams such as STPR2 and Bus Partnership Fund projects and initiatives.

⁹ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/dwpjwne5/p170921_agenda8.pdf

- Targets

Good progress is being made in relation to the development and refinement of the targets (in principle) put forward in the RTS Case for Change. The RTS will follow national targets for transport emissions and car kilometre reductions and a regional mode share target will also be set. In achieving the transport emissions target, this will require a whole region approach but the way in which this is achieved will differ across the area in terms of levels of modal shift, reducing travel demand, and the take-up rate of alternatively fuelled vehicles. A tool is being developed to disaggregate the RTS targets which will provide guidance as to the amount and type of change required at different local/sub-regional areas. This will be discussed further with local authority partners as targets are further developed.

- Scenario Planning and Option Appraisal

To ensure alignment between national and regional levels, the RTS is adopting the future scenarios developed for the STPR2 and the Option Groupings mentioned earlier in this section will be appraised on that basis. While the majority of Options will be appraised at STAG Preliminary Options Appraisal level, some infrastructure and transport service options will be further appraised using the SITLUM¹⁰ tool.

- RTS Timeline

Updates on the outcomes of the studies highlighted in the Option Groupings section above will be reported to the Committee in the first quarter of 2022. The outcomes of the appraisal process, which will give a clear view of the direction in which the RTS is heading and the likely components of it, will be reported to the Partnership in March. The draft RTS will be prepared in April with the statutory 12-week public consultation carried out over summer 2022. At this stage, it is anticipated that the final draft RTS will be presented to the Partnership later in 2022 and subject to approval, will then be submitted to Scottish Ministers for their approval. These timelines allow for continued alignment with other relevant national strategies and plans.

3.3.2 Glasgow Metro

Further to the report to the previous Committee, the various initial workstreams underway led by Transport Scotland (as part of STPR2) and Glasgow City Council (GCC) in relation to the Metro proposal are nearing completion. Officers are in dialogue with TS and GCC in relation to these and anticipate being able to give a fuller update to the Committee at its next meeting, subject to the beginning of the STPR2 consultation process noted earlier in this report.

3.3.3 SPT Climate Change Duties annual reporting for 2020/21

In line with the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties arising as a result of Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, SPT has a duty to report progress annually on reducing its impact on climate change. Since the pilot year of 2014/15, SPT has submitted the required information within deadline to the

¹⁰ Strathclyde Integrated Transport and Land Use Model

Scottish Sustainability Network (SSN), the custodian body for reporting and which is subsequently made publicly available on the SSN website.

SPT's carbon footprint for 2020/21 was 3,671 tCO₂e, the majority of which came from electricity usage on the Subway, specifically traction for the trains. This is a reduction of 14% on the previous year of 2019/20 and a 63% reduction on our baseline year of 2008/09. While acknowledging that this reduction is in some part due to changes made at UK level in the grid emissions factor (the measure by which the amount of carbon generated by electricity is calculated), it shows positive progress and serves as added impetus for SPT to continue to show leadership in reducing carbon use.

3.4 Local

3.4.1 Glasgow City Council (GCC) – City Centre Proposals

On 11 November, the leader of Glasgow City Council announced a proposal to work towards creating a zone within Glasgow city centre which would, over a five year period, be a more people-friendly place, removing access for all but essential private cars (e.g. those used by disabled people). Access to the zone would be prioritised to public transport and active travel, with access retained for servicing businesses and other essential vehicles. While further details are awaited, the proposal appears positive, and could transform travel to, from and within the city, providing a significant boost to public transport and active travel in the process. SPT has been advised that engagement on the proposals will be undertaken as part of GCC's City Centre Transformation Plan consultation, due to take place early in 2022. Officers will update the Committee in due course as further information becomes available.

3.4.2 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.

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.

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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