

Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

Date of meeting 28 November 2025

Date of report 18 November 2025

Report by Head of Policy and Planning

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 to report

Members will be aware that a wide range of policy, planning and delivery initiatives are currently underway within transport and related sectors across Scotland. The effects of these on the people, communities and transport network of the west of Scotland could be significant and it is therefore important that SPT continues to monitor developments and seek to influence outcomes in order to maximise benefits for our area. This report summarises current key workstreams and SPT activity in that regard.

3. Outline of proposals

3.1 Scottish Government and COSLA – “Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement”

Further to the report to the previous Committee in June¹, advising that the Scottish Government intended to review its 20% car use reduction target following advice from the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the Scottish Government in collaboration with COSLA published a revised policy statement on car use reduction². “Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement”³ restated the Scottish Government and COSLA’s commitment to reducing car use in Scotland. The policy statement did not contain any individual interventions to reduce car use but it did commit to four key next steps:

- Revising the existing car use reduction target, informed by the advice of the Climate Change Committee and other relevant evidence, to develop a new, longer-term target which will support our 2045 net zero target.
- Undertaking a regulatory check of existing Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 powers for discretionary local road user charging schemes to allow local authorities and/or regional transport partnerships the option to implement these.

¹ www.spt.co.uk/media/yz3modtg/sp130625_agenda5.pdf

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/achieving-car-use-reduction-in-scotland-a-renewed-policy-statement/>

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/achieving-car-use-reduction-in-scotland-a-renewed-policy-statement/>

- Working with key stakeholders at national, regional, and local level to develop place-based and experience- specific delivery plans to support reduced car use and alternative transport options.
- Driving a national communication and engagement campaign and set out a positive vision around how reducing car use can deliver outcomes for public health, air quality, and the environment.

Subsequent to publication of the policy statement, Transport Scotland has established supporting workstreams to take these steps forward. This includes the establishment of working groups on Car Use Reduction and regulatory check of Road User Charging. Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), including SPT, are represented on both these working groups. Initial work has focussed on establishing terms of reference and governance arrangements for these groups. Further updates on the progress of any workstreams of these groups will be provided to future Committee meetings.

3.2 Scottish Government - Draft Climate Change Plan

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is Scotland's main legislation on climate change. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024 amended the 2009 Act and implemented a system of 5-year carbon budgets, meaning limits on the amount of greenhouse gas which can be legally emitted over a given time. The new CCP, will have future implications for SPT dependent on how the Scottish Government intends to meet the 5-year carbon budgets across all sectors of the economy.

The Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee issued a Call for Views on 19 September 2025 to inform its cross-committee scrutiny of the new CCP, and SPT submitted a response on the sectors of Transport, Electricity, and Buildings.

SPT's response to this Call for Views was rooted in the policies and strategies outlined in the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and SPT's Climate Change and Net Zero Strategy, and focused on the following:

- Transitioning to Electric Vehicles (EVs) will require significant investment in grid capacity to meet the increased demand.
- Policies to promote active travel and public transport are key in moderating this increased demand.
- Policy focus should be on modal shift from private car to active travel and public transport, as well as reducing the need for travel and managing demand for car travel.
- Policies to decarbonise buildings should include support for district heat networks, funding for organisations and public bodies to install energy efficient heating systems, and support of circular economy principles in construction.

On 6 November 2025, the Scottish Government published the Draft Climate Change Plan 2026-2040⁴. The draft CCP will now be subject to scrutiny by various committees of the Scottish Parliament until March 2026. The Scottish Government have committed to publishing the final CCP in 2026, before the end of this parliamentary term.

SPT will seek to contribute to any requests for input into its review by Scottish Parliament committees and via the working groups noted above with Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Officers are in the process of reviewing the Draft CCP in detail, although it is worth highlighting that in terms of the target to reduce car usage, a new target has been proposed: to reduce annual car mileage by at least 4% by 2030, and at least 90% of all

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-change-plan-2026-2040/>

new car sales will need to be electric by the same year. Officers will continue to keep members up to date on the CCP as it develops.

3.3 Bus Infrastructure Fund

Further to the publication of the Programme for Government noted in the previous report to this Committee⁵, the Scottish Government has now allocated £20 million through the new Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF) for 2025-26 aimed at improving accessibility, tackling congestion and shortening journey times. The investment is intended to support the development and construction of a wide range of infrastructure projects across Scotland – from bus lanes and bus priority signals to accessible features and transport hubs. These improvements are designed to shorten journey times, increase reliability, and improve integration with other modes of transport, ultimately encouraging more people to choose the bus over private vehicles.

BIF funding has been distributed through two tiers. Tier 1 funding of £10 million has been distributed through the General Capital Grant to all local authorities on a per capita basis based on levels of Transport Poverty. Tier 2 funding of £10 million is being awarded to Local Authorities for work being undertaken through voluntary bus partnerships, which includes Regional Transport Partnerships.

In April 2025, the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (GCRBP) applied for a total of £4.39 million funding support from Tier 2 of the BIF for a range of bus priority and related measures. Glasgow City Council are the lead applicant on behalf of the GCRBP. Subsequently, notification was received from Transport Scotland that funding has been distributed to GCRBP totalling £1.24million.

When Glasgow City Council's Tier 1 funding (£88,000) is added, which is likely to supplement the bus improvement works, the total comes to £1.328m. Other GCR local authorities within the GCRBF have also received Tier 1 funding and we await detail on where this funding will be directed. SPT officers have been in dialogue with our local authority partners to discuss potential priorities. Officers will update members on progress in the delivery of BIF funding as matters progress.

3.4 Community Transport

The Scottish Government has announced funding of £4million through the Plugged-in Communities Fund to support investment by community transport operators in zero emission vehicles and charging infrastructure. The funding can be used for the purchase or lease of electric vehicles, including wheelchair accessible vehicles, and associated charging infrastructure. As members will be aware, SPT has invested significantly in Community Transport initiatives over recent years, with £1.25m being awarded in 2025, and officers will continue to liaise with operators in regard to this funding and the new Plugged-in Communities Fund.

3.5 Hairmyres Rail Station relocation and station upgrade

As noted previously⁶, SPT officers have engaged with South Lanarkshire Council and rail industry partners to support the Hairmyres rail station relocation and station upgrade. The project, which includes new park & ride facilities, has been completed, with the new station opening in May 2025 and the park & ride facilities opening in August 2025.

SPT has provided just over £0.80 million funding contribution towards the new park and ride, which now provides 530 parking spaces. Other funding partners included South Lanarkshire Council and Transport Scotland.

⁵ www.spt.co.uk/media/yz3modtg/sp130625_agenda5.pdf

⁶ www.spt.co.uk/media/wfwldcvc/sp230224_agenda8.pdf

3.6 Ardrossan Harbour Acquisition

The Scottish Government has initiated the process of acquiring Ardrossan Harbour from Peel Ports, with a "Heads of Terms" agreement reached in principle. The acquisition is driven by the need to redevelop the harbour to enable new CalMac ferries serving the Arran route to dock there, as the current facilities are too small.

The purchase is being managed by CMAL, the government agency for ferries and ports. Scottish Government funding is allocated within the 2025-26 budget to facilitate the acquisition of the harbour, subject to legal, commercial and financial due diligence.

The ferry service to Arran is currently operating from both Ardrossan and Troon. However, future reconstruction works at Ardrossan will mean that the terminal there would have to be closed for a period of approximately 21 months although the precise start date for any closure and reconstruction cannot yet be confirmed. During the closure and reconstruction of the Ardrossan facility Arran ferry services will operate to/from Troon Harbour (Lochranza-Claonaig services will continue to operate as per normal). SPT officers are working closely with industry partners and North Ayrshire Council to ensure that disruption for ferry users is minimised and that there is effective coordination with bus services on Arran, as well as highlighting impacts for services on the mainland which may be affected.

4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>All workstreams noted in this report are in line with the policies of the new Regional Transport Strategy.</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>The impact of the issues identified in this report could be significant for equalities groups. Due process in terms of statutory impact assessments will need to be undertaken by responsible parties to ensure appropriate mitigation of any matters identified.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None.</i>
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	<i>The impact of the issues identified in this report could be significant and due process in terms of statutory impacts assessments will need to be undertaken by responsible parties to ensure appropriate mitigation of any matters identified.</i>

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