



Strategic Issues Update for the SPT area

Committee Strategy & Programmes

Date of meeting 22 November 2019

Date of report 31 October 2019

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.

2. Background

Further to earlier reports¹, members will be aware that there are a range of strategic-level policy, planning and delivery initiatives underway within transport and related sectors in Scotland at present, across national, regional or local levels. The impact 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 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 Legislation

There are separate reports to this Committee which consider the Transport (Scotland) Bill and Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Bill. In relation to the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, on 2 October 2019 SPT attended an event in Stirling hosted by the Scottish Government in relation to the Act, with a specific focus on the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and Regional Spatial Strategies. The Scottish Government noted that they were looking to set up regional working groups for the NPF4 (similar to those for the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)) with a view to having an outline NPF4 ready by summer 2020. As regards Regional Spatial Strategies, there was an emphasis on being flexible in relation to the development of these, dependent on the aspirations of local and regional partners, and that they would form a key input to NPF4. Officers continue to liaise with relevant partners, including Clydeplan, in relation to the implementation of various elements of the Planning Act.

¹ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP300819_Agenda8.pdf

3.1.2 Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)/Regional Transport Working Groups (RTWGs)

Officers continue to engage with Transport Scotland, councils and other partners in relation to the STPR2. Meetings have taken place regarding objective setting, with further workshops in November regarding generation of options and interventions for consideration for inclusion in STPR2.

3.1.3 Scottish Government - Protecting Scotland's Future: the Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-2020 (PfG)

Further to the report to the Partnership in September, officers met with Transport Scotland in relation to relevant items announced in the PfG, including the additional £500million investment in bus. While more details on elements of the PfG will be made available in early 2020, SPT is guided that in relation to the £500million funding, this will be closely aligned to the Transport Bill's provisions for Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) and will seek to focus on strategic, large-scale interventions. Transport Scotland has also highlighted that some of the PfG funding may be allocated for 'managed motorways', and SPT officers attended a recent workshop in regard to future development of this proposal. Further discussions with Transport Scotland will continue to make the case for how this funding should be allocated and managed for the most effective outcomes.

3.2 Regional

3.2.1 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

Further to the report to the Committee in August², and the detailed update to the Partnership in September³, good progress continues to be made in developing the Regional Transport Strategy, and the programme remains on target for publication of the RTS in 2021. Additional work was undertaken during September and October using modelled forecasts to provide useful additional evidence for the RTS Issues and Objectives report. The public consultation on RTS Issues and Objectives will begin in December and continue for twelve weeks into 2020. Officers are continuing to engage with partners and stakeholders in preparation for the consultation to encourage as wide a response as possible to this important stage of RTS development.

3.2.2 Climate Ready Clyde Governance Arrangements

As members will be aware, SPT along with other public sector partners is a member of Climate Ready Clyde (CRC), which is currently preparing a Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy, a process endorsed at the previous Committee in August⁴. The initial three-year formal programme of the Climate Ready Clyde initiative is due to complete at the end of March 2020, and the CRC Board has expressed a desire to continue with the initiative, particularly with the new Adaptation Strategy at an early stage of development, and of course with the recent publicity surrounding the climate emergency. Officers will continue to engage with partners in regard to future options and provide a further update on the recommended way forward for approval by SPT's Partnership Board in early 2020.

² Section 3.2.1 of this report: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP300819_Agenda8.pdf

³ http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/P200919_Agenda9.pdf

⁴ Sections 3.7-3.8 of this report: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP300819_Agenda7.pdf

3.2.3 Rail update

There will be a fare increase for rail users in the west of Scotland in January 2020 of 2.8% for peak hour tickets and 1.8% for off-peak tickets. This compares to this year's rises of 3.2% for peak fares and 2.2% for off-peak. ScotRail has yet to announce details as regards increases on unregulated fares such as Super Off-Peak, Advance and First Class tickets.

The following sections provide an update on rail projects and initiatives SPT is working on with partners:

- **Clydebank Transport Interchange**
SPT and West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) are working jointly in developing an Outline Business Case for improving transport connections in Clydebank town centre. The business case is looking at opportunities for upgrading the existing Clydebank rail station and improving connections with bus services and to the Clyde Waterfront Regeneration area at Queens Quay. Consultants have been appointed to deliver a business case on behalf of SPT/WDC with this expected to complete early 2020.
- **Motherwell Rail Station Redevelopment**
SPT, North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), ScotRail and Transport Scotland have been working together to integrate investment plans and proposals to redevelop Motherwell rail station into a modern, accessible and attractive transport hub. A steering group and working group have been established to oversee delivery of the project. SPT to date has awarded £1million of capital programme funding towards the redevelopment of the station and expanded park and ride.
- **Robroyston Rail Station and Park & Ride**
The new Robroyston rail station and park & ride will come into operational service on 15 December as part of ScotRail's 2019 winter timetable. A multi-agency project Steering Group involving SPT, Transport Scotland, ScotRail, Glasgow City Council, Network Rail and the housing developer has been the key driver to ensuring the successful delivery of the new station and 250 space park and ride.

3.3 Local

3.3.1 Glasgow Connectivity Commission - Transport Delivery Steering Group

The Glasgow City Council (GCC) City Administration Committee at its meeting on 31 October 2019⁵ approved the creation of a Transport Delivery Steering Group to deliver or facilitate the recommendations from the Connectivity Commission Phase 2 report, relevant projects from the Regional Transport Strategy, and work in relation to GCC's position on the sale of First Group's UK bus business. Membership of the group is drawn from elected members and officers from GCC, plus three co-opted members. Officers will continue to engage with GCC and partners in regard to the Transport Delivery Steering Group and Connectivity Commission and keep the Committee updated as matters progress.

⁵ <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDN0GZ3UTZL81>

3.3.2 George Square

Throughout October, there was an engagement exercise undertaken in the form of a 'conversation' on the future of George Square in Glasgow. SPT took part in that process, and emphasised the need for improvements to the Square. SPT's response is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Conclusions

There is significant potential for change in transport and related fields at present within Scotland at a strategic level as a result of many of the initiatives outlined in section 3 above. SPT is involved in many of these, and officers will continue to seek to ensure that SPT's views are taken into account and will update the Committee 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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APPENDIX 1

George Square Conversation – Response by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

George Square is not only a civic space; it is a key thoroughfare and hub within the city and region's transport network. In this latter role it plays a significant part in the economic vibrancy of the city centre, for example, as a through-route for those travelling across and beyond the city, as a destination point for those travelling by bus to shop, work or undertake leisure activities in the city centre, and an interchange for those wishing to travel by rail and Subway (at Queen Street Station and Buchanan Street Subway Station respectively).

Specifically focusing on bus, George Square serves as a key route for many local and regional services going far beyond the city centre to areas outside Glasgow such as Lanarkshire, and to hubs including Buchanan Bus Station. The Square is also home to three specialist bus services, the 398 inter-station service, the 500 Airport service, and the City Sightseeing bus tours, all of which are important parts of Glasgow and the region's offer to residents and visitors.

As it stands, however, how George Square works at the moment is far from optimal. It does not fulfil its economic, social and environmental potential as a key section of the local and regional transport network, nor as a civic space. For example, it is difficult to find another major European city's main square which has all four of its sides open to all traffic, with parking available on three of those sides.

Altering how George Square works as a transport hub and thoroughfare, however, is not a task which should be undertaken lightly. What may seem a relatively small change could in fact have significant impacts on the wider transport network and thereon the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the city and region.

So in undertaking a community conversation on the future of George Square, the voice of the public transport user – particularly the all-too-often forgotten and undervalued bus passenger – must be given greater credence. Further, while community consultation is vitally important, so is robust transport appraisal and rigorous traffic analysis of the wider impacts and societal effects of any changes proposed.

SPT therefore believes change is essential; provided it is done in the correct way. That requires an integrated, complementary and holistic approach to reviewing the development of the city centre transport network through the developing Regional Transport Strategy, Connectivity Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy, and other similar such documents, and new mechanisms such as Bus Service Improvement Partnerships arising from the Transport (Scotland) Bill. A collegiate approach is particularly important at the current time, with significant interventions such as the LEZ and Avenues programme already impacting on how transport works within the city centre.

The removal of all traffic from all parts of the Square would disproportionately disadvantage bus users as a result of more convoluted routes and less convenient bus stop locations, reduce opportunities for integration between modes, and significantly reduce accessible pick-up and drop-off opportunities for those using nearby hubs such as Queen Street Station. In considering a new future for George Square, SPT believes the following considerations should be at the core of any plans:

- Removal of all parking spaces
- Retention of bus routes and access for bus
- Reduction in general traffic access
- Pedestrianisation of the section of the road in front of the City Chambers

SPT remains committed to working closely with the Council and other partners in taking forward plans for George Square, and the wider city and region's transport network in an integrated and co-ordinated way to maximise future economic, social and environmental benefits.