



Glasgow City Council

Economy, Housing, Transport and
Regeneration City Policy Committee

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Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

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Item 4

23rd April 2024

Bus workstreams update

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on workstreams related to bus in Glasgow including Bus Partnership Fund projects and the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership, strategic bus network plan research, free public transport pilot scoping study, city centre electric shuttle bus study, bus infrastructure projects and Community Bus Fund.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note progress of work related to bus in Glasgow
- (ii) Note the proposed response to the consultation on SPT's Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy business case work in Appendix A

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1 Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on work related to bus in Glasgow, including: Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership workstreams; Free Public Transport Pilot Scoping Study; City Centre Electric Shuttle Bus Study; and bus infrastructure projects.

2 The Bus Partnership Fund

- 2.1 The [Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership \(GBP\)](#) brings together as a voluntary partnership: the eight Glasgow City Region local authorities; SPT; bus operators (through their new alliance, GlasGo); and bus passenger representative groups. The purpose is to address current challenges to bus travel and to improve the passenger experience for communities across the City Region.
- 2.2 The Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) was first announced as part of the 2019 Programme for Government whereby as part of its response to the climate emergency, the Scottish Government committed to investing £500m over five years to deliver targeted bus priority measures on local and trunk roads. The BPF is managed by Transport Scotland and is designed to support local authorities – in partnership with bus operators – to tackle the negative impact of congestion on bus services so that bus journeys are quicker and more reliable, thus encouraging more people to travel by bus.
- 2.3 Glasgow City Council (GCC), on behalf of the GBP, was awarded £3,655,000 with £1,655,000 of the grant funding specifically for Glasgow. The remaining £2,000,000 of this grant funding was allocated to projects led by Renfrewshire Council.
- 2.4 Throughout the early development of the BPF bid, there has been consensus within the GBP that the focus of work should be on delivering bus priority measures on routes that benefit the greatest number of passengers. Funding was granted by Transport Scotland to develop detailed business cases that identify bus priority enhancements on five Strategic Bus Corridors across the Glasgow City Region:
- Dumbarton Road;
 - Great Western Road;
 - Maryhill Road;
 - Paisley Road West; and
 - Pollokshaws Road
- 2.5 Each business case takes a holistic view of how changes to Strategic Bus Corridors can deliver on wider policies and aspirations, including the Glasgow

Transport Strategy. The proposed bus priority measures would support both sustainable transport and place-making objectives, whilst helping to reduce our dependency on private car use.

- 2.6 In addition to these business cases, funding was also provided to develop a wider bus network plan and associated strategic business case – see Section 3.
- 2.7 As part of the Outline Business Case, the following options have been explored along each Strategic Bus Corridor:
- bus lanes and gates;
 - minimising on-street parking;
 - upgrading existing traffic lights to provide bus pre-emption;
 - conversion to red routes;
 - upgrading bus waiting facilities, and
 - reviewing the number of bus stops.

Subject to the outcome of the Outline Business Case stage, these options would then be subject to further assessment and consultation in the next stage of preliminary design, as well as opportunities for integration with active travel and other forms of public transport, and localised public realm enhancements.

- 2.8 The proposed corridors successfully passed through the Strategic Business Case (SBC) stage following a Gateway Review by Transport Scotland in February 2023. The Outline Business Cases (OBCs) were then submitted to Transport Scotland for the following:
- **Paisley Road West:** from Glasgow Central Station to Paisley Gilmour Street Station in Renfrewshire Council – **£37.56M**
 - **Dumbarton Road:** from Glasgow Central Station to Clydebank Railway Station in West Dunbartonshire Council – **£30.6M**
 - **Great Western Road:** from the city centre to Kilbowie Roundabout in West Dunbartonshire Council – **£21.76M**
 - **Maryhill Road:** from the city centre to Canniesburn Toll in East Dunbartonshire Council – **£22.49M**
 - **Pollokshaws Road:** from the city centre to Darnley and Eastwood Toll in East Renfrewshire Council – **£33.62M**

- 2.9 GCC, as lead authority of the GBP, was formally advised by Transport Scotland on 16th January 2024 that due to budgetary constraints the BPF funding has been paused until the end of the 2024-25 financial year. The pause in funding presents significant challenges to the GBP and in particular GCC to deliver improvements to bus infrastructure across the City Region.

- 2.10 Despite this setback in funding, the GBP remains committed to continue and during this pause to the BPF will explore ways of continuing to make an impact. In particular, opportunities to integrate bus infrastructure design into active travel projects will be sought by GCC. The GBP will remain in dialogue with Transport Scotland and continue to make the case for bus capital infrastructure investment.
- 2.11 Notwithstanding this pause in BPF in 2024/25, the GBP has overseen the delivery of some bus infrastructure improvements in Glasgow which are set out below.

Howard Street Bus Pre-emption Pilot

- 2.12 A Bus Priority pre-emption signal trial was undertaken on Howard Street, which enables late-running buses to request priority to assist in getting through the junction quicker. As evidence of the impact of this intervention, data shows that in a selected week in 2023, 393 buses were granted signal priority which can account for approximately 400 minutes of bus journey time savings through the junction across the week.
- 2.13 The success of the trial has meant that Transport Scotland permitted traffic signal upgrades that include bus pre-emption to be part of the suite of bus priority measures considered for funding.

Virtual loops – Paisley Road West Pilot

- 2.14 A second pilot has been utilised to upgrade our existing traffic signal detectors with new vehicle detection. The solution is to install above ground detection (virtual loops) which ensures these cannot be cut during roadworks. They can also be programmed to deal with issues around parked vehicles, distinguish between types of vehicles or road users, particularly cyclists and are able to provide additional traffic information.
- 2.15 GCC selected the Paisley Road West strategic bus corridor to convert existing SCOOT traffic signals to virtual loops and link these together to reduce the number of junctions that are offline at any time. This could have been trialled on any of the five strategic bus corridors that received BPF funding. However, Paisley Road West was chosen due to this route running parallel to the M8 motorway and any incidents on the motorway often result in vehicles being displaced onto Paisley Road West which consequently impacts bus services.

Signal upgrades (Paisley Road West)

- 2.16 Following the success of the Howard Street trial, BPF grant funding has been allocated towards junction upgrade works which would enable bus priority pre-

emption to operate at four congested junctions along Paisley Road West between Seaward Street and South Portland Street. This section was chosen as it is one of the slowest in terms of average bus speed on the Paisley Road West Strategic Bus Corridor.

- 2.17 These works were completed in March 2024. As part of these works the junctions were completely refurbished with tactile paving and tactile cones provided for the visually impaired

3 Strategic Bus Network Plan research

- 3.1 Using funding provided through the BPF, research has been carried out on a Glasgow and Strathclyde Strategic Bus Network Plan. This sets out the improvements that may be required to deliver a world-class bus network for the region. Introducing the network has the potential to unlock wide-ranging benefits that well-used bus networks provide. The following work as described is a concept and will require buy in from partners and significant capital and revenue investment to deliver.

- 3.2 The network planning process has sought to:

- Strategically reflect on the requirements of a future bus network;
- Develop a concept network for future Levels of Service; and
- Present the general case for Supporting Bus Infrastructure.

- 3.3 The process has a 2030 horizon for change, set to coincide with the timescale for achievement of the Scottish Government's ambitious 20% car kilometre reduction target (at least 30% for Glasgow). However, it is a strategic component part of this work for the proposed network to look both to and beyond this 2030 horizon and set a baseline for the longer-term development of the bus network, ensuring it integrates with other transport modes and the region's wider priorities including Clyde Metro.

- 3.4 A phased approach to network development has been adopted in the research. This considers the:

- **Opening Network**, representing what we currently know about the bus network in and around Glasgow in relation to supply, demand and current issues;
- **2025 Network** comprising of smaller scale alterations that could be made in the shorter term as a stepping stone towards greater change; and;
- **2030 Network**, presenting the longer-term view for service levels and infrastructure requirements for the bus network, aligned with the broader aspirations of Clyde Metro.

- 3.5 The work to form the new Strategic Bus Network Plan has:

- Analysed demand for and supply of buses in the region;
- Completed a visioning exercise for the role of bus up to 2030;
- Developed a spatial network plan and approach to service delivery;
- Appraised and developed a Strategic Business Case of options for change; and
- Defined a route map to implementation of the preferred network.

3.6 A summary report from this research can be found [here](#). Analysis of gaps in the current bus network versus demand has also been included within the adopted Glasgow Transport Strategy: Spatial Delivery Framework, presented to [Committee](#) in early 2024.

3.7 It should be noted, that Glasgow City Council does not have the power to deliver these changes alone. GCC are working with the wider Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership to consider the findings of this piece of work though noting the significant investment required. Notwithstanding this, this research is a valuable piece of evidence-based analysis on the type of bus network the city should be aiming for in the future.

4 Bus governance update

4.1 GCC adopted a [bus governance routemap](#) in November 2022 at City Administration Committee. This confirmed GCC aspirations to explore alternative forms of bus governance in the city, including a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP), municipal bus operations, and franchising.

4.2 As part of the BPF process, Transport Scotland has indicated that some form of BSIP will be required, if significant BPF investment is granted. This would aim to lock in benefits and BPF investment by securing commitments from bus operators. BSIP guidance is still being developed by Transport Scotland.

4.3 The Council still plans to explore the opportunities for a BSIP with SPT and the GBP once the guidance is published and are exploring what funding opportunities are available to fund this work, in particular the Community Bus Fund, see section 9.

4.4 The Council has also participated in SPT's work to develop a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS), which is looking at options to improve the bus network within Strathclyde Region.

4.5 The SRBS Options Development and Appraisal process explored 5 options for future delivery of the regional bus network: Business As Usual; Voluntary Partnerships; Bus Service Improvement Partnerships; Local Services Franchising; and Municipal Bus Company.

- 4.6 Recommendations for future delivery of the regional bus network was published at the [SPT Partnership Committee on the 15th March](#):
- Recommendation 1: Franchising - SPT should commence work on franchising, in line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
 - Recommendation 2: Bus Service Improvement Partnerships - SPT should progress with Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) arrangement to provide a firm basis for private and public sector commitments to arrest further passenger decline and improve the bus network over the medium term.
 - Recommendation 3: Municipal Bus Company - As and when it may be required, SPT will consider developing business case(s) for small-scale municipal bus company(ies) aimed at providing socially necessary services in parts of the region where private operators are currently very limited.
 - Recommendation 4: Bus Partnership Fund - SPT should continue working with local authorities, Transport Scotland and bus operators to continue delivery through the Bus Partnership Fund.
 - Recommendation 5: Business As Usual and Voluntary Partnerships should be ruled out.
- 4.7 The Council as a key stakeholder has an opportunity to feed into this process along with the wider public when the above work is consulted on in April / May 2024. A draft consultation response is appended in Appendix A for discussion and for information. Officers will finalise the consultation response and submit to SPT in May 2024.

5 GBP - Bus co-ordination group and behaviour change campaigns

- 5.1 Following comments raised at the GBP about how events and roadworks can significantly delay buses, a co-ordination group with Bus Operators and operational Council Staff has been set up. The aim of the group is to share details of planned roadworks, projects, events or any other issues to minimise disruption to local bus services from both planned and emergency works.
- 5.2 This group is chaired by Glasgow City Council and meets quarterly to provide a forum to discuss issues and provide an opportunity to provide early warning of projects which may cause significant disruption to the bus network.
- 5.3 Whilst not funded by the BPF or the GBP, it should be noted that the Council launched a [“Don't be a bus blocker”](#) behaviour change campaign in March 2024, supported by Transport Scotland's Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding programme. The idea for this campaign emerged from discussions at the GBP on the need to tackle irresponsible parking at bus stops and on bus lanes, which affects the ability of passengers to board the bus as well as the journey times of buses. This campaign is running throughout spring 2024, and

is visible across the city on billboards and bus backs as well as on social media and via radio adverts.

6 Free Public Transport Pilot Scoping Study

- 6.1 Glasgow City Council have procured support to provide a fully developed proposal for a free Public Transport pilot. This responds to the [Glasgow Transport Strategy: Policy Framework](#) Action 41.C: “The Council will work with partners to explore the feasibility of a targeted free public transport scheme, and subject to this, monitor and evaluate any pilot to inform thinking on the benefits and costs of free public transport. This should build on Transport Scotland’s free bus travel scheme for under 22s.” This work also responds to previous correspondence with the Scottish Government in 2022 on free public transport and the inability to consider funding until a proposal was developed.
- 6.2 GCC elected members allocated funding to support this workstream, i.e. the development of the scope of a pilot. It should be noted that there is currently no funding allocated for delivery of the pilot.
- 6.3 The scoping study was commissioned to explore the feasibility of a free public transport pilot and covered the following topic areas:
- Similar schemes in operation both in Scotland and wider afield;
 - Lessons learned from these schemes which could assist in the development of a pilot within Glasgow;
 - The need for free public transport in Glasgow;
 - Options for the delivery of a pilot – including ticketing solutions, pilot population and duration; and
 - The development of a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the emerging findings from a pilot
- 6.4 A range of options were developed which would meet the criteria of the research. Considering a range of factors including governance, reimbursement and potential costs a preferred pilot option was identified. Key elements in the decision-making around this preferred pilot option are as follows:
- SPT Zonocard was viewed to be the most effective method of delivering a free public transport pilot.
 - Achieving uptake has been a challenge with other free / concessionary fare travel schemes in Scotland, and it was decided to maximise the possibility of uptake by working with members of the public the Council is already in contact with (balanced by a control group recruited from the general public).
 - Due to the need to avoid overlap with reimbursement mechanisms for existing free bus travel in Scotland, a free public transport pilot in Scotland must exclude populations already in receipt of free bus travel – hence the focus on a population aged between 22 and 59.

6.5 A costing model was developed to calculate the estimated cost of operating the pilot in Glasgow. The model estimated that to provide everyone in this demographic group (i.e. across the city) with free public transport for nine weeks would cost approximately £95.7m excluding back office and admin costs. Option E below is the preferred pilot option that has been developed as part of the research.

Table 1: Free public transport pilot options

Option	Description	No of pilot participants	Total Cost (2023 Prices)
Option A	Spatial Area	25,784 (6.9% of 22-59)	£6.7m
Option B	Targeted Population	12,077 (3.2% of 22-59)	£3.1m
Option C	Employment Based	11,560 (3.1% of 22-59)	£3.0m
Option D	Socio-Demographics / Socio-Economic Indicators	26,048 (7.0% of 22-59)	£6.8m
Option E	Pathfinder Project + Public Sample	1,000 (0.3% of 22-59)	£0.2m
Full Option	Universal Access	372,117 (100% of 22-59)	£95.7m

6.6 A pilot proposal has therefore been developed which would provide 1,000 residents of the City of Glasgow, aged between 22 and 59 years, access to free public transport for a nine-week duration. These participants would be recruited from the public (500) and 500 members from a range of Pathfinder projects operated by GCC. The team overseeing these pathfinder projects can provide a pool of participants across each of their programmes to provide a wide and diverse representation of the population of Glasgow.

6.7 A summary report from this work can be found [here](#). A route map to deliver the free public transport pilot has been set out in the report. At present, no funding has been secured to take forward this intervention, so the next task would be to identify and secure any potential funding.

7.0 Free Electric City Centre Shuttle Bus Study

7.1 Further to the City Centre Transport Plan, GCC has commissioned a study to investigate the option of introducing a free electric city centre circular bus service to connect transport interchanges and key gateway locations.

- 7.2 The scoping study covered the following topic areas:
- a review of other free city centre shuttle bus services operating elsewhere in the UK;
 - review the existing ScotRail Station Link service;
 - a public transport accessibility and connectivity within the city centre;
 - route design options, frequency and timetable options;
 - the financial implications of introducing a shuttle bus;
 - operating options eg. tendered service, public sector operation or franchising; and
 - service design elements, such as routes, frequency and operating model.
- 7.3 Indicative costings have been prepared for 6 options, based on use of fully-electric zero emission buses and estimated using a bus industry costing model. Costs varied from £764,000 to £1,575,000 per annum to run the service dependent on the option taken forward.
- 7.4 The key delivery issue for this proposed service is the requirement to make it free to all users. As there is no reimbursement payable this prevents the service reclaiming any revenue from the concessionary fares scheme for over 60's and under 22's operated by Transport Scotland. This would mean that the service would need to meet the full revenue cost for all passengers.
- 7.5 At present, no funding has been secured to take forward this intervention, so the next task would be to identify and secure any potential funding.

8. SPT Funding

- 8.1 The Scottish Government budget process in December 2023 saw the withdrawal of capital monies to SPT for public transport improvements. The Council continues to liaise with SPT on this matter, as this was a valuable funding source for bus infrastructure improvements in Glasgow annually.
- 8.2 Under the 2023/24 SPT capital funded programme in Glasgow, Hope Street Bus Corridor Improvements Phase 1 is presently being progressed via funding £1.5m secured from this programme. Site works are commencing early 2024 and will deliver the upgrades to the western footway on Hope Street between Argyle Street and Bothwell Street. This package will also deliver improved public realm, high quality bus stop infrastructure inclusive of bus build outs and high access kerbs, Real Time Passenger Information Units and shelter upgrades for bus passengers. The works package also includes full carriageway surfacing and traffic signal upgrades. Completion is anticipated to be April 2024. Due to changes to SPT's capital funding levels for 2024/25, Phase 2 is currently paused.

- 8.3 In addition to Hope Street, via the SPT Capital Fund, Council Officers secured £100k to progress bus stop improvements across the city. The bus stop locations were selected in communication with SPT, bus operators and via issues that were highlighted to Officers by residents. These locations include Brockburn Road, Royston Road, Edinburgh Road and two locations on Sauchiehall Street. Works began in January 2024 and are scheduled for completion by March 2024.
- 8.4 Due to lack of SPT capital funding in 2024/25, the Pollok Roundabout project is currently paused. The Council are continuing to explore potential alternative funding sources.

9 Community Bus Fund

- 9.1 Transport Scotland's Community Bus Fund provided funding of over £5m in 2023/24 to support local authorities to explore the full range of options set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, including municipal bus services. This funding round was split between both capital and resource funding with allocations of £5 million capital and £0.75 million in resource funding covering the 2023-24 period.
- 9.2 GCC received £30,000 from the Capital funding element. This funding was allocated based on levels of transport poverty as defined in the Transport Poverty in Scotland report from Sustrans.
- 9.3 This funding has been used to upgrade 2 bus stops with new shelters and real time passenger information signs that had been identified from SPT as requiring upgrades, tying in with the wider SPT bus stop funding noted above.
- 9.4 The Council also submitted a CBF bid in 2023/24 of £50,000 for revenue funding to support for resources and expertise for the ongoing development of a BSIP. The application was unfortunately unsuccessful.

10 Fair Fares Review

- 10.1 Transport Scotland's [Fair Fares Review work](#) was published in March 2024. This work commenced in Spring 2022 in response to a Bute House Agreement commitment to "“commission a Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares.”"
- 10.2 The Review has considered the cost and availability of public transport services across all modes of public transport. Options were considered and assessed, as well as work to develop potential Pathfinder projects.
- 10.3 A number of recommendations are set out in the main report of the Fair Fares Review work. These include developing a proposal for a flat-fare bus fares pilot for an area-based scheme; exploration of the feasibility of a pilot project to extend free travel on rail services for companions accompanying eligible Blind Persons Concessionary Travel cardholders; recommencing Transport

Governance review work with specific action on identifying changes to support improved public transport; developing a business case for introducing a national and/or regional integrated ticket and fare structure; developing a bus service improvement plan and delivery framework over the next 18 months; consideration of concessionary travel support for those experiencing financial poverty.

11 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Most of the bus related work in Glasgow is being funded through the Bus Partnership Fund. However this has been paused until the end of the 2024-25 financial year due to budgetary constraints.
<i>Legal:</i>	GCC Legal Services to conduct due diligence
<i>Personnel:</i>	No direct personnel issues
<i>Procurement:</i>	Any external resources will be procured through the Scotland Excel Framework

Council Strategic Plan: Deliver sustainable transport and travel aligned with the city region. **Mission 1, Grand Challenge 3.**

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	Generally supportive of the stated outcomes.
<i>What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?</i>	Positive impact
<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.</i>	Improving opportunities for additional, quicker, more frequent and reliable bus services can help address barriers many people in Glasgow face in accessing employment, education and services

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

Action 25 – Develop a Glasgow Bus Partnership
Action 26 – Explore alternative options for bus delivery in Glasgow

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Bus related work looks to improve bus services in terms of reliability and shorter journey times to make it more attractive for the passenger. A greater shift from private car to bus would tackle congestion, reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Yes

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

Not currently though commercial data shared by bus operators on bus service performance would be an issue in any future BSIP etc.

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

12 Recommendations

12.1 It is recommended that the Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee:

- (i) Note progress of work related to bus in Glasgow
- (ii) Note a proposed response to the consultation on SPT's Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy business case work in Appendix A

Appendix A: Proposed GCC response to SPT SRBS publication April 2024