



30 March 2023

Ariane Burgess MSP
Convener, Local Government, Housing and Planning
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our ref: PRJ/0200/07/8583LJB
Your ref: N/A
Direct Dial 0141-333-3740
Email: bruce.kiloh@spt.co.uk

Inquiry into Community Planning

Dear Ariane

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee's inquiry into Community Planning.

Please find in the enclosed appendix SPT's responses to the questions raised by the Committee. I hope these are helpful and we would be happy to provide further input as required.

As you note, SPT is a statutory partner in Community Planning and we work closely with our local authority and other partners to support the outcomes contained in the respective LOIPs across our twelve Community Planning Partnership areas.

SPT is the Regional Transport Partnership for the west of Scotland, established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, covering 11 full council areas and part of one other. We have a range of responsibilities including managing and operating the Glasgow Subway; operating bus stations; supporting socially necessary bus services including the MyBus demand responsive service, support for community transport, delivery of integrated and smart ticketing and significant capital investment in transport infrastructure. We also have a statutory obligation to prepare and deliver a Regional Transport Strategy and we are in the process of finalising our refreshed strategy in coming weeks subject to approval by our Partnership Board and subsequently Scottish Ministers. More information on SPT and our services is available at www.spt.co.uk

Our responses to the Committee's questions naturally focus on transport. However, by its nature, and as a derived demand, we would emphasise the importance of transport across a wide range of policies and sectors, including reducing inequalities, helping deliver inclusive economic growth, reducing inequality, improving health and wellbeing and, of course, taking climate action.

SPT is a committed Community Planning Partner and we welcome the opportunity to provide input to this Inquiry and look forward to its recommendations and the further strengthening of Community Planning as a force for enhanced partnership working and meeting the needs of our local communities.

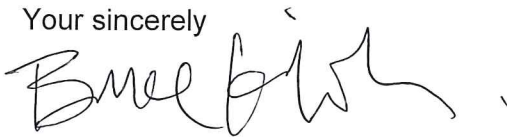
Local transport services are essential to ensure that people can access services, employment, education, health and leisure and to support the wider economy. This is critical to the wellbeing of our communities and requires close engagement with our community planning partners.

To highlight two important examples of SPT's support for transport in our local communities, SPT provides support for the MyBus demand responsive transport service which provides transport for some of our most vulnerable residents including access to shops, friends and family and for GP appointments. We also invest in community transport across the west of Scotland. Investment in MyBus and Community Transport is essential to maintain the social fabric of our communities and supporting inclusive access.

Ensuring this inclusivity and accessibility requires a close understanding of the needs of passengers and communities and SPT works hard to ensure their voices are heard. Our Partnership Board comprising elected members across Strathclyde we have a good understanding of local transport needs and concerns. Being part of the Community Planning process across twelve local authority areas underpins and strengthens our understanding of people's transport needs as transport is a prominently discussed issue and one which all our partners recognise is critical not only to the wellbeing of our communities but also to ensuring that they too can deliver their services in a responsive and efficient manner.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the Committee's Inquiry. We hope our responses are helpful in setting out our commitment to Community Planning and demonstrating the benefits that Community Planning brings to enhanced partnership working and improved service delivery for our people and communities.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Kiloh', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bruce Kiloh
Head of Policy & Planning
SPT

Appendix

SPT's Responses to the Inquiry Questions

1. How SPT engages with the CPP and works in partnership with other members.

SPT is a partnership of the 11 Local Authorities in the west of Scotland and incorporates part of one other so our relationship with Local Government is well established. As such we are members of twelve Community Planning Partnership Boards across the west of Scotland. SPT itself is a partnership organisation with a Board comprising elected members from across our partner councils as well as appointed members from a range of background and experience including the NHS, business community and wider transport network.

What we do flows directly from funding and approvals from elected members. In a sense this gives SPT the opportunity to be a more complete partnership organisation which is fully embedded in LAs and hence directly connected to CPP priorities.

In addition to CPP Board participation, SPT is represented on a range of supporting CP groups such as the Glasgow Community Planning Executive Group or the Inverclyde Depopulation Group as examples.

SPT's Partnership Board has recently approved the final draft Regional Transport Strategy¹ and subject to final approval by Scottish Minister's this will set the policy framework for transport in the west of Scotland for the next fifteen years. The Strategy sets out a strong vision for transport

"The west of Scotland will be an attractive, resilient and well-connected place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by high quality, sustainable and low carbon transport shaped by the needs of all."

This has been designed specifically to align with the Local Outcomes set by Community Planning Partnerships in our region and SPT, as a statutory participant in Community Planning, will continue working within Community Planning Partnerships to facilitate the tailored delivery of the RTS within communities in order to help reduce inequalities and improve quality of life.

SPT has recently produced Council Reports for each of our CPP areas which set out our role, update progress on our workstreams and set out future workplans while demonstrating our alignment with CPP Local Outcome Improvements Plans. These are available at the following link and set out our current and future transport plans and the importance of effective transport solutions for the economic social and health and wellbeing of communities across the west of Scotland.

<https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/spt-in-your-area/>

SPT also works with community groups and the 3rd Sector across our area to ensure public transport provision is as effective as possible in meeting the needs of our communities, particularly at this most challenging time for all.

We have close partnership working arrangements across health, economic development, regeneration and planning sectors as well as co-ordination with Police and Fire & Rescue to ensure public safety for public transport users.

¹ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/wmxnkmvp/p170323_agenda9.pdf

We also administer Concessionary Fares on ferries, rail and Subway on behalf of our partner Councils to help ensure people have, so far as is possible, equitable access to the people, services and opportunities they need.

During the Covid pandemic SPT worked closely with our partners across local authority, NHS, Police and Transport Scotland to support the safe operation of the transport network and help ensure that essential workers were able to get to their work. We also worked with the NHS to ensure members of the public who relied on public transport were able to access vaccination centres. We kept our local authority and community planning partners aware of what bus services were available to NHS Hospitals in the SPT area and continuing financial payments to bus operators for supported services even when these could not be operated due to Covid to ensure wider sustainability of the bus network.

In terms of the Cost of Living Crisis SPT has been proactive in a number of ways which aim to minimize its impact. Transport affordability is a major challenge for service users and emerged as one of the key issues raised by respondents to the consultation undertaken by SPT in preparing the refreshed Regional Transport Strategy. SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland and the wider transport industry to develop longer term action to address affordability. However, we have taken initial action to address this by continuing to freeze fares on SPT supported bus services and the Glasgow Subway. The Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Committee has also delayed the proposed introduction of a half fare payment for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme, which SPT administers on behalf of our partner Councils and which provides discounted travel on rail, Subway and ferry services in the west of Scotland.

As the Committee will be aware, Transport Scotland is taking forward a Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares. The review will look at the range of discounts and concessionary fare schemes which are available on all modes. SPT has been in liaison with Transport Scotland to support the review including the potential to take forward pilot ticketing initiatives to help address the issue of affordability.

2. Whether there are any challenges or barriers to that engagement being effective.

SPT has good working relationships across our partners but there is always scope for improvement. SPT represents the transport sector on Community Planning Boards and, of course, given our role as the regional transport planning authority, we have responsibility to support the planning and coordination of the wider sustainable travel network and not simply those parts of the transport network over which we have direct responsibility. However, our specific powers and statutory role across transport modes is varied. We provide support for socially necessary bus services but do not own or operate bus services directly, we do not run rail services which are a matter for Transport Scotland and ScotRail but we do invest in rail including improvements to stations and access, we own and operate the Subway in Glasgow but we do not have any direct role in ferry services which are operated by CalMac although again we provide investment in ferry terminal facilities including bus interchange. We do however have a clear role to promote integrated and coordinated transport solutions but this cannot always translate to immediate action. The complex nature of transport governance can result in some confusion over our capacity to act directly where transport issues are raised.

SPT's wider strategic transport planning role, and the capacity of transport investment and intervention to address issues of inequality, access and inclusion, can sometimes be overlooked. Restating the nature and purpose of community planning and its function to enable better partnership working to deliver genuine improvements to services for communities and reducing inequalities would be a welcome recommendation to emerge from the work of the Committee.

SPT's role then is often to act as a bridge to wider transport partners to ensure issues raised at Community Planning meetings are appropriately addressed through partnership working and liaison. It might be helpful nonetheless if there was a more explicit statement at national level on the specific role and obligations of Community Planning partners and a recognition of the limits and opportunities their participation brings to the process.

3. Your views on the whether the Act is meeting its objective of reducing inequalities, and the effectiveness of Local Outcome Improvement Plans and locality plans.

There is no doubt that much of the activity of Community Planning can help to address individual and localised inequalities. There are examples in many CPPs of success in tackling specific issues be that in educational attainment, health outcomes, support for access to education and youth employment, crime reduction, and the challenges of supporting an ageing population. These are valuable and necessary interventions and credit is due to the dedication of staff across the Community Planning sector in addressing these issues and finding innovative solutions to local issues.

However, addressing inequalities across health, income and access to services requires a wider range of action at national level including major investment in public services including sustainable transport to address issues of accessibility, affordability, frequency and availability. Community Planning has an important role in supporting communities and helping to tackle specific instances of inequality but will only be successful in tackling deep seated structural inequalities as one part of a wider multi-level approach.

Specifically, in relation to LOIPs and Locality Plans, the move towards a more focused approach around key priorities such as improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged communities as well as geographic and interest group based, is both welcome and necessary.

4. Whether the statutory partners as set out in Schedule 1 of the Act needs revisiting.

There might be an argument for some partners to become associate partners or as a wider virtual reference group where expertise can be drafted at certain times and on specific topics on an ongoing or bi-annual or annual timeframe. With specific regard to transport it is noted that the Regional transport Partnerships are statutory partners whereas Transport Scotland – as the Government's transport body – is not (albeit the Scottish Government is a statutory partner).

Consideration could also then be given to more ad hoc engagement as required to address community concerns or aspirations. From a transport perspective this could include Transport Scotland and other Scottish Government Departments (Roads directorate for the trunk road network and Councils for surface streets and other roads) in addition to other bespoke community groups to attend for specific meetings.

5. Whether there is sufficient leadership at a local or national level to support community planning.

At the local level there is undoubtedly strong leadership from Council Leaders, Chief Executives, elected members and officers as well as from Police, Fire, NHS and Scottish Enterprise and the 3rd Sector. This often reflects not only clear commitment but also an element of 'boots on the ground'. This is often accompanied by significant resources for community engagement and a shifting focus from on traditional service delivery e.g the role of the Fire Service now covers wider community safety and resilience.

SPT is committed to providing leadership from the transport sector, including through our engagement with Transport Scotland at national level, transport operators locally, including the

Community Transport sector and our local authority transport colleagues to ensure that the wider transport sector is playing its role in delivering local outcomes.

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