

To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board

On: 26 August 2020

Report by: Director of Environment & Infrastructure

Heading: Transportation Transition Recovery Plan

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board with a summary of the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on public transport in the Renfrewshire and wider Glasgow City region area and the steps being taken to support the recovery of public transport.
- 1.2 In the early stages of the covid-19 pandemic and at the start of the formal lockdown period it was quickly apparent that public transport would be significantly impacted, both due to issues with resourcing services but also the physical distancing measures put in place.
- 1.3 During lockdown the demand for public transport fell by 85 to 95% against the normal pre-covid conditions. As well as the reduced demand, there was a significant reduction in service provision with rail services operating at around 40% capacity and bus services at around 30%, this was in line with the government guidelines for only essential journeys to be taken. During lockdown people were making an average of 1.4 trips per day compared with 2.7 trips per day before lockdown.
- 1.4 Likewise, travel by private car reduced by around 75%, ferry journeys reduced by 95% and plane journeys by 90%. During this period we also witnessed walking and cycling journeys increase significantly, with some areas seeing an increase in cycling journeys of around 50%.
- 1.5 Walking and cycling increased as people stayed in their own local areas for exercise and this initial increase has been supported by the £30million Scottish Government Spaces for People fund released to support Councils deliver temporary active travel improvements. As reported to the Emergencies Board, Renfrewshire has been

successful in securing £700,000 from Sustrans to implement measures to increase active travel opportunities in Renfrewshire.

- 1.6 In relation to the proposed temporary cycling infrastructure, the Service is currently reviewing the feedback from the consultation exercise and incorporating this feedback into the final designs. The majority of the feedback has resulted in some relatively minor amendments to proposed routes, although the proposed route through the Broomlands Street and Wellmeadow area has been significantly amended to Canal Street/George Street in response to concerns raised by local businesses and members. Once the final designs are concluded these will be shared with elected members and key stakeholder groups prior to implementation.
- 1.7 As we move to Phase 3 of the covid-19 routemap the demand for public transport is increasing on a week by week basis and with physical distancing reducing to 1metre, transport operators face the challenge of meeting this increased demand with the capacity restraints that physical distancing provides i.e. a bus with 1m physical distancing in place can only carry 40% of the passengers it could carry pre covid-19.
- 1.8 In order to respond to this challenge Councils are working in partnership with Transport Scotland, our city region partner authorities, SPT, Scotrail and bus operators to manage the increased demand on public transport to prioritise the safety of passengers but also to ensure the supply of services matches the demand.
- 1.9 The Council and city region partner authorities are developing a Transport Transition Recovery Plan detailing a range of appropriate interventions that will support the recovery of public transport across the region and mitigate the potential for an increased reliance on private car journeys.
- 1.10 These interventions will be supported by the announcement of the Transport Minister on 16 July 2020 of the creation of a £10million Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund which will provide funding for temporary bus priority infrastructure. The principal behind this is to reduce the impact of congestion on the busiest transport corridors as we continue to progress through the covid-19 route map and out of the crisis.
- 1.11 The infrastructure will be targeted to the areas with the highest concentrations of congestion in order to make bus journeys quicker and more reliable for passengers which aims to support the bus industry with incentivising bus trips instead of private vehicle journeys.
- 1.12 The main areas of infrastructure under consideration are the reallocation of road space to buses, reallocation of parking provision to buses, implementation of bus lanes and bus gates and consideration of traffic light prioritisation.
- 1.13 The Council will be submitting a bid to the fund as part of a city region submission with the list of priority interventions being agreed between the city region authorities, SPT and bus operators.

- 1.14 The range of interventions which are under consideration within Renfrewshire are attached as Appendix 1. At this stage these proposals are at an early stage of assessing feasibility and will range from short to medium term with appropriate consultation being carried out in the areas where the interventions are required.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board:

- 2.1 Notes the content of this report and that further progress updates will be reported to this Policy Board.
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3. Background

- 3.1 As we continue to response to the easing of the current restrictions in how we access services, employment or how we socialise, there is a need to ensure the transport system is fit to meet the demand placed on it across the country. The Council has engaged with all relevant stakeholders at an early stage to ensure that appropriate action can be taken to support the transport system and ensure employment can be accessed by all throughout these challenging times.
- 3.2 The transport system has managed to work through the phases of the lockdown routemap and has risen to the challenges provided to date. Those challenges inevitably include the perception of whether passengers can use public transport safely and with confidence.
- 3.3 In order to ensure the supply of public transport can meet the demand placed on it over the coming weeks and months it will be necessary to take action to support public transport providers throughout this period. Those actions may range from promotional campaigns, enforcement activity to support current road restrictions or the introduction of additional infrastructure.

Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund

- 3.4 On 16 July 2020, the Transport Minister announced the launch of a £10million Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund to support local authorities with the provision of bus infrastructure to assist the recovery of bus operators during the move through the covid-19 route map.
- 3.5 The fund will allow local authorities to work with bus operators to implement temporary measures including bus lanes or gates in order to make journeys quicker and more reliable for passengers and combat the natural return to private car journeys.

- 3.6 A Transport Transition Group has been established for the Glasgow City region area with Transport Scotland, SPT, and the city region local authorities. This group is looking at transport corridors across the region and has been split into 4 areas with Renfrewshire leading on the corridors across the South West area working with Inverclyde Council, Glasgow City Council, East Renfrewshire Council, SPT and public transport operators.
- 3.7 The group is gathering information on a range of interventions that would support public transport operators in the short and medium term, and these are outlined in the action plan attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.8 Prior to the covid-19 pandemic officers from Environment & Infrastructure had been discussing bus priority measures with McGills and SPT and these discussions have proven invaluable in terms of having an early list of potential areas for consideration for applications to this new Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund.
- 3.9 The Glasgow city region Transition Group has agreed to combine the intervention lists from the 4 areas into a priority list for the region and this prioritised list will be submitted to the new fund for consideration. In addition to this each local authority will be able to make separate submissions for measures that may have a lower impact across the region but may be important for local circumstances.
- 3.10 As the fund will be fluid in nature and will require a quick turnaround, the consultation process for implementation of any measures is expected to be a shortened process with the use of emergency Traffic Regulation Order powers and time limited consultation with the public. This is similar to the consultation process with the temporary cycling infrastructure where comments can be taken on board and officers will have the flexibility to amend infrastructure based on feedback from the public if certain measures are found to be impacting local residents.
- 3.11 Once the outcome of applications to the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund are known these will be reported through the Emergencies Board to provide members with an update on progress.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community & Council Planning** –

Our Renfrewshire is thriving / Reshaping our place, our economy and our future - the service is actively involved in the support of public transport to support and facilitate economic growth.

4. **Legal** – None.

5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website
8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
12. **CoSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – The performance outlined within the report will continue to contribute to positive climate change.
14. **Fairer Scotland Duty** - none

List of Background Papers: Appendix – Transport Transition Recovery Plan

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Appendix 1 – Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund Proposed Interventions

A761 & Paisley-Renfrew-Braehead BPRDF Proposals

