

Report to Partnership Meeting 13 September 2019

PARTNERSHIP

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Purpose of Report

To inform members of progress with key transport related aspects of the Programme for Government (PfG)ⁱ published on 3 September 2019

Summary

1. The report provides a summary of the key elements of the Programme for Government relevant to the delivery of the RTS in the forthcoming year

Programme for Government

The PfG published is separated in four key sections: ending Scotland's Contribution to Climate Change; a successful fair green economy; improving outcomes through our public services and communities where everyone is valued, protected and respected.

Key Aspects

There is a new commitment a "Mission Zero for Transport" with a £500m commitment to fund bus priority infrastructure aligned to the forthcoming second National Transport Strategy and working with Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB) to scope out new funding mechanisms for bus industry investment in low/zero emission buses. The SNIB will also issue a wider call for Green Deal Accelerator investable projects in November this year, the PfG announced. There is also further funds for ULEVs purchase by business and communities. There is a commitment to decarbonize rail by 2035 and a commitment to make the Highlands and Islands the first zero mission aviation zone. Alongside a phasing out of all petrol and diesel vehicles from the public sector fleet by 2025. There was also a series of policy initiatives announced around transport innovation.

The document also outlined that Scottish Government are also working to extend the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, providing free bus travel for people accompanying eligible disabled children under the age of 5. We will work with stakeholders to review the option of extending public transport concessions to people under 26, reporting on progress in the coming year.

In the Rural economy section there is a commitment to review the services on the West Highland rail corridor to find opportunities to integrate rail services with other transport modes as well as active travel. There was a further £4m commitment to upgrades and replacements of key systems and equipment on board ferries. Scottish Government also outlined the intention to set out the second Scottish Ferries Plan by the end of 2022.

Stating that where evidenced, we will continue to enhance both the Northern Isles and the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services in response to the challenges ahead. We will continue to work with local authorities in the Northern Isles on improving intra-island services and we will shortly confirm the outcome of the tender for Northern Isles ferry services. There was also a statement that Scottish Government are focusing on securing the investment needed to complete the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness, albeit no specific reference to A96 dualling.

It was also announced that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund will be extended for a further year and £3m will be available. Members may wish to lobby for RTPs alongside councils and national park authorities to be eligible, to facilitate the potential further extension of bike/e-bike sharing in key tourism areas to able modal shift. There is also the continuation of a flat cash investment in active travel, following it's doubling last year from £40m to £80m. There is also a reference to the Government's support at second stage of the transport bill to the introduce of legislation to enable the introduction of the workplace parking levy.

The PfG reiterated the intention to published NTS2 this year, which will redefine investment priorities to put sustainable transport at the heart of decision-making and ensure that transport plays a key role in delivering net zero emissions by 2045. The ongoing work on Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) embed sustainable travel principles and review investment priorities in light of the climate change emergency. However, it will also be critical that transport poverty and lifeline aspects of transport networks are recognised in these two key documents, so whilst all play their part in sustainable long-term mobility for the communities of HITRANS area this isn't delivered by suppressed mobility and a lack of a rights-based approach to enabling a fair and equitable access to key services and assets nationally, as championed by the recent Poverty and Inequality Commission report

The proposals for a new Consumer Advocacy agency Consumer Scotland are reiterated, alongside a continued commitment to tackle unfair delivery charges for rural and island areas. Members may also want to see the new agency also take a roll in the setting of transport fares and prices and service quality across a number of modes. The PfG also detailed that the new Tourism Strategy for Scotland would be launched in the forthcoming months and developed in partnership with key sector partners.

In the context of the Local Governance Review, the PfG doesn't outline any legislative agenda around the previously proposed Local Democracy Bill. It does highlight that the recent consultation outlined a desire from communities to to see a transformation in how decision-making arrangements work in Scotland and the Scottish Government state that this year they will explore how we can make that a reality, creating a system of inclusive local democracy based on rights which will improve outcomes for people and communities.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery
Impact - Positive
Policy
Impact - Positive
Financial
Impact – Positive
Equality
Impact – Positive

Recommendations

1. Members and Advisors are asked to comment upon the report.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 4th September 2019

ⁱ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/publication/2019/09/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/documents/governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/govscot%3Adocument/governments-programme-scotland-2019-20.pdf?forceDownload=true>