

Report to Partnership Meeting 11 September 2020

PARTNERSHIP

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with a summary of the key transport related aspects of the Programme for Government (PfG)¹ published on 1 September 2020

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 2020 PfG is titled 'Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland' and is separated in three key sections: ending Scotland's Contribution to Climate Change; a national mission to create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs; promoting life-long health and wellbeing; and promoting equality and helping our young people grasp our potential.

Key Commitments within PfG

- New funding of **over £500 million over five years for active travel infrastructure**, access to bikes and behaviour change schemes
- Take forward our ambitions for **20 minute neighbourhoods** – the creation of liveable, accessible places, with thriving local economies, where people can meet their daily needs within a 20 minute walk
- Introduce **Low Emissions Zones** in Scotland's major cities in the first half of 2022
- £2 million **Islands Green Recovery Programme**
- Introduce **a network of regional hubs** to empower communities to develop local solutions to making the transition to net-zero and climate resilient living
- Develop **a network of Climate Action Towns**
- **Invest £4 million in 2021 in a zero emission drivetrain testing facility**
- Establish a **zero emission heavy duty vehicle programme** with a minimum investment of £1 million

The PfG details the first tranche of an additional £2billion of low infrastructure investment over the next parliamentary session. This includes a multi-year commitment to funding for heat and energy efficiency, reprioritizing road space for public transport use and decarbonising industry.

£26 million has been made available through the Scottish Governments (SG) Low Carbon Transport Loan Fund to support Scottish households and business in purchasing ultra-low

emission vehicles. This year it is being expanded to include used electric vehicles, removing more upfront costs for people, and increasing the accessibility of the scheme for lower income households.

The Government is committing to use its power as a large scale buyer to **establish a zero emission heavy duty vehicle programme**, accelerating the development and uptake of such vehicles in the public and private sectors and creating new opportunities for Scottish companies through the development of innovative solutions.

The programme has been developed in partnership between Transport Scotland and Scottish Enterprise with a minimum investment of £1 million in 2020-21. SG will **invest in the establishment of a zero emission drivetrain testing facility in 2021**, with a focus on hydrogen fuel cells to accelerate the development of these vehicles. They will also **establish a new resource to support research and product development in zero emission mobility through pooling academic capability and enabling collaborations**.

Across the bus sector SG have committed to zero-carbon fleet renewal, stating that, while many operators are actively engaged, one of the challenges for the sector has been the greater upfront capital cost of new technologies and associated infrastructure investments, and COVID-19 has undoubtedly elevated these challenges. However, evidence is building that battery-electric buses are moving towards comparable total ownership costs to diesel vehicles, which means we are reaching a pivotal point for our transition to zero-emission transport.

The SG have recently made an additional £9m available to support immediate ultra low and zero emission fleet renewal investments. In the lead up to the Scottish National Investment Bank launch, engagement is underway with operators on options to support the net-zero transition, and Scottish Enterprise is also providing proactive support to the supply chain to assist its transition to lean, zero emission manufacturing. The SG pledge to work with the sector, the supply-chain, energy network companies and financial institutions to co-design creative solutions for tackling the hurdles that remain, while also working to stimulate opportunities for immediate and strategic investment in zero or low emission buses.

Building on their Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plans the PfG states that the SG will produce and maintain a long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports to improve resilience, reliability, capacity, and accessibility, increase standardisation, and reduce emissions to meet the needs of island communities and give confidence on our ongoing commitment.

Highlighting the positive impacts of some of the temporary active travel infrastructure installed to assist with social distancing in town centres, the PfG states that these positive changes need to be locked in through active travel infrastructure schemes which connect towns and cities from the suburbs to the centres, connect housing to transport, enable active travel in rural areas and support the idea of 20 minute neighbourhoods.

'The **20 minute neighbourhood** is an idea that is becoming popular across the world. Developed in different ways in cities like Melbourne, Portland and Paris, people can meet most of their essential needs within a 20 minute walk. This means you can do your shopping, join in with leisure activities, take your children to school, find local services like your GP practice and ideally get to work – all within easy access of where you live. It also means having greenspace on your doorstep and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and well-being. It is a place where people want to live, so affordable housing must be part of it.'

To help introduce the 20 minute neighbourhood, the SG are launching a **Review of the Town Centre Action Plan** and have asked the Review for advice on how to adapt the 20 minute neighbourhood idea for our cities, towns, rural and island communities. It recognises that while many local communities are already benefitting from their 20 minute neighbourhoods, many others aren't and there will be particular challenges for some of our rural and island communities where services are much more spread out.

To support this, the Scottish Government are committing **over £500 million over five years** for active travel, including for local authorities and others to bid in for funding of large scale, transformational active travel infrastructure projects, reallocating road space in favour of walking, cycling and wheeling over cars.

Local authorities now have the opportunity to review the temporary infrastructure projects – turning many of them into permanent schemes – and SG have pledged to engage with them to determine where this is possible.

As part of our sustainable transport future, in 2019 the SG announced a long term capital investment of over £500 million for bus priority measures to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services. Work on this was paused during the pandemic, but in the interim we have launched the £10 million Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund for temporary bus priority measures. Building on this, and working closely with COSLA, the bus industry and other partners, we will launch the Bus Partnership Fund in the coming months to support local authorities' ambitions around tackling congestion so that bus journeys are quicker and more reliable, and more people make the choice to take the bus. Work is also underway to reallocate road space on parts of the motorway network around Glasgow to high occupancy vehicles such as buses.

Given the levels of uncertainty the SG are considering the implications for transport and how they re-start the second Strategic Transport Projects Review to ensure that this will help identify interventions that would aid or help accelerate economic recovery. They are taking a phased approach to STPR2, with Phase 1 focusing on recommendations which "lock in" the benefits and travel behaviours of individuals and provide a step change in investment which supports the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy.

They have also committed to accelerating work to consider a range of possible permanent options to address the challenges faced on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful, with a dedicated parallel project team now established to progress the environmental and engineering assessment, as well as stakeholder engagement.

The SG remain **committed to delivering a national concessionary travel scheme for free bus travel for under-19s**, and have begun the necessary preparations including planning, research, legal review and due diligence.

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 will be published following consultation

There is a commitment to **introduce Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in our four biggest cities**, and into all other air quality management areas by 2023, where the National Low Emission Framework appraisals advocate such mitigation.

Work so far on the Local Governance Review has involved over 4,000 people discussing the future of local democracy. COVID-19 delayed the next part of this conversation, but the PfG states that the response to the pandemic has reinforced what communities told us they can achieve. Once we are able, SG will begin widespread engagement to explore in detail how a

new tier of democracy can be made to work in practice. To prepare the way we will start work now with a small number of diverse communities

The PfG notes the particular challenge faced by rural and island communities, especially as a result of lockdown and the disruption to tourism. But even before now, it notes that there were issues of poverty of opportunity, and a need to ensure high quality jobs to allow young people to remain in their communities. To tackle this they are **establishing a £2 million Green Recovery Programme for our islands**, opening in October 2020, to help deliver on low-carbon related commitments in the National Islands Plan. This will complement existing funding for the previously announced PfG commitment to support repopulation of our rural and island communities. It will include specific ring-fenced funding for capital projects on islands relating to net-zero and green recovery objectives, creating high-quality, skilled, green jobs in some of our most remote and vulnerable communities.

The PfG also reiterates that the SG is fully committed to introducing the Air Departure Tax (ADT) when a solution to the Highlands and Islands exemption issue has been found. Stating that they will engage with the HM Treasury on their consultation on Air Passenger Duty reform and will work with stakeholders to find a solution for aviation that remains consistent with our climate ambitions.

Finally the PfG also commits to **develop a network of Climate Action Towns** targeted at small towns with little historical involvement in climate action. This will support them to reduce what they use, recycle more, and cut their emissions and become carbon neutral, as part of our aim to ensure that Scotland's response to the global climate emergency is a truly national endeavour.

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.

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Date: 2nd September 2019
