

Report to Partnership Meeting 6 October 2022

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)ⁱ published on 6th September 2022

Summary

The report provides a summary of the key elements of the Programme for Government relevant to the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy and work of HITRANS in the forthcoming year.

Programme for Government (PfG)

The 2022-23 PfG is titled 'A Stronger and More Resilient Scotland' and the Programme itself is separated in nine key sections:

- The Cost Crisis
- A Stronger & More Resilient Scotland
- Children, Young People and Scotland's National Mission on Child Poverty
- Excellent Public Services: Recovering Strongly from the Pandemic
- Transforming Our Economy
- Tackling the Climate Emergency
- Restoring Our Environment
- Supporting Our Communities
- Scotland in the World

Commitments within PfG

The Scottish Government's immediate and overriding priority in this Programme for Government is to ensure households, businesses and other organisations, as well as the public services that support them, are protected from the worst impacts of the cost crisis. To combat the cost crisis the following transport commitment is made:

- £300 million for concessionary travel, making bus travel free for over 2 million people in Scotland, including all children and young people under 22, disabled people and everyone over 60.

The following actions are identified by Government to deliver the vision of an affordable, zero carbon and modern transport system:

- Freeze ScotRail fares until March 2023, and complete a Fair Fares Review – delivering options for a sustainable and integrated approach to all public transport fares.
- Consult on a new Islands Connectivity Plan this year, progress the small vessel development programme and continue to improve the resilience of the ferry fleet by sourcing additional vessels. We will publish the independent review of ferry governance arrangements, and set out how we can provide stronger accountability, transparency, and good outcomes for our island communities.
- Test a new mobility and scrappage scheme to help low income households to replace a polluting vehicle with the means to travel sustainably.
- Deliver record investment in active travel, including multi year funding, with a focus on new infrastructure and storage, access to bikes through schemes such as the Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme 2 and free bikes for school-age children who are unable to afford one.
- Work with the private sector to deliver £60 million of public and private investment to double the size of the public charging network to at least 6,000 electric vehicle charging points over the next 4 years.
- Work with third sector partners and local authorities to consider how best to provide free bus travel to asylum seekers and refugees including displaced people from Ukraine.
- Further promote free bus travel for those under 22 to improve uptake following the introduction of the scheme in January 2022. This scheme supports children and young people to travel for free, lifting the cost burden on households.
- Continue the Network Support Grant to support bus services by keeping fares at more affordable levels and networks more extensive.
- Roll out our national strategy for expanding 20 mph zones, with more roads and areas reducing their speed limits to 20 mph – making our streets feel safer and encouraging active travel.
- Introduce regulations to enable bus franchising and Bus Improvement Partnerships, giving local authorities more options to improve bus services.
- Work with women’s groups to identify and publish recommendations on women and girls’ personal safety on public transport to support future access and usage of public transport.

Under the theme of Supporting our Communities the PfG commits to:

- Continue to invest up to £75 million in place based initiatives, which supports our most fragile communities and accelerate our ambitions for place and to help people live well locally.
- Agree a New Deal between the Scottish Government and local government, including a fiscal framework, which will support:
 - Working together to achieve better outcomes
 - for people and communities especially on national priorities including addressing poverty, inequality, and supporting the economy.
 - Balancing greater flexibility over financial arrangements with improved accountability.
 - Providing certainty over inputs, outcomes and assurance, alongside scope to innovate and improve services.
 - Recognising the critical role played by local authorities in tackling the climate emergency, for example through delivering our heat and buildings, waste, active travel and nature restoration goals.

Within the area of Scotland in the World the PfG underlines that Scotland will play host to:

- Host the UCI Cycling World Championships, the first time road, track and mountain bike races have been held under one event, and consider a bid for the EURO 2028 championships.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – A number of key commitments will help shape the new RTS.

Policy

Impact - Positive

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – Multi Year Funding of Active Travel and a number of other commitments offer opportunity to build better and more sustainable transport services in the Highlands and Islands.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – With fairness and just transition at the heart of PfG this will have a positive Equalities Impact.

Recommendation

1. Members and Advisors are asked to note the report.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 6th September 2022
