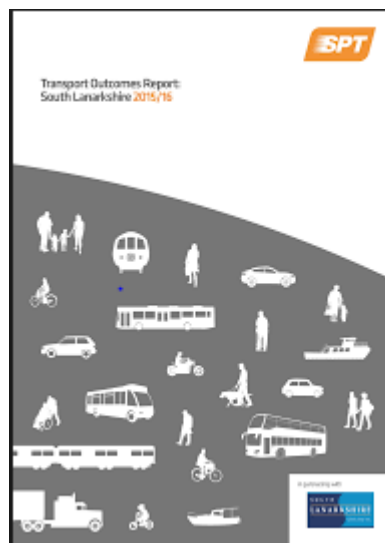

Community Empowerment - Challenges and Opportunities for Transport

John Binning, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) is the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the west of Scotland. SPT's history goes back to the early 1970s when the Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive (GGPTE) was established following the introduction of the UK Transport Act 1968ⁱ which paved the way for Passenger Transport Executives.
- 1.2 As a statutory Community Planning partner we are members of all twelve Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) across our area. To demonstrate SPT's commitment to Community Planning, we publish Transport Outcome Reports (TORs) annually for each CPP area. TORs provide detail on how we contribute to local outcomes and set out shared plans for the year ahead. TORs have proven to be enduring and adaptable to the changing landscape of Community Planning but this paper is about how SPT is turning theory into practice by delivering a range of community supported and community driven transport initiatives which reflect the changing dynamic of public service delivery away from a top down, public sector knows best approach, to one where organisations work across responsibilities and with local communities to jointly deliver services which are more receptive to local need and where design and delivery driven by the local community.



- 1.3 This is all very fine and well in theory but the reality is that we face huge challenges in continuing to deliver high quality, value for money services that meet the needs of our communities. These challenges include public spending reductions, a challenging commercial bus market, many unfulfilled trips an increasingly elderly population and high levels of disability and chronic illness. However, the development of new technologies and business models mean that Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services can be provided through collaboration and co-ordination of transport resources.
- 1.4 The passing of the Community Empowerment Act (CEA)ⁱⁱ brings fresh challenges, particularly given the Scottish Government desire for a greater role for CPPs in local transport decision-making. We await discussion between the Scottish Government and RTPs on the nature of this role and forthcoming CEA guidance. We recognise the commitment within the Act to ensure communities are participants in the design and delivery of services. In particular, we are keen to

develop an ever more inclusive approach to engagement and to develop mechanisms to embrace 'participation requests' which are at the heart of CEA.

- 1.5 Achieving a partnership approach to the opportunities offered by the Act is vital given the range of services we deliver: Subway; smartcard; supported bus services; MyBus; and social and community transport solutions.
- 1.6 Building on SPT's track record of partnership working, this paper will set out some of the approaches that SPT and its partners have taken to meet the aspirations of the Scottish Government and communities and to deliver responsive, innovative and best value solutions with scarce resources. In particular it will focus on the work of SPT with the Community Transport sector, including the recently formed West of Scotland Community Transport Network and our ambitious plans for a Public Social Partnership model. These are important and innovative responses to the challenges of working within the Community Planning process and represent effective working models for co-production of services in the age of community empowerment.

2 Community Planning and Empowerment

- 2.1 Community Planning is a process which helps public agencies to work together with the community to plan and deliver better services. Community Planning aims to ensure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services and also to organisations to work together in providing better public services. Community Planning also provides a clear connection between national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.



- 2.2 Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) are led by councils with partners drawn from a range of statutory, community and third sector organisations including the Police, Fire Service, Health Boards, Scottish Enterprise, JobCentre Plus and Community Fora. Most CPPs have Strategic Boards, with Officer Working Groups and a range of thematic groups to support their work. SPT is a statutory Community Planning partner under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 and is required to participate in and support the Community Planning process across our twelve partner council areas.
- 2.3 Section 15 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003ⁱⁱⁱ Community Planning Act places a duty on local authorities to initiate and facilitate Community Planning in their respective areas.

The accompanying Statutory Guidance states that there are “a number of bodies whose participation is seen as particularly important to the successful operation of Community Planning. This is recognised in section 16 of the Act by the application of a specific statutory duty to participate in Community Planning on Enterprise, Health, Police, and Fire bodies and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority.

"Effective Community planning arrangements will be at the core of public service reform"

- Scottish Government/COSLA Statement of Ambition

- 2.4** We await discussion between the Scottish Government and RTPs on the nature of this role and forthcoming CEA guidance. We recognise the commitment within the Act to ensure communities are participants in the design and delivery of services. In particular, we are keen to develop an ever more inclusive approach to engagement and to develop mechanisms to embrace ‘participation requests’ which are at the heart of CEA. Achieving a partnership approach to the opportunities offered by the Act is vital given the range of services we deliver: Subway; smartcard; supported bus services; MyBus; and social and community transport solutions.
- 2.5** The Scottish Government has been working to strengthen Community Planning arrangements to ensure public sector agencies worked more closely to deliver better outcomes for communities. As part of this process, the Community Empowerment Bill received Royal Assent and became an Act in July 2015. The Act aims to give people in communities, and those supporting them in the public sector, new ways to help deliver improved services. These will include greater opportunities for community groups to directly input towards the design and delivery of local services including through mechanism such as participatory budgeting (where community groups decide on local spend priorities), asset transfer requests (where community groups can take over the ownership and running of underused public sector assets including buildings or land) and participation requests (where community groups request direct involvement in how local services are being designed and delivered).
- 2.6** As part of the process of developing the orders, regulations and guidance related to the Act, the Scottish Government has met recently with representatives from Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) to discuss the implications of the Act for RTPs and to seek their views so as to inform the development of best practice Guidance for implementing the Act. As each element of the Act comes into effect, these would have implications for SPT and other public bodies and would create an enhanced and more formalised level of engagement with community groups, and therefore a greater call on staff time and resources.



Community
Empowerment (Scotland)
Act 2015

2015 asp 4

The Statutory Orders have been produced for use in the
understanding of this Act and are available separately.

426/75

- 2.7** SPT is represented on the Boards of eleven of the twelve CPPs in its area and on the Executive Group for Glasgow City Council. In addition, SPT is represented on a range of supporting CPP Officer Groups and thematic groups. SPT prepares annual Transport Outcome Reports (TORs) which demonstrate commitment to and alignment with the outcomes in the respective SOAs. SPT contributes to the development of the SOAs and annual SOA progress updates. SPT has also participated in needs assessments undertaken by CPPs and advises on transport issues as appropriate.
- 2.8** Community Planning Partnerships have provided an ideal platform on which to build and develop a new model for service delivery which directly engages the local community. In particular, SPT has been working with community planning partners as well as the community transport sector to encourage and promote community transport as an essential and growing part of the wider transport network.



Combined MyBus and Community Transport on Arran

3 SPT and Community Planning

- 3.1** The Transport Minister Derek MacKay has made clear his commitment to ensuring there is a bigger role for Community Planning in decisions about transport. As part of the developing guidance for the Community Empowerment Act, the Scottish Government is consulting on how this should be taken forward and what the scope and nature of RTPs role in Community Planning can and should be. The outcomes of this guidance will be interesting and while it is not possible to predict what they will be it is likely that RTPs will be the subject of greater scrutiny by CPP partners.
- 3.2** In addition to our general requirement to support the Community Planning process and support the achievement of local and national outcomes, SPT's current role as a Community Planning partner can be summarised as follows:
- Providing guidance and advice to CPPs on transport matters including policy
 - Keeping CPPs up to date on the progress of transport projects being delivered by SPT, the Council and others

- Agreeing transport projects and initiatives that support local and national outcomes
- Providing a platform for local engagement and input on transport with local community representatives and the third sector
- Providing an opportunity for closer partnership working with public sector partners including NHS

3.3 In addition, SPT has a number of planning and operational responsibilities with a real focus on delivering benefits for the travelling public in the west of Scotland. These include:

- Services that we directly operate and/or manage such as subsidised and demand responsive bus services, Subway, bus stations, and project delivery



- Services undertaken on an agency/administrative arrangement such as school transport contracts. Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme and ZoneCard forum; and
- Wider activities such as our statutory regional transport planning function, community transport, travel planning and responding to consultations.

3.4 The Scottish Government describes Community planning as:

“A key driver for public service reform at local level. It brings together local public services and the communities they serve. It provides a focus for joint working, driven by strong shared leadership, directed towards distinctive local circumstances. And this focused joint working provides powerful potential to address often deep-rooted causes of inequalities, and to use preventative approaches to manage future demands on crisis intervention services.”

3.5 Jean Waddie, Policy Officer in the Scottish Government’s Community Empowerment team, highlighted what ministers aim to achieve through the Act. “People and communities actually know best what works for them and for their area and we need to draw on that to solve the problems that we haven’t managed to solve in the past,” While local authorities already have the ability to transfer assets, the Act says Waddie “shifts the balance of power in favour of communities”. “The Community Empowerment Act as a whole sends a message out to the public sector and says that trusting communities and empowering them to do their own thing is the right thing to do – this is the way we expect the public sector in Scotland to be working.”^{iv}

3.6 In a recent report, the Scottish Transport Studies Group^v has argued that:

“Community planning processes could enable the relevant partners to agree socially beneficial solutions so that investment packages can be assembled to deliver them.”

But in terms of both of these statements, SPT has by any definition already been proactive in taking forward community based solutions for transport.

4 SPT's innovative approach: West of Scotland Community Transport Network

4.1 Since 2006, SPT has pioneered and invested significantly in integrated transport solutions within the west of Scotland. SPT has engaged with social transport providers to examine how a variety of service organisations provide transport that meets the needs of their client group. The main aim has been to offer a solution, where through a coordinating of their resources by utilising a centralised scheduling facility, can provide significant benefits.

4.2 SPT receives funding from its 12 Local Authority partners for the funding of Demand Responsive and Community Transport. SPT allocates a grant funding budget each financial year that Community Transport Operators can apply for. As well as the co-ordination of funding this model has enabled SPT to work in partnership with the CT Sector that also provides support, assistance, co-ordination and development of the Sector throughout the West of Scotland.

4.3 SPT continues to support and assist the development of the CT sector throughout the West of Scotland in partnership with the sector. Outlined below is a summary of the progress in relation to the various activities and initiatives SPT is taking forward.

- SPT has invested significantly in supporting the CT sector:
- Since 2008, grant funding of £4m has been provided for 30 CT projects and services;
- Provision of leased low floor vehicles to CT operators; and
- Purchase of ticket machines and 'Back Office' infrastructure to enable CT to deliver local community bus services.

4.4 The West of Scotland Community Transport Network is a partnership between SPT and the Community Transport Sector throughout the West of Scotland and has been established to assist in bringing co-ordination, enhanced quality and better use of resources. The Network is important to the continued development and sustainability of the CT sector in the West of Scotland that allows the sector to work in partnership to continue to grow and deliver and develop innovative transport solutions.



4.5 Since its launch in 2013, 21 CT Organisations have become members of the Network which is a third of the CT Organisations in the West of Scotland. A website has been developed www.spt.co.uk/community-transport to assist with raising the awareness of the sector as well as providing information and guidance to CT operators. SPT, in partnership with the CT sector in the West of Scotland, were also keen to develop vehicle maintenance standards within the sector and have developed a Quality Framework. The Framework is linked to membership of

the West of Scotland CT Network and covers 4 key areas, vehicle maintenance, governance, finance/planning and operations. Support and training is made available to CT operators experiencing difficulties in achieving or maintaining the standards. Since the framework was implemented in 2013, 16 CT Organisations have achieved accredited status.

5 Further Innovation: SPT's Community Transport Public Social Partnership

5.1 A PSP is a strategic partnering arrangement, backed by the Scottish Government, which involves the third sector in the design and commissioning of public services. The model focuses on redesigning services using a structured process of service redesign through extensive third sector provider engagement ending in a pilot.



5.2 SPT, in partnership with the Member Organisations of the West of Scotland Community Transport Network, is developing and delivering a CT Public Social Partnership (PSP) that will further strengthen CT in the west of Scotland. A PSP is a strategic partnering arrangement, backed by the Scottish Government, which involves the third sector in the design and commissioning of public services. The model focuses on redesigning services using a structured process of service redesign through extensive third sector provider engagement resulting in a pilot.

5.3 As well as developing transport pilots a key aspect of the PSP is the delivery of a D1 Training Pilot Programme that will link into volunteering and employability. The key benefits the programme will deliver include:

- Increasing the knowledge, skills and self-confidence of the long-term unemployed;
- Increase the available pool of volunteer drivers for CT Operators; and
- Build the capacity of the CT sector to deliver affordable D1 training in the future.

5.4 As part of the CT PSP, SPT is currently procuring IT Scheduling Software that will be provided to Network members of the CT sector in the West of Scotland. SPT are also working with the CT Network to develop an annual Monitoring Questionnaire that member of the Network will complete on an annual basis. The majority of this information required should be gathered from the IT Scheduling System.

5.5 As part of the CT PSP, SPT has undertaken a Mapping Exercise of the CT sector in the West of Scotland. 63 CT Organisations were identified in the West of Scotland. The estimated annual turnover of the sector is at least £7 million. Over 1,000 vehicles are being used carrying out a

minimum of 600,000 passenger journeys and 1.4 million fleet miles per annum. CT Operators stated the main user benefits of CT are the opportunities for social interaction, assistance to older people and the provision of affordable services.

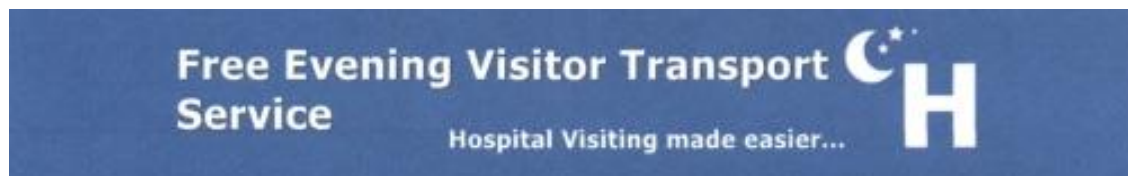
- 5.6** Some of the key challenges identified by the CT sector, including D1 training, volunteers and funding, highlight the areas where SPT, through the development of the PSP, will assist. There are a number of areas including North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and North Ayrshire, where there is limited or no provision of CT. SPT is working with key stakeholders, including the third sector, councils and the NHS to develop CT in these areas. The CT sector and SPT's ability to continue to deliver socially necessary DRT services currently face significant challenges which have to be addressed. To assist in addressing these challenges it has been agreed that the PSP will focus on SPT's MyBus and DRT services and building capacity within the CT sector.



- 5.7** This will ensure that the CT sector and the range of DRT services that SPT delivers are effective, efficient and fit for purpose in the future that will enable individuals and communities to access services. The SPT Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) is a partnership between SPT and the Member Organisations of SPT's West of Scotland Community Transport Network (WoSCTN). There are two main work streams to the PSP:
- Delivery of DRT Services – This work stream seeks to design, pilot and implement innovative transport solutions for communities through a process of user engagement, development and delivery of pilot services operated by community transport operators with a view to tendering these services if successful after the pilot phase.
 - CT Capacity and Capability Growth – This work stream focuses on driver training, the development of volunteering and employability initiatives and building the sectors IT infrastructure.
- 5.8** Following a funding submission to Scottish Government, SPT was awarded £120,000 funding with SPT providing £60,000 match funding. In 2013/14 the initial stages in the development of the PSP included obtaining stakeholder buy-in, agreeing governance arrangements, developing a project plan and recruiting and appointing a Project Co-ordinator.
- 5.9** During 2014/15 further progress was made including delivery of DRT services work stream which involved scoping potential DRT services, initiating a D1 Training Programme with 60 people trained including staff and volunteers. Other initiatives included the development of a

West of Scotland Community Transport Network website www.spt.co.uk/community-transport and providing support for the North Lanarkshire Transport for Employment, Education and Services (TEES) Project and the South Ayrshire Carrick Villages Service Project. In addition, SPT began works on developing an IT Scheduling Software solution for the Community Transport Operators.

- 5.10** The PSP has also had additional benefits to the overall development of Community Transport. An additional 5 CT Organisations have become members of the West of Scotland Community Transport Network so that they can access the D1 Training Programme and 9 CT Organisations were successfully awarded onto SPT's Bus Services Tender Framework following a tendering exercise.
- 5.11** 2015 and 2016 has seen the development of these initiatives being rolled out with an emphasis on the D1 driver training programme and a focus on attracting volunteers to community transport organisations through partnership working and direct marketing of member groups; In particular, there has been an emphasis on developing and piloting employment options for those who are long-term unemployed through volunteering. This will be achieved through building partnerships with the commercial bus sector, the public and third sector and Job Centre Plus.
- 5.12** The PSP is also beginning to demonstrate that the development of a service identification and design model will be an important consideration for future planners and commissioners of services. The work of the PSP is assisting the Scottish Government in meeting the recommendations of the final report of the Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee who undertook an Inquiry into Community Transport in 2013^{vi}. The final report made a number of recommendations around funding and sustainability, shared standards and guidelines, driver training, joint working and co-ordination, information sharing and transport for healthcare.



- 5.13** The PSP, along with the support SPT has provided to the CT sector in the west of Scotland over the last few years, is beginning to address these, particularly, funding and sustainability, driver training, joint working, information sharing and co-ordination and transport for healthcare. This can be a good model that could be rolled out in other parts of Scotland.
- 5.14** The activities and initiatives being taken forward by SPT to support and assist the development of the CT sector, in partnership with the sector, is addressing the main findings and recommendations outlined in the 2013 Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee Community Transport Report. This highlighted funding, shared standards and guidelines, driver training, joint working, information sharing and transport for healthcare as key issues facing the CT sector.
- 5.15** This is a good model that could be rolled out in other parts of Scotland, particularly the Network, Quality Framework and the D1 Training Pilot Programme. Working in partnership with key stakeholders such as Transport Scotland, The CTA, ATCO and COSLA, SPT would be willing to assist in taking forward D1 Training and the development and implementation of Standards and Practice for CT throughout Scotland.

6 Challenges

- 6.1** SPT's approach to community engagement and empowerment has not been without challenges. One of the key challenges is to encourage local communities that they have the potential skills set to take on responsibilities such as Community Transport. This is not always easy and as we have seen there is a dedicated but ageing band of volunteer drivers and it is essential to recruit a new generation of younger drivers to swell their ranks and eventually to pass the mantle too.
- 6.2** Funding continues to be a real challenge. In 2016 SPT's capital allocation from the Scottish Government was cut by £5 million from the previous year. Revenue funding is also a challenge and it is critical to ensure that where community partners come forward with proposals that these stand the test of long term sustainability. This means SPT and our community partners have to be even more innovative than ever if we are to meet community needs and expectations.
- 6.3** Getting the message across that Community Transport solutions are just that i.e. a community solution, is very important. It is not and should not be about top down solutions but rather about the organic development of community transport from the local community up. This message can be surprisingly difficult to get across perhaps because there is a culture of public sector delivery but also because there is a need for more capacity building at community level, particularly in communities which face the challenge of deprivation or in very remote rural areas where ironically the lack of transport options makes community cohesion and opportunities for people to get together more difficult.



- 6.4** The continuing shrinkage in commercial bus provision is a serious concern as more and more routes are withdrawn by bus operators. With most services delivered commercially i.e. over 95% this is a worrying trend and one which will result in still greater calls on community transport.
- 6.5** It has been estimated that there are approximately 286 million unfulfilled trips in Scotland each year and this gives a sense of the scale of the challenge that community transport, along with conventional commercial and supported bus services must meet.
- 6.6** Scotland's ever increasing elderly population is obviously good news but again presents a major challenge with the over 60 population estimated to increase by 31% over the next 20 years. In addition, 25% of the west of Scotland's population is registered with some form of disability / mobility challenge and this will increase as the elderly population increases.

7 Recent Success

- 7.1** Having said that hard work and a strong partnership ethos can pay dividends. SPT's work in Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) has been recognised with a Scottish Social Enterprise Award at an event held in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Social Enterprise Awards are Scotland's annual awards which recognise innovation and success in social enterprise. It is an opportunity to showcase how social enterprises are improving Scotland's economy and society.
- 7.2** SPT won the 'Buy Social' – Market Builder 2015 Award acknowledging the partnership working, through the PSP model, between SPT and the community transport sector, specifically the support SPT has provided to the sector in helping it to grow and develop.
- 7.3** Nominated for the award by Ready for Business, SPT was praised for its clear evidence of commitment to partnership and co-planning of service design; articulation of the steps taken to improve the community transport infrastructure, overcoming significant cultural and organisational challenges, and evidence of improved commitment to developing social enterprise as a business model.



SPT's Graham Dunn and Robert MacKenzie meeting John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth at the Scottish Social Enterprise Awards in December 2015.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1** The Community Planning process and the Community Empowerment Act represent a significant challenge to public sector bodies to step up the plate and work more closely with communities in the design and delivery of services. Recognising that working with the community is essential if we are to deliver effective and relevant public transport services SPT has taken the challenge head on and is working with community transport operators to co-produce services focussed on local needs. Examples of the kinds of initiatives SPT and the Community Transport sector have jointly delivered the West of Scotland Community Transport Community Network and the Scotland's first Transport Public Social Partnership.
- 8.2** It is questionable whether the kind of success SPT has achieved would have been possible without the platform and framework of Community Planning. SPT's Community Transport Coordinator has worked closely with CPPs across the west of Scotland and this has earned dividends. CPPs bring together not just the council and other public sector partners but also the third and voluntary sector and community transport initiatives receive a good hearing in this context. While community planning is often criticised as a 'talking shop' and have questioned

what practical difference makes to service delivery, “Wouldn’t this just have been done anyway?” is often heard. But the situation is certainly different with Community Transport and the impetus that has been given by Community Planning Partnerships is tangible. The increasingly significant role of Community Planning in decision making across the west of Scotland is placing strains on SPT’s capacity to effectively resource, participate in and fulfil our statutory function as a CP partners. SPT should consider how best to address this issue and consideration of the range of alternative approaches is welcome as is advice and direction on alternative approaches.

9 Acknowledgements

9.1 The author wishes to acknowledge the advice and assistance of Graham Dunn, Transport Development Officer, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, in the preparation of this paper.

10 References

ⁱ Transport Act 1968

ⁱⁱ Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

ⁱⁱⁱ Local Government in Scotland Act 2003

^{iv} Event report: Community Assets – a Holyrood policy event on the Community Empowerment Act, <https://www.holyrood.com/articles/inside-politics/event-report-community-assets-%E2%80%93-holyrood-policy-event-community-empowerment>

^v Scottish Transport Studies Group, Scottish Transport Review, January 2016 edition

^{vi} Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, 7th Report, 2013 (Session 4), Report on Community transport

^{vii} Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland