

## **Minutes for Third Bus Taskforce Meeting – 2 March 2023**

### **Attendees:**

Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP (JG)  
Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, Jamie Hepburn MSP (JH)  
Transport Scotland, Interim Chief Executive – Michelle Quinn (MQ)  
Stagecoach West Scotland, Managing Director & CPT Vice Chair– Fiona Doherty (FD)  
Scottish Citylink, Operations Director – Simone Smith (SS)  
Lothian, Managing Director – Sarah Boyd (SB)  
Public Health Scotland, Consultant [redacted]  
Public Health Scotland – [redacted]  
Transport Focus, Senior Stakeholder Manager [redacted]  
Community Transport Association, Director for Scotland – David Kelly (DK)  
HiTRANS, Director – Randal Robertson (RR)  
West Coast Motors, Managing Director - Colin Craig (CC)  
Confederation of Passenger Transport, Director – Paul White (PW)  
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery [redacted]  
Confederation of Passenger Transport, Public Affairs Manager [redacted]  
Bus Users Scotland, Director – Greig Mackay (GMK)  
McGill's, CEO - Ralph Roberts (RR)  
First Bus Scotland, Managing Director & CPT, Chair - Duncan Cameron (DC)  
Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers, Chair [redacted]  
COSLA, Policy Officer [redacted]

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**1. Welcome extended to all attendees from Minister for Transport, and to Minister Hepburn for joining, and committed to circulate minutes from last meeting. (Action – TS)**

**2. Discussion with Mr Hepburn MSP, Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training**

### **Points discussed:**

- Mr Hepburn began with the current skills shortage, recognising the challenges and was keen to hear from the group.
- Operators confirmed that retention is key, and that qualifications play an important role in this.
- Mr Hepburn confirmed he would consider how to help raise the profile of jobs in the bus industry, and noted the benefits of targeting the young workforce – particularly at school age.
- The Minibus driver awareness scheme was suggested, which has trainers to engage young people to develop skills locally and provides a sense of community.

- Mr Hepburn was asked about the Skills Delivery Landscape report, and agreed to circulate information to the group. **(Action – Mr Hepburn)**

### **3. Introductions and Actions from Previous Meeting**

#### **Points noted:**

- [redacted] provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting, and the Minister requested TS follow up with DfT officials regarding the Ukrainian exchange agreement. **(Action – TS)**

### **4. End of the Network Support Grant Plus (NSG+)**

#### **Points discussed:**

- The Minister expressed her view of recent correspondence she had site of regarding service changes from an operator. The Minister asked to be contacted directly by operators in future.
- Operators noted they have a duty to inform local stakeholders of planned changes. They recognised the support provided helped fund the revenue gap, allowing for more services and lower fares. Operators are working on transitioning from 1 April 2023, as agreed, to the basic NSG rate. They noted that the Minister may receive more correspondence when communities learn of any changes to services, as these are keenly felt in communities.
- Challenges for LTAs were raised as budgets have been cut at the same time operating costs are increasing, and therefore tender costs, resulting in LTA's being unable to fund the same amount of services.

### **5. Presentation on the Health Benefits of Bus by Public Health Scotland**

#### **Points discussed:**

- [redacted] from Public Health Scotland gave a presentation on the health benefits of bus.
- Operators were keen for this to be used as a basis for the Taskforce outputs, and used in conjunction with the transport hierarchy to show crossover. **(Action – TS)**.
- It was noted that the report reinforces the importance of bus, which receives less focus politically than other modes.
- There was a suggestion to look again at Shared Services / improving coordination across passenger transport fleets in local authorities, non-emergency patient transport services, DRT services and Community Transport **(Action – SG / ATCO/CoSLA)**.

### **6. Updates from Subgroup Chairs**

#### **Points discussed**

- Sarah Boyd provided an update on work by the Driver shortages subgroup, with DWP to attend the next meeting.

- David Kelly provided an update on the Community engagement subgroup work. Once the best practice guidance is complete, they will seek an endorsement from the Taskforce to commit and sign up.
- Paul White provided an update on the work of the Patronage growth subgroup, with the intent of building a strong case for bus use, and recommendations to prioritise bus, and maximise existing policies.
- The Minister proposed to extend the Taskforce, with the next meeting being June 2023.

**Actions:**

- **TS to circulate minutes from Taskforce meeting on 12 December 2022.**
- **Mr Hepburn's office to circulate information on the Skills Delivery Landscape Report to the group.**
- **TS to follow up with DfT regarding the Ukrainian Exchange Agreement.**
- **TS to look at using the report to form the basis of the Taskforce outputs, and use with the transport hierarchy.**
- **ATCO/CoSLA/SG to look at improving coordination across fleets in local authorities.**

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End of Meeting Note