



Official Report
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DRAFT

Transport Committee

Comataidh na Còmhhdhail

Wednesday 23 September 2026

Session 7



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Wednesday 23 September 2026

CONTENTS

REGIONAL TRANSPORT AUTHORITIES	Col. 1
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**TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
6th Meeting 2026, Session 7**

CONVENER

*Willie Rennie (Fife North East) (LD)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Lloyd Melville (Angus South) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Iris Duane (Glasgow) (Green)

*Zen Ghani (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP)

*Donald MacKinnon (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab)

*Graham Simpson (Central Scot and Lothians West) (Reform)

Collette Stevenson (East Kilbride) (SNP)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:

Bruce Kiloh (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport)

Councillor Moraig Lyall (Shetland Transport Partnership)

Mark Speed (Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership)

Ewan Wallace (Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists)

LOCATION

The Alexander Fleming Room (CR3)

Scottish Parliament

Transport Committee

Wednesday 23 September 2026

[The Convener opened the meeting at 09:30]

Regional Transport Authorities

The Convener (Willie Rennie): Good morning, and welcome to the sixth meeting in 2026 of the Transport Committee. We have received apologies from Collette Stevenson.

The first item on our agenda is an introductory session with representatives of regional transport partnerships, as well as the Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists—SCOTS. I welcome Bruce Kiloh, head of policy and planning at Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, or SPT; Mark Speed, partnership director for Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership, or Tactran; and Ewan Wallace, chair of the Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists. That is a great name. Councillor Moraig Lyall, who is the chair of the Shetland Transport Partnership, or ZetTrans, joins us online.

Councillor Lyall may have to leave the meeting a little early, so we will try to ask her questions earlier in the session, but I know that she will be in touch with the clerks about that. It would be appreciated if members and witnesses could keep their questions and answers as concise as possible.

I will start with Graham Simpson.

Graham Simpson (Central Scotland and Lothians West) (Reform): Before I start, can Councillor Lyall hear us?

The Convener: That is clearly a no. We will move on until that can be resolved.

Graham Simpson: I welcome the witnesses. It is good to see those of you in the room. There are different models of regional transport partnerships. To set the scene, could you explain what each of your bodies are for? I will start with Bruce Kiloh before we move to Mark Speed. I will then go to Councillor Lyall, if she is back online and can hear us.

Bruce Kiloh (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport): I will say a wee bit about the types of RTP, before I say something about SPT. There are two types of RTPs: model 1 and model 3. Model 1 RTPs have planning responsibilities for regional transport strategy and conduct project development and delivery for projects such as the people and place programme and the transport to employment initiative, which were given to us by

Transport Scotland. SPT is a model 3 partnership, as are ZetTrans and SWestrans, which means that we have planning and operational responsibilities. As our written evidence shows, we are responsible for the regional transport strategy and we also look at planning and policy. We are responsible for the operations, so we run the subway and bus stations and are responsible for various other project delivery aspects.

To answer your question about what SPT is for, that is a fundamental question about regional transport authorities. We can see across boundaries and across organisations. Transport does not stop at boundaries, so we try to work across those boundaries and focus on outcomes for people and communities in the west of Scotland, which means that our work includes anything from subway modernisation to the Clyde metro project and bus franchising, or the supported bus services that we provide on behalf of our councils. We are responsible for more than 200 services and 5.5 million passengers a year, which fills the gaps where the commercial network does not provide services. From that perspective, we are there to ensure that transport is working in our region as best as possible. We are focused on delivering for people and communities in the west of Scotland.

As for the future, we believe that we have the skills, experience and capability to continue and grow. We believe that there should be greater pace in what is happening; indeed, that has always been a frustration for us.

Something else that you would expect us to say—and which I am sure that you hear continually—is that the funding situation is not great. That is about not just the amount of funding that we get but the multiyear funding agreements or settlements that we reach.

I hope that that is enough for now.

Graham Simpson: I think so—it was a good opener. Mark, what is Tactran for?

Mark Speed (Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership): Bruce Kiloh did a good job of explaining the differences. The key difference between model 1 and model 3 partnerships is that a model 1 partnership has the statutory responsibilities that are laid out in the legislation. We write and deliver the regional transport strategy; we get involved in working with partners on spatial planning and local development plans and in feeding our transport knowledge into that; and we work with the community planning partnerships.

The other difference between model 1 and model 3 partnerships, which was your key question, is that particular responsibilities that

would have been carried out by individual authorities have officially been handed over to the model 3s. That is why you see the differences in size. I think that that is perhaps the answer to the question that you were asking.

Graham Simpson: Yes.

Mark Speed: It is exactly what we are there to do. As you know, transport does not respect boundaries, even regional transport boundaries, and we quite often work across boundaries. One such example that stands out is Loch Lomond, where you have three RTPs working with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority on its mobility strategy. We get involved in those kinds of things, too.

We also feed into the city deals. In my area, we have two such deals—the Forth valley and the Tayside deals—and I chair the transport board that feeds into them. We are there to give the strategic view, do the strategic planning and pull together the partners required to do whatever work is involved. However, the difference between model 1 and model 3 partnerships is that particular powers have been handed over to the model 3s.

Most of us are working, in some way, towards that. I run a senior officer group in our area; we have been talking about this for a long time, and we have been trying to get a position in place. Obviously, the Scottish Government set out a new position on regionalisation only a day ago, and I am sure that we will get into that conversation, too.

Graham Simpson: We will come on to that.

Mark Speed: In any case, that is the key difference between the two models.

Graham Simpson: Yours is a model 1 partnership. Was that a choice right at the start?

Mark Speed: I was not there at the start, but I think that most started off in a model 1 position. I imagine that the likes of SPT probably moved quite quickly to model 3, because of the particular circumstances of running the Clyde metro and so on. In a sense, it is a choice for the board and the partnership itself to decide what powers they might want to be at a regional rather than a local level. I have been working with the senior officers in those authorities to put things into the board and to move to that position, but it is a choice for the board and our partners.

Graham Simpson: So, in your area, there is a bit of an appetite to move from model 1 to model 3 eventually.

Mark Speed: I think so, because there are definitely areas where—

Graham Simpson: There is interest.

Mark Speed: There is definitely interest, and we have a group looking at that. I cannot speak on behalf of the board, because they have not come to a final position. As well as feeding into the board on how we might change, for more than two years now, we have been working on the “Develop to Deliver” reports, which you might have heard of. Those reports, which the regional transport partnerships have been putting in to Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government, focus on the changes that we think need to be made in the move from a national to a regional approach as well as from a local to a regional position.

Graham Simpson: Councillor Lyall is not with us yet, so I will ask Mark Speed another question. If you, as a model 1 RTP, were to be abolished, would anyone notice?

Mark Speed: Yes. I think that they would notice really quickly, actually.

Graham Simpson: Who would notice?

Mark Speed: The local authorities would, I think, and the wider partnerships would, too, because we do an awful lot of work with a lot of different partners. I am also thinking of the capacity to do strategic planning. We had to do a complete rewrite of our regional transport strategy following the pandemic, and we are actually quite a small team. There are only seven of us, with two secondees. It took us nearly three years to write that regional transport strategy—gathering the evidence, working with partners, and going through all of it.

I do not believe that there is capacity in local authorities to write a regional transport strategy, which is the statutory document for transport. Local transport plans are not statutory, so there will be massive gaps in the ability to link up with strategic planning and economic growth. As I say, we do an awful lot of work—it is not just us sitting in a room by ourselves. We are involved in the city deals—we do the transport work around those—and we work with the national health service, particularly around mobility as a service. Not only would we be missed but, rather than there being a question about what we are there for, we are being asked to do more, both nationally and locally.

Graham Simpson: Somebody else will ask you specifically about mobility as a service.

Mark Speed: I am sure that they will.

Graham Simpson: I am interested in that, personally, but another member will ask you more about it later.

Councillor Lyall is still not with us, so I will move on.

I did not ask you that question, Bruce, because I know that SPT does a lot, and I think that we

would notice if you went, because you run quite a bit, so the question does not really apply in the same way as it applies to Mark. Would you agree with that?

Bruce Kiloh: Yes, I think that that is correct. SPT is very fortunate. We have a good partnership with our councils. We have a strong relationship with them and with Glasgow City Region through the Clyde metro.

I would focus on not whether the councils and so on would miss us but whether the passengers would miss us. Through our supported services, the work on bus stations, and the work that we are doing on people and place, we genuinely are making a difference to people's lives. That is what drives SPT as an organisation, and we keep our focus on that.

On the work that we currently do and the work that we have planned for the future, we are working on two of the biggest transport initiatives in Scotland: the Clyde metro and bus franchising. We are trying to break new ground there and, again, we are focused on making a difference to the lives of the people and communities of the west of Scotland through both those initiatives.

I agree that there should not be a question about whether SPT should exist. We are in a good position and we want to build for the future. We take nothing for granted and we continually try to improve on all of that, but we are delighted to be here and we will continue to work for the future.

Graham Simpson: Okay. We will come on to Clyde metro and franchising. I will move on to the reform agenda, if we can call it that. In the programme for government, it was almost suggested that RTPs would vanish in this new local government set-up. With regional councils, you would be subsumed into that new set-up. What are your feelings on what you have heard about that so far?

Bruce Kiloh: Taking a step back, having RTPs is best practice across the United Kingdom, Europe and elsewhere. The most successful regions have strong regional transport authorities or partnerships. You can see what Transport for London has done for London, what Transport for Greater Manchester is doing for Manchester and what SPT has done for the west of Scotland. From a principle perspective and a policy perspective, it would be a retrograde step to weaken or remove the regional transport approach.

As I said, we do not sit on our laurels and expect to continue ad nauseum just doing the same thing. We want to change. We want to reflect what is happening out there in terms of the demands of the travelling public and make sure that we are doing things that are relevant to them. If that is through

working with the new format of strategic regional authorities, as the public sector reform statement said the other day, let us have that conversation and make it work.

Recognition of the importance of transport is absolutely essential to any dialogue that takes place on the future set-up of governance. Over the past five to 10 years, the importance of transport across health, economy, environment and social exclusion has come to light. Transport's place in that hierarchy has gone up, so it needs to be treated seriously, and the transport system works on a regional basis. We look forward to the conversations about the reform agenda. We will see what happens in that regard, but there is a strong case for retaining and evolving RTPs. We will see where that goes. There is a strong case for regional transport partnerships to be retained in Scotland.

09:45

Graham Simpson: Turning to Mark Speed—I also intend to bring in Ewan Wallace, who may have a view on the subject—I presume that you would agree. Do the reform proposals present an opportunity for you to beef up your responsibilities and have an enhanced role?

Mark Speed: Absolutely. We have been calling for that for a long time. The "Develop to Deliver" reports have been produced since well before my time; I think that they started in about 2013 or 2014. We did a refresh of that a few years ago. It is exactly in line with what we are talking about.

To go back to your question about whether people would miss us, they would, because of what we run. We have the ability to do more, and we have been asking to do more. We have been asking for additional budget. I know that budgets are tight, but it is not a question of taking budget from anyone else.

In the "Develop to Deliver" reports, we have talked about how regional transport partnerships could be linked more closely with spatial planning. There used to be an equivalent of us for spatial planning, but that has gone. There is a lesson to be learned there, because we all know that spatial planning is really struggling. We have been pushing for closer links with planning, economic development and the environment, which, to my mind, are the main strategic elements.

I cannot speak for the board in the absence of a much clearer message on what the proposals might mean, but our board has been talking about such an arrangement for a long time. In a sense, we are stuck. We know what our statutory duties are and we fulfil those but, when it comes to how quickly we can go, we are very reactive to what budgets we are given. When we are given a

budget, we have to deliver within the framework of what that budget is for, so quite a lot of what we do in relation to people and place and on transport to employment is done within the confines of what we can do in that space with the budget that we have been allocated.

We are more than ready to take on more and to work more collaboratively. We already work collaboratively. We certainly do not fear change, but it would be quite a strange move to take apart a mechanism that is already available and which could be used to do more, and to go down the primary legislation route, with everything that that would entail, when we already have something that we can use to bring the benefits and gains that the reform process is trying to provide.

Graham Simpson: To prove that we are not ignoring him, I will bring in Ewan Wallace. Do you have a view on the reform agenda for local government, whereby we could end up with big regional councils, and how that would affect regional transport?

Ewan Wallace (Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists): I am happy to share some thoughts on that. It is an interesting conversation. I was fortunate enough to be around when the bill that became the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 was being developed, which led to the creation of the regional transport partnerships.

The north-east had had a voluntary partnership since about 1998, the purpose of which was to address the gaps that we felt were left when we went from nine regional authorities to 32 councils. We thought, "How do we do this? How do we ensure that we address that strategic need?", and the partnership was our response. I was obviously much younger when I was involved in that, but I still remember a lot of what was involved at the time.

When it comes to cross-boundary delivery, from the point of view of SCOTS, I hear from member colleagues across all the council areas that they work very effectively with the regional transport partnerships. The RTPs know about the delivery side of things. When it comes to the nuts and bolts of how to procure something or how to build something on the ground, they bring knowledge and experience in a range of areas, whether on the engineering side or in relation to traffic regulation orders.

Over the past seven to 10 years, the interface between RTPs and local authorities has matured positively, and I do not see why that relationship would be lost in any way at the people level. Whichever governance model we decide to use, the people will ensure that we are able to work under it.

In the past few days, my inbox has been quite full—I am sure that that has been the case for lots of others—with people asking what the changes will look like in practice. Ultimately, there will remain the need to work across boundaries, whatever the size of the authorities. SCOTS has a strong interface with Transport Scotland, and we also link into transport policy discussions with the Department for Transport at UK level. What would the changes look like in relation to some of the gap areas? Over the past few weeks, we have been asked to feed into some of the work, and I am sure that, as a society, we will be asked to provide responses and thoughts in the coming weeks and months, too.

Graham Simpson: I see Councillor Lyall on the screen. Can you hear us now, Councillor Lyall?

Councillor Moraig Lyall (Shetland Transport Partnership): I can hear you very well. The technical issue seems to have been resolved, and I was able to listen in on my phone while I was not able to hear directly through the meeting. I apologise for not being there in person, but it is a long way to come for a meeting and it is an expensive journey.

Graham Simpson: You are right on both counts—it is a long way and it is very expensive. We had an evidence session on island flights, and we will no doubt have more. It is certainly an issue for you.

You have heard what I have asked. What is the Shetland Transport Partnership all about? How would the local government reform agenda that the Government has announced affect you?

Councillor Lyall: ZetTrans is a single local authority partnership, which puts us in the ideal position of having strategic oversight and responsibility for operational implementation in our local area, with decision making being sustainably delivered at a level that is as close to the local population as possible.

When RTPs were established, Shetland's transport needs were considered to be sufficiently different from those in other areas to justify having our own partnership. *[Interruption.]* That means that, as well as enjoying local accountability, we can help to deliver national outcomes—

Graham Simpson: Can I ask you to pause there? There was some background noise, but I think that it is a false alarm. Carry on.

Councillor Lyall: What was I saying? We have local accountability, but we can also help to deliver national outcomes in a Shetland-appropriate way. Our network of lead officers and chairs meet regularly, so we are able to draw on shared expertise and experience from across the country.

Public transport in an island setting is not a nice-to-have; it is essential. People cannot move from island to island under their own steam. They require a ferry or a plane to move between our islands or to get off the islands. Therefore, transport is essential in an island setting in a way that is different from the position in other areas. Having ZetTrans, which is focused on our local context, means that we get it done right for our islands.

Your second question was about how things might change in the future. How ZetTrans operates at the moment works well, because we do not only specify and deliver for our islands; we have good interaction with our external transport providers, Loganair and NorthLink Ferries. The ZetTrans board gives us an established interface with them to ensure that, as well as what we deliver locally, they provide for us. Our local focus means that, for example, rural parts of Shetland enjoy a far better bus service than many other rural areas do, because our board specifies the timetables, the bus sizes and other minutiae, and the service is then delivered through our local authority contracts that we partner with.

Graham Simpson: I am interested in the info that you sent us. Just to be clear, you run all the buses in Shetland. Is that correct?

Councillor Lyall: There are no bus routes in Shetland that would be profitable for a company to operate. ZetTrans has just finished a piece of work, which we do every five years, to identify the what the needs are, where the routes should go and what the timetables should be. Through local authority contracts, around 30 local companies, some of which operate the larger routes and some of which operate smaller local routes within small islands, deliver those services for us.

Graham Simpson: Right. You have about 30 companies. Are they all badged the same? If I get on a bus, do they all look the same or do they have—

Councillor Lyall: Absolutely not. They will have their company logos on them, unless they are very small operators. We provide them with the hardware and software for collecting the fares; that is unified across all the buses. We are also currently using money that we got from the bus infrastructure fund to develop real-time information services across the network, which we have not had in Shetland up until now.

Another advantage of working closely with our local authority is that we can integrate the public network and the school network to a great extent. That means that we can reduce costs, both for the local authority in providing the school network and for ZetTrans in providing the public network.

Graham Simpson: I live in Strathclyde and I am extremely jealous—I hope that Bruce Kiloh will deliver the service that you have in Shetland at some point. Maybe we will get there.

I know that other members want to come in. Thank you, convener.

The Convener: We love structures—we are politicians. We have spent 20-odd minutes on that topic, so I hope that we will have shorter questions and answers as we progress. I will move on to Zen Ghani.

Zen Ghani (Glasgow Cathcart and Pollok) (SNP): I thank our guests for being here today. I have quite a few questions for Bruce Kiloh; they are mainly Strathclyde related.

I will start with the subway, given that quite a few changes have happened recently or are ongoing. I am keen to know what measurable improvements have been made to the subway in recent times. Also, when the subway's new trains were first introduced a wee while ago, there were issues with shakiness and train speeds. Have those issues been addressed, based on customer feedback so far?

Bruce Kiloh: I am delighted to speak about the subway, which we are very proud to run on behalf of the people and communities of the west of Scotland.

Just for members who might not be aware, some years ago we embarked on a £288 million subway modernisation programme to refurbish stations and provide new trains, a new control system, a new operational control centre and improved accessibility, which is important. Part of the programme is about moving us towards our ambition of expanding the subway's opening hours. We have said that we will do that, and we are hopeful that we can do so upon completion of the subway modernisation programme.

In addition, we are working towards unattended train operation—in other words, a closed system, controlled by our state-of-the-art operational control centre—and we are making good progress on that. Also, we have installed platform screen doors.

If you would like to see our new subway system, I would be delighted to host the committee at some point in the future.

From the reaction that we have had to the new system and the new trains, we have made progress. As was mentioned earlier, this is only the third set of new trains that the subway has had in its entire existence since 1896. Those of you who have been on the new trains will know that they are much quieter and much more passenger friendly;

they have a much safer feel to them and better closed-circuit television coverage.

The response from the passengers has been superb. It is worth noting that the subway was the first public transport mode to get back to 100 per cent of pre-Covid levels. That is thanks to our passengers and the offer that we make to them. We have had a great response.

10:00

You will be aware that we brought in smart card ticketing in the subway some years ago. We moved in March or April to a contactless system, so you can use your debit card to go in and out, and we had a fantastic response to that. We always give the passenger the best-value ticket, so if they use it on a return journey, they get a return, and if they use it more than that, they get an all-day ticket, which is of benefit to them.

The response from passengers so far has been superb, and we want to do more. We are looking at how well we can integrate the subway with other modes of transport and improve accessibility. There is still more to be done.

We do not see subway modernisation as a project with an end. It is an ongoing process, as we have seen with modernisation over the years. Things have evolved—for example, smart card ticketing has evolved to be used as the basis for things such as the ZoneCard, which we operate on behalf of transport operators across Scotland. It is the first multimodal, multi-operator ticket in Scotland to go smart. That came from our work on the subway. It has been a very positive process.

It is worth saying that the cost of the subway modernisation process will be around £300 million, which is only a £10 million increase in all the time from the original estimate. It has been good value and a good experience.

We have a team at the subway who are second to none. They are adapting and changing to the new system. We also have a project team who now have a good track record of delivering the modernisation of what you would call a light-rail system or a tram system. That can only stand us in good stead when it comes to our capability moving forward.

All in all, it has been a very positive experience. I am delighted that we are coming towards the end of this phase of the subway modernisation process but, as I say, it is ongoing. We are always looking for ways of improving the subway, and we are open to suggestions and ideas.

Zen Ghani: It is encouraging to see all the different improvements that are happening for passengers and staff and to make the trains able

to meet the needs of the modern day. When do you expect the entire train system to be fully self-driving?

Bruce Kiloh: At some point in 2027. That is the final piece of the jigsaw. A few things have happened recently that have helped us towards that. I talked about the new control system and the new operational control centre. We have an amazing system in a new building. The new system is built to cope with the subway and grow as necessary if the transport network expands.

We are bringing in platform screen doors. We have them at three stations at the moment. They are operational, which is fantastic to see. They are great for safety and security and, as I say, they are helping with the creation of the closed system, which is essential for moving towards unattended train operation. Once all those pieces are in place, we can move to that at some point in 2027.

Zen Ghani: Excellent. That is great to hear.

Over the summer, you were closed for around four days to test the new signalling with the control room. How does that tie in with the new control room? Will you tell us a bit more about the control room and the new things that have come alongside that?

Bruce Kiloh: I would bow to my colleagues on the subway team to give you the detail, but what I do know about the testing, both for when the new trains come in and for the new operating system, is that we are bound by strict rules when it comes to the safety case for running a railway underground. Rightly, there are hugely onerous rules that we have to stick by for passenger safety.

For testing the subway trains, we wanted to make sure that the operational control system was working as well as it could in a safe and controlled way before we had passenger access. Regrettably, we had to close the subway for those days, but the benefits of that are now there. We have a great system that is working very well.

Zen Ghani: Absolutely.

To go back to the self-driving trains, what are the plans for the existing drivers? Will they be retrained or redeployed?

Bruce Kiloh: I should say that the staff of the subway are key to the success of the modernisation process. I am very proud of the way in which they have worked with us through the process, which has not been easy. We are building a completely new system while running an existing one, so all credit to them.

On how our staff are deployed, we will seek to ensure that the drivers and anyone else who is affected has as many opportunities as possible to progress within SPT in other ways.

Zen Ghani: Excellent.

You briefly mentioned accessibility, which is constantly raised in my casework by people in Glasgow Cathcart and Pollock, and particularly by people who use wheelchairs. The subway stations have stairs and escalators, but a lot of them do not have lifts. Are there any short or long-term plans to make the subways accessible for all Glaswegians and visitors?

Bruce Kiloh: Right from the start of the modernisation process, we engaged with disabled groups and communities to hear what they wanted from the subway and to get them to understand that we are dealing with a system that was built in 1896 and is underground. The range of challenges has evolved over the years. There are buildings that, unfortunately, sometimes make some of the improvements that we would love to make very challenging. At the moment, we have two passenger lifts on the subway—one on either side of the Clyde—and we encourage people to use them. Those stations are fully accessible.

We have recently had work done to look at accessibility at Buchanan Street and Hillhead stations, and we are exploring options for those. We have brought in a whole load of other initiatives, such as tactile maps, improved lighting and so on, that we believe will help passengers who need it.

I go back to the staff. If you have been on the subway and seen someone who needs extra assistance, you will know that how our staff respond is very much hands on and involves escorting them to the platform, reassuring them and so on. It is to the credit of the staff and SPT as an organisation that we are trying to do the best we can in what are sometimes challenging circumstances with the infrastructure that we have.

Zen Ghani: As you say, given that many of the stations were built a long time ago, it would be a huge infrastructure project to make them a lot more accessible. However, I think that all Glasgow MSPs could attest to the fact that our constituents are always raising the need for accessibility at every station on the route. I know that that is a big task.

I will move on to SPT's relationship with the Glasgow City Region partnership. Do you find that effective? Are there any difficulties?

Bruce Kiloh: That is obviously a live issue, given the public sector reform statements that have come out and people's interest in that. We work on a regional basis, as does Glasgow City Region—we have that in common. As I mentioned, over the past five to 10 years, there has been a greater understanding and appreciation of the impact that transport has across a number of

sectors. That has really got through to people who work in economic development, housing, health or whatever. There is now a much stronger relationship with Glasgow City Region.

In fact, with one of the projects that we are working on, the Clyde metro, which I am sure will come up later, we have a formal relationship with Glasgow City Region, in that it is funding us to do that. The funding is coming from Glasgow City Region. SPT is leading the project, with Glasgow City Region as a partner, and Transport Scotland has a project assurance role.

We are at the point at which we are seeking approval to go out to consultation, and that report will go to the Glasgow City Region cabinet. There is a good basis for the project. As I said earlier, any changes that come in terms of transport governance need to be focused on outcomes and building on what is in place.

We have a good relationship with Glasgow City Region. People always raise the issue that the SPT area includes the Ayrshires and Argyll and Bute, but we do not see that as insurmountable or contradictory to any development that we might want in our relationship with Glasgow City Region. We work very closely with our colleagues in Ayrshire and in Argyll and Bute to improve the transport network there, and we believe that that can continue into the future, whatever happens.

As I always say, we are open to dialogue, but we and Glasgow City Region are in a very good place at the moment.

Zen Ghani: It is encouraging to hear about the different relationships that SPT has with councils and other transport bodies across the region.

I will move on to Clyde metro, given that it is topical. Could you shed any light on the scheme's likely extent, any funding mechanisms and what its next steps will be?

Bruce Kiloh: I am delighted to do so. For those who might not be aware, Clyde metro is a next-level transport project that we are working on as we look to take public transport in the west of Scotland to the next level. We always say that it is much more than just a transport project. What is driving us is the west of Scotland economy, social exclusion, the environment and ensuring that all communities across the west of Scotland, as far as possible, whether by bus or by some new mode, such as metro, tram, light rail or whatever it might be, have the opportunity to access a sustainable transport network that can get them to work and enable them to participate fully in society, visit friends and whatever else.

You asked about the extent of Clyde metro. It is a regional project that will extend as far as we can possibly take it. Generally, the full extent of such

systems would be about 15km, but that takes us to broadly the extent of Glasgow City Region. Other areas might not be served directly by Clyde metro but might be served through interchange.

We are coming to a very important and exciting stage in the Clyde metro project: we are developing our preferred network option. We are going through approval processes for that, with a view to starting a three-month public consultation on it later this year or early next year. I would like to come back to the committee at that time and speak to elected members about it. I can assure members that the consultation will cover the full region.

In terms of the funding, we have a workstream dedicated to that. It is fair to say that we are keeping a very open mind on it. We are working with Transport Scotland, the UK Government, the Scottish Government and the National Wealth Fund, and we are looking at new opportunities through things such as land value capture. With every option, whether it is obtaining funding from the private sector or working with developers and others, we will ensure that it is as affordable as possible. We will also talk about that in the consultation.

Zen Ghani: That is great to hear. In terms of the consultation, what engagement do you plan to have with people? Following the consultation, what would be the next stages?

Bruce Kiloh: The consultation will be as wide as possible. When we did the consultation on our Clyde regional bus strategy and our regional transport strategy, we went really deep and tried to get into local communities as far as possible. It is amazing what you can now do digitally, such as getting people to respond on SurveyMonkey and things like that. It will be the same with the Clyde metro. We will engage with everyone, from MPs, MSPs and councillors—elected members who are so important to us—to local communities and businesses. It is important to say that we will not engage only with the big businesses. We want to engage with smaller businesses, including those that are looking to grow, so that they can see that organisations such as SPT have confidence in the west of Scotland—we are investing in it, and they should invest too, to make the Clyde metro as meaningful to them as possible. We want to hear what those businesses have to say.

10:15

Between January and March next year, you will see a lot more of us. We will be engaging as widely as possible at in-person events and online. What the new system will look like is a complicated subject to talk about. Whether that is a new tram network or whatever else, we will try to make the

conversation as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

Zen Ghani: That is also great to hear. It was briefly mentioned in the papers that the Clyde metro will help to reduce emissions, so can you tell us more about that?

The Convener: I am conscious of the time, so please try to keep things a bit tighter.

Bruce Kiloh: A key objective of the metro is to encourage people out of their cars, and we will ensure that we develop the system in as climate friendly a way as possible.

Zen Ghani: I have a smart ticketing question, if that is okay.

The Convener: Yes, but please keep it brief.

Zen Ghani: Integrated ticketing is a big issue, and you said in your evidence that the national smart ticketing advisory board is progressing work on a national integrated ticketing system by 2030. Can you tell us more about the obstacles that you will face in implementing that, and is it likely that you will meet the 2030 target?

Bruce Kiloh: SPT does not lead the national smart ticketing advisory board, but we are a member of it, along with Transport Scotland and others. As I said, we have made great progress in the west of Scotland with the subway ZoneCard smart card, which we operate and administer on behalf of the operators—and all credit to them for pushing us on that. It was a challenge to implement a cashless system—I mean a contactless system; I wish it was cashless. That was a very progressive move, and it has done very well.

Future challenges will include fares and pricing, the infrastructure, some of the business rules, and the mechanisms for how the ticketing systems work. However, SPT's experience and capability put us in a position to be a strong forerunner for taking forward smart card ticketing in Scotland as a whole, and we will be delighted to have conversations about that.

Graham Simpson: I do not want to hog the conversation, because we have a lot to get through. On smart ticketing, I will stick with you, Bruce, because you mentioned that you can use your bank card to tap in and out on the subway. I must admit that, until recently, I did not know that, and I use the subway—I have just been buying a ticket. When you get to a station, it is not immediately obvious that you can use your bank card, but, in future, I will do that. If we have the technology to do that, why can we not have a system, like the one in London, that would allow you to use your bank card on the subway and buses, with a daily fare cap applied to all bus and

subway journeys in the Strathclyde region? Maybe we do have that facility.

Bruce Kiloh: It is our strong aspiration to achieve exactly that, hence why we are trying, as much as possible, to take an integrated approach across different modes of transport. We have a strong relationship with ScotRail, and we provide it with smart card services. At the moment, the bus system is commercially run, and there are just over 30 operators in the west of Scotland, all with their own systems. They very much want to work with us and we want to work with them on an integrated system. A key aspect of our work on bus reform and the bus franchise will be an integrated ticketing system, whether you are using the subway, bus, rail or, when it comes round, the Clyde metro. Our aspiration is to achieve what you have set out, Graham.

Graham Simpson: The committee has talked about this before, but the technology is there—it exists. There is what one might call some institutional resistance—I am not talking about you, Bruce; it could be bus companies or whatever—to driving this forward. I just wanted to make that point.

Councillor Lyall, what sort of integrated ticketing do you have in Shetland? If I were to go to Shetland, would I be able to buy one ticket that would get me on the bus and then on to the ferry?

Councillor Lyall: No. That is very much an aspiration, but it is not the reality at the minute. You would pay to get on each bus, and then pay to get on each ferry.

Graham Simpson: Okay. That was a nice short answer.

The Convener: I like you, Councillor Lyall—that was very brief. It is a good lesson for all the men on the panel here.

Anyway, I will now bring in Donald MacKinnon.

Donald MacKinnon (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (Lab): Thank you, convener, and thank you to the panel members for joining us this morning.

I have some questions for Moraig Lyall on rural and island connectivity. I have the Shetland tunnels report with me, and the work going on there at the moment is quite exciting. What strikes me about the tunnels project, and the aspirations around it, is the links that are being made not just between connectivity and economic possibilities but between connectivity and population retention. Can you touch on that aspect? How important is ZetTrans's work not just on population retention but on seeing transport and connectivity as an economic driver in the islands?

Councillor Lyall: Thank you very much for your question. I have a lot more to say on this subject, I

can assure you. I should also say that I might have to leave this meeting a wee bit early, as we are having a council meeting to take the decision on the very next section of our transport connectivity programme, looking at how we will move forward from where we are at the minute.

We in Shetland see tunnels as being the one thing that could transform our islands connectivity, and the aspects of the proposal that you have picked out of our submission are absolutely the ones that we would highlight. This is not just about people getting from A to B; we also have a problem with population drain from our outer islands into the centre.

The fact is that massive economic developments are happening in the outer islands, too. The aquaculture sector is large and expanding, and there is also the SaxaVord spaceport up on the island of Unst. However, to get there, you have to take not one but two interisland ferries; once you arrive in Shetland, you have to get to Yell and then to Unst. The capacity on those ferries is already very constrained, so, as this economic development occurs, the pressure on the space on the ferries will become harder and harder to manage. Moreover, the ferries are ageing, and the pier infrastructure requires to be replaced, so a lot of money will be required just to maintain the ferry system as it is.

Even though it has a high up-front capital cost, the tunnels project could be the one thing that transforms our ability not only to grow and develop as an economy but to retain and grow the population in the outer islands, because the people who live there will know that they can get into and out of the centre in Lerwick within half an hour or 45 minutes by driving straight through a tunnel, instead of their having to wait for ferries that can be unreliable in winter weather and which are becoming increasingly unreliable in relation to breakdowns and our ability to keep them staffed. We could strip all of those things away as barriers to growing our population and our economy in our small islands.

Donald MacKinnon: Can you say a little bit more about the role of ZetTrans, and its relationship with Shetland Islands Council, in that project?

Councillor Lyall: As I have explained, ZetTrans plays the strategic role in transport for the islands. We have set out our main goals—we are looking to decarbonise, to grow our population in the islands, and to ensure that people do not face exclusion in being able to travel.

Having put those broad-brush principles behind our connectivity programme, we then look at how to deliver it in practice, which I hope will be done through a network of tunnels linking some of our

islands. Having made that strategic decision as a board, the local authority is now pushing forward on our behalf with the work that is required to build the business cases so that we can begin to implement the programme.

Donald MacKinnon: In his questions, Graham Simpson touched on flights, which the committee has a strong interest in. We have taken evidence on flights before and hope to do so again. Will you talk about the importance of flights to the economy of the Shetland islands and the direction of travel that you would like to see for the work on flights?

Councillor Lyall: Yes. The flight network that we have to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Kirkwall is really important for the islands. For large businesses that operate from here, whether that is our salmon companies, spaceports or tourism businesses, or the fishing-related activity that goes on in our economy, the need to get people in and out quickly is really important. When we do not have those connections, that makes it impossible for businesses to operate efficiently.

The Aberdeen link is particularly important for healthcare, because that is where many people go for appointments. When flights are not available, people are curtailed from being able to attend their appointments. I am sure that you will recognise that situation from the Western Isles. Another aspect is people going away for training and education; if we do not have a system whereby people can get in and out for training and education quickly and efficiently, that becomes difficult for businesses. For example, we no longer have a heavy goods vehicle test centre here, so people who want to get an HGV or a bus driving licence have to travel south and need to be able to do so quickly and easily on a flight. As you are probably aware, the flights are extremely expensive, which is becoming a problem for not just individuals but businesses.

Donald MacKinnon: Thank you very much for that. I will not ask the rest of the panel about tunnels, but I will touch on the broader piece about rural connectivity and its link with economic development. Ewan Wallace, how important is the work of your members in ensuring economic development in rural parts of the country?

Ewan Wallace: I am conscious that I should have said that a large element of the role of SCOTS members is about road connectivity and maintenance, especially winter maintenance, and I recognise all the points that Councillor Lyall made about the importance of allowing people to get to and from healthcare appointments and education opportunities. I know that the chief officers in SCOTS regularly work with economic development colleagues, so they feed into a

number of areas of activity and work closely with RTP colleagues on the funding for access to employment, for example. That all happens regularly.

The unseen bit is probably just trying to keep the wider road network open on the mainland, in particular. That can be subject to significant weather events, and, because there have been more such events over the past three or four years, that has been a major issue for teams. It impacts on every part of the transport network, so keeping it open, safe and operating is a big focus.

Colleagues feed into what the connectivity element looks like at the strategic level. I have talked to Councillor Lyall before about this: she referred to having no HGV test station or an ability to train your driving cohort close to where they live and operate, and that is a major issue across large parts of the country—certainly north of the central belt. You regularly see local authority vehicles on low loaders being taken to testing stations or for repairs elsewhere in Scotland. That is a major element that is starting to impact on our ability to do things at the local level, but we are trying to manage it as best we can across the local authority cohort on the operational side of things.

10:30

Donald MacKinnon: Thank you for that. I know that other colleagues will have some questions on road condition, too. Mark Speed, would you like to add anything, particularly on what the big connectivity challenges are in the rural parts of the region that you cover?

Mark Speed: I will try to keep my answer short. Our region covers a good mix of urban and rural areas. The issue is life chances. The bottom line is that there is depopulation in rural areas, and the reason is that people have to be able to access jobs, healthcare and education, and an awful lot of the transport solutions that are proposed are very urban-based ones.

We have huge challenges, but we are working through them. Transport to employment is a new initiative, and it is going to be incredibly useful, because it is not only about transport to employment; it covers the whole system around that. It considers whether people can get access to healthcare and, if not, whether that is what is keeping them out of employment, and it also asks about issues such as whether people can get to their childcare provider. There are big challenges, but we are considering community-based transport and demand-responsive transport systems. A DRT system could mean using a taxi; it does not necessarily need to be a large bus.

Looking at transport across the system is a completely different challenge, but we are very

engaged in that. We have two bus alliances in our region, and we are considering what network we need to meet the challenges of the RTS and the national transport strategy. It is clear from the work that we have done that it is not about having fixed-route bus routes that go everywhere, because that does not make sense environmentally or economically, so we are trying to put in transport modes and hubs so that we have a system that brings people in. I know that people do not like transferring between too many different forms of transport, but putting hubs into the right places with the right facilities and the right connections can make a massive difference to those in our rural communities.

On Ewan Wallace's last point, we need to consider the transport resilience of the affected communities. We have to think about everything, all the way down to the maintenance connectivity, not just for transport, but for electricity and all sorts. It will be a huge challenge in Scotland because of the geographical size and the way that the population is distributed. However, it is a main focal point for us.

Donald MacKinnon: Bruce Kiloh, on that same point about rural connectivity, SPT covers several different local authorities that might have different aspirations and use different strategies and approaches to economic development and business growth and how they relate to the needs of particular businesses and communities. How do you manage that?

Bruce Kiloh: We are fortunate in some respects as we cover public transport in a big urban area, and we can make the plans work in the urban areas. However, as the guys have said, it is challenging to create sustainable transport in rural areas.

In response to your question, we work closely with the councils, whether on economic development or anything else. Mark Speed referred to the transport to employment work that we are doing. We are engaging with local employability partnerships across the region on that. Also, in relation to community planning partnerships, SPT and the RTPs have been statutory community planning partners for many years now, so we are right in there in trying to understand some of the local issues that might affect one village and not another.

Many rural areas in the west of Scotland have seen huge service withdrawals during recent years. As Mark Speed said, we want to ensure that people have the opportunity to have the same life chances as anyone else, whether they live in a rural area, on an island or anywhere else. We also engage with local employability partnerships, councils and the chambers of commerce to get a

better understanding of what is needed. On RTPs, one size does not fit all. What might work in one area of Scotland might not work in another. It is a huge challenge for us, but we are working on it.

Donald MacKinnon: Councillor Lyall, the £2 bus fare cap was piloted in the Highlands and Islands and I believe that it has been in place in Shetland since the end of January this year. What is your experience of that? Are there any learnings that should be picked up across the rest of the country?

Councillor Lyall: Our buses were already competitively priced relative to those in other parts of the country. We do not have the long-distance journeys that there are in some other parts of the Highlands, so the change in fares has been more modest in Shetland than it has been in other areas. As a result, the uplift in passenger numbers has also been more modest. We have seen a slight increase this year, but it will take a while for the impact to filter through. We have seen a bit more of an uptake in the last month or two after the recent increases in the price of petrol and diesel. As travelling by car becomes more expensive, the £2 bus fare will become a more attractive prospect.

As in other rural areas, sometimes it is not the fare that holds people back from using the bus. Rather, it is about the availability of the services and whether they are at the right times and going to the right places. Often, in an island and rural context, you could be going from a specific location to somewhere other than the central hub in Lerwick. At that point, even if the bus service cost £2, it would not be a viable option. The fare cap is making a slight difference in Shetland, but the jury is out on how big a difference it will make. We will be monitoring it in the months ahead.

Donald MacKinnon: You are absolutely right to highlight the timetabling aspect, which is often a barrier to bus use in rural communities—I certainly recognise that from my constituency. I will not ask everyone on the panel for a response, but I have a final point about interregional and intercity travel in relation to the £2 bus fare cap. I am conscious that the situation is changing quite quickly. Last week, I was on an Ember bus travelling from Edinburgh to Aviemore. The bus stopped in many different villages that may never have had intercity travel and connectivity before. On the one hand, there are quite drastic changes and on the other hand, we have the £2 bus fare cap. We are not clear yet as to how that will work for interregional and intercity travel, but it will have drastic implications for the competitiveness of rail, which we touched on last week with ScotRail. I will open that up to anyone who has thoughts or comments on it.

Bruce Kiloh: It is a good point. The whole industry, including the subway and ScotRail, is

monitoring the impact of the £2 bus fare cap. We spoke earlier about the smart card ticketing that we have introduced with operators, for which the Government has put the money in to try to get it to work. We have similar reflections to Moraig Lyall on the impact of the bus fare cap. As far as I am aware, we have not seen much of an impact or increase in numbers as a result of the cap. I was speaking to my colleague in ticketing yesterday, and the cap has not had much of an impact on the number of zone cards that we are selling. We need to closely monitor the effect of the cap and see what happens.

It comes back to the point about the integrated approach. We want to ensure that the passenger gets the best value across modes so that they can get the journey that they need for the price that they are willing to pay. That will drive our approach to reviewing the £2 fare cap in future. It will have a huge impact on how we build the business case for the Clyde metro, and I know that colleagues who are working on bus reform are considering what the effect on the market would be if the cap were to become permanent.

Donald MacKinnon: We will come on to bus reform.

Mark Speed, do you have any thoughts on interregional and intercity travel? I would have passed through some places in your region on that journey last week.

Mark Speed: The £2 bus fare cap has not come to Tactran yet, but I am very much looking forward to that, and we are watching what is going on very carefully.

The bus fare cap sends a really positive message. When it comes to encouraging people to use sustainable travel, a lot of the discussion around transport is about travel demand management, which involves charging people for using cars and things like that. The fare cap is a carrot rather than a stick.

You mentioned Ember, which calls itself a disruptor, and it has a part to play. A perfect example for us is the time that it takes to travel from Perth to Edinburgh by train versus by bus. I imagine that ScotRail is very cautious about what that challenge means for it. However, at the end of the day, that provision has given passengers a choice and has given people the opportunity to travel and connect.

A lot more can be done with rail, and a lot more can be done with bus. We are trying to work through bus service improvement plans with the bus alliances that we work with. At the moment, that is voluntary. However, all these issues are starting to come before those groups, and they are starting to talk about them. We are able to point to

the money that we are putting in to improve infrastructure and at what the Government is doing through its fares policies to encourage people to use buses. That is encouraging those companies to consider what they can do, too.

Connectivity between cities is a massive challenge. I am assuming that you have travelled by train on that journey. It is very interesting that some journeys are now quicker by bus than by train.

Donald MacKinnon: Thanks for that. No further questions from me, convener.

The Convener: On the bus fare cap, did any of you ask for it? Did you, Bruce?

Bruce Kiloh: You could perhaps see me thinking there, trying to remember. One key finding from our regional transport strategy and the work that we did on it, which involved a great deal of engagement with communities, was the massive issue of affordability for some people and families in the west of Scotland. It is great to see the transport to employment funding that people are getting to help with that. We would welcome any initiative that makes things more affordable.

The Convener: You did not ask for it specifically.

Bruce Kiloh: No.

The Convener: What about you, Mark?

Mark Speed: We did not ask for it specifically. To reiterate Bruce Kiloh's points, affordability has been the key focus.

The Convener: Ewan, I do not know what role you would have in this area, but I know that some of your colleagues have roles in the management of local bus services.

Ewan Wallace: Absolutely. We are in a fortunate position, as we see the strategic asks across multiple RTPs and authorities. Some RTPs put themselves forward to be part of the bus fare cap pilot. Nestrans submitted a proposal saying, "Yes, we would like to be part of"—

The Convener: That was once the idea was proposed—it did not come up with the idea itself.

Ewan Wallace: Yes.

The other thing that I am aware of from our transportation working group is that there are multiple examples across RTPs and local authorities where decisions have been taken to provide a level of subsidy to assist particular passenger groups on particular corridors, because they had the ability to do that with operators. Where local authorities considered that it was costing people too much to travel to education or

employment, they have trialled something with operators.

The Convener: Councillor Lyall, if your prices were already quite competitive, are you not at a disadvantage when others are getting greater levels of subsidy because their fares were higher?

Councillor Lyall: We are always at a disadvantage. If you look at the advantage to every young person in Scotland that has come from the introduction of free under-22 bus travel, you see that the benefit to a child in Edinburgh is multiple times greater than the benefit to a child in Shetland or another rural area. That is basically because a child in Edinburgh has services available to use that are not as widely available in rural areas and islands such as ours.

The Convener: There is a concern that, taken together, free bus travel for the under-22s, the older persons bus pass and the fare cap represent a subsidy primarily for places that already have bus routes—for urban and intercity routes—and a shift of subsidy away from rural routes to urban routes. Councillor Lyall, is that a concern?

10:45

Councillor Lyall: I recognise that concern. Where you have routes, the subsidy obviously flows, and, where you do not have routes, it is impossible to access the subsidy.

Mark Speed: That is a massive concern. You have to have the services in order to benefit from them, and that has been proved through the provision for under-22s and over-60s, before we get into the issue of the fare cap.

The Convener: Do you tell the Government that?

Mark Speed: We have certainly spoken about it, yes. It comes up in conversations with Transport Scotland.

Bruce Kiloh: It is a huge issue and, as the guys have been saying, we are concerned about it for the future.

The Convener: Do you tell the Government about that, too?

Bruce Kiloh: Through the dialogue that we have been having with Transport Scotland for many years on bus transport, we have raised a number of issues, and we would like to see more being done. We will continue that dialogue; it is an ongoing process.

Iris Duane (Glasgow) (Green): Thank you all for your time today. Bruce Kiloh, I apologise that I might have a number of questions for you. We have briefly touched on bus franchising. Recently, the committee heard from campaigners that there

is a feeling that bus franchising in the Strathclyde region is taking a long time, compared to some English regions where that has been done. Do you think that it is taking a long time, and, if so, why?

Bruce Kiloh: Yes, SPT's view is that we would like to see the process accelerated, and, when the Government announced its intention to introduce a better buses bill, we conveyed that to the new cabinet secretary and set out the types of things that should be in the bill. We want to see a streamlined process across a number of fronts and things being done proportionately. We are hidebound by the specifications set out in legislation.

When we produced our regional transport strategy and then the regional bus strategy, which put forward bus franchising in Scotland for the first time, it was clear that there was huge strength of feeling about that. We were surprised and shocked by the scale of the response to our consultation. In the past, we have been used to hundreds of responses, but thousands of people responded, so know that there is demand for bus franchising—this has touched a nerve with people. The bus market in the west of Scotland has struggled for many years and bus patronage has been going down. That needs urgent attention, and the quicker that we can get on with the franchising process, the better it will be, not only for passengers, but for operators. One of the great ironies of franchising is that we require a healthy private-sector bus market. We know that operators are concerned about that, and we want to reassure them and get the franchising process done as quickly as possible to turn things round.

The Convener: If I may interrupt, Iris, Councillor Lyall needs to leave soon, so do you have any specific questions for her?

Iris Duane: No, thank you.

The Convener: Councillor Lyall, I am really grateful for your evidence, and I am sorry for the communication problems at the beginning of the meeting. Thank you for attending. We understand that you need to leave shortly.

Councillor Lyall: Thank you for the invitation. It is always good to share on a national level what is happening in Shetland. As I said, I am heading off to, we hope, decide to take forward the next stage of our tunnel project, which is a really exciting place for us to be, as a transport board and the local authority.

The Convener: Thank you.

Iris Duane: I will come back to the matter of private operators. On the better buses bill, the committee heard some strong opinions on the scrutiny panel for the current franchising process, which started in 2019. England used that model

previously, but it no longer does so. The campaigners who came to us advocated for the removal of the panel. They lodged a parliamentary petition on the subject and have campaigned on it. Does SPT support or oppose that position?

Bruce Kiloh: From the word go on the development on the 2019 act, we said that a decision on the future of the bus network in the west of Scotland being made by a three-person panel that was picked by the traffic commissioner did not sit well with us. I perhaps did not emphasise enough earlier the democratic accountability that RTPs provide, which is hugely important. We have elected and appointed members from across our region and we go through that democratic process. As members of this Parliament, you will know about that.

Our view is that the panel should be removed from the process and we should allow the democratically accountable structures that are in place, such as SPT, to make the decisions. Our elected members represent our communities. We have worked on the process for the development of the franchise, and we believe that the audit process that will go alongside that will provide sufficient assurance that we are trying to do the right thing. We try to put the right thing forward for our members to approve.

We always have had concerns about the panel. We said that from the word go, and we would like to see it changed.

Iris Duane: It is nice to hear you and the campaigners singing from the same hymn sheet.

My next question is about the £2 bus fare cap, which came up briefly in our conversation about franchising. It is unclear as yet how much the cap will cost in the long run, especially if it is made permanent. Franchising would have been a cheaper and more positive alternative. Are you concerned that the £2 bus fare cap is subsidising businesses without us having extra routes, as the convener mentioned?

Bruce Kiloh: In general, there is a case for looking at the entirety of the money that is going into the transport network, including the bus network, and asking whether we are using it as efficiently as we can. We hope that we will start to break that down and get to the bottom of it through our dialogue with relevant partners on the franchising process. As I said, the key thing for us is to identify the price point that the passenger is willing to pay and which they find makes the bus an affordable option for them, and we will try to focus on that from the franchise perspective.

If the £2 fare cap continues for a number of years or is made permanent, we will take account of that in our process, but we would like to have

that dialogue on how much money is going into the entire network and whether it is being spent in the right way. We know, for example, that 56 to 58 per cent of an operator's revenue is coming from public subsidy. That is the subject of another piece of dialogue that we need to have. It is something that we would very much like to look at going into the future.

Iris Duane: That is great to hear. I absolutely agree with what you said about the strength of feeling about franchising. The subject came up many times on the doorsteps, at least for me and Zen Ghani, even from people who are not ordinarily involved in this kind of policy change. However, the strength of feeling has not been universal. McGill's condemned the transport partnership's proposal and said that it would represent a £400 million taxpayer burden, although that is four times the amount that we expect. You spoke about how important it is to have the bus operators on side. Do you share the bus operators' concern that the cost might spiral out of control?

Bruce Kiloh: It is an interesting point. It is challenging—there is no doubt about that. We were not naive in embarking on the journey for the regional bus strategy and there is absolutely no way that we would have recommended franchising as the appropriate choice if we did not believe that it was the right thing to do.

Naturally, it is unsettling for businesses if somebody comes in and says that they are going to change the market and how things are done. We are sympathetic to a lot of the goals of the operators: we want there to be congestion reduction and bus priority, and we want the industry to grow and patronage to go up. Those are common-ground factors, and we can work through any of the challenges that we have through the franchising process with the operators in a reassuring way, as best as we can. We know that the situation is difficult, so we will try to do work in the most transparent way that we can and be as up front with them as possible in order to get the right result for the people and communities of the west of Scotland.

No one ever said it was going to be easy, and I think that the issue that you raise is at the forefront of our mind. We just need to make sure we do it properly.

Iris Duane: Thank you, Bruce.

Mark Speed, earlier it was mentioned that the public sector reform agenda might present an opportunity for Tactran to change how it operates. Obviously, you are in a very different position from SPT as a model 1 RTP but, in your heart of hearts, do you see Tactran potentially pursuing

franchising in the future, or do you think that that is absolutely off the table?

Mark Speed: You have to be very careful when you use the F-word—franchising—because it sets an awful lot of hares running. We have been doing some work on various issues and are getting very close to having a bus strategy. One of the things that we are working through at the moment is around what model will best get us to where we want to be. The issue of franchising has not come before the board at this point in time. Before I even go near that, I would need to speak to Transport Scotland about the amount of money that it takes to go down that route.

On the question that you asked Bruce Kiloh, I think that anything that supports making travel affordable for people is welcome. However, at the moment, we have commercial routes and subsidised routes. Councils are spending increasing amounts of money on those subsidised routes, and they are still not getting out to the areas that they need to in order to give us the necessary coverage, particularly in our rural communities. That is something for Government as a whole to consider. We have the under-22 scheme and the over-60 scheme, and now we have the £2 fare cap. The question that must be asked is whether there is enough money in the system to give us the support to extend the services that we have so that we can provide what we need to. What is the best use of the money in the system?

I do not want to knock what is being done to help people, in terms of making travel affordable. However, from my perspective, the challenge that I have is how I am going to expand our services so that people can benefit from those types of interventions. For example, in large areas of our community, a lot of young people do not benefit from the under-22 scheme—it is obvious that there is a lot more benefit from the scheme in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

We have been looking at governance models for quite a while, and we have just issued a paper to our bus alliances. I do not know whether you know what the bus alliances are, but they were set up around the time when there was the announcement of the big infrastructure initiatives. We came up with 13 strategic corridors in our region that we really want to invest in, and the operators on those routes sit on those alliances, as do the bus users. The paper that we have issued to them sets out the challenges and the issues and asks what model might be needed to address them. However, I cannot say that franchising is on the table at all at the moment. It is one of the options, but to go to that step, I would need to have a lot more conversations about whether we are ready and have the finance that

would enable us to go down that route in relation to any governance model change.

Iris Duane: Thank you for that. Like many of our constituents, I am interested in the issue. It was good to hear your view on it.

Mark Speed: The process that we are engaged in is a way of looking at our existing routes. The essence of franchising is, “You can do those routes, but you must run routes elsewhere.” It is feasible and it has worked elsewhere—I have worked outside of Scotland, and I have seen it work. However, yes, there is definitely opposition to it from various places.

Iris Duane: Certainly. Ewan Wallace, you looked like you wanted to jump in.

Ewan Wallace: If it would assist, I am aware that there are probably two other RTP areas that have looked specifically at the bus service improvement partnership model as a better fit for them than the franchising model, and some extensive work has been done on that. Further, two weeks ago, Transport Scotland published formal guidance to assist any groups of local authorities that want to look at that model as an alternative to franchising.

Iris Duane: Actually, that ties the discussion together—and I should say that I am sorry for not directing more of my questions to you, Ewan.

The committee recently spoke to the cabinet secretary about the proposed better buses bill. The Government’s timeline to introduce that is unclear. We found out that there may be multiple bills, and we are not sure what each of those bills would focus on and where they would come from. From your experiences—I would appreciate an answer from everyone on the panel—what would you like to see in the better buses bills? What would your priorities be? We have all spoken about affordability and such things, but it would be nice to know your thoughts on that. I am happy for anyone to start.

11:00

Bruce Kiloh: As I mentioned, we wrote to Stephen Flynn the day after the announcement on the better buses bill, to put some of those markers down. I mentioned the scrutiny panel, and that needs to be reviewed. The streamlining of the governance and approvals process needs to be reviewed, with a mind to the democratically accountable nature of SPT’s partnership board.

We need more flexibility in the 2019 act. We need the ability to have more pace in it to make franchising happen quicker and not have people spend years drowning in documents and assessments and so on.

There are other things in there. We believe that there is a case—again, this comes back to working with the bus industry—for direct award of contracts to ease the transition into a franchise and support the operators and the small and medium-sized enterprises that work with them on that.

There is also the proportionate assessment process for franchising. It cannot be too in depth. It needs to be at the appropriate level to allow us to deliver things at the pace that your constituents and everybody else would like to see things moving at. There are other things in the letter that I will not cover just now.

Mark Speed: I do not want to take up too much time, but I agree with that. It must be about pace and flexibility. As you know, we are not Tactran. Our boards are Tactran, and they are predominantly made up of councillors, but we have non-councillor members from different organisations and from the public on there. Anything that can quicken the pace and make the process less complicated and bureaucratic would absolutely be welcome.

Ewan Wallace: I will make two very quick points. One of the things that local authorities often struggle with is the requirement to provide socially necessary services. Under the current legislation, that might not fall into the mandatory duty category, so it then falls into budget discussions every year. Therefore, if the bill were to say that that becomes a duty and it strengthens the requirement for authorities to assess that, that would be a positive.

The other element to mention—I do not know whether it would necessarily be in this bill—relates to operators and authorities looking at future vehicle types. Will they be internal combustion engines of the future? Will they have low floors? Will they have seatbelts? What vehicles will we look to operate under a legal framework in future?

Mark Speed: I will add to that, because it is a good point. One of the challenges that we need to address is that we need to stop trying to fix the transport problems of the past and embrace the transport vehicles, opportunities in technology and so on that will be coming down the line. I reiterate that I agree with that point.

Iris Duane: Thank you so much for your time. In the interests of time—I see that we have already run over—I hand back to the convener.

The Convener: We indicated that we would be finished by 11, but we are interested in what the panel has to say, so I hope that you do not mind us carrying on for a bit longer.

That last question neatly fits in with what Lloyd Melville is about to ask.

Lloyd Melville (Angus South) (SNP): I will start with Ewan Wallace on potholes, and we can come back to discuss other issues. You will be aware, Ewan, that the Scottish Government has committed to a £350 million better surfaces fund over this parliamentary session. Do you welcome that?

Ewan Wallace: Yes, absolutely. The investment in the physical infrastructure network is very welcome. It will be interesting to see what that looks like in practice. We conduct annual surveys across every local authority area, and those have identified that we are probably £330 million short each year across all 32 authorities. That is just to stand still; it is not to address the level of deterioration that we have seen over a long period of time.

Lloyd Melville: Will the fund make a significant enough difference?

Ewan Wallace: Based on the numbers, the local authority road maintenance community would welcome the funding being front loaded in the parliamentary cycle, so that it can get ready to use it. Many authorities have flagged the fact that, over the past two years, higher oil prices have led to increased bitumen costs, which is reducing the amount of activity that they can fund on the ground through the maintenance programmes.

When it comes to the delivery of funding to the teams on the front line, effective use has been made of other funds, such as the road safety improvement fund, which has been a big positive. That is being rolled out across all 32 authorities. It is welcome how that funding has matured. If something similar happens with the better surfaces fund, I can see it having real benefits.

Lloyd Melville: It is interesting that you say, “If something similar happens,” because I was going to ask you about engagement with the Government. Have you or your members had any engagement with the Government about how the fund will work or about a distribution model and so on?

Ewan Wallace: Not since the announcement was made. We are due to meet Transport Scotland colleagues over the coming period to discuss how that will be rolled out. As I said, we have had very positive experiences with Transport Scotland colleagues on the other funding models in that area.

As regards when the letters will arrive and when individual authorities will be able to build that into their works programmes, we are now in September, so the focus of many of those teams will already be turning to planning for winter. We will continue to do the surfacing programmes and the reinstatements, but it will very much be down

to what the next annual work programme will look like in any individual authority.

Lloyd Melville: I am a bit surprised that there has been no engagement on that so far. I appreciate that the Government will take that forward in budget discussions, but I would have thought that it might have wanted to hear what partners had to say about it. However, I will leave that for now.

I want to follow up on Iris Duane's questions about the types of vehicle that are used to provide different services. Mark Speed and I have previously had a discussion about demand-responsive travel, which I was involved in pushing for in Angus. Is there a bigger role for demand-responsive travel to play, especially in a rural setting?

Mark Speed: Are you asking that question specifically in the context of the new transport to employment programme?

Lloyd Melville: Yes.

Mark Speed: I will give some context. We get just over £1 million. As you know, a new programme was announced this year, so we have had to develop and move forward our work in that area. With £1 million over four authorities, the amount that we can do is limited, but that funding can still have a massive impact.

To put things in the simplest terms, members are probably all aware of home-to-school transport. Transport to employment is provided in a similar way, where there are gaps. We are not competing with other services. Transport to employment is provided when someone cannot get into employment, either because there is no bus available or because there is no bus available at the time when they would need to get to work, or that would allow them to get to childcare and then to work. We are starting to work closely with the NHS, especially in relation to the maternity element and what the barriers are to people being able to get into work in health.

Transport to employment could be a game changer. This is a new programme, and we are just starting to get people coming into our system. We are linking the system with our mobility as a service platform to make it easier for people to engage. The Department for Work and Pensions, our local enterprise partnerships and Jobcentre Plus have been absolutely brilliant in meeting us and getting the message out to people.

I think that the scheme could be scalable. We are hoping to be able to come up with a way of calculating, for monitoring and evaluation purposes, how much it saves the system down the road. People might think, "Oh! These are quite expensive interventions." However, we have one

person already who is in work and has had difficulties getting to work, and who is saving for a motorbike to replace what they are relying on at the moment. If that one person is in work, how much will that save for all of government down the road? That is the real power of the programme. It will be life changing for people who are struggling with the cost of transport or who have no transport available to get to childcare. Childcare is expensive enough as it is. If you get the free childcare that is available, that is great, but is it possible to get there?

I am genuinely excited about that programme. However, it is early days and my appeal is for the funding to go on for more than one year. I know that everything has one-year funding, and I am sure that the committee will want to discuss multiyear funding at some point. However, we have been told that the funding for that programme is for one year. Right at the start, while we are setting it up—that includes establishing the front-facing platform; doing the procurement to make the services available; involving the LEPs in paying for some of it from their money; and getting the jobcentres geared up—we have had to plan for how we exit if the fund ends after this year. Right at the beginning, we are having to think about sustainability beyond this year. As you can imagine, it is challenging to do all that in a 12-month period. We need to get results and we want people to benefit and ensure that we do not just suddenly snatch something away from them in an inappropriate manner.

The funding for that programme is for a year at the moment, and year-on-year funding is hugely challenging. However, the programme could make a massive difference. I hope that we will be able to prove that it is scalable and will have an impact on all the issues that you have raised to do with rural connectivity and rural communities, as well as for people in urban areas who struggle to get to the work that they do at the time that they do it.

Lloyd Melville: I am sure that people in Transport Scotland are listening, and we can follow up with them on longer-term funding.

I want to come on to mobility as a service, which we have briefly touched on. I know that Tactran has been working with Dundee and Angus College and NHS Tayside on mobility as a service. Can you tell us how those pilots went?

Mark Speed: Just to give the committee an insight, I point out that there were five pilots, and ours is the last one that is still going. All of them were really interesting in their own ways and in how they approached the issue. The reason why ours is still going is because we have a destination and so we have clientele, and we have worked with the clientele to change our platform and to

remove barriers that they have identified, which are very different. We started with one department in the NHS, and we are beginning to go to other departments. I know that the NHS is interested in taking the approach nationally but, obviously, that is a long-term aspiration. Three organisations were involved—the college, the NHS and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority. We are expanding the platform, and we now have local authorities that have mobility as a service in the front end, and we are in talks with universities and other colleges to extend the system.

People might wonder—I did, at first—why we are building a journey planner when you can just google it. However, it is a very different platform. It is not just about planning, booking and payments—as I say, it is bespoke. At the beginning of the pilot, we spent a lot of time, particularly with the NHS, considering what difficulties patients and people faced in getting there, and the feedback from that has allowed us to adapt our platform in really good ways. For instance, to take away anxiety—people have anxiety about using public transport—we now have a system in which, if something goes wrong with a planned journey, something kicks in that tells you that there is an alternative journey and plans that.

We are also working closely with the national smart ticketing advisory board, on which I am an observer. A question was asked about that earlier. One reason why smart ticketing has taken so long is because of the number of systems that are out there and the compatibility of those systems. We feel that we are going to need some form of mobility as a service platform in that new system.

Lloyd Melville: Thank you for bringing up that issue, because I have a question on it. I have with me a 74-page Transport Scotland report on mobility as a service. One of the points that it brings up is that, in some of the trials, the pilot projects gravitated towards a single back-end app—a base app that they could base everything on—that would point towards a national roll-out. The report notes that the key barrier to pursuing that is that it would be reliant on a set of high-quality transport options being available. Is it not a chicken-and-egg scenario in that you need to improve transport to get to mobility as a service, or can it be done at present as we try to improve transport?

11:15

Mark Speed: The data that we get back from mobility as a service is a really good planning tool, because it means that we see not only where people successfully plan their journeys but where they fail to do so.

We have been working with the NHS, and one of the big parts of the work that has come out of that is on non-appearances for appointments and how much they cost the NHS. Through the work that we are doing with departments, they are looking at it and saying, “Okay, well, people can’t get here by public transport, so can we change our booking system for patients coming in?”. We are trying to link the transport to employment through the MAAS platform. Getting somebody a bike could also be an option through the people and place programme.

Really good information comes out of the MAAS tool and back to us, so it is not necessarily a chicken-and-egg situation, but some decisions will need to be made fairly quickly. As has been established, the MAAS work has been sitting for a period of time. It is a long piece of work, but we will come up with what technology requirements are needed in that space. The Traveline Scotland app is still there, and we are working on making connections with it as it is developed.

It is really important to keep the MAAS box on, because investment has gone into it and, as you know, if you turn the technology box off, you might as well throw it in the bin; you have to keep it updated and secure. At the moment, it costs Transport Scotland less than £100,000 a year to keep the MAAS platform going and to develop it a little bit. This year, we will invest about £300,000 in the platform, because we are investing in it through the transport to employment—T2E—project and linking it with that. The people and place programme is also looking at it and linking it with DRT services. We are building a holistic system: it is putting information out to people, connecting people with services and giving us information.

I would like to spend more time with the team to look at how we can pull out better information. We are developing that, but it is not costing a huge amount of money to keep the platform going while the other elements are being fitted into place.

Lloyd Melville: Is it your view that the current barrier to a national roll-out is the smart ticketing advisory board not moving quickly enough?

Mark Speed: No, I do not want to criticise the board for not going quickly enough, because the issue is incredibly complex. There might be a question about whether we need to build a new system, give it time and then move towards a national roll-out. However, as you are probably aware, the ticket barrier technology at train stations is 35 to 40 years old, and we have to get it to work with a new system.

I do not think that the board is taking too long. You have to get the pieces in place before committing to where you are going with technology. I am certain that we need a MAAS

platform of some sort, because integrated ticketing systems abroad have such functions and technologies contained within them.

Lloyd Melville: You are investing £300,000 this year. Are you confident that you will be able to maintain that on a multiyear basis?

Mark Speed: My funding is year to year. I could try to—

Lloyd Melville: Have you been given any assurances about it?

Mark Speed: There are no assurances about any budget lasting more than one financial year.

Lloyd Melville: Okay. That is me.

The Convener: I will conclude with some questions about active travel and e-bikes, which I will put to Ewan Wallace first.

I was quite alarmed to see the impact that the removal of multiyear funding for active travel developments has had on those developments. Can you give us a bit of colour, from your knowledge, on which active travel developments have been reduced as a result of the removal of the multiyear funding?

Ewan Wallace: For a number of years, general grant money has come through to each individual local authority. That has included indicative amounts for each authority to advance active travel, particularly through the capital grant side of things.

What we have clearly seen, over a period of time, is a move towards specific grants. I referred earlier to the extensive work that took place with Transport Scotland colleagues on the active travel improvement funding that was put in place; the RTPs and SCOTS worked proactively to ensure that, through the previous parliamentary session, significant amounts of money came to local authorities and RTPs for the development and delivery of active travel projects, including specific ones such as the people and place programme, which you will have heard about. Across the whole spectrum of investment and the overall amounts of money that had been given, we were in a pretty positive place.

We still have to work out where things go next and the amounts of money that will be available for those types of projects. On the back of a change in legislation a few years ago, RTP colleagues now have the ability to manage capital funding, in particular, and that will really help when it comes to looking at cross-boundary and larger-scale active travel projects. The RTPs can hold a level of reserve, which will allow them to plan on a multiyear basis and then work things through with their constituent local authorities. That is probably where the discussions between the RTPs and

local authorities are at the moment: how do we take the available funding—however it will be allocated and whatever the decision looks like—and build it into a collective, strategic-level investment portfolio for active travel?

There has been good documentary evidence of the impact of active travel. For example, good evaluation reports on the people and place programme have been fed back, and evaluation reports on many individual projects in different parts of Scotland have shown positive health and societal impacts, too. Our conference this year had a positive story to tell about work in the town of Arbroath, the impact of active travel there and how that had been delivered in a collaborative way. We know about the positives of such an approach, but the question is what things will look like in this parliamentary session with regard to the amount of money that will be available.

Finally, I would say, from a local authority perspective, that multiple pots of funding can be quite difficult to manage, but that is where work with RTP colleagues comes in very useful, because they can say, “Okay—this is where everything is sitting. Let’s see how we can manage it as effectively as possible.” It is not great to have too many funds, but if the overall amount is reduced, the local authority then has to decide how much of its own capital money it will want to invest not just in putting in place new schemes but in maintaining schemes when they require to be upgraded or repaired or to have a little bit of maintenance done in future. After all, you can increase the asset, but you still have to manage it.

The Convener: This is your chance to speak clearly on the issue. There is a lot of anger in the active travel community about projects being delayed as a result of the people and place fund moving to single-year funding. From what I can see, the impact has been quite significant; indeed, I have a list of a number of projects that have been delayed for several years.

Perhaps I can come to Bruce Kiloh. What projects have been delayed, and why? How can that situation be rectified?

Bruce Kiloh: The issue is taking up quite a lot of our time at the moment, and I have a couple of things to say about it.

The people and place and transport to employment programmes are good examples of the regional devolution that has already taken place between Transport Scotland and the RTPs. They are working; indeed, as Ewan Wallace has said, the evaluation reports on the people and place programme not just in our area but in other RTP areas have been really positive.

Adjusting to the new system has involved a very difficult learning curve for us and our partners—the councils and the third sector—and, from our perspective, single-year funding, whether it be for people and place, transport to employment or anything else, is certainly not conducive to strategic planning and project development. I am happy to come back to you on the details of any projects that have been delayed because of that approach.

SPT has always said that we want to have multiyear funding so that we have certainty for transport planning and project delivery across the piece. We are grateful for the funding that we get, whether it is our general funding or the people and place and transport to employment funding, but having funding for only one year is very difficult and results in huge uncertainty for SPT's planning and that of our partners. Some of the organisations that we deal with through the people and place funding are not big, but they do an amazing job in encouraging behavioural change by, for example, teaching kids how to ride bikes, building confidence and improving their mental health. Those organisations do amazing work, and it is not right that the sword of Damocles hangs over them every year.

The Convener: The impact is quite dramatic in Glasgow. Originally, under the connecting Glasgow master plan, there was to be 270km of segregated cycle routes by 2032. However, following the simple act of moving from multiyear funding to single-year funding, the figure dropped to 54km. Why is there not outrage about that?

Bruce Kiloh: I think that there is among the organisations that are involved. Over recent years, there has been growth in active travel through the work of organisations such as Sustrans—or the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust—councils, third sector partners and SPT. That has put active travel on the map, so to speak, and it is now a firm part of the transport network.

Why has the issue not become a political issue or got more publicity? There is a question mark over that. There was a lot of public interest in the bus reform work that we did, which we talked about earlier, so I am not sure why the switch to single-year funding has not caused more concern. We very much support Glasgow City Council and the other partners involved in the connecting Glasgow project. We would like the target to go back up to its previous level and to have conversations about road space allocation, bus priority, how we fit in the Clyde metro and how we fit in cycle lanes. All those questions still need to be answered.

Single-year funding is not acceptable. As I said, it is not conducive to strategic planning and, as you have outlined, it will have a direct impact on

people's opportunities to walk, wheel and cycle in the future.

The Convener: Occasionally, I cycle from home into Edinburgh. At the Fife end, it is mostly okay, and I can use the Roseburn path and go through the Dalmeny estate. That is all great, but it is like dicing with death when I get into the city centre. The Roseburn link is a great investment. We went to see it, and it is fantastic, because it connects the Roseburn path to the canal. That is outstanding, but we need more such projects if we are ever to get more people to use their bikes in the city centre. In today's paper, there was a report of a cyclist being assaulted by a motorist because of that conflict. We need to have segregated paths.

I had hoped that you and your colleagues would have been a bit more agitated about the situation, because we need to make it clear to the Government that, if we are to have any chance of shifting from vehicles to bikes or walking, we must take the simple step of moving back to multiyear funding. If what I have set out is the dramatic impact of changing to single-year funding, surely that is the logical thing to do.

Anyway, that was more of a rant than anything else. However, it is not a case of special pleading, because I know that other people use bikes, too.

Graham Simpson: I agree with you completely on that point, convener. The figures that you read out are stark.

To be frank, one of the reasons why there is not much outrage is down to some of our colleagues. Generally, politicians and other people in politics are not as passionate about the subject as you and I are. Some of them are dead against spending money on active travel, which is why we do not have outrage.

Investing in active travel would benefit the health of the nation and, I would argue, the economy—it would certainly benefit local economies. For some of the bike hire schemes in Edinburgh and Glasgow, uptake has been massively successful. I was reading that, on one route in Glasgow, there are more people cycling than there are driving. That shows that, if we invest in such routes, people will use them.

The outrage needs to come from you and me, and from others on the committee, because some of our colleagues let us down. That has been a long-standing problem, so perhaps the committee could take up the issue and champion it.

That was not a question. It was another rant.

The Convener: But we feel better for having had a rant.

On that point, I will conclude the evidence session, because we have kept the witnesses half

an hour beyond the time that was set out. We all appreciate your answers. This was an introductory session to allow the committee to understand the good work that you do, and it will certainly inform our further evidence sessions.

I conclude the public part of our meeting.

11:31

Meeting continued in private until 12:04.

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