



Time to Take Back our Buses Petition Hand-in and Meeting with Cllr Susan Aitken to discuss Glasgow's Public Transport

Wednesday 29 January 2020, 3pm

Get Glasgow Moving's proposed Discussion Points:

1) Update on Council investigations to buy back First Glasgow

On 27 June 2019, Glasgow City Council [approved a motion](#) requiring officers to 'investigate further what the process of acquiring and operating bus operational assets could involve', and to report back to the Transport Delivery Steering Group. We would like to know how this is developing and when the report is due. We would like to attend the Transport Delivery Steering Group as co-opted members (this was proposed as one of the outcomes of our first [presentation to the WECCE Committee](#) on 24 January 2019, but has not yet been followed-up by Officers).

2) Get Glasgow Moving's ideas for buying back First Glasgow

[Building a World-Class Bus System for Britain](#) shows that across Europe and beyond many local authorities are bringing bus services back into local/regional ownership to improve services *and* reduce operational costs in the long-term.

With First Glasgow being up for sale we have a golden opportunity to do the same. We estimate the cost to be approx. £200 million (the £110 million paid by First for Strathclyde's Buses in 1996 plus inflation).

We believe it is essential that this cost is spread across the region (either between the 8 councils represented by the Glasgow City Region Cabinet, or the 12 councils represented by SPT) for two key reasons:

- a) because it means less financial investment required from each council
- b) because it is essential that we have a regional operator, which can work in harmony with the Regional Transport Authority to serve all corners of our 'travel to work area'.

We call on Glasgow City Council to lead these negotiations and to demand that the Scottish Government provides additional funding if necessary. Aberdeen City Council told us they had considered collaborating with other Council's and the Scottish Government to buy out First Aberdeen, is this something the Glasgow City Council has considered?

3) Transport Governance

Big issues and questions loom over the governance of transport in the Glasgow region. Our current Regional Transport Authority (SPT) does not have the powers or the funding to properly do its job and deliver the world-class, fully-integrated and accessible public transport network which our campaign demands. Uncertainty over our transport governance has been caused by:

- The 2017 [SNP manifesto](#) commitment to set-up 'A Transport for Glasgow body, to implement a new integrated transport strategy for the city'.
- The Connectivity Commission's [recommendation](#) to replace SPT with a 'Glasgow City Region Development Agency to plan and coordinate transport infrastructure at the city region level'.
- The National Transport Strategy's [conclusion](#) that 'current arrangements [for transport governance] are no longer sustainable'.

We would like to know what is happening!

We believe that any new Regional Transport Authority must:

- a) be explicitly public transport focussed (i.e not be a 'Development Agency')
- b) have all the powers and funding necessary to do its job, as outlined by the Connectivity Commission (especially revenue raising powers and traffic management and land use planning powers)
- c) cover the region's whole 'travel to work area' (ie. Transport for *Greater Glasgow*)
- d) and most importantly, be democratically accountable and to have workers, passengers and community groups represented on its board.

4) Seizing new Bus Franchising powers

New powers to re-regulate the bus network were passed in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. This means we can now follow the lead of Transport for Greater Manchester, who are utilising these powers to deliver '[Our Network](#)' – a world-class, fully-integrated and accessible public transport network for their city region.

- The 2017 [SNP manifesto](#) committed the council to 'Investigate local bus franchising to deliver a more comprehensive, accessible network for communities' and to deliver 'A smart one-ticket system for use across all public transport'.
- The Connectivity Commission said its 'firm view is the powers in the new Scottish Transport Bill should be deployed to regulate the bus network' if partnership continues to fail. Partnership has failed and will continue to fail Glasgow.

As [Building a World-Class Bus System for Britain](#) clearly shows:

'No partnership model – no matter how it is framed – can achieve the transformative change that is needed: it cannot enable a local authority to plan and deliver a comprehensive area-wide bus network; cannot enable creation of a single easy-to-understand fares structure; cannot allow timetables and services to be coordinated; cannot guarantee network stability and easy-to-find comprehensive information; and cannot enable costs of concessionary fares payments to be brought under control.' p.12



We would like to know how these ‘investigations’ have developed.

We want to ensure that both the Glasgow City Region Cabinet and SPT commit to putting a region-wide bus franchising framework at the heart of all local/regional transport strategies and demand that the Scottish Government provides additional funding if necessary.

Although there is a start-up cost for franchising, the report quoted above shows that we will save money in the long-term from bringing our buses back into public control.

If we don’t seize this opportunity to prepare a region-wide franchising framework, we will fall yet further behind other UK cities in terms of productivity, inequality, carbon emissions and air pollution.

5) Free Public Transport for COP26

The Council’s Climate Emergency Working Group [Recommendations](#), approved by council on 26 September 2019, recommend utilising ‘franchising powers’, ‘seizing the opportunity of First Glasgow’s sale’ to investigate re-municipalisation, as well as making a ‘formal assessment of the potential for making the transition to a public transport system that is free to use’. [Public transport is already free](#) in more than 100 forward-thinking towns and cities across the world, including most recently [Kansas](#) (population 490,000) and [Calais](#). This must also become Glasgow’s ambition.

In the next few months Get Glasgow Moving will be working with the Campaign Against Climate Change and the Glasgow Trades Council to launch a campaign demanding free public transport across the city region during COP26 (9 – 19 Nov 2020). This will be the perfect opportunity to run a pilot project, to demonstrate its success and to show delegates visiting from across the world our real ambitions to address the climate crisis.

We would like the Glasgow City Council to get behind this campaign and help secure the funding necessary from the Scottish Government/UK Government and/or the UN.