

SPT chair: “I believe people in the West of Scotland will face future cuts to public transport”

July 8, 2020



The chair of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has welcomed emergency funding from the Scottish Government, but says it doesn't go far enough.

The comments from Councillor Dr Martin Bartos, chair of SPT, which runs Glasgow Subway, comes after the Government announced it would provide up to £9 million of emergency funding for Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Trams.

It is in response to the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the measures in place from July to the end of September to support services throughout this period.

The funding announcement follows detailed discussions with SPT and Edinburgh Trams regarding available resources due to the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 has had on travel demand.

SPT chair, Councillor Dr Martin Bartos, said: “This funding package is designed to address the losses which

SPT now faces from July to September and goes some way towards recognising the important work of SPT bus and subway teams during this global public health emergency to help key workers and public undertake necessary journeys.

“Whilst the announcement today of additional funding is welcome, it fails to cover the losses from March to June and does not recognise the changed landscape which future public transport faces beyond September.

“Without further support addressing the millions of pounds of losses already incurred during lockdown doing as government requested, and without clarity of how additional costs can be managed beyond September, I believe people in the West of Scotland will face future cuts to public transport. SPT will however continue to engage with government and carefully consider how best SPT can support transport to meet the public’s needs over both the short and longer term.”

Edinburgh Trams chair Martin Dean welcomed the funding, but says 2020 will remain a challenging year for the organisation.

Announcing the funding, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson said: “The Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Trams provide key connections within our two biggest cities and as we emerge through the stages of lockdown demand for public transport will continue to rise. The services provide essential capacity and link with bus, rail and park and ride facilities.

“Over the next three months we will provide up to £9 million of financial support to operators to enable services to continue. Any restrictions on these services could have placed unsustainable demands on other modes, especially bus and so this funding will assist capacity across all public transport.

“I would like to thank all the people working across the light rail sector who have, and continue to, provide these important connections. These services have allowed our key workers and others who needed to travel for essential journeys to do so during very challenging circumstances. Going forward the subway and tram will help our wider society and economy recover as we emerge through the next phases of easing lockdown.

“We will continue to monitor the demand, capacity and costs of support across all transport modes over the coming months.”

Photo credit: Strathclyde Partnership for Transport