



Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

Equality Impact Assessment Interim Report



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Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION 5**
 - 1.1 Overview..... 5
- 2 Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy 6**
 - 2.1 Project Background 6
- 3 Assessment Framework 8**
 - 3.1 Introduction 8
 - 3.2 Guide Questions..... 8
 - 3.3 Baseline Data Sources 8
 - 3.4 Assessment Criteria Matrix 9
 - 3.5 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation 9
- 4 Baseline Conditions 11**
 - 4.1 Overview..... 11
 - 4.2 Age..... 12
 - 4.3 Disability 13
 - 4.4 Gender Reassignment 14
 - 4.5 Pregnancy and Maternity 15
 - 4.6 Race..... 15
 - 4.7 Religion or Belief 15
 - 4.8 Sex..... 16
 - 4.9 Sexual Orientation 16
 - 4.10 Marriage and Civil Partnership 17
 - 4.11 SPT Region Employment & Demographic Profile 17
- 5 Equality Impact Assessment..... 18**
 - 5.1 Business as Usual 18
 - 5.2 Voluntary Partnerships 28
 - 5.3 Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) 38
 - 5.4 Franchising 51
 - 5.5 Municipal Bus Operators 64
- 6 Summary 79**
- 7 References 80**

Tables

Table 1.1. Report Structure 5
Table 3.1: Assessment Criteria Matrix 9
Table 5.1:Option 1 – Business as Usual: Impact on Protected Characteristics 18
Table 5.2. Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships: Impact on Protected Characteristics. 28
Table 5.3:Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs): Impact on Protected
Characteristics. 38
Table 5.4:Option 4 – Franchising: Impact on Protected Characteristics. 51
Table 5.5:Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators: Impact on Protected Characteristics. 64
Table 6.1:Summary of Impacts 79
Table A.1: Age Profile by SPT Region 82
Table A.2: Disability Profile by SPT Region 82
Table A.3: Gender Reassignment Profile by SPT Region 83
Table A.4: Pregnancy and Maternity Profile by SPT Region 83
Table A.5: Race and Ethnicity Profile by SPT Region 83
Table A.6 Religion or Belief Profile by SPT Region 84
Table A.7: Sex Profile by SPT Region 84
Table A.8: Sexual Orientation Profile by SPT Profile 84
Table A.9: Marriage and Civil Partnership Profile by SPT Region 85

Appendices

Appendix A Baseline Data

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out a 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (PSED). This requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The public sector equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require listed authorities to undertake an impact assessment in relation to the needs outlined in section 149(1) of the Act and take account of the results of the assessment in development of the policy. The approach to the assessment has been informed by reference to the Scottish Government's general guidance on the PSED (Scottish Government, 2016) and relevant guidance on application of the duty in Scotland (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016).

This Interim Report sets out the background to the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy study and presents the evidence base and Public Sector Equality Impact Assessment process to be undertaken at an interim impact assessment stage during the options appraisal stage of the study.

Table 1.1. Report Structure

Section	Description
Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy project background
Section 3	Assessment framework and guide questions
Section 4	Baseline conditions
Section 5	Equality Impact Assessment
Section 6	Summary of impact assessment

2 Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

2.1 Project Background

The development of a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy has its foundations embedded in SPT's A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland (2023 – 2038) (or 'RTS'), and its vision, priorities and objectives, and clear policy statement setting out the aim for a world class passenger focused public transport system.

The RTS was published in 2023, and reinforces national policy ambitions, setting out the following Vision for transport in the region:

“The west of Scotland will be an attractive, resilient and well-connected place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by high quality, sustainable and low carbon transport shaped by the needs of all.”

The RTS recognises the need to invest in transformative public transport ensuring a sufficiently attractive 'offer' to move more people by more sustainable transport modes rather than by car. Therefore, a key theme within the strategy encompasses enhancing the quality and integration of public transport with a specific objective to make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone.

The RTS concluded that the **“strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network and set out a policy aiming for a world class passenger focused public transport system”**. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 requiring consideration in the development of the SRBS.

In this regard, a previous scoping study to consider the new powers and bus improvement options available to local transport authorities under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, concluded that a truly 'fit for purpose' network would achieve the RTS objective to *'make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone with a regional public transport network that guarantees access to work, health, education and recreation – without breaking the bank or planet – and builds the foundation of a dynamic, integrated and efficient 21st century transport system, with the ultimate outcome of more people using buses'*.

The development of the world class system is guided by the RTS Connecting Places Policy theme which focuses on the spatial context for the RTS and future RTS Delivery Plans, setting out the strategic gateways, corridors and locations that will be a focus for future transport appraisal and investment to support regional development priorities, economic strategies and regional Growth Deals.

The Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy is being developed through the consideration of:

- the role of bus in delivery of the RTS
- the spatial context of the bus network
- the attributes and components of a world class bus network for the region

The option development and appraisal process will consider the operating and funding model (from the range of bus reform options available to SPT) and during the option appraisal process will be informed by a series of impact assessments including this EqIA, a Fairer Scotland Duty assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment and a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. The options to be appraised include the following:

- Option 1 – Business as usual
- Option 2 – Voluntary partnerships
- Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIP)

- Option 4 – Local Franchising
- Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operations

The appraisal will identify the most appropriate operating and funding model(s) for the region, taking into account the powers available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

An overview of each option is provided in **Section 2.2 – 2.6** of the **Options Appraisal Report**.

3 Assessment Framework

3.1 Introduction

The following guide framing questions and assessment criteria matrix will be applied to testing the performance of the emerging Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) options in relation to implementing the PSED. This provides a transparent framework to assess the extent to which emerging SRBS components promote equality of opportunity, including the removal of physical and cultural barriers to accessing and benefiting from the transport system.

The interim assessment will be informed through engagement activities with relevant groups of interest and impact (as discussed below).

3.2 Guide Questions

The framing questions, as set out below, have been designed to allow for testing the implementation of the PSED.

The framing questions have been applied in relation to the three key aims of the Duty:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity; and
- Fostering good relations.

The second of these aims involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages affecting people due to their protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Guide Questions: Public Sector Equality Duty

Will the SRBS...

- *Result in any likely different or disproportionate effects on persons with protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010, namely age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation?*

How might the SRBS support SPT to fulfil the General Duty, specifically:

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct,*
- *Advance equality of opportunity, and*
- *Foster good relations?*

3.3 Baseline Data Sources

A range of data sources were used to inform the baseline, including:

- National Records of Scotland (2022) – Mid-2021 Population Estimates Scotland.

- 2011 Census – Scotland.
- Public Health Scotland (PHS).
- ScotPHO Profiles.
- Scottish Government – Equality Evidence Finder.

The data sources listed above are fully referenced in **Chapter 7** and in **Appendix A**.

3.4 Assessment Criteria Matrix

The following matrix will be used to assess any disproportionate impact of the emerging SRBS on protected characteristics.

Table 3.1: Assessment Criteria Matrix

Impact Score	Description	Symbol
Major Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes significantly to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	++
Minor Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics, economic and social issues, but not significantly	+
Neutral / Negligible Effect	The policy has neutral or negligible effect on the requirements of the PSED.	0
Minor Adverse Effect	The policy adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	-
Major Adverse Effect	The policy significantly adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	--
Uncertain Effect	The policy has an uncertain relationship to the PSED requirements or insufficient detail, or information may be available to enable an assessment to be made.	?
No Clear Relationship	There is no clear relationship between the proposed policy and the achievement of the PSED	~

The assessment criteria provide an objective means of undertaking and reporting the equalities assessments of the transport policies on a consistent basis. The colour coding also allows for rapid identification of the impacts most likely to be significant, generally those assessed as having a major positive or negative effect. Commentary will be provided on any identified impacts in relation to the policy options and protected characteristics.

During the appraisal of options for the strategy, an interim assessment is to be undertaken on the options being developed and appraised toward the development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy. This assessment will support the options appraisal process. A final assessment would also be undertaken as the Strategy itself is developed.

The interim assessment will be undertaken using the Guide questions and assessment criteria matrix as set out above, and informed through an engagement exercise, as discussed below. The outcome of the assessment and engagement will be clearly stated in the appraisal outcomes, with options adapted if required, given the assessment findings.

3.5 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

Engagement to inform the assessment has been conducted in two stages:

- During the Option Appraisal, engagement has been undertaken with local authorities and bus operators in the Strathclyde region.
- As part of a wider consultation exercise planned at the end of the options appraisal process, where engagement would be undertaken and targeted towards a range of key stakeholders pertinent to the duty as well as more generally through the planned public engagement exercise.

4 Baseline Conditions

4.1 Overview

Different people use the bus network at different times, more or less frequently, and for different purposes. People with protected characteristics are more likely to use and rely on public transport, particularly bus services therefore a lack of public transport services and options disproportionately impacts on disabled people, women and younger and older people in particular. Some groups of people, such as people from ethnic minority groups, disabled people, young carers, young mothers, and care leavers, are typically less mobile and more reliant on public transport (Scottish Government, 2017). This may result in differential impacts of changes to service provision for a particular time of day or route for people in different groups of protected characteristics. Policies or measures around service provision, information, price and scheduling in the emerging SRBS are therefore likely to impact groups related to protected characteristics in different ways.

It is also important to acknowledge the links between socio-economic disadvantage (which is expressly considered as part of the Fairer Scotland Duty¹) and many of the groups with protected characteristics. Women, people with disabilities and people in some ethnic groups are more likely to have lower incomes or live in areas of deprivation therefore they are typically also affected by issues around affordability of transport, and dependency on public transport to access employment, health facilities and other services.

SPT identify that people can be deterred from using public transport over real or perceived safety fears (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). This can be related to experiences of racism or harassment or relate to the physical environment around transport hubs. Key evidence identified by SPT includes:

- Only three in five people (62%) feel safe and secure on bus services in the evening – one of the lowest levels among Scottish regions – and three in four people (74%) feel safe and secure on rail services in the evening.
- Safety and security problems are more likely to affect women, older people, younger people, LGBT+ people and black and ethnic minority people.
- Experience of racism or harassment and/or having been the victim of hate crimes in the past prevents some people from using public transport.
- A perceived lack of safety also deters people from using public transport.
- Other safety identified problems related to public transport usage include travelling to and waiting for services at transport stops or stations particularly in the evening, at unstaffed or isolated locations and where there are low levels of lighting.
- Quality and maintenance of pavements and footpaths including routes to public transport is a problem especially for older and disabled people and for people travelling with children in prams and buggies.

Impacts are likely to be compounded in rural areas where current levels of public transport provision and connectivity can act as barriers giving rise to a range of socio-economic impacts and equalities issues. Retention of bus services is essential in rural areas as a lifeline service for many people who do not have any alternative transport options. Bus services in rural and island communities are also experiencing a sharp decline in use, heightened by the impacts of COVID-19. Key problems with bus services identified from the SPT's public survey in 2019 related to service reliability, cost of fares and frequency of services with a lack of direct services being reported as the most common response as to why public transport was not used more frequently (Stantec UK, 2021). Data presented to support the RTS Case for Change identified a 31% reduction in passenger bus journeys made in the SPT region between 2007 and 2019 (Stantec, 2021). These are particular challenges in the wake of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on declining public transport use particularly in rural areas where bus service provision is a complex balance between commercial and supported services.

¹ See separate Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Report

Analysis undertaken as part of the Case for Change for the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (Stantec, 2023) highlights that 22% of households across the SPT area do not have access to a bus stop (within a suitable walking catchment defined (for this analysis) as within 400m in large urban and urban areas, within 600m with accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas); 40% of households (defined as having access to a bus stop) have a bus less often than every 30 minutes, with this rising to 65% for stops located outside of Glasgow; 43% of households outside of Glasgow have no direct bus to Glasgow in the afternoon, increasing to 46% in the evening; nearly a quarter of households (23%) have no access to a service after 1900 (rising to 36% outside of Glasgow); and nearly 1 in 3 households (31%) are not served by a Sunday service. This limits the use of the bus network by many including for employment, education, leisure and social activities, especially in more rural areas.

Review of key information sources and recent literature has suggested several trends and issues relating to a number of the protected characteristics which should be considered in the EqIA process. These are highlighted below.

Baseline demographic data for each protected characteristic is presented in **Appendix A** for each of the council areas in the SPT region. Where possible the most up to date data has been used, however, for some protected characteristics the 2011 Census is the most recent source.

4.2 Age

The increase in the population of older age groups has been much higher than younger age groups over the last 20 years (National Records of Scotland, 2020). Older people tend to travel relatively less often and for shorter distances than other adults (Fatima, Moridpour, De Gruyter, & Saghapour, 2020) although they are more likely to use public transport for journeys in comparison with other age groups. They are also less likely to drive every day or hold a driving licence. For those older people who are no longer working, many are more likely to travel between the hours of 9:00 and 15:00, with most trips for shopping (mostly undertaken by older women) (Su & Bell, 2012). Accessibility issues are more likely to affect older people than other age groups with some older people having more limited mobility, hearing or vision impairments and difficulties in alighting to and from transport services, using station facilities or standing for long periods of time (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022). Older people experiencing difficulties of access to public transport may be hampered in accessing key services such as healthcare.

Younger and older people are less likely to drive and more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Issues facing older people in accessing public transport include inaccessible vehicles, journey comfort, frequency of bus services and poor integration between different transport services (as well as cross cutting issues shared with other protected groups such as hearing and visual problems and reduced personal mobility) (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services. They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults.

In the last 15 years, the youngest adults (16–24-year-olds) have been consistently more likely to be in relative poverty compared to older adults (Scottish Government, 2023). According to Davis (2014), younger people may have a more local focus than the population as a whole. This suggests that younger people from disadvantaged communities may look for jobs and training opportunities only in their local area and those easily accessible via public transport.

People on low incomes are more likely to be in temporary, part-time jobs and in services such as retail, catering and residential care that require working unsocial hours or doing shift work. They are also less likely to have access to private vehicles (Public Health Scotland, 2023). Young people (16-24 years) were least likely to be in contractually secure employment. Part-time employment is also more common for those in employment ages 16 to 24 years, where 46.5% were working part time (the majority being students), and for those ages 65 years and over where 57.3 per cent were working part-time (Scottish Government, 2021). This suggests that younger people and older people will be disproportionately impacted by the reduced level of service across public transport.

Disabled people and older people with mobility needs have found the significant reduction in public transport services following COVID-19 to be particularly difficult to deal with. These groups may be less likely to have access to reliable, accessible and accurate journey planning information when trying to make travel plans. They

can also be excluded from accessing information provided in digital formats due to a lack of access to, or the skills and confidence to use (and/or afford) digital technology.

The SPT region is experiencing population ageing. The changing age structure has wide-ranging implications for public policy, demand and provision of public services, labour market characteristics and tax revenues. Population ageing also has substantial transport impacts due to changes in connectivity and accessibility needs (Stantec UK, 2021)

Equalities issues relevant to children and young people who form part of this protected characteristic group are addressed in more detail in the evidence base presented in support of the CRW duty assessment report.

4.3 Disability

Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework (SATF) supports implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Scotland and is a key framework for the RTS. In each of the Council areas in the SPT region, between one fifth and one third of the adult population has a limiting long term physical or mental health problem (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a). Yet, SPT identify that there is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey, and a lack of consistent provision of audio/visual travel information on board transport services. For example, NHS websites tend to signpost to Traveline Scotland or Google maps, neither of which can specifically identify accessible transport options needed for planning a journey. These websites also have poor accessibility features for people with visual impairments (MACS, 2019).

Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving licence than those who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%) (Transport Scotland, 2021b). Those who have driving licences are less likely to drive everyday than those who are not disabled (25% compared to 47%). Permanently sick or disabled adults in Scotland are significantly more likely to travel by bus (19% travelling 2 or 3 times per week compared to 9% of all adults in 2019) and they are less likely to travel by train compared to all adults (Transport Scotland, 2019b). These groups often experience higher levels of inequality and accessible transport is an important aspect of helping disabled people enjoy a better quality of life.

Poverty rates remain higher for households in which somebody is disabled compared to those where no-one is disabled (Scottish Government, 2023). People who have a long-term illness or disability that limits their daily activities are more likely to live in households that do not have access to a private car. About one in every two individuals whose daily activities are limited a lot by long-term health problems or disability live in a household without access to a private car, compared with just one in five people whose daily activities are not limited by health problems or disability (National Records of Scotland, 2011).

An individual will generally use public transport less frequently if they experience a greater number of difficulties completing daily tasks or where lack of accessible infrastructure and services presents a barrier (Yarde, Clery, Tipping, & Kiss, 2020). This may include:

- A lack of cycle infrastructure for adapted bicycles and costs associated with non-standard cycles; and
- Safety and security concerns when using public transport, especially at night. 58% of disabled people agreed that they 'Feel safe and secure on the bus at night' compared to 73% of non-disabled people (Transport Scotland, 2021b).

Evidence reviewed by SPT has identified that many disabled people are not able to or are not confident about leaving home on their own due to uncertainty about the physical environment and of the realities of making journeys on transport services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Key accessibility issues in the SPT area are identified as:

- Journey planning: There is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey.
- Journey assistance: Journey assistance services are not provided in a consistent way across public transport operators, there is a lack of co-ordination between operators and modes and a need for

improved approaches to assist people who encounter problems when a journey is already in progress.

- Accessible infrastructure: Many bus, Subway and rail stations and stops in the region are not fully accessible for disabled people to be able to board and alight services. Many bus and taxi vehicles are not yet fully wheelchair accessible, and the Subway is only partly accessible.
- Physical environment: Pavements and streets including routes to public transport and interchange connections are not always fully accessible or well-maintained whilst navigation aids can be inconsistent or not working.

People with disabilities tend to avoid travelling during peak hours. On weekdays a greater proportion of disabled people's journeys are in the middle of the day, and fewer before 9:30am and after 4:30pm. For those whose disability limits activities a lot, there is an even greater proportion of travel between 9:30 and 4:30 (Transport Scotland, 2021b).

A lack of accessible travel information including timetables, journey planning information and audio / visual announcements can create barriers for those with sight or hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, mental health conditions or neuro-diverse conditions (Jarvis, 2020). However, travel behaviour among groups of people with disabilities varies widely as the behaviour of people with specific types of disabilities is often markedly different to each other (Clery, Kiss, Taylor, & Gill, 2017). Whilst most disabled travellers in Scotland rely on public transport, many experience difficulties when travelling. Problems include poor service frequency, inadequate infrastructure between home and stop or station, lack of suitable facilities while travelling (e.g. toilets) and difficulties physically accessing the transport (Disability Equality Scotland, 2017). Other access difficulties encountered by disabled travellers include steps or multi-layered stations, lack of trained support staff and lack of accessible connectivity between modes (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).

Women and disabled people may also face safety issues when using public transport, particularly where bus stops are situated in isolated or unsafe places (Duchene, 2011). Overall, the journeys that can be made as a disabled person may be less convenient, potentially more costly and a lower quality experience compared to other people (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a).

A 2018 survey (Disability Equality Scotland, 2018) found that access to hospitals by transport for disabled people was most difficult in rural areas, evidencing a clear link between lack of transport and an ability for people to achieve the highest standard of physical and mental health. In rural and island areas, journey times by public transport are often long and may involve at least one interchange. This can exacerbate problems of access to health and other key services and facilities for non-car users and impact upon health outcomes and contributing to higher NHS costs.

Increasing physical activity for all groups is identified as a priority by SPT. Safe, secure, obstruction-free walking routes with well-maintained surfaces are key to facilitating more walking and wheeling by a range of disability groups (and for older people, women, teenage girls and black and minority ethnic people who are less likely to be physically active). The SPT RTS public survey also identified key factors to enable more walking for people who are blind or with visual impairment include safe, obstruction free walking routes with good surface quality and places to rest.

4.4 Gender Reassignment

Transgender people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016).

Transgender people are likely to have lower incomes and experience structural disadvantages in accessing employment and training and therefore they are at a higher risk of transport poverty. They may have concerns about using public transport or public transport facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against (Valentine, 2016) which could affect their use of the public transport network. Reddy-Best and Olson (2020) describe public transport as a site where trans people cannot be sure who is watching so are consequently 'on alert', conducting self-surveillance and controlling their behaviour to avoid harm. A survey in 2017 (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017) identified that 51% of transgender young people felt safe when using public transportation; meaning that 49% of transgender young people felt unsafe.

Limited information and data are available on the transgender population including the lived experiences of this group with regards to transport (Transport Scotland, 2021).

4.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

Mothers often have complex journey patterns e.g. making journeys between home, work, nursery, the school run and groups/clubs. Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels.

Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours (Transport Scotland, 2021).

4.6 Race

Data at a Scotland-level is limited on different ethnic minority groups (Scottish Government, 2015) and any analysis of race-based discrimination must consider the differences in people's experiences and preferences both between and within different ethnic groups (Gentin, 2011).

The last Census (2011) found that most of the population in Scotland was 'white' (96%)², with only Glasgow having a white population of less than 90%. Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British was the second largest ethnicity in Scotland (2.7%), with the largest populations being in Glasgow (8.1%), Edinburgh (5.5%) and East Renfrewshire (5.1%). Certain ethnic minority households were most likely to have no car or van available (compared to the national average of 23%) including 51% of African households, 39% of Caribbean or Black households and 36% of Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British households (Transport Scotland, 2019).

Recent research suggests that people from black and other non-white ethnic minority groups take relatively few active leisure trips such as walking or cycling (Colley & Irvine, 2018). Potential explanations can include socio-economic disadvantage, fear of discrimination, and language barriers. (Transport Scotland, 2020)

Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021). Those from black and other minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination compared to those from white ethnic groups (25% and 17% respectively) (Transport Scotland, 2022). SPT also report that the attitude of other passengers due to race or ethnicity (and religion) can limit travel choices (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.

People from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared to those from the 'White – British' and 'White – Other' groups. (Scottish Government, 2023)

As noted, people in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

4.7 Religion or Belief

There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) on the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

² This percentage includes all Census ethnic categories of 'White'. White (Scottish, Other British, Irish, Gypsy/Traveller) represent 96.8% of the total White population in Scotland and White (Polish, Other White) represents 3.2%.

4.8 Sex

Women and disabled people are less likely to drive and more likely to use buses, yet they have particular needs that are often not taken into account by transport systems which tend to be designed around the needs of some travellers and not others (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Women are much more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households. In the SPT region fewer than half (49%) of single parent households with dependent children have a car available for private use (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a).

In general, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments and are more likely to travel with young people and older people (Duchene, 2011) (Sanchez de Madariaga, 2013) and make multi-purpose trips. This influences travel behaviour and women tend to travel shorter distances within a more restricted geographical area, make more multi-stop trips, and rely more on public transport. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night.

SPT report a range of other key evidence relating to women and transport:

- Women are more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households and at greater risk of poverty than married or co-habiting households with children.
- Women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently.
- Women tend to take on a disproportionate level of care and domestic tasks, compared to men, in addition to full or part-time work, consequently, they are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes.
- Trip purposes and patterns differ for women compared to men e.g. working part-time or shifts, or in relation to caring responsibilities.
- Safety and feelings of safety have a significant impact on women's travel choices. In the UK, 72% of women were worried about experiencing sexual harassment on public transport, compared to 40% of men. This has led to a higher proportion of women (62% compared to 35% of men) who would change their behaviour to in relation to public transport to avoid sexual harassment (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020); and
- Women feel less safe than men when travelling at night. Survey data from 2022 shows that females and those who identified as either trans, non-binary or in another way were less likely to indicate that they felt safe using the bus at night either always or often and were more likely to state that they never felt safe using the bus at night compared to males (Transport Scotland 2022).

4.9 Sexual Orientation

People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGBO) are more likely to live in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults (Scottish Government, 2017b). People in the LGBO group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination (Transport Scotland, 2021). In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020).

SPT report that one in four LGBO people in Scotland have faced prejudice or discrimination and have suffered discriminatory treatment when accessing services. This has led to reluctance amongst some people in this protected characteristic group to engage in aspects of public life including accessing services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b).

A survey in 2017 (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017) identified there has been a decline in the percentage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people overall who say they feel safe on public transport, from

70% in 2012 to 67% in 2017. A more recent survey shows that those (aged 16+) who identified their sexual orientation as either gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or in another way were considerably more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination while travelling on buses – 43% compared to 18% of those who identified as straight/heterosexual (Transport Scotland, 2022).

Limited information and data are available on the lived experiences of this group with regards to transport.

4.10 Marriage and Civil Partnership

No evidence has been identified on travel in relation to marriage or civil partnership.

4.11 SPT Region Employment & Demographic Profile

Please see **Appendix A** for an overview of demographic profile and protected characteristics by geographic areas within the Strathclyde region.

5 Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 Business as Usual

Table 5.1: Option 1 – Business as Usual: Impact on Protected Characteristics

Option 1 – Business as Usual
<i>Will the SRBS options impact protected characteristics groups differentially or disproportionately...?</i>
<i>Option Specific Assessment Summary</i>
<p>Overview:</p> <p>The current bus operations in the SPT region reflect the provisions of the 1985 Transport Act. The majority of bus services are provided on a commercial basis by privately owned bus companies who recover the cost of operating their services through a mixture of farebox revenues and government payments. A minority of services are considered to be socially necessary and are provided through tendered contracts let by SPT, especially in some rural areas. In the City of Glasgow and larger towns in the region, many bus services operate frequently using modern buses equipped with good quality seating, on-board real-time information plus on-board wi-fi and charging facilities. In smaller towns and in rural areas services are typically less frequent – although there are some notable exceptions – and are operated by vehicles that may be a little older but still provide a comfortable passenger environment.</p> <p>Given the commercial nature of operations, operators tend to focus on the corridors and towns where bus ridership, and the potential for growth in ridership, is higher. This means that some communities, or links between relatively nearby communities, can receive a poor bus service or, in extreme cases, no timetabled conventional bus service at all. SPT has a budget of £10m per annum to contract with operators to fill these gaps in the commercial networks and provide socially necessary bus services. These can take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entire services using conventional buses or door-to-door dial-a-ride operations; ▪ Early morning, evening and Sunday services where the communities are served by commercial services during the rest of the week; and ▪ Extensions and diversions to commercial services that would otherwise not serve certain communities. <p>Age:</p> <p>Younger (aged 17-24) and older people (65+) are less likely to drive and are more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Older people tend to travel relatively less often and for shorter distances than other adults (Fatima, Moridpour, De Gruyter, & Saghapour, 2020). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults. Accessibility issues are more likely to affect older people than other age groups with some older people having more limited mobility, hearing or vision impairments and difficulties in alighting to</p>

and from transport services, using station facilities or standing for long periods of time (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022). Older people experiencing difficulties of access to public transport may be hampered in accessing key services, such as healthcare.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** There are currently issues related to coverage, periods of operation, and frequency of services for public transport across the SPT region. The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a business as usual situation. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, which could especially affect public transport access for younger and older people given lower rates of driving. The network that operates after 1900 and on Sundays would particularly be impacted which would adversely impact young people who work unsocial hours or are doing shift work.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity. However, bus operators in the SPT region must participate in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme which is available to the older (aged 60+) and younger people (under the age of 22). The NEC card provides holders with free bus travel in Scotland. It is therefore unlikely that affordability will impact younger and older people as a result of the NEC card.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** With the absence of any commitment to mitigate against anything more than very trivial improvements and without formalised partnership agreements it is unlikely that reliability and punctuality will improve, which will only exacerbate issues highlighted by older people e.g. standing for long periods of time.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Some efforts to integrate identity are in place, in particular around information on available services. Actions, commitments, and engagement with operators does suggest that efforts will continue to be made to improve on the current position under a business as usual situation. This may have a positive impact on older people who may find the network hard to understand.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Simplified and integrated ticketing options would promote inclusivity of bus services by benefitting older people who face challenges navigating complex ticketing systems, but this is unlikely to be delivered under a business as usual approach.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Upgrading interchanges and bus stops is a core activity of SPT across the SPT region. Inconsistencies still exist across the network requiring further action. Informal arrangements with operators could help to deliver bus stop rationalisation; however, other options offer a more formal mechanism for delivering this type of intervention.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** It is noted that the existing Glasgow Bus Alliance have outlined a Pledge to deliver reliable, up to date and consistent information and working with local authorities, SPT and Transport Scotland on elements such as a multi-operator branded app, audio-visual next stop announcements, upgrading information at busy stops, and providing better timetables, maps and fares information.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Some users, such as older adults, may face difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Customer support and feedback policies and processes currently vary between operators and areas. Glasgow Bus Alliance has several points in its Pledge around customer service, such as accurate and up to date timetable information across all platforms. This would assist some users, especially older adults, who experience difficulties in understanding timetables.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including older people and younger people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g., older people and disabled people). Currently under a business as usual model, SPT can support socially necessary bus services where there is no provision by commercial bus operators. However, the ability to do so is limited based on funding and the absence of alternative public transport options, and the need to avoid abstraction from commercial services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots:** Children, older people, and those with predisposing cardiovascular or lung disease are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality. Currently, many of the larger operators use vehicles with tracking technology, CCT and driver aids to encourage more efficient fuel consumption. A significant proportion of buses in Glasgow and Ayrshire are fully electric. However, the fragmented system currently means there is a lack of consistency in terms of what customers can expect between local authorities, services and corridors. The existing Glasgow Bus Alliance sets out pledges related to commitments to upgrade fleets in order to meet the Scottish Government net-zero pledge of 2045 and complying with the Glasgow City low emission zone. However, this would be dependent on government support and/or access to funding opportunities.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Younger (aged 17-24) and older people (65+) are less likely to drive and are more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Issues have existed within the SPT region in relation to the availability of drivers to operate the network. In recent years, this has led to some disruptions to the delivery of some services on the network. Increasing inaccessibility will only negatively impact younger and older people who rely on the bus network.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Older people have expressed concern about safety and security issues. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. It is noted that the Glasgow Bus Alliance has a pledge and related manifesto setting out ambitions for some of these topic areas and other quality and network improvements. However, it is unlikely to benefit younger or older people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Ad hoc data sharing agreements are in place between operators and local authorities. Typically, these are in place where there is partnership working towards improvements, such as in the preparation of recent Bus Partnership Fund studies in the SPT region. Typically, detailed data on bus operations and certain performance aspects, such as patronage, farebox revenues, operational costs, etc, are not forthcoming from bus operators, largely due to commercial sensitivities around this type of data. This means that it is difficult for authorities to gain a detailed, reliable and accurate view of the performance of bus network operations and related travel patterns. This does limit the extent to which authorities can consider measures to improve the performance of the bus network and the quality of the sustainable transport offering to users in the region.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Disability:

In each of the Council areas in the SPT region, between one fifth and one third of the adult population has a limiting long term physical or mental health problem ((Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a)). Yet, there is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey, and a lack of consistent provision of audio/visual travel information on board transport services. Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving licence drive than those who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%) ((Transport Scotland, 2021b)). Permanently sick or disabled adults in Scotland are significantly more likely to travel by bus (with 19% travelling by bus o 2 or 3 times per week compared to 9% of all adults in 2019) and they are less likely to travel by train compared to all adults (Transport Scotland, 2019b). These groups often experience higher levels of inequality and accessible transport is an important aspect of helping disabled people enjoy a better quality of life. Approximately, 58% of disabled people agreed that they 'Feel safe and secure on the bus at night' compared to 73% of non-disabled people (Transport Scotland, 2021b). People with disabilities tend to avoid travelling during peak hours. On weekdays a greater proportion of disabled people's journeys are in the middle of the day, and fewer before 9:30am and after 4:30pm (Transport Scotland, 2021b). A 2018 survey (Disability Equality Scotland, 2018)) found that access to hospitals by transport for disabled people was most difficult in rural areas. Overall, the journeys that can be made as a disabled person may be less convenient, potentially more costly and a lower quality experience compared to other people.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** There are currently issues related to coverage, periods of operation, and frequency of services for public transport across the SPT region. The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a business as usual situation. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, impacting access for disabled people.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity; which may particularly adversely impact on disabled people, as they often already have to take more inconvenient routes which may make journeys more costly. Despite this, affordability will not adversely impact all disabled people as many will qualify for a free bus pass. However, not all disabled people who qualify for a free bus pass will apply as some may find the application process challenging and confusing if they are unsure of their entitlement.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** With the absence of any commitment to mitigate against anything more than very trivial improvements and without formalised partnership agreements it is unlikely that reliability and punctuality will improve which will only further discourage disabled people from using the services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Some efforts to integrate identity will continue to be made to improve on the current position under a business as usual situation. This may have a positive impact on disabled people who may find the network hard to understand.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Disabled people have expressed a desire for simplified and integrated ticketing, but this is unlikely to be delivered under a business as usual approach.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Disabled people report concerns about changing from buses to other forms of transport and the first and last mile of their journey due to infrastructure challenges and a lack of modal-integration. Multimodal journeys are a particular concern because of the stress of repeatedly getting on and off public transport, finding a seat and asking for assistance. Upgrading interchanges and bus stops is a core activity of SPT and across the SPT region; however, inconsistencies still exist across the network and more action would be required to deliver the scale of improvement suggested in the policies and the types of measures to deliver these.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** Simplified and integrated ticketing options would promote inclusivity of bus services by benefitting older people who face challenges navigating complex ticketing systems, but this is unlikely to be delivered under a business as usual approach. It is noted that the existing Glasgow Bus Alliance have outlined a Pledge to deliver reliable, up to date and consistent information and working with local authorities, SPT and Transport Scotland on elements such as a multi-operator branded app, audio-visual next stop announcements, upgrading information at bus stops, and providing better timetables, maps and fares information.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers and they also report that available public transport options do not meet their needs for various reasons. These include difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). It is noted that the Glasgow Bus Alliance includes several relevant points in its Pledge around customer service, such as *“a commitment to regular engagement with local communities to seek feedback to help maintain a world class bus service.”*
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including people with disabilities) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility. SPT can support socially necessary bus services where there is no provision by commercial bus operators. However, the ability to do so is limited based on funding and the absence of alternative public transport options, and the need to avoid abstraction from commercial services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots:** Disabled people, particularly those with predisposing cardiovascular or lung disease, are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality. Additionally, disabled people express concern because of the stress of trying to get a seat on public transport. Many of the larger operators use vehicles with tracking technology, CCTV and driver aids to encourage more efficient fuel consumption. A significant proportion of buses in Glasgow and Ayrshire are fully electric. However, the fragmented system currently means there is a lack of consistency in terms of what customers can expect between local authorities, services and corridors. Therefore, it is unlikely that a business as usual scenario will benefit disabled people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers. Issues have existed within the SPT region in relation to the availability of drivers to operate the network. In recent years, this has led to some disruptions to the delivery of some services on the network.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Older people who are more likely to experience disability issues, have expressed concern about safety and security issues. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. It is noted that the Glasgow Bus Alliance has a Pledge and related manifesto setting out ambitions for some of these topic areas and other quality and network improvements. SPT and individual operators also have their own charters, although some of these are focused on complaints services or conditions of carriage only.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. However, ad hoc data sharing agreements are in place between operators

and local authorities. This does limit the extent to which authorities can consider measures to improve the performance of the bus network and the quality of the sustainable transport offering to users in the region.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Gender Reassignment:

Transgender people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016). In a survey conducted by LGBT Youth Scotland, 51% of transgender young people felt safe when using public transportation (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017).

Transgender people are likely to have lower incomes and experience structural disadvantages in accessing employment and training and therefore they are at a higher risk of transport poverty. They may have concerns about using public transport or public transport facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against which could affect their use of the public transport network (Valentine, 2016).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity; with a particularly adverse impact on transgender people as they are more likely to have lower incomes than other groups of people (Valentine, 2016).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Transgender people have expressed concern about safety and security issues. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels. Pregnant women may also have safety

concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours when services are busier (Transport Scotland, 2021).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** There are currently issues related to coverage, periods of operation, and frequency of services for public transport across the SPT region. The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a business as usual situation. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, as would access for pregnant people / people on maternity leave who may rely on the bus for hospital appointments. The network that operates after 1900 and on Sundays would particularly be impacted.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity. This may particularly adversely impact pregnant women and people who experience affordability issues when returning to work following maternity leave (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Pregnant people have expressed concern about safety and security issues, especially at night. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Race:

Certain ethnic minority households were most likely to have no car or van available (compared to the national average of 23%) including 51% of African households, 39% of Caribbean or Black households and 36% of Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British households (Transport Scotland, 2019). Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021).

Attitude of other passengers due to race or ethnicity (and religion) can limit travel choices (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security. People from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared to those from the 'White – British' and 'White – Other' groups (Scottish Government, 2023).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** There are currently issues related to coverage, periods of operation, and frequency of services for public transport across the SPT region. The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a business as usual situation. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, especially public transport access for ethnic minorities who are more likely to rely on the network. The network that operates after 1900 and on Sundays would particularly be impacted which would adversely impact people who work unsocial hours or are doing shift work.

- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity; with a particularly adverse impact on ethnic minorities who are more likely to be in relative poverty. Issues of transport cost may therefore disproportionately affect these groups.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Some efforts to integrate identity will continue to be made to improve on the current position under a business as usual situation. This may have a positive impact on people whose first language is not English, who may find the network hard to understand.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Ethnic minorities have expressed concern about safety and security issues. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Religion or belief:

There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) on the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** People have expressed concern about safety and security issues in relation to individual religious identities. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sex:

Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently. Women are much more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households. In the SPT region fewer than half (49%) of single parent households with dependent children have a car available for private use (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021).

Women feel less safe than men when travelling at night. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020). Women tend to take on a disproportionate level of care and domestic tasks, compared to men, in addition to full or part-time work, consequently, they are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes. Trip purposes and patterns differ for women compared to men e.g. working part-time or shifts, or in relation to caring responsibilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** There are currently issues related to coverage, periods of operation, and frequency of services for public transport across the SPT region. The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a business as usual situation. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, as would access by women. The network that operates after 1900 and on Sundays would particularly be impacted which would adversely impact women and men who work unsocial hours or are doing shift work.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** Given long-term trends for real terms fares increases, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a business as usual scenario. This will particularly negatively impact women as they are more likely to make journeys using public transport, with children and otherwise 'encumbered' (Hine and Mitchell, 2001), and whilst those under 22 are eligible for free bus travel, less affordable public transport will negatively impact women already experiencing transport poverty.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Women have expressed concern about safety and security issues. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation:

A greater proportion of the LGBT group live in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults) (Scottish Government, 2017b). People in the LGBT group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination (Transport Scotland, 2021). SPT report that one in four LGBT people in Scotland have faced prejudice or discrimination and have suffered discriminatory treatment when accessing services. This has led to reluctance amongst some people in this protected characteristic group to engage in aspects of public life including accessing services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). A survey in 2017

(LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017) identified there has been a decline in the percentage of LGBT young people overall who say they feel safe on public transport, from 70% in 2012 to 67% in 2017. A more recent survey shows that those (aged 16+) who identified their sexual orientation as either gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or in another way were considerably more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination while travelling on buses – 43% compared to 18% of those who identified as straight/heterosexual (Transport Scotland, 2022).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In relation to affordability, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a business as usual scenario, having a particularly adverse impact on people in the LGBO group as a greater proportion of people belonging to the group tend to live in the most disadvantaged communities.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** People in the LGBO group have expressed concern about safety and security issues. Any safety and security measures implemented through a business as usual approach would primarily relate to vehicle improvements and would not be expected to improve waiting facilities or passenger safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Notes and Recommendations:

Overall, if a business as usual approach was continued, there would be a gradual decline in the level of service and the service would become increasingly more unaffordable and the service less accessible for the protected characteristic groups. It is also not clear how safety concerns and problems for some groups could be mitigated or resolved through business as usual.

Overall Impact of Option on PSED: Overall, if a business as usual approach was continued, there would be a gradual decline in the level of service and the service would become increasingly more unaffordable and the service less accessible for the protected characteristic groups. It is also not clear how safety concerns and problems for some groups could be mitigated or resolved through business as usual. It is assessed that **Option 1 – Business as Usual** would result in a **Minor Adverse Effect**.

5.2 Voluntary Partnerships

Table 5.2. Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships: Impact on Protected Characteristics.

Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships
<i>Will the SRBS options impact protected characteristics groups differentially or disproportionately...?</i>
<i>Option Specific Assessment Summary</i>
<p>Overview:</p> <p>A voluntary partnership (VP) provides a formal written framework within which bus operators, local transport authorities, local highway authorities and other relevant actors will work together to achieve stated objectives and deliver agreed measures and facilities. A VP is typically entered into to provide a structure for agreeing enhanced operating and highways standards when a major investment in infrastructure or services is secured. During the engagement process, the operators expressed the desire to establish a more ambitious and transformational VP than previous examples e.g. Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership. It is understood that this enhanced version of a partnership could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A single network identity, including a region-wide app, website and branding; ▪ A joint management group made up of SPT and operator representatives to consider areas such as network strategy and operational reviews; ▪ Enhanced data sharing and KPI targets; ▪ Reinvestment of savings from bus priority measures into service enhancements; ▪ A review fares and ticketing to provide simpler and consolidated products; and ▪ Customer service improvements on-street and through other channels. <p>Age:</p> <p>Younger (aged 17-24) and older people (65+) are less likely to drive and more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Older people tend to travel relatively less often and for shorter distances than other adults (Fatima, Moridpour, De Gruyter, & Saghapour, 2020). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults. In the last 15 years, the youngest adults (16-24 year olds) have been consistently more likely to be in relative poverty compared to older adults (Scottish Government, 2023). According to Davis (2014) younger people from deprived areas may look for jobs and training opportunities only in their local area and those easily accessible via public transport. There is a slightly higher average of people aged 15 and under and people aged 60 and over in the combined SPT region than in the rest of Scotland; age therefore is a particularly important protected characteristic.</p>

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Existing VPs in the region have not significantly influenced levels of service provided. Under a VP, it is likely that there would be a continued retraction in the commercially provided bus network, especially buses operating after 1900 and on Sundays. No change in the current service would not help to solve the issues for younger people looking for jobs and training outside of their local area.
- **TPO2: Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity. However, bus operators in the SPT area must participate in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme which is available to older people (aged 60+) and younger people (under the age of 22). The NEC card provides holders with free bus travel in Scotland. It is therefore unlikely that affordability will be a concern for younger and older people as a result of the NEC card.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A number of VPs currently operate in the SPT region. While they hold the potential to improve service reliability it is deemed that the application of this option is unlikely to deliver transformation improvements across the region. The ability of all operators to conform to enhanced standards can be inconsistent which may exacerbate issues highlighted for older people (e.g. standing for long periods of time waiting for buses) and younger or working aged people relying on bus services for education, employment or other key services and daily needs.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** VPs offer the potential to achieve more a positive, recognisable and trusted network identity. Limited connectivity has been identified as a factor making it more difficult for people to reach opportunities outside their local area, increasing the risk of social isolation particularly for older people and limiting opportunity for younger adults. A more cohesive multi-modal network delivered through effective VPs could alleviate this challenge.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Better integrated ticketing and better multi-operator products may be deliverable through a voluntary partnership with the agreement of the partners, but initiatives may not be universal (unless all operators agree to participate); and it may result in an increase of additional products, compounding the existing complexity and potentially confusing users, especially older people. The partnership is expected to bring about a region-wide app and website. This may create accessibility issues for older people who are not confident at using apps or the internet.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** A VP can assist in the co-operation required to identify quality issues and inefficiencies in the network related to interchanges and bus stops. Partners can work together to better prioritise and deliver improvements. However, some efficiency elements such as bus stop rationalisation may have negatively impact older people less able to walk for long distances. An understanding of local travel patterns and needs should be gained prior to agreeing such measures.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** Alternate, individual operator, sources of information are likely to remain under a VP unless operators agree that the alternative is fit for purpose and agree to remove their own sources. This can cause confusion for users and mean that those sources of information only offer fragments of that available through a combined source. This could adversely affect a range of users, particularly older people, who may struggle to find consistency and comprehensive information for journey planning.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Some users, such as older adults, may face difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). VPs offer the potential to agree standards for customer support and feedback and work towards these. However, the ability of all operators to conform to these enhanced standards may be inconsistent.

TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services: People who are most reliant on buses (including older people and younger people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g., older people and disabled people). Under a VP, agreements can be set up in relation to enhanced standards for the dates, frequency and scale of services changes. However, this agreement could be on a voluntary basis and not all authorities and operators may choose to sign up to such an agreement.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots:** Children, older people, and those with predisposing cardiovascular or lung disease are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality. It is considered unlikely that significant fleet renewal commitments over and above what is already set out would form part of a new voluntary partnership. Significant funding commitments would be needed on both sides to deliver new vehicles and/or standards. The Glasgow City low emission zone and national net-zero pledge is already influencing fleet renewal decisions to an extent and this would not be expected to be accelerated in this option. There would be expected to be zero or minimal depot management or fleet sharing benefits under a voluntary partnership given the small geographical scale and commercial environment it would operate in.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Younger (aged 17-24) and older people (65+) are less likely to drive and are more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Issues have existed within the SPT region in relation to the availability of drivers to operate the network. In recent years, this has led to some disruptions to the delivery of some services on the network. Increasing inaccessibility will only negatively impact younger and older people who rely on the bus network.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered; therefore, this issue will remain a problem for older people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Agreements can be set up through a voluntary partnership to help support development of a regional customer charter. This could include pooled resources for production and for elements such as monitoring and reporting on KPIs. This agreement could be on a voluntary basis and not all authorities and operators may choose to sign up to such an agreement. The challenge of agreeing consistent standards could be significant, where operators have varying approaches to some elements of the charter. The charter may therefore end up being non-specific in many of its parts, which is of lesser benefit to users than very specific and clear commitments.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. VPs could act as a mechanism to help identify the key areas of benefit related to data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring. Some performance metrics could be agreed and made public. To date, only limited data related to operations has been made available by operators to authorities such as SPT, through voluntary partnerships. Should this continue, the potential for voluntary partnerships to deliver this policy remain minor to moderate, depending on the willingness of operators to share information.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Disability:

Disabled people have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. 58% of disabled people agreed that they ‘Feel safe and secure on the bus at night’ compared to 73% of non-disabled people (Transport Scotland, 2021b). There is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey, and a lack of consistent provision of audio/visual travel information on

board transport services. There is a slightly higher average of people whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot under the Equality Act in the combined SPT region (10.7%) compared to the national average (9.6%) (NOMIS, 2011).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** VPs currently exist in some parts of the region; however, they do not seem to have significantly influenced levels of service provided. Under a VP it is anticipated that there would be a likely continued deterioration in the commercially-provided bus network, particularly during off-peak periods (evenings and Sundays). By proceeding with this option, it could mean that public transport network coverage would worsen impacting access for disabled people, who rely more heavily on bus networks to meet their daily needs.
- **TPO2 Increase the Affordability of the Bus Network:** In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity. However, bus operators in the SPT Region area must participate in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme which is available to disabled residents. The NEC card provides holders with free bus travel in Scotland. It is therefore unlikely that affordability will impact disabled people as a result of the NEC card.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A number of VPs currently operate in the SPT region. While they hold the potential to improve service reliability it is deemed that the application of this option is unlikely to deliver transformation improvements across the region. The ability of all operators to conform to enhanced standards can be inconsistent which may exacerbate issues highlighted for disabled people (e.g. standing for long periods of time waiting for buses). Disabled people also rely more heavily on public transport to meet daily needs such as access to education, employment or other key services. Unreliable or inconsistent service delivery would negatively affect this.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** VPs offer the potential to achieve more a positive, recognisable and trusted network identity. VPs do offer the potential to achieve significant steps towards creating a more positive, recognisable and trusted network identity. This may have a positive impact on disabled people who may find the network hard to understand.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** National Concessionary Travel Scheme legislation does not require paper tickets to be issued to cardholders for concession journeys. Currently, the issuing of paper tickets to passengers is an operational decision at the discretion of bus operators. However, those travelling with disabled people can be negatively impacted by complex ticketing systems. A VP is unlikely to deliver universal measures to reduce the complexity of ticketing products.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Disabled people report concerns about changing from buses to other forms of transport and the first and last mile of their journey due to infrastructure challenges and a lack of modal-integration. Multimodal journeys are a particular concern because of the stress of repeatedly getting on and off public transport, finding a seat and asking for assistance. A voluntary partnership can assist in the co-operation required to identify quality issues and inefficiencies in the network related to interchanges and bus stops. Partners can work together to better prioritise improvements and deliver elements such as stop rationalisation.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** A VP will include the provision of an area-wide app, website and information hub which may enable disabled people to feel more confident when travelling.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers and they also report that available public transport options do not meet their needs for various reasons. These include difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Voluntary partnerships offer the potential to agree standards for customer support and feedback and work towards these. As per the status quo discussion above, it is noted that Glasgow Bus

Alliance has a pledge related to this that could be enhanced through a VP. VPs offer the potential to agree standards for customer support and feedback and work towards these. As per the status quo discussion above, it is noted that Glasgow Bus Alliance has a pledge related to this that could be enhanced through a voluntary partnership. Overall, benefits for disabled people would be limited.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including people with disabilities) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility. Agreements can be set up through a voluntary partnership in relation to enhanced standards for the dates, frequency and scale of services changes, along with communication protocols for communicating changes to authorities and users. This could make it easier for disabled people to understand any changes to the bus services and will ultimately make the service more accessible for them.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots:** Disabled people with predisposing cardiovascular or lung disease are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality. Additionally, disabled people express concern because of the stress of trying to get a seat on public transport. It is considered unlikely that significant fleet renewal commitments over and above what is already set out would form part of a new voluntary partnership. The Glasgow City low emission zone and national net-zero pledge is already influencing fleet renewal decisions to an extent and this would not be expected to be accelerated in this option.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers. A voluntary partnership could review existing training (including CPD) across operators and agree a set of standards for delivery across a regional network. There is also the potential to pool resources or develop some other form of supporting arrangement between operators and with authorities to ensure all drivers are trained to this standard, contributing to CPD requirements. This may benefit disabled people and reduce the number of people who experience discrimination on public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered; therefore, safety and security will likely remain an issue for disabled people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Agreements can be set up through a voluntary partnership to help support development of a regional customer charter. This could include pooled resources for production and for elements such as monitoring and reporting on KPIs. However, this agreement would only be voluntary and not all authorities and operators may choose to sign up to such an agreement leading to inconsistencies.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. A VP could act as a mechanism to help identify the key areas of benefit related to data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring. Some performance metrics could be agreed and made public. To date, only limited data related to operations has been made available by operators to authorities such as SPT, through voluntary partnerships. Should this continue, the potential for voluntary partnerships to deliver this policy remain minor to moderate, depending on the willingness of operators to share information.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Gender Reassignment:

Transgender people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016). Transgender people are likely to have lower incomes and experience structural disadvantages in accessing employment and training and therefore they are at a higher risk of transport poverty. They may have concerns about using public transport or public transport facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against (Valentine, 2016) which could affect their use of the public transport network.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Given long-term trends for real terms fares increases, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a VP option. This is likely to have an adverse impact on transgender people as they are more likely to have lower incomes than other groups of people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered; therefore, safety and security will remain an issue for transgender people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels. Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours (Transport Scotland, 2021).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Existing VPs in the region have not significantly influenced levels of service provided. Under a VP, it is likely that there would be a continued retraction in the commercially provided bus network, especially buses operating after 1900 and on Sundays. This would be expected to adversely impact pregnant people in relation to accessing healthcare services.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** In relation to affordability, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a VP option. Existing VPs, such as the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership, show no evidence of progress in improving the affordability of bus fares in the region, therefore suggesting that VPs are unlikely to deliver radical changes envisaged through SRBS core **Policies 2a – 2c**. These policies are unlikely to be achieved as existing VPs have no evidence of progress or aspirations to improve affordability.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered; safety and security will therefore remain an issue for pregnant people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Race:

Certain ethnic minority households were most likely to have no car or van available (compared to the national average of 23%) including 51% of African households, 39% of Caribbean or Black households and 36% of Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British households (Transport Scotland, 2019). Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** As stated, existing VPs in the region have not significantly influenced levels of service provided. Under a VP, it is likely that there would be a continued retraction in the commercially provided bus network, especially buses operating after 1900 and on Sundays. This is likely to impact ethnic minorities as they are less likely to own a vehicle.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** In relation to affordability, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a VP option, having a particularly adverse impact on ethnic minorities who are less likely to own a vehicle. Existing VPs show no evidence of progress in improving the affordability of bus fares in the region, therefore suggesting that VPs are unlikely to deliver radical changes envisaged through **Policies 2a – 2c**.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Under a VP, there is potential to achieve significant steps towards creating a more positive, recognisable and trusted network identity. However, as improvements would be voluntary, it is likely that there would be some limitations and inconsistencies related to the rollout of improvements. Any improvement may have a positive impact on people whose first language is not English, who may find the network hard to understand.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered. Therefore, issues relating to safety and security for ethnic minorities will remain.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Religion or belief:

Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) on the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered. Therefore, issues relating to religion and belief will remain.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sex:

Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men. Additionally, women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently. Women feel less safe than men travelling at night. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night. In general, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments and are more likely to travel with young people and older people (Duchene, 2011; Sanchez de Madariaga, 2013) and make multi-purpose trips. Trip purposes and patterns differ for women compared to men, for example, working part-time or shifts, or in relation to caring responsibilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** As stated, existing VPs in the region have not significantly influenced levels of service provided. Under a VP, it is likely that there would be a continued retraction in the commercially provided bus network, especially buses operating after 1900 and on Sundays. No change or a deterioration in the level of service is likely to continue to negatively impact women, especially as women are more likely than men to make multi-purpose trips and have caring and domestic responsibilities. Women are also more likely to work part-time or work shifts and therefore rely on services operating after 1900 and on Sundays.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Given long-term trends for real terms fares increases, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a VP option. This will particularly negatively impact women as they are more likely to make journeys using public transport, with children and otherwise 'encumbered' (Hine and Mitchell, 2001), and whilst those under 22 are eligible for free bus travel, less affordable public transport will negatively impact women already experiencing transport poverty.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered. Issues relating to safety and security therefore will remain an issue for women.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership would have a **Minor Adverse Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation:

People in the LGBO group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination (Transport Scotland, 2021). In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020). A great proportion of the LGBO group lived in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared to 19% of heterosexual adults) (Scottish Government, 2017b).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** In relation to affordability, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable under a VP option, having a particularly adverse impact on people in the LGBO group as a greater proportion of people belonging to the group tend to live in the most disadvantaged communities.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Based on previous VPs, significant improvements related to safety and security would not be expected to be delivered. Issues relating to safety and security therefore will remain an issue for people in the LGBO group.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 2 – Voluntary Partnership** would have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Overall Impact of Option on PSED: It is assessed that a VP would have an overall **Minor Adverse Effect**. Key issues that would continue include:

- The safety and security of all people within the protected characteristics is a key issue and is not adequately addressed under a VP option.
- Accessibility requires more careful consideration, especially in relation to disabled people and older people.
- The implementation of apps and websites would have to ensure they are user-friendly for older people.
- Enhanced accessibility to services for disabled people needs more consideration.

- A key concern is the issue of increasing prices that are likely under a VP option. Although the Scottish Government's NCTS offers free travel by public bus to young people, older people and people with disabilities, there remain sections of society not eligible for free travel who find buses unaffordable. This would need to be mitigated against as it would be unlikely that **TPO2** would be achieved under this option.

5.3 Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)

Table 5.3: Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs): Impact on Protected Characteristics.

Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)
<i>Will the SRBS options impact protected characteristics groups differentially or disproportionately...?</i>
<i>Option Specific Assessment Summary</i>
<p>Overview: A Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) is a new form of statutory quality partnership enabled by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. A BSIP enables partners to come together and agree on binding commitments that will be delivered during the term of the partnership. If measures and facilities agreed upon during the inception of the BSIP are not delivered, then the relevant partner can be at risk of sanctions – as an example, an operator who fails to meet the agreed standards of operation for a service (a vehicle quality standard or the acceptance of multi-operator tickets, for instance) could see its services deregistered by the Traffic Commissioner. A Bus Service Improvement Partnership provides the relevant parties with greater confidence that the proposed outcomes developed in the consultation period will be delivered. Within a BSIP, commitments made by partners are more binding, given the statutory nature of the partnership. More ambitious working relationships between partners could result in benefits such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An expansion of the network; ▪ An enhancement of services through adherence to agreed standards; ▪ A more integrated system through area wide tickets and value for money multi-operators tickets <p>The process of establishing a BSIP involves consultation between local authorities, bus operators and other relevant parties to establish an initial view on the content of the BSIP plan and scheme(s) and establish commitments. Whilst the statutory nature of the partnership can result in more ambitious outcomes and deliver benefits, it can create considerable demand in terms of management, and the commitments made are reliant on agreement between all partners.</p> <p>Age: Younger and older people are less likely to drive and more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Issues facing older people in accessing public transport include inaccessible vehicles, journey comfort, frequency of bus services and poor integration between different transport services (as well as cross cutting issues shared with other protected groups such as hearing and visual problems and reduced personal mobility) (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services. They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults.</p> <p>Young people (aged 16-24 years) from disadvantaged communities are more likely to seek and access employment and training opportunities in their local area or those easily accessible via public transport, thus relying on a more local context compared with peers from less deprived areas.</p> <p>Young people aged 22 years and under, older people aged 60 years and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2023).</p> <p>Equalities issues relevant to children and young people who form part of this protected characteristic group are addressed in more detail in the evidence base and assessment presented in support of the CRWIA Interim Report (Stantec, 2024).</p>

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Bus Service Improvement Partnership(s) would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, an improved level of service through enhanced coverage, increased periods of operation and frequency, and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency could support older and young people in accessing key destinations that are more likely to be used by these age groups, such as, education, training opportunities, healthcare services and facilities, and local retail hubs. As well as provide working-age adults with access to employment opportunities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in an area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to introduce value for money multi-operator tickets. Working age adults, including young professionals, part-time workers and those on low incomes are likely to benefit from increased fare affordability measures that are assumed to be delivered as part of BSIPs (further analysis is provided in the Fairer Scotland Duty Report – Stantec, 2024).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** Younger adults and those ages 65 and over are more likely to work part-time, resulting in travelling hours outside of typical commuting patterns. A BSIP would establish agreed services between operators and local authorities and the incorporation of targets, out with those set by the Scottish Traffic Commissioner (STC), may result in improved reliability and punctuality and increased confidence in services by users. However, targets currently set by the STC are not always met and a BSIP agreement may not address the cause of this, limiting the potential for positive change.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A robust working relationship via a BSIP may deliver action that promotes a more positive, recognisable, and trusted network through statutory agreements. This could include supportive information and ticketing agreements that remove single operator products and conflicting information, contributing to a more cohesive network. Limited connectivity has been identified as a factor making it more difficult for people to reach opportunities outside their local area, increasing the risk of social isolation particularly for older people and limiting opportunity for younger adults. A more cohesive network through the development of a BSIP could alleviate this challenge.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** A BSIP should be capable of delivering targeted reductions to bus fares, through new additional fare products. However, this is likely to result in a proliferation of ticketing products which may add complexity and confusion for users. Members of the public have expressed a desire for simpler and more cost-effective ticketing products; however, it is unlikely that this can be fully realised under a BSIP. As such, this option is unlikely to aid people who face difficulties navigating complex ticketing products such as older people and younger people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** A BSIP could result in improved interchanges and bus stops through a statutory agreement that if infrastructure improvements are delivered, services will be increased. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities through agreements established within a BSIP would benefit older people who are more likely experience mobility issues that create anxiety around multi-modal travel.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** A statutory partnership through a BSIP could be set up to agree and deliver standards for information. However, the ability of all operators to conform to these enhanced standards may be inconsistent (e.g. depending on resources) and, as these standards would need to be agreed to by the majority of operators up front, it is unlikely that very strict standards would be agreed. Similar challenges would exist under a BSIP as for a VP, which may create accessibility issues for older and younger people who may have difficulties with fragmented or inconsistent information availability.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Some users, such as older adults, may face difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Service standards around customer could be set out in a statutory partnership under a BSIP. This could bring operator standards in line with each other and monitor adherence to this. The establishment of single customer front for customer support and feedback could be delivered through a BSIP arrangement.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including older people and younger people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g., older people and disabled people). A BSIP could deliver beneficial changes to services. Operators and authorities would need to agree to the establishment of the partnership and the standards set.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots:** Children, older people, and those with predisposing cardiovascular or lung disease are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality. The nature of a BSIP may deliver slightly greater commitment and certainty with regards to standards of vehicles, age of vehicle, and vehicle capacity across the network. However, despite the statutory basis of a BSIP, significant fleet benefits are considered unlikely meaning positive impact may be minimal under this model.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Older people may face challenges boarding and using buses. Through a statutory partnership model of this nature, training standards and resources could be enhanced to improve the quality standards of existing and potential drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience for more vulnerable users requiring additional time or support to use bus services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by older people when using public transport. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business as usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a BSIP could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing older people and young adults in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is expected that **Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Disability:

Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving license compared with people who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%, respectively). Disabled or permanently sick adults are significantly more likely to use bus travel compared to all adults. Poverty rates for households with a disabled member remain higher compared to households where no-one is disabled. Disabled people expressed more safety concerns related to public transport use in evenings compared with non-disabled people.

Disabled people may often feel less confident about making a journey by public transport if there is uncertainty about the physical environment or realities of making a journey on transport services. Key accessibility issues relate to *journey planning* and access to clear information; co-ordinated and consistent *journey assistance services*; *accessible infrastructure*, including fully wheelchair accessibility in stations and vehicles; and the *physical environment* relating to pavements streets and routes to public transport or interchange connections. Disabled people have also reported concern about discriminatory encounters with staff and other passengers, unsafe transport infrastructure and pedestrian spaces, and fear of falling or colliding with other passengers. Within Bus Service Improvement Partnerships, the following policy options have the potential to impact this protected characteristic group:

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Bus Service Improvement Partnership(s) would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, an improved level of service through enhanced coverage, increased periods of operation and frequency, and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency could support disabled people in accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, employment, education, training opportunities, and local retail hubs.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** While disabled people are eligible to apply for free travel in Scotland, this may not apply to the entire household which could be at risk of higher levels of relative poverty compared with households where no members are disabled. Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to potentially reduce fares. Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes linked with disability.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** People with disabilities tend to avoid travelling during peak hours, with a greater proportion of journeys being completed in the middle of the day. Timetabling that results in infrequent services or lack of services at particular times of the day, such as off-peak times, can limit the use of public transport. A BSIP would establish agreed services across the day between operators and local authorities and the incorporation of targets, out with those set by the Scottish Traffic Commissioner (STC), may result in improved reliability and punctuality and increased confidence in services by users. However, targets currently set by the STC are not always met and a BSIP agreement may not address the cause of this, limiting the potential for positive change.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A robust working relationship via a BSIP may deliver action that promotes a more positive, recognisable, and trusted network through statutory agreements. This could include supportive information and ticketing agreements that remove single operator products and conflicting information, contributing to a more cohesive and inclusive network.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** National Concessionary Travel Scheme legislation does not require paper tickets to be issued to cardholders for concession journeys. Currently, the issuing of paper tickets to passengers is an operational decision at the discretion of bus operators. However, those travelling with disabled people can be negatively impacted by complex ticketing systems. A BSIP has the potential to deliver better integrated ticketing and multi-operator products with the agreement of all partners.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Disabled people report concerns about changing from buses to other forms of transport and the first and last mile of their journey due to infrastructure challenges and a lack of modal-integration. Multimodal journeys are a particular concern because of the stress of repeatedly getting on and off public transport, finding a seat and asking for assistance. A BSIP could result in improved interchanges and bus stops through a statutory agreement whereby if infrastructure improvements are delivered by the local authority, services will be increased by the operator. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities through agreements established within a BSIP would benefit people with disabilities who are more likely experience anxiety around travel, and particularly around connections between transport modes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** BSIPs could establish an agreed standard for information to ensure consistency via an area-wide app, website and information hub with the authority retaining control and oversight over data use and publication. However, the ability of operators to conform to these standards may be inconsistent due to varied resources resulting in a risk of inconsistent information and the accessibility of this information being compromised.

TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback: Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers and they also report that available public transport options do not meet their needs for various reasons. These include difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Under a BSIP, service standards around customers support could be established to align operator’s approach. The establishment of a single front for customer support and feedback through a BSIP would positively impact disabled people as they would be able to provide feedback and address challenges. This could contribute to the improvement of services but agreeing standards, resources, and providing consistency for customers may prove challenging under a BSIP.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including people with disabilities) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility. Changes to services determined within a BSIP can be made to support measures to deliver policy objectives. However, operators and authorities would need to agree to the standards set. Therefore, if a party does not have the resources required to meet the change in service set out in the partnership agreement, they are unlikely to commit, limiting the positive impact that could be delivered.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots.** Disabled people with predisposing cardiovascular or lung disease are more susceptible to the effects of poor air quality. Additionally, disabled people express concern because of the stress of trying to get a seat on public transport. The nature of a BSIP may deliver slightly greater commitment and certainty with regards to standards of vehicles, age of vehicle, and vehicle capacity across the network. However, despite the statutory basis of a BSIP, significant fleet benefits are considered unlikely meaning positive impact may be minimal under this model.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers. Through a partnership of statutory nature, training standards and resources could be enhanced to improve the quality standards of existing and potential drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Concerns about safety and health harms are significant factors limiting transport options for disabled people. In Scotland, disabled people are less likely to say they feel safe and secure on a bus at night than people who are not disabled. The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by disabled people when using public transport. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the

improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business-as-usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact and alleviate safety and security concerns.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expected by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a BSIP could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing disabled people in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is expected that Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic as much of the potential scope for improvements would depend on the development of partnerships based on agreed commitments.

Gender Reassignment:

Transgender people may experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of discrimination or harassment can prevent individuals from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016). Transgender people are also likely to face inter-sectional issues and vulnerability relating to lower incomes and structural disadvantages related to employment, education and training putting this group at higher risk of transport poverty.

Within Bus Service Improvement Partnerships, the following policy options have the potential to impact this protected characteristic group:

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in an area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to potentially reduce fares. Improved affordability measures could positively impact transgender people experiencing transport poverty as a result of the interrelated challenges.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A robust working relationship via a BSIP may deliver action that promotes a more positive, recognisable, trusted, and inclusive network through statutory agreements.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** Concerns about safety and discrimination are significant factors limiting transport options for transgender people. Reddy-Best and Olson (2020) describe public transport as a site where trans people cannot be sure who is watching so are consequently 'on alert', conducting self-surveillance and controlling their behaviour to avoid harm. LGBO people can encounter aggressive behaviours motivated by antagonism towards non-heterosexual relationships or gender identities other than those assigned

at birth (Weintrob et al., 2021). The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by trans people when using public transport. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business-as-usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact and alleviate safety and security concerns.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expected by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Benefits could be realised for data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring through a BSIP under a statutory partnership arrangement. Similarly, performance metrics could be agreed and made public. Data on discrimination and crime rates on bus services could help to improve safety concerns for transgender people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Overall, it is assessed that **Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships** would have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave. Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels. Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** BSIPs would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, an improved level of service through enhanced coverage, increased periods of operation and frequency, and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency could support pregnant women and new mothers in accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, employment, education, training and employment opportunities, and local retail hubs.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in an area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to potentially reduce fares. Improved affordability measures could positively impact pregnant women and new mothers experiencing transport poverty as a result of the interrelated challenges they face when accessing public transport.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Pregnant women are mobility restricted as later stages of pregnancy and may have concerns or issues with regards to accessibility and safety as well as needing to access facilities whilst experiencing symptoms of pregnancy. New parents travelling with push chairs and young children may find public transport journeys uncomfortable or difficult, especially without rest stops. Multimodal journeys are a particular concern for pregnant women and new parents because of the stress of repeatedly getting on and off public transport, finding a seat and asking for assistance. A BSIP could result in improved interchanges and bus stops through a statutory agreement whereby if infrastructure improvements are delivered by the local authority, services will be increased by the operator. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities through agreements established within a BSIP would benefit pregnant women and new parents, who are groups more likely to experience discomfort around travel, and particularly around connections between transport modes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and depots:** Pregnant women are more vulnerable to adverse effects of air pollution, including an increasing risk of miscarriage as well as premature births and low birth weights (Transport Scotland, 2022). Additionally, pregnant women express concern because of the stress of trying to get a seat on public transport and parent travelling with young children can struggle to access appropriate bus fleet for buggies/pushchairs. The nature of a BSIP may deliver slightly greater commitment and certainty with regards to standards of vehicles, age of vehicle, and vehicle capacity across the network. However, despite the statutory basis of a BSIP, significant fleet benefits are considered unlikely meaning positive impact on pregnant women and new parents may be minimal under this model.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by pregnant women travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business-as-usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact and alleviate safety and security concerns.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a BSIP could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing pregnant women and new parents in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Enhanced network coverage, the potential to increase affordability, service frequency and on-board accessibility measures that may be introduced or standardised through an agreement established under a Bus Service Improvement Partnership could have a potential **Minor Beneficial Effect**

Race:

People in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.

Individuals from minority ethnic communities can experience heightened vulnerability due to the intersectionality of sex and socio-economic disadvantage. In particular, women from minority ethnic backgrounds are concentrated in low-paid and undervalued work, facing intertwined gendered and racial barriers in recruitment, training and development and workplace culture (Transport Scotland, 2022).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Bus Service Improvement Partnership(s) would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, an improved level of service through enhanced coverage, increased periods of operation and frequency, and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency could support ethnic minority groups in accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, employment, education, training and employment opportunities, and local retail hubs.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in an area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to potentially reduce fares. Improved affordability measures could positively impact ethnic minority groups experiencing transport poverty as a result of the intersectional disadvantage when accessing public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A robust working relationship via a BSIP may deliver action that promotes a more positive, recognisable, trusted, and inclusive network through statutory agreements.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** A BSIP has the potential to deliver better integrated ticketing and multi-operator products with the agreement of all partners. This may include app-based ticketing and an increase in contactless payments across the region. Simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting ethnic minority groups. Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing can improve boarding times and flexibility for most users, it is intended that maintaining cash payment on board for tickets will also help promote the inclusivity of bus services to a range of users.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** People who do not speak English as a first language can sometimes experience challenges related to language barriers that can occasionally make navigating public transport systems difficult in relation to timetables, signage, notifications, origin and destination information and fares being difficult to understand in some instances. Information should be easy to understand, using simple language and visual representation of changes where possible. BSIPs could establish an agreed standard for information to ensure consistency via an area-wide app, website and information hub with the authority retaining control and oversight over data use and publication. Accessibly, consistent information could help to overcome language barriers and enhance accessibility across a broad spectrum of users. However,

the ability of operators to conform to these standards may be inconsistent due to varied resources resulting in a risk of inconsistent information and the accessibility of this information being compromised.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by ethnic minorities using public transport. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business-as-usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact and alleviate safety and security concerns.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a BSIP could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing ethnic minorities in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Under BSIPs, service specifications and policies under a binding agreement have the potential to create a more inclusive transport network for all users. Glasgow has the highest ethnic minority population in Scotland which forms a significant proportion of the SPT region's overall population. Given low levels of car ownership among minority ethnic groups and intersectional factors such as increased rates of relative poverty and risk of safety concerns related to harassment or discrimination, it is judged that the above package of policies delivered under a BSIP could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic group as the changes would be subject to agreement from all relevant parties.

Religion or belief:

There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) of the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

Limited-service provision on Sundays or during evenings could preclude some people from attending faith and worship services in their local community if they are reliant on bus travel.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** A BSIP would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP

would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, through a statutory partnership increased frequency during off-peak times (including Sundays and evening) could allow some people to attend church or faith and worship events in their local communities.

- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** People have expressed concern about safety and security issues in relation to individual religious identities. A BSIP may allow for additionally safety and security measures due to the unlocking of more funding. This could positively impact the safety and security of people within religious communities who have expressed concern.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Under BSIPs, service specifications and policies under a binding agreement have the potential to create a more inclusive transport network for all users. It is judged that the above package of policies delivered under a BSIP could have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic group as the changes would be subject to agreement from all relevant parties.

Sex:

Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently. Women are much more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households. In the SPT region fewer than half (49%) of single parent households with dependent children have a car available for private use (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021).

Women feel less safe than men when travelling at night. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020). Women tend to take on a disproportionate level of care and domestic tasks, compared to men, in addition to full or part-time work, consequently, they are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips (trip chaining), combining travel to work with trips for other purposes. Trip purposes and patterns differ for women compared to men e.g. working part-time or shifts, or in relation to caring responsibilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** BSIPs would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, an improved level of service through enhanced coverage, increased periods of operation and frequency, and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency could support women in accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, employment, education, training and employment opportunities, and local retail hubs.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in an area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to potentially reduce fares. Women make more journeys using public transport, with children and otherwise 'encumbered' (Hine and Mitchell, 2001), and whilst those under 22 are eligible for free bus travel, improved affordability

measures could positively impact women experiencing transport poverty as a result of the intersectional disadvantage faced when accessing public transport.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A robust working relationship via a BSIP may deliver action that promotes a more positive, recognisable, trusted, and inclusive network through statutory agreements.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Women are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes such as taking children to school, looking after family members or shopping and are more likely to walk, take the bus, or be a passenger in a car than men (Sustrans, 2018). Consequently, women are more likely to stop at interchanges and bus stops and conduct multimodal journeys. In comparison to men, women are more likely to be very or fairly concerned about sexual assault, and they are also less likely to feel very or fairly safe going alone at night (66% compared to 89%). Safety concerns are heightened if the public transport facilities are unstaffed (Transport Scotland, 2022). A BSIP could result in improved interchanges and bus stops through a statutory agreement whereby if infrastructure improvements are delivered by the local authority, services will be increased by the operator. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities through agreements established within a BSIP would benefit women, who are a group more likely to use public transport but also more likely to experience discomfort around travel, and particularly around safety.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by women using public transport. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business-as-usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact and alleviate safety and security concerns.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expected by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a BSIP could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing women in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** There is a lack of detail available at this stage of option development to understand if these TPO3 categories would have differential impacts on sex.

Overall impact: Under BSIPs, service specifications and policies under a binding agreement have the potential to create a more inclusive and safer transport network for all users, including women. Women are more likely to trip-chain, be a victim of sexual assault and have concern about safety and security issues with regard to the use of public transport. It is judged that the above package of policies delivered under a BSIP could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic group as the changes would be subject to agreement from all relevant parties.

Sexual Orientation:

People in the LGBO group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination. In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport. A greater proportion of the LGBO group lived in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults (Scottish Government, 2017b) so are likely to face higher rates of transport poverty and challenges in terms of access to key services.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Bus Service Improvement Partnership(s) would allow for a more ambitious and structured working relationship between partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of services. The greater certainty and statutory commitments associated with a BSIP would encourage and oblige partners to deliver an improved level of service. The level of service would be dependent on that established in the commitments set between partners. However, an improved level of service through enhanced coverage, increased periods of operation and frequency, and improved operational effectiveness and efficiency could support the LGBO group in accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, employment, education, training and employment opportunities, and local retail hubs.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Closer and more robust partnership working via a BSIP could result in area-wide ticketing and the roll out of smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to potentially reduce fares. Improved affordability measures could positively impact the LGBO group experiencing transport poverty as a result of the intersectional disadvantage faced when accessing public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A robust working relationship via a BSIP may deliver action that promotes a more positive, recognisable, trusted, and inclusive network through statutory agreements.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** LGBO people can encounter aggressive behaviours motivated by antagonism towards non-heterosexual relationships or gender identities other than those assigned at birth (Weintrob et al., 2021). The potential of a BSIP to unlock more funding and to apply to a wider area, if an agreement can be reached, may alleviate the safety and security concerns experienced by LGBO people using public transport. Whilst this would be agreed on a statutory basis, the improvements over a voluntary partnership or the business-as-usual model are expected to be marginal, limiting the scope to create a positive impact and alleviate safety and security concerns.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expected by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Through a BSIP, agreements can be set up to deliver a regional customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a BSIP could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing LGBO people in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Under BSIPs, service specifications and policies under a binding agreement have the potential to create a more inclusive and safer transport network for all users, including LGBO people who are more likely to experience discrimination or harassment. It is judged that the above package of policies delivered under a BSIP could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic group as the changes would be subject to agreement from all relevant parties.

Overall Impact of Option on PSED: Minor Beneficial Effect as the policy contributes to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics, economic and social issues, but not significantly.

5.4 Franchising

Table 5.4: Option 4 – Franchising: Impact on Protected Characteristics.

Option 4 – Franchising
<i>Will the SRBS options impact protected characteristics groups differentially or disproportionately...?</i>
<i>Option Specific Assessment Summary</i>
<p>Overview:</p> <p>Franchising allows the authority to specify service standards, which includes the potential to set ‘ambitious’ levels of service (subject to sufficient funding). Under franchising, service levels will not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is the case currently) but can also support wider public sector policies such as offering sustainable travel alternatives, tackling social deprivation, or supporting local economies. A franchising option is more likely to be applied region wide so could deliver far reaching benefits such as wider network coverage, enhanced comparative access by different population groups, and comparative access by geographic sub-context. A precise franchising model is subject to further development; however, it could range from a comprehensive form (e.g., covering all/most of the region) to a more localised form (e.g., covering a single local authority or part of an authority), with different options available in between. Franchising has the potential to set an ambitious model of comprehensive specifications covering every aspect of bus service operation however it could also seek to operate with more flexible arrangement with a range of risk-sharing between the public and private sectors.</p> <p>Delivering a franchising scheme is recognised as a complex and resource intensive endeavour with significant risks associated with funding, set-up and preparation, unknown timescales and potential legal challenges raised from commercial operators.</p> <p>Age:</p>

Younger and older people are less likely to drive and more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Issues facing older people in accessing public transport include inaccessible vehicles, journey comfort, frequency of bus services and poor integration between different transport services (as well as cross cutting issues shared with other protected groups such as hearing and visual problems and reduced personal mobility) (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services. They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults.

Young people (aged 16-24 years) from deprived areas are more likely to seek and access employment and training opportunities in their local area or those easily accessible via public transport, thus relying on a more local context compared with peers from less deprived areas.

Young people aged 22 years and under, older people aged 60 years and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2023).

Equalities issues relevant to children and young people who form part of this protected characteristic group are addressed in more detail in the evidence base and assessment presented in support of the CRWIA Interim Report (Stantec, 2024).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support older and young people in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Working age adults, including young professionals, part-time workers and those on low income are likely to benefit from increased fare affordability measures (further analysis is provided in the Fairer Scotland Duty Report – Stantec, 2024).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** Younger adults and those aged 65 and over are more likely to work part-time, resulting in travelling hours outside of typical commuting patterns. A franchising model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support younger people and working aged adults low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities. It would also support people travelling outside of typical commuting hours, such as older adults in meeting their daily needs.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Providing a positive, inclusive and trusted brand identity will build trust with groups of users that have specific mobility needs, such as older people, or those who have low confidence using public transport. Simplifying and enhancing the clarity of brand information will enhance inclusivity of the network to a range of users including older people, disabled people and those with lower confidence in using public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing as improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, it is intended that maintaining cash payment on board for tickets will also help promote the

inclusivity of bus services to a range of users, including older people, who are not confident using electronic payment. Simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting older people, young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** A franchising agreement would allow working with highway authorities to deliver improvements to interchanges which may present accessibility issues to older transport users. It would also provide greater oversight of bus stop provision and facilities which could better accommodate the access needs of older transport users. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities would benefit older people who are more likely experience mobility issues that create anxiety around multi-modal travel.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** As with other options, a franchising agreement could deliver an area-wide app, website and information hub with the authority retaining control and oversight over data use and publication. It is judged that a franchising option would be more likely to deliver a transport network with less complex information requirements (e.g., simplified ticketing options and consistent standards across multiple service quality areas). This would support all users to use public transport by providing comprehensive journey information, details of accessibility features and services available including simplified information for ticketing options that are applied consistently throughout the SPT region,
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Some users, such as older adults, may face difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Under a franchising model, service standards around customers support could be established to align operator's approach. The establishment of a single front for customer support and feedback through franchising would positively impact all users as they would be able to provide feedback and address challenges.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including older people and younger people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g., older people and disabled people). Changes to services determined under a franchise agreement are made by the authority with oversight of both community welfare and operational need.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** SRBS core policy 3q aims to 'Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.' A franchise agreement would have the ability to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. Given this would be more likely to be applied region-wide, the benefits after a suitable transition period could be far reaching and would in particular raise the standards in areas that are served by smaller operators or do not benefit from modern or more accessible bus fleets suited to the needs of ageing adults or people with limited mobility.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Older people may face challenges boarding and using buses. Through a franchising model, training standards and resources could be enhanced to improve the quality standards of existing and potential drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience for more vulnerable users requiring additional time or support to use bus services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be

acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so there may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*”
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a franchising model could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing disabled people in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter.

Overall impact: Taking the above points into consideration, it is considered that **Option 4 – Franchising** would have a **Major Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Disability:

Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving license compared with people who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%, respectively). Disabled or permanently sick adults are significantly more likely to use bus travel compared to all adults. Poverty rates for households with a disabled member remain higher compared to households where no-one is disabled. Disabled people expressed more safety concerns related to public transport use in evenings compared with non-disabled people.

Disabled people may often feel less confident about making a journey by public transport if there is uncertainty about the physical environment or realities of making a journey on transport services. Key accessibility issues relate to *journey planning* and access to clear information; co-ordinated and consistent *journey assistance* services; *accessible infrastructure*, including fully wheelchair accessibility in stations and vehicles; and the *physical environment* relating to pavements streets and routes to public transport or interchange connections.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support disabled people accessing key destinations and services such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of Bus Network:** While disabled people are eligible to apply for free travel in Scotland, this may not apply to the entire household which could be at risk of higher levels of relative poverty compared with non-disabled households. Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes linked with disability.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** Enhanced reliability and punctuality influenced by more ambitious service specifications as proposed under a franchising agreement would positively influence the needs of disabled public transport users who have more of a reliance on bus travel compared with non-disabled adults. Disabled adults can be deterred from using public transport if they encounter challenges to journey planning and inconsistent services.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among disabled users who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing as improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, it is intended that maintaining cash payment on board for tickets will also help promote the inclusivity of bus services to a range of users, including disabled users, who are not confident using electronic payment. Simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting disabled users in particular.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** A franchising agreement would allow working with highway authorities to deliver improvements to interchanges which may present accessibility issues to disabled transport users. It would also provide greater oversight of bus stop provision and facilities which could better accommodate the access needs of disabled transport users.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** As with other options, a franchising agreement could deliver an area-wide app, website and information hub with the authority retaining control and oversight over data use and publication. It is judged that a franchising option would be more likely to deliver a transport network with less complex information requirements (e.g., simplified ticketing options and consistent standards across multiple service quality areas). This would support disabled people to use public transport by providing comprehensive journey information, details of accessibility features and services available including simplified information for ticketing options that are applied consistently throughout the SPT region,
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers and they also report that available public transport options do not meet their needs for various reasons. These include difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Under a franchising model, service standards around customers support could be established to align operator’s approach. The establishment of a single front for customer support and feedback through franchising would positively impact disabled people as they would be able to provide feedback and address challenges.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including disabled people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g. disabled people). Changes to services determined under a franchise agreement are made by the authority with oversight of both community welfare and operational need.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** SRBS core policy 3q aims to ‘Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.’ A franchise agreement would have the ability to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. Given this would be more likely to be applied region-wide, the benefits after a suitable transition period could be far reaching and would in particular raise the standards in areas that are served by smaller operators or do not benefit from modern or more accessible bus fleets suited to the needs of ageing adults or people with limited mobility.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers. Through a franchising model, training standards and resources could be enhanced to improve the quality standards of existing and potential drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*”
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a franchising model could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing disabled people in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter.

Overall impact: The likelihood of delivering positive outcomes for the above policies is increased under a franchising model due to the level of control and specification that can be set by the operating authority. As such, it is assessed that **Option 4 – Franchising** will have a **Major Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Gender Reassignment:

Transgender people may experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of discrimination or harassment can prevent individuals from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016). Transgender people are also likely to face inter-sectional issues and vulnerability relating to lower incomes and structural disadvantages related to employment, education and training putting this group at higher risk of poverty.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups, such as transgender people, who may be experiencing poverty or low income.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among users who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*”
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring could be specified as part of a franchising scheme, along with public transparency for performance metrics. The potential benefits of this to the delivery of these transport policies and the transport network and transport planning processes are significant. Data on discrimination and crime rates on bus services could help to improve safety concerns for transgender people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Overall, it is assessed that **Option 4 – Franchising** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave who may be on lower income or managing increased costs in relation to childcare within the household (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels. Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support pregnant women and people and new mothers in accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, employment, education, training and employment opportunities, and local retail hubs.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups, such as pregnant people and new mothers, who may be experiencing poverty or low income due to increased costs in relation to childcare.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Pregnant women are mobility restricted as later stages of pregnancy and may have concerns or issues with regards to accessibility and safety as well as needing to access facilities whilst experiencing symptoms of pregnancy. New parents travelling with push chairs and young children may find public transport journeys uncomfortable or difficult, especially without rest stops. Multimodal journeys are a particular concern for pregnant women and new parents because of the stress of repeatedly getting on and off public transport, finding a seat and asking for assistance. Franchising introduces the opportunity to specify the level of service enhancements for bus services linked to improvements to interchanges and bus stops. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities would benefit pregnant women and new parents, who are groups more likely to experience discomfort around travel, and particularly around connections between transport modes.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** Policy 3q aims to 'Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.' A franchise agreement would have the ability to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. Given this would be more likely to be applied region-wide, the benefits after a suitable transition period could be far reaching and would in particular raise the standards in areas that are served by smaller operators or do not benefit from modern or more accessible bus fleets suited to the needs of parents travelling with young children, including those requiring buggies/pushchairs.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users, especially pregnant people and new mothers. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expected by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Franchising could be operated to work within standards set out in an agreed customer charter. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access, especially pregnant people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under franchising could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing pregnant women and new parents in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Enhanced network coverage, service frequency and on-board accessibility measures that may be introduced or standardised under a franchising agreement could have a potential **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Race:

People in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support ethnic minority groups in accessing key destinations and services such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups, such as ethnic minority groups, who may be experiencing poverty or low income.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among users who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use. Any improvement may have a positive impact on people whose first language is not English, who may find the network hard to understand.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing will improve boarding times and flexibility for most users, it is intended that maintaining cash payment on board for tickets will also help promote the inclusivity of bus services to a range of users, including older people, who are not confident using electronic payment. Simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting disabled, minority ethnic groups, young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** People who do not speak English as a first language can sometimes experience challenges related to language barriers that can occasionally make navigating public transport systems difficult in relation to timetables, signage, notifications, origin and destination information and fares being difficult to understand in some instances. Information should be easy to understand, using simple language and visual representation of changes where possible. This will help to overcome language barriers and enhance accessibility across a broad spectrum of users.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*”
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under franchising could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing ethnic minorities in accessing public transport.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Under a franchising model, service specifications and policies have the potential to create a more inclusive transport network for all users. Glasgow has the highest minority ethnic population in Scotland which forms a significant proportion of the SPT region's overall population. Given low levels of car ownership among minority ethnic groups and intersectional factors such as increased rates of relative poverty and risk of safety concerns related to harassment or discrimination, it is judged that the above package of policies delivered under a franchising model could have a **Minor to Major Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic group, particularly in more urban regions.

Religion or belief:

There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) on the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Enhancements to frequency during off-peak times (including Sundays and evening) could allow some people to attend church or faith and worship events in their local communities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractive of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** People have expressed concern about safety and security issues in relation to individual religious identities. Franchising allows bespoke safety and security standards to be agreed and written into any agreement, ensuring all operators on the network meet a certain standard in terms of technology, processes and training. This could positively impact the safety and security of people within religious communities who have expressed concern.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Limited data is available in regard to this domain and travel needs associated with religion and belief for different population sub-groups. There is a potential to deliver slight positive impacts related to enhanced service frequency and coverage in addition to safety and security measures which may address some experienced or perceived risks among people identifying with different religions or beliefs. However, it is assessed that **Option 4 – Franchising** would have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sex:

Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men. Additionally, women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently. Women feel less safe than men travelling at night. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night. Women are also more likely to be undertaking care-giving roles for children and other family members requiring access to a range of facilities and services such as schools, healthcare facilities, retail hubs, supermarkets, community and leisure facilities.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support women accessing key destinations and services such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among users who have concerns or less confidence with public transport users, including women who are more reliant on bus travel compared with men.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Women are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes such as taking children to school, looking after family members or shopping and are more likely to walk, take the bus, or be a passenger in a car than men (Sustrans, 2018). Consequently, women are more likely to stop at interchanges and bus stops and conduct multimodal journeys. In comparison to men, women are more likely to be very or fairly concerned about sexual assault, and they are also less likely to feel very or fairly safe going alone at night (66% compared to 89%). Safety concerns are heightened if the public transport facilities are unstaffed (Transport Scotland, 2022). Franchising could introduce the opportunity to specify the level of service enhancements for bus services linked to improvements to interchanges and bus stops. This could de-risk a potential situation where funding is used to upgrade infrastructure at which services are later withdrawn from or are not provided at an attractive level.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. However, improvements would positively benefit women using public transport who may feel less safe travelling at certain times of day.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** The franchising scheme could specify the adherence to specific standards for elements of a customer charter and, therefore, directly tackle the consistency challenge around its delivery. Accountability to specific standards and KPI would also be built into the scheme and therefore could also form part of the charter commitment to users. Users, particularly women, would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring could be specified as part

of a franchising scheme, along with public transparency for performance metrics. This could contribute to improve service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing women in accessing public transport.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: It is assessed that **Option 4 – Franchising** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation:

People in the LGBO group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination. In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport. A greater proportion of the LGBO group lived in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults (Scottish Government, 2017b) so are likely to face higher rates of transport poverty and challenges in terms of access to key services.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support LGBO users living in more deprived areas (Scottish Government, 2017b) to access key destinations and services such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact LGBO people who may be more likely to face challenges linked with poverty or low income (Scottish Government, 2017b).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among LGBO users who have concerns or feel less confident using public transport due to fear of discrimination or harassment.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. However, improvement would positively impact LGBO users who may have security concerns or feel less confident using public transport due to fear of discrimination or harassment.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*” This could positively impact inclusivity bus services to LGBO users who fear harassment or discrimination when using public transport.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring could be specified as part of a franchising scheme, along with public transparency for performance metrics. The potential benefits of this to the delivery of these transport policies and the transport network and transport planning processes are significant. This could contribute to improve service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing LGBO users in accessing public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: It is assessed the Option 4 – Franchising could potentially deliver a **Major Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic through enhanced affordability measures, promoting a region wide inclusive transport network and supporting measures to enhance safety and security for all users.

Overall Impact of Option on PSED: Overall, **Option 4 – Franchising** will have a **Major Beneficial Effect** on the PSED, if delivered as an ambitious and comprehensive model with region-wide geographic coverage.

5.5 Municipal Bus Operators

Table 5.5: Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators: Impact on Protected Characteristics.

Option 5 – Municipal Ownership
<i>Will the SRBS options impact protected characteristics groups differentially or disproportionately...?</i>
<i>Option Specific Assessment Summary</i>
<p>Overview:</p> <p>Under a Municipal Bus Operator model, the operator would likely be an arms-length company wholly owned by the local authority, providing suitable separation when competing for tendered bus service contracts. This option could come forward under two formats to replace current commercial operators' businesses: either by winning contracts in a franchise scheme, or by acquisition of bus operator assets and businesses – which although possible is not considered feasible to achieve market dominance.</p> <p>It is considered that this option would work in conjunction with the franchise scheme options, inheriting all costs, benefits and risks associated with that option.</p> <p>A municipal operator is unlikely to acquire all existing commercial services in the region, at least in the short term, and is more likely to start at a smaller scale, perhaps by operating subsidised services or filling gaps in the network. Therefore, there is uncertainty about the geographic applicability and relevance of any benefits associated with this option as they are dependent on the wider operating context.</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Younger and older people are less likely to drive and more likely to use the bus than those in other age groups. Issues facing older people in accessing public transport include inaccessible vehicles, journey comfort, frequency of bus services and poor integration between different transport services (as well as cross cutting issues shared with other protected groups such as hearing and visual problems and reduced personal mobility) (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services. They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults.</p> <p>Young people (aged 16-24 years) from deprived areas are more likely to seek and access employment and training opportunities in their local area or those easily accessible via public transport, thus relying on a more local context compared with peers from less deprived areas.</p> <p>Young people aged 22 years and under, older people aged 60 years and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2023).</p> <p>Equalities issues relevant to children and young people who form part of this protected characteristic group are addressed in more detail in the evidence base and assessment presented in support of the CRWIA Interim Report (Stantec, 2024).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TPO1 Improve Service Quality: Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage, as a result these targets would be embedded in a Municipal Bus operator agreement under a shared delivery model. Level of service would not only be

dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support older and young people in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The application of these benefits would be dependent on the wider operating context and a municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit, the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability.

- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Working age adults, including young professionals, part-time workers and those on low income are likely to benefit from increased fare affordability measures (further analysis is provided in the Fairer Scotland Duty Report – Stantec, 2024).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** Younger adults and those ages 65 and over are more likely to work part-time, resulting in travelling hours outside of typical commuting patterns. A municipal ownership model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support younger people and working aged adults low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities. It would also support people travelling outside of typical commuting hours, such as older adults in meeting their daily needs. However, the extent of improvement would be dependent on the scale of municipal operations as a proportion of the overall network and the existence of any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company was operating.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Providing a positive, inclusive and trusted brand identity will build trust with groups of users that have specific mobility needs, such as older people, or those who have low confidence using public transport. Simplifying and enhancing the clarity of brand information will enhance inclusivity of the network to a range of users including older people and those with lower confidence in using public transport. Municipal ownership could deliver a single identify across all operated services or franchised area or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identify in these areas. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above. However, it is unlikely that a municipal operator will exist in a form in the SPT area that could independently progress the types of measures needed to fully deliver core policies **3b** and **3c**.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing has improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular. While the operating authority would have the ability to establish fares and ticketing products under a municipal ownership model it is judged that these would be additional to an existing complex product range and would not contribute to overall simplification if delivered under a sole municipal ownership model. If delivery is linked with other models, such as franchising more simplified ticketing options could be realised.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Municipal bus services could be operated to work effectively with interchange and bus stop requirements. However, the scale of benefit would be constrained by the ability of municipal operators to run these services effectively and affordably, in competition with other operators or not. It is also dependent on any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company is operating. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities would benefit older people who are more likely experience mobility issues that create anxiety around multi-modal travel.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** Information standards can be set by the municipal operator; however, the reach of potential benefits would depend on the scale of operational delivery and the existence of other agreements/delivery models. Positive benefits would be realised if the option could deliver consistent network wide sources of information across the SPT region, this would particularly benefit older adults and younger people who may have difficulties accessing and understanding fragmented or complex information.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Some users, such as older adults, may face difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Under municipal ownership model, service standards around customers support could be established to align operator's approach. The establishment of a single front for customer support and feedback through municipal ownership would positively impact disabled people as they would be able to provide feedback and address challenges.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including older people and younger people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g., older people). Changes to services determined under a franchising and municipal ownership agreement are made by the operating authorities with oversight of both community welfare and operational need.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** SRBS core policy 3q aims to 'Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.' Depots and services would be managed under one municipal operation which has the potential to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. Under municipal operation the coverage of these changes would be dependent on the wider operating context and any region-wide application would likely not be realised in the short- to-medium term. Any improvement delivered under this model would positively meet the needs of ageing adults and other with limited mobility. This would particularly apply if the option could improve accessibility standards in areas that are served by smaller operators or do not benefit from modern or more accessible bus fleets.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Older people may face challenges boarding and using buses. Through a municipal ownership model, training standards and resources could be enhanced to improve the quality standards of existing and potential drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience for more vulnerable users requiring additional time or support to use bus services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as "*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*"

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a municipal ownership model could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing disabled people in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter.

Overall Impact: It is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic if it is delivered in conjunction with another delivery model such as franchising.

Disability:

Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving license compared with people who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%, respectively). Disabled or permanently sick adults are significantly more likely to use bus travel compared to all adults. Poverty rates for households with a disabled member remain higher compared to households where no-one is disabled. Disabled people expressed more safety concerns related to public transport use in evenings compared with non-disabled people.

Disabled people may often feel less confident about making a journey by public transport if there is uncertainty about the physical environment or realities of making a journey on transport services. Key accessibility issues relate to *journey planning* and access to clear information; co-ordinated and consistent *journey assistance* services; *accessible infrastructure*, including fully wheelchair accessibility in stations and vehicles; and the *physical environment* relating to pavements streets and routes to public transport or interchange connections.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage, as a result these targets would be embedded in a Municipal Bus operator agreement under a shared delivery model. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to disabled people accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The application of these benefits would be dependent on the wider operating context and a municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit, the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of Bus Network:** While disabled people are eligible to apply for free travel in Scotland, this may not apply to the entire household which could be at risk of higher levels of relative poverty compared with non-disabled households. Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes linked with disability. Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products. The extent of impact that could be delivered under a municipal ownership model depends on the scale and context to which it applies. If the option is applied to the existing deregulated context as a ‘challenger operation’ the municipal operator would need to negotiate partnership arrangements for universal fares initiatives. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operation model, delivering greater control over bus service delivery and fares would deliver similar benefits to the franchising model with a full suite of ticketing improvements as described above.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** Enhanced reliability and punctuality influenced by more ambitious service specifications as proposed under a municipal agreement would positively influence the needs of disabled public transport users who

have more of a reliance on bus travel compared with non-disabled adults. Disabled adults can be deterred from using public transport if they encounter challenges to journey planning and inconsistent services.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Providing a positive, inclusive and trusted brand identity will build trust with groups of users that have specific mobility needs, such as disabled users, older people, or those who have low confidence using public transport. Simplifying and enhancing the clarity of brand information will enhance inclusivity of the network to a range of users including older people, disabled people and those with lower confidence in using public transport. Municipal ownership could deliver a single identify across all operated services or franchised area or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identify in these areas. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above. However, it is unlikely that a municipal operator will exist in a form in the SPT area that could independently progress the types of measures needed to fully deliver SRBS core policies **3b** and **3c**.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing has improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting disabled, ethnic minority groups, young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular. While the operating authority would have the ability to establish fares and ticketing products under a municipal ownership model it is judged that these would be additional to an existing complex product range and would not contribute to overall simplification if delivered under a sole municipal ownership model. If delivery is linked with other models, such as franchising more simplified ticketing options could be realised.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Municipal bus services could be operated to work effectively with interchange and bus stop requirements. However, the scale of benefit would be constrained by the ability of municipal operators to run these services effectively and affordably, in competition with other operators or not. It is also dependent on any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company is operating.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** Information standards can be set by the municipal operator; however, the reach of potential benefits would depend on the scale of operational delivery and the existence of other agreements/delivery models. Positive benefits would be realised if the option could deliver consistent network wide sources of information across the SPT region.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers and they also report that available public transport options do not meet their needs for various reasons. These include difficulties with purchasing tickets, infrastructure, design of vehicles, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes and facilities at interchanges (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Under municipal ownership model, service standards around customers support could be established to align operator's approach. The establishment of a single front for customer support and feedback through municipal ownership would positively impact disabled people as they would be able to provide feedback and address challenges.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including disabled people) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility (e.g., older people and disabled people). Changes to services determined under a municipal ownership agreement are made by the operating authorities with oversight of both community welfare and operational need.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** Policy 3q aims to 'Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.' A municipal ownership agreement would have the ability to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. This option is highly dependent on the scale of municipal operation with minimal benefits being realised if delivered within the existing network operation model. Under a more comprehensive municipal operation model, benefits would be applied to a wider geographical area as a result of acquiring a greater proportion of the commercial network and introducing higher fleet standards. Any improvement delivered under this model would positively meet the needs of disabled people if improved accessibility can be applied particularly in relation to areas served by smaller operators or those that do not benefit from modern or more accessible bus fleets.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** Disabled people report particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers. Through a municipal ownership model, training standards and resources could be enhanced to improve the quality standards of existing and potential drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*”

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a municipal ownership model could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing disabled people in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter.

Overall impact: The ability to deliver positive outcomes for the above policies is uncertain under a municipal ownership model due to constraints such as the smaller scale delivery across the region and uncertainties about the model in relation to other operating models (e.g., franchising). As such, it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic if delivered under a more comprehensive model.

Gender Reassignment:

Transgender people may experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of discrimination or harassment can prevent individuals from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016). Transgender people are also likely to face inter-sectional issues and vulnerability relating to lower incomes and structural disadvantages related to employment, education and training putting this group at higher risk of poverty.

Under a municipal ownership agreement, the following policy options have the potential to impact this protected characteristic group:

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Municipal ownership could deliver a single identity across all operated services or franchised area, or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identity in these areas. A cohesive single identity could help demonstrate inclusivity and safety to build trust among users, such as transgender people, who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above. However, it is unlikely that a municipal operator will exist in a form in the SPT area that could independently progress the types of measures needed to fully deliver SRBS core policies 3b and 3c.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.*” This would particularly benefit transgender people who experience hate crimes and poverty as through a customer charter they will feel safer and be able to have greater access to the service.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring could be set out for municipal bus companies, along with public performance metrics. This would relate to municipal operations alone, and any other agreements existing under the other delivery models. Data on discrimination and crime rates on bus services could help to improve safety concerns for transgender people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: Overall, it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic

Pregnancy and Maternity:

Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave. Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels. Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage, as a result these targets would be embedded in a Municipal Bus operator agreement under a shared delivery model. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to pregnant people and new mothers in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The application of these benefits would be dependent on the wider operating context and a municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit, the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Pregnant women are mobility restricted at later stages of pregnancy and may have concerns or issues with regards to accessibility and safety as well as needing to access facilities whilst experiencing symptoms of pregnancy. New parents travelling with push chairs and young children may find public transport journeys uncomfortable or difficult, especially without rest stops. Multimodal journeys are a particular concern for pregnant women and new parents because of the stress of repeatedly getting on and off public transport, finding a seat and asking for assistance. Municipal bus services could be operated to work effectively with interchange and bus stop requirements. However, the scale of benefit would be constrained based on the ability of the municipal operations to operate these services effectively and affordably. The enhancement of interchanges and bus stop facilities would benefit pregnant women and new parents, who are groups more likely to experience discomfort around travel, and particularly around connections between transport modes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** Policy 3q aims to ‘Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.’ Depots and services would be managed under one municipal operations which has the potential to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. Under municipal operation the coverage of these changes would be dependent on the wider operating context and any region-wide application would likely not be realised in the short- to-medium term.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services

and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** A Customer Charter can outline the quality that can be expect by users of the bus network. Many of the challenges that users face can be addressed through the provision of consistent, deliverable and attractive bus services. Municipal bus services could be operated to work within standards set out in an agreed customer charter. However, the level of benefit in achieving the policies would relate to the scale/share of operations and the existence of any agreements under the other delivery models. Establishing agreement to the delivery of a Customer Charter could create accountability across partners. Users would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access, especially pregnant people.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a municipal bus option could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing pregnant women and new parents in accessing public transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: While there are uncertainties associated with this delivery option in relation to the above policies and the extent of potential roll out / scale it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic, especially if delivery in conjunction with another delivery model such as franchising.

Race:

People in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage, as a result these targets would be embedded in a Municipal Bus operator agreement under a shared delivery model. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support ethnic minorities in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The application of these benefits would be dependent on the wider operating context and a municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable

delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit, the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability.

- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups, such as ethnic minorities, who may be experiencing poverty or low income.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Municipal ownership could deliver a single identity across all operated services or franchised areas, or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identity in these areas. A cohesive single identity could help demonstrate inclusivity and safety to build trust among users such as minority ethnic groups who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above. However, it is unlikely that a municipal operator will exist in a form in the SPT area that could independently progress the types of measures needed to fully deliver SRBS core policies 3b and 3c.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing has improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting disabled, ethnic minority groups, young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular. While the operating authority would have the ability to establish fares and ticketing products under a municipal ownership model it is judged that these would be additional to an existing complex product range and would not contribute to overall simplification if delivered under a sole municipal ownership model. If delivery is linked with other models, such as franchising more simplified ticketing options could be realised.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** Information standards can be set by the municipal operator; however, the reach of potential benefits would depend on the scale of operational delivery and the existence of other agreements/delivery models. Positive benefits would be realised if the option could deliver consistent network wide sources of information across the SPT region.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** Municipal bus services could be operated to work within standards set out in an agreed customer charter. This could positively impact who find the network confusing or who require further assistance when using the network.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring under a municipal bus option could contribute to improved service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing ethnic minorities in accessing public

transport. Additionally, performance metrics could be made public to reinforce the accountability established through a Customer Charter. However, a lack of willingness from relevant parties to share information can limit the scope of this benefit and jeopardise the potential of establishing a statutory partnership.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: While there are uncertainties associated with this delivery option in relation to the above policies and the extent of potential roll out / scale it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic, especially if delivery in conjunction with another delivery model such as franchising.

Religion or belief:

There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) of the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities. However, a municipal bus operator could:

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** A municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability. Enhancements to frequency during off-peak times (including Sundays and evening) could allow some people to attend church or faith and worship events in their local communities.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractive of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** People have expressed concern about safety and security issues in relation to individual religious identities. Under a municipal bus option, any benefits would be very much dependent on the scale that the municipal company would operate in. However, it should be noted that subsidised services may currently be operated by older vehicles or smaller operators, therefore the marginal improvement in terms of security measures in-vehicle may be greater than on a more heavily used, profitable service. For entirely new services, clearly the benefits for these passengers and areas would be significant. Any improvement in safety and security measures could positively impact the safety and security of people within religious communities who have expressed concern.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall, it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** would have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on this protected characteristic.

Sex:

Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men. Additionally, women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently. Women feel less safe than men travelling at night. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night. Women are also more likely to be undertaking care-giving roles for children and other family members requiring access to a range of facilities and services such as schools, healthcare facilities, retail hubs, supermarkets, community and leisure facilities.

Problems with personal safety and security.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage, as a result these targets would be embedded in a Municipal Bus operator agreement under a shared delivery model. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support women in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The application of these benefits would be dependent on the wider operating context and a municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit, the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Municipal ownership gives complete freedom regarding fares, but only for those services delivered by the municipal bus company. This has the potential to positively impact women as they are more likely to make journeys using public transport. Additionally, a more affordable public transport system under municipal ownership will positively impact women already facing transport poverty.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Municipal ownership could deliver a single identity across all operated services or franchised area, or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identity in these areas. A cohesive single identity could help demonstrate inclusivity and safety to build trust among users such as women who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above. However, it is unlikely that a municipal operator will exist in a form in the SPT area that could independently progress the types of measures needed to fully deliver SRBS core policies 3b and 3c.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Women are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes such as taking children to school, looking after family members or shopping and are more likely to walk, take the bus, or be a passenger in a car than men (Sustrans, 2018). Consequently, women are more likely to stop at interchanges and bus stops and conduct multimodal journeys. In comparison to men, women are more likely to be very or fairly concerned about sexual assault, and they are also less likely to feel very or fairly safe going alone at night (66% compared to 89%). Safety concerns are heightened if the public transport facilities are unstaffed (Transport Scotland, 2022). Municipal bus services could be operated to work effectively with interchange and bus stop requirements which could benefit women. However, the scale of benefit would be constrained based on the ability of the municipal operations to operate these services effectively and affordably, in competition with other operators or not. It would also depend on the existence of any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company was operating.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among women using bus travel. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so

improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** Municipal bus services could be operated to work within standards set out in an agreed customer charter. However, the level of benefit in achieving the policies would relate to the scale/share of operations and the existence of any agreements under the other delivery models. Users, particularly women, would be empowered to identify a reference point when using bus services if they continue to experience challenges in access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring could be set out for municipal bus companies, along with public performance metrics. This would relate to municipal operations alone, and any other agreements existing under the other delivery models. This could contribute to improve service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing women in accessing public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: While there are uncertainties associated with this delivery option in relation to the above policies and the extent of potential roll out / scale it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic, if delivered in conjunction with another model such as franchising.

Sexual Orientation:

People in the LGBO group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination. In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport. A greater proportion of the LGBO group lived in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults (Scottish Government, 2017b) so are likely to face higher rates of transport poverty and challenges in terms of access to key services.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage, as a result these targets would be embedded in a Municipal Bus operator agreement under a shared delivery model. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support LGBO users living in more deprived areas (Scottish Government, 2017) in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The application of these benefits would be dependent on the wider operating context and a municipal bus company would operate within the constraints of the applicable delivery model. However, it is possible that if profits permit, the company could offer a better level of service than a private sector operator (covering more geographical areas or operating at quieter times of day) – but subject to always maintaining overall financial viability.

- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** Auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** Providing a positive, inclusive and trusted brand identity will build trust with groups of users that have specific mobility needs, such as disabled users, older people, or those who have low confidence using public transport. Simplifying and enhancing the clarity of brand information will enhance inclusivity of the network to a range of users including older people, disabled people and those with lower confidence in using public transport. Municipal ownership could deliver a single identify across all operated services or franchised area or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identify in these areas. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above. However, it is unlikely that a municipal operator will exist in a form in the SPT area that could independently progress the types of measures needed to fully deliver core policies 3b and 3c.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.” This could positively impact inclusivity bus services to LGBO users who fear harassment or discrimination when using public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Data and Monitoring:** The collection, monitoring and analysis of data can be key to achieving improvements in quality across many aspects of a bus network. Data collection, sharing, analysis and monitoring could be set out for municipal bus companies, along with public performance metrics. This would relate to municipal operations alone, and any other agreements existing under the other delivery methods. This could contribute to improve service quality as partners would gain further insight into the challenges facing LGBO users in accessing public transport.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots + Drivers:** The differential impact of this TPO on this protected characteristic cannot be assessed due to limited detail or evidence.

Overall impact: While there are uncertainties associated with this delivery option in relation to the above policies and the extent of potential roll out / scale it is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** would have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on this protected characteristic, if delivered in conjunction with another delivery model such as franchising.

Overall Impact of Option on PSED: Overall, **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** will have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on the PSED, if delivered under a comprehensive model with wide geographic coverage.

6 Summary

Table 6.1: Summary of Impacts

Protected Characteristic	Options				
	1 – BAU	2 – Voluntary Partnership	3 - BSIP	4 – Franchising	5 – Municipal Ownership
▪ Age	-	-	+	++	+
▪ Disability	-	0	+	++	+
▪ Gender Reassignment	-	-	0	+	+
▪ Pregnancy and Maternity	-	-	+	+	+
▪ Race	-	-	+	+ / ++	+
▪ Religion or Belief	0	-	0	0	0
▪ Sex	-	-	+	+	+
▪ Sexual Orientation	-	0	+	++	+
Overall assessment with respect to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)?	-	-	+	++	+

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Appendix A Baseline Data

Table A.1: Age Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Aged 15 and under	14.4	17.0	16.3	15.3	15.7	17.9	17.4	18.0	20.4	16.6	15.9	16.8	16.6
Aged 16-24 years	9.5	9.4	9.8	9.0	12.0	9.2	9.7	10.5	10.0	9.9	9.5	9.9	10.2
Aged 25-59	41.6	45.5	43.2	41.7	53.2	42.7	46.1	47.3	42.5	47.4	45.1	45.1	47.0
Aged 60 and over	34.4	28.1	30.8	34.0	19.1	30.2	26.8	24.2	27.1	26.2	29.5	28.2	26.2

Source: National Records of Scotland (2022) Mid-2021 Population Estimates Scotland. Available at: [Mid-2021 Population Estimates Scotland | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

Table A.2: Disability Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	8.9	11.3	11.3	10.5	12.8	7.8	12.3	11.6	7.7	10.7	12.5	10.7	9.6
Day-to-day activities limited a little	11.3	10.8	11.2	11.2	9.9	9.5	10.8	9.8	9.1	10.3	11.3	10.5	10.0
Day-to-day activities not limited	79.8	77.9	77.4	78.2	77.3	82.6	76.9	78.6	83.2	79.0	76.3	78.9	80.4

Source: Census 2011: [Search | Scotland's Census - Search by location \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

Table A.3: Gender Reassignment Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Gender Reassignment	There is no data available at a Council level for Scotland for this protected characteristic. The Scottish Public Health Network estimates that 0.5% of the Scottish population is transgender (approximately 24,000 adults).												

Source: Public Health Scotland » [Introduction \(scotphn.net\)](https://www.scotphn.net)

Table A.4: Pregnancy and Maternity Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Healthy birth weight (%)	84.82	83.75	80.97	83.27	86.52	85.14	86.89	84.76	83.33	85.92	87.73		84.14
Live birth rate (per 1,000 population)	6.95	9.2	7.96	6.88	9.35	8.25	8.76	9.63	8.18	9.15	7.85	8.38	8.72
Teenage pregnancies (crude rate per 1,000 females aged 15-19)	15.71	25.93	27.71	23.06	31.52	13.96	35.35	25.13	12.29	22.03	22.54	23.20	24.95

Source: [ScotPHO profiles \(shinyapps.io\)](https://shinyapps.io/scotpho/)

Table A.5: Race and Ethnicity Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Race													
White	98.8	98.9	98.9	98.7	88.4	95.8	98.4	97.9	94.1	97.3	98.6	96.9	96.0
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	8.1	3.3	0.9	1.6	5.0	1.8	0.9	2.2	2.7
African	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.6

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
Caribbean or Black	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other ethnic groups	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3

Source: Census 2011: [Search | Scotland's Census - Search by location \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

Table A:6 Religion or Belief Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
Religion or Belief	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Church of Scotland	40.0	33.4	39.6	43.7	23.1	35.6	29.0	30.4	33.4	32.2	33.0	34.7	32.4
Roman Catholic	11.3	22.2	14.7	9.9	27.3	22.3	33.1	34.6	22.2	22.7	37.0	22.3	15.9
Other Christian	7.7	4.1	4.1	4.8	4.1	4.6	3.2	3.3	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.3	5.5
Muslim	0.2	3.3	0.2	0.2	5.4	1.0	0.4	1.0	3.3	0.2	0.2	1.2	1.4
Other religions	0.8	4.2	0.7	0.7	2.1	1.9	0.5	0.5	4.0	0.9	0.5	1.5	1.1
No religion	32.0	26.5	33.6	33.5	31.0	28.2	27.3	24.3	26.5	32.7	19.2	29.6	36.7
Not stated	8.0	6.3	7.2	7.1	7.1	6.4	6.6	5.8	6.3	6.9	5.9	6.7	7.0

Source: Census 2011: [Search | Scotland's Census - Search by location \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)

Table A.7: Sex Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
Sex	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Female	50.0	51.5	52.5	52.2	50.8	51.6	52.2	51.6	52.1	51.6	52.1	51.7	51.2
Male	50.0	48.5	47.5	47.8	49.2	48.4	47.8	48.4	47.9	48.4	47.9	48.3	48.8

Source: National Records of Scotland (2022) Mid-2021 Population Estimates Scotland. Available at: [Mid-2021 Population Estimates Scotland | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

Table A.8: Sexual Orientation Profile by SPT Profile

Protected Characteristic	Region												
Sexual Orientation	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National

Protected Characteristic	Region
Limited information is available about sexual orientation for Scotland. Data from 2019 suggested that 95% of Scottish adults identified as being heterosexual with around 3% of adults self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. Younger people are more likely to identify as being lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB), with 50% of those identifying as LGB and other aged 35 years and under (Equality Evidence Finder, 2023).	

Source: equalityevidence.scot

Table A.9: Marriage and Civil Partnership Profile by SPT Region

Protected Characteristic	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dunbartonshire	West Dunbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Marriage and Civil Partnership													
Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership)	29.1	32.3	31.9	29.4	49.2	28.2	37.0	34.9	28.0	35.4	35.8	33.8	35.4
Married	49.9	47.4	46.4	49.8	30.8	55.0	40.9	45.2	54.9	44.1	42.7	46.1	45.2
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Separated (but still legally married)	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.0	3.9	2.7	3.6	3.8	2.7	3.6	3.1	3.4	3.2
Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	8.5	8.4	9.1	8.5	8.2	5.9	8.5	8.0	6.2	8.5	8.8	8.1	8.2
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	9.1	8.3	8.9	9.2	7.6	8.0	8.4	8.0	8.2	8.4	9.4	8.5	7.8

Source: Census 2011: [Search | Scotland's Census - Search by location \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk)