Partnership   **SPT**

Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy - Final Draft for Approval

Date of meeting   19 September 2025   **Date of report**   1 September 2025

Report by Head of Policy and Planning

1. Object of report

The object of this report is to:

- recommend approval of the Final Draft of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) attached at Appendix 4; and

- subject to the above approval, agree that a costed programme and timeline for SPT to deliver a Franchise Framework Assessment (FFA) as required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019), and a progress update on the other actions in the SRBS Delivery Plan, will be presented for approval to the Partnership in December 2025.

2. Background to report

Members will recall that the SRBS Draft for Consultation was approved by the Strategy and Programmes Committee on 21 February 2025[1] and an update on the consultation was provided to the Partnership on 27 June 2025[2]. The following section provides an update on work undertaken to incorporate the outcomes of the consultation into the Final Draft SRBS.

3. Outline of proposals

This section provides further detail on responses to the consultation and how these have been incorporated into the Final Draft SRBS.
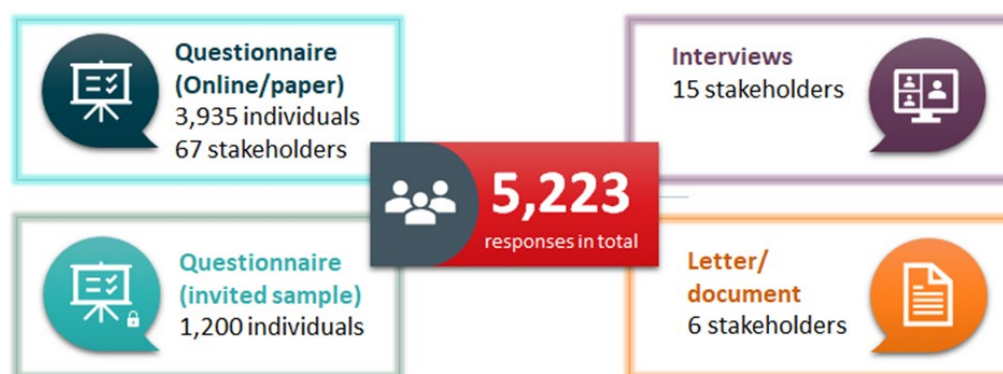
(i)   Consultation Overview

The consultation on the draft SRBS was carried out over 12 weeks between March and May 2025. A total of 5,223 responses were received across all channels including 5,135 responses from individuals and 88 responses from organisations. A summary of responses received, and engagement undertaken as part of the consultation is provided in Figure 1 (next page).

Attached at Appendix 1 is the full consultation report. This includes details on the consultation process and respondents, approach to analysis, reporting and considerations when interpreting the findings. Section 2.3.4 of Appendix 1 specifically sets out the steps taken to ensure robustness and authenticity of data including identification of respondents and use of comparative sampling.

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[1] https://spt.production.d8.studio/media/vdolwdeb/sp210225_agenda8.pdf
[2] https://spt.production.d8.studio/media/rchjlotz/p270625_agenda7.pdf

Figure 1: SRBS Consultation: Summary of Engagement and Responses Received

(ii) Consultation findings – views on the current bus network

Individual respondents were asked how they would rate their current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region. The results are shown in Figure 2, noting that 62% of respondents were fairly or very dissatisfied.

Questionnaire respondents answering on behalf of an organisation were similarly asked whether they agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public. The results are shown in Figure 3, noting that 76% of respondents either slightly or strongly disagreed that the bus network meets the needs of the general public. Further details on this are set out in Chapter 4 of Appendix 1.

Figure 2: How would you rate your current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region?
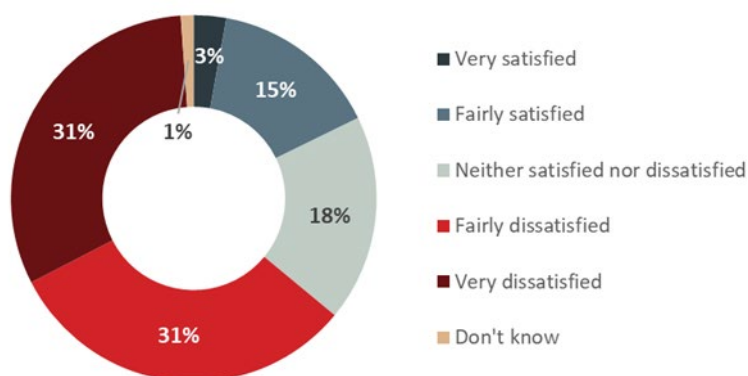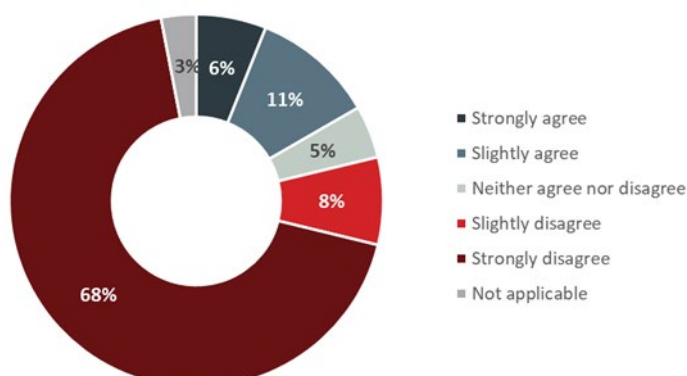

Figure 3: Do you agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public?

(iii) Consultation findings - The Bus Network We Need

The draft SRBS sets out policies and measures grouped within 7 themes. The consultation asked respondents how important each theme is to them/their organisation, when thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved. Respondents were then asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that each theme should be included in the SRBS. Under each theme, all respondents were then asked, on an optional basis, to what extent they agreed or disagreed that each policy or measure were appropriate to deliver that theme. Organisation respondents were also invited to comment on individual policies and measures. A summary of results for each theme are presented below, with further details set out in Chapter 5 of Appendix 1.

The key findings for "Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed" include:

- 97% of respondents rate this theme as very important (80%) or important (17%).
- 97% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.
- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 92% to 98% in agreement.

The key findings for "Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys" include:

- 97% of respondents rate this theme as very important (74%) or important (23%).
- 97% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.
- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 70% to 99% in agreement.
- Measures 9 (70%) and 10 (78%), relating to wider car demand management, traffic management and enforcement measures, had the lowest levels of agreement of all policies and measures across all themes; however, only 3% (measure 9) and 7% (measure 10) disagreed with the measures, with remaining respondents selecting 'neither agree/disagree' or 'don't know'.

The key findings for "Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing" include:

- 94% of respondents rate this theme as very important (76%) or important (18%).
- 96% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.
- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 91% to 98% in agreement.

The key findings for "Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys" include:

- 91% of respondents rate this theme as very important (61%) or important (30%).
- 94% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.
- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 88% to 97% in agreement.

The key findings for Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network include:

- 85% of respondents rate this theme as very important (55%) or important (30%).
- 86% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.

- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 85% to 97% in agreement.

The key findings for Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network include:

- 94% of respondents rate this theme as very important (68%) or important (26%).
- 93% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.
- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 86% to 97% in agreement.

The key findings for Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet include:
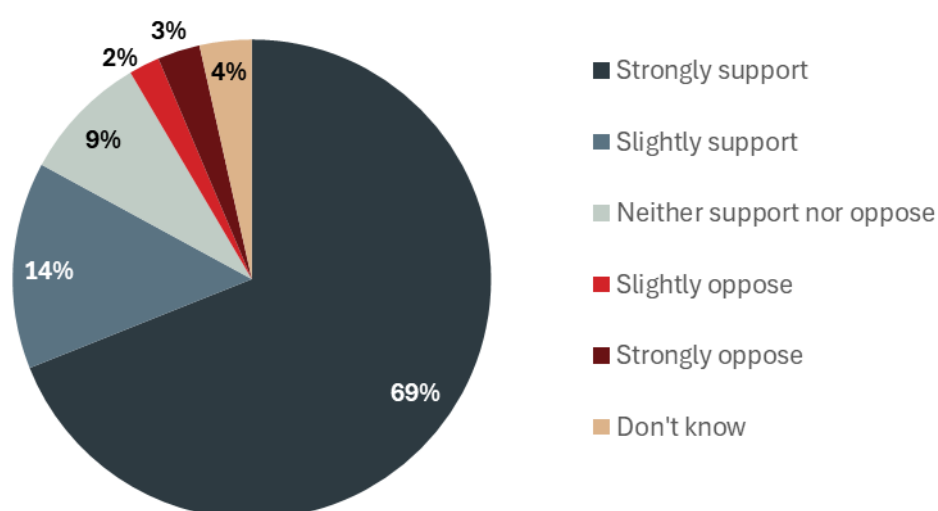
- 82% of respondents rate this theme as very important (51%) or important (31%).
- 85% of respondents agree that this theme should be included in the strategy.
- The vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or slightly agreed that each individual policy and measure was appropriate to deliver the theme, ranging from 89% to 98% in agreement.

(iv) Consultation findings – Delivery Plan

Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that 83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising, while 5% oppose. This is shown in Figure 4.

The draft strategy set out a range of 'key issues' to be considered in the development of franchising and a set of 'key risks' for the franchise development process. The majority of respondents agreed that the listed topics constitute the key issues and risks to be considered by SPT. Additionally, stakeholders raised other points for consideration in the development of the delivery plan. Further details are set out in Chapter 6 of Appendix 1.

Figure 4: To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

Legend:
- Strongly support
- Slightly support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Slightly oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Pie chart values: 69%, 14%, 9%, 2%, 3%, 4%

(v) Consideration of consultation findings – views on the current bus network

The views on the current bus network demonstrate that a majority of individual respondents are not satisfied with the current bus network and a majority of organisational respondents do not believe the current bus network meets the needs of

the general public. These results provide a reasonable basis for SPT to continue with the development and finalisation of the bus strategy.

(vi) Consideration of consultation findings – The Bus Network We Need

The vast majority of respondents considered all of the themes to be important and agreed that each theme should be included within the SRBS. The vast majority of respondents also agreed that the policies and measures were appropriate to deliver the relevant theme. Therefore, it is proposed to retain the themes and the groupings of the policies/measures within each theme. However, consideration has been given to the detailed feedback on the policies and measures, with proposed amendments to these set out in Appendix 2.

(vii) Consideration of consultation findings – Delivery Plan

The analysis of consultation feedback on the Delivery Plan identified 12 issues to be considered by SPT for potential amendments to the strategy. Appendix 3 provides a summary of feedback and SPT's response for each issue.

(viii) Final Draft SRBS

Having been updated as per Appendix 2 and Appendix 3, the Final Draft SRBS is attached at Appendix 4.

4. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to:

- approve the Final Draft of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy attached at Appendix 4; and

- subject to the above approval, agree that a costed programme and timeline for SPT to deliver a Franchise Framework Assessment as required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019), and a progress update on the other actions in the SRBS Delivery Plan, will be presented for approval to the Partnership in December 2025 and if approved, note that plans to implement the agreed actions will now be formulated.

5. Consequences

Policy consequences	*The SRBS establishes bus policies for the region and supports the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy.*
Legal consequences	*None at present.*
Financial consequences	*Taking forward the SRBS Delivery Plan will involve some costs in 2026/27 and beyond. These initial costs be covered from within existing SPT provision.*
Personnel consequences	*A programme for SRBS delivery will be reported to SPT Partnership Board at a future date.*
Equalities consequences	*An Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Community Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment have been carried out as part of the SRBS development process.*
Risk consequence	*The SRBS sets out key risks for the Franchise Framework Assessment, which are incorporated into project and corporate risk registers as appropriate.*

Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	*A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out as part of the SRBS development process.*

Name	Bruce Kiloh	**Name**	Valerie Davidson
Title	**Head of Policy and Planning**	**Title**	**Chief Executive**

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APPENDIX 1

DRAFT STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL BUS STRATEGY 2025 CONSULTATION REPORT

DRAFT STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL BUS STRATEGY

2025 CONSULTATION REPORT

IDENTIFICATION TABLE	
Client/Project owner	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Project	Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy Consultation
Type of document	2025 Consultation Report
Date	22/08/2025
File name	SRBS Consultation Report.docx
Reference number	GB01T25A21
Number of pages	79

APPROVAL				
Version	**Name**		**Position**	**Date**
1	Author	Samyuktha Arun	Assistant Consultant	09/06/2025
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	Checked by	Lindsey Stack	Associate	22/08/2025
	Approved by	Liz Boast	Associate Director	22/08/2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has been developing a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) that sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered.

SPT has commissioned SYSTRA to consult with stakeholders and the general public to **understand their views on key elements of the draft strategy and supporting documents, and whether any changes to the strategy are required** prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

The consultation forms a critical component in the strategy's development, providing stakeholders and the general public an opportunity to shape the bus network's future direction.

Consultation process

SYSTRA was commissioned to carry out a non-statutory consultation exercise over a twelve-week period, between **Wednesday 5th March 2025** and **Thursday 29th May 2025** to gather feedback from stakeholders and the wider public on the draft SRBS. A total of **5,223 responses** were received across all channels:
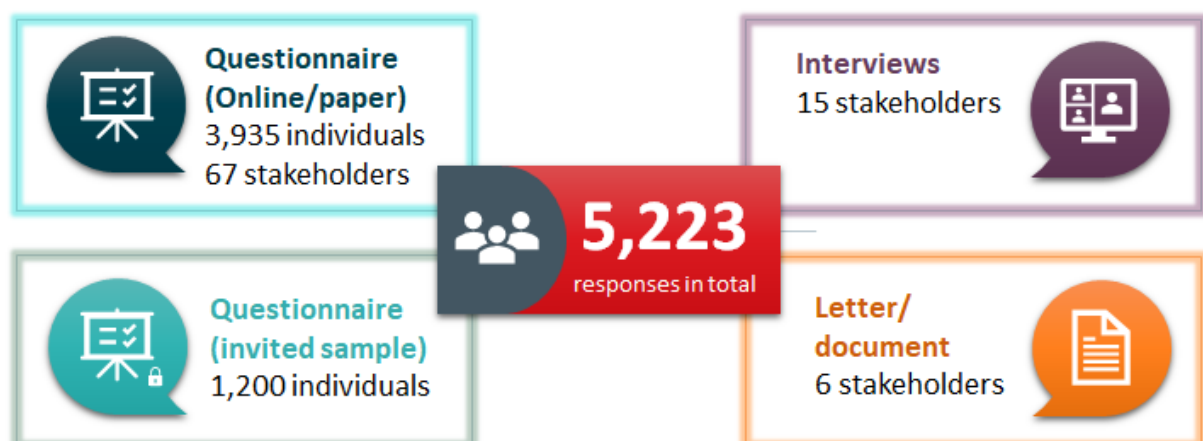
Consultation feedback on the current bus network

The consultation gathered feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the current bus network.

The questionnaire findings indicate that the majority (62%) of individual respondents are fairly or very dissatisfied with the bus network, while 18% of respondents are satisfied. Frequent bus users were more likely to be very satisfied with the bus network compared to infrequent/non-bus users.

A total of 17% of respondents representing organisations (stakeholders) strongly agree / agree that the bus network currently meets the needs of the general public.
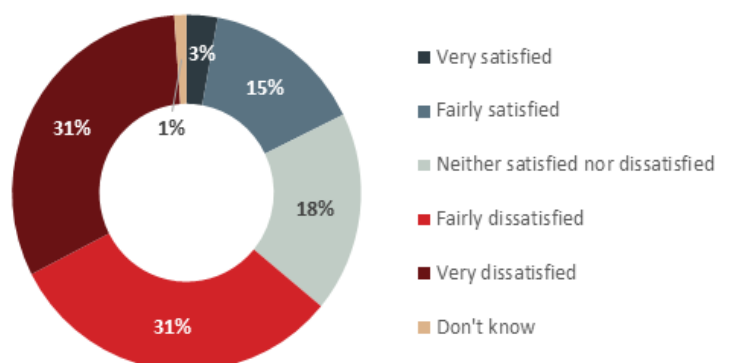
Comments from respondents in the questionnaire highlighted dissatisfaction relating to the cost of bus travel, reliability, lack of services in certain areas, long journey times and a perceived lack of integration between different modes of transport.

Consultation feedback on The Bus Network We Need

Feedback was gathered on the draft SRBS chapter 'The Bus Network We Need', which details seven key themes setting out what the SRBS aims to achieve, alongside policies and measures to support each theme. Respondents were asked about the importance of each theme and whether it should be included in the SRBS.

The vast majority of respondents considered each theme to be important and felt it should be included within the SRBS. Theme 1

('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') had the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%), followed by Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing').

Stakeholders were broadly positive about the proposed policies and measures within each of the seven themes. Support was highest for more frequent and punctual services (P4), improving periods of operation and geographic coverage – several noting that there should be more focus on rural areas (P2), improved frequency (P3), and ensuring bus fares are easy to understand (P8). With the latter, stakeholders felt it was important to retain cash payments as an option. Also receiving high levels of support were improvements related to accurate and reliable real time travel information (M35) and high quality and well maintained vehicles across the region (P18).

Consultation feedback on the draft SRBS Delivery Plan

Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that 83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising, while 5% oppose.

Stakeholder support for franchising was due to a view it would provide stronger public control and oversight, while others felt it may improve integration and lead to bus travel improvements, particularly in rural areas. However there are concerns about the costs involved and uncertainty over funding sources. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.

- Strongly support
- Slightly support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Slightly oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know
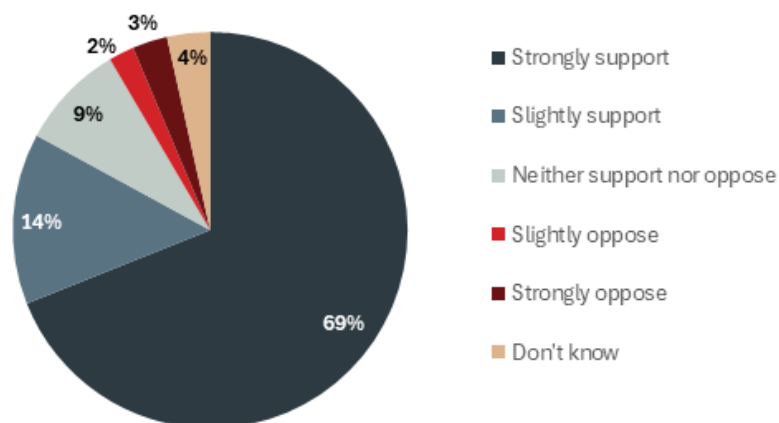
The majority of stakeholders agree with the **key issues** to be considered in the development of franchising, listed in the draft SRBS Delivery Plan, but wanted to see further inclusion of accessibility, rural service coverage and integration matters. Stakeholders also agreed with the **key risks in the development of franchising**, particularly around funding and governance.

Stakeholders consider the draft **SRBS action plan** an essential foundation, but some perceive it as lacking detail, urgent timelines, and sufficient ambition, especially regarding public ownership and integrated system reform. There are calls for clearer timelines (distinguishing short/medium/long-term priorities), greater clarity on what constitutes a 'minimum level of service,' and explicit commitment to equity across geographies, particularly rural areas.

Feedback on the accompanying background and technical documents was generally positive, with suggestions for further clarity on forecast demand, the evidence base for priority measures, and the resourcing of implementation. Several stakeholders recommended additional impact assessments, particularly around equalities, and the implications for rural communities. The value of strong, clear communication of the SRBS vision and benefits was also highlighted, with calls for ongoing engagement as delivery proposals are further developed.

Next steps

SPT will review all consultation feedback and refine the SRBS accordingly. The revised SRBS will be put forward to the SPT Partnership for approval in the latter part of 2025.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Bus services are vital to our communities, connecting towns, villages and city neighbourhoods across the west of Scotland, and bus is the most frequently and widely used form of public transport. Despite the significant value of bus to society, economy and the environment, fewer people use bus to travel, and bus services are less frequent than 10 years ago. Many people and communities have told SPT they want an improved bus service.

1.1.2 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) wants to reverse this cycle of decline and grow the bus network. To achieve this, SPT has been developing a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) that sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered. SPT has commissioned SYSTRA to consult with stakeholders and the general public to **understand their views on key elements of the draft strategy and supporting documents, and whether any changes to the strategy are required** prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

1.2 Development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

1.2.1 In 2023, SPT commenced work on the SRBS. The SRBS is SPT's process to determine a preferred approach to improving the bus network and set the direction of bus policy in the region.

1.2.2 The first stage in developing the SRBS was by establishing the SRBS **Case for Change**[1]. This report set out the key issues with the bus network and the desired transport outcomes, objectives and core policy areas to improve the bus network.

1.2.3 Following this, an initial bus policy framework was developed and an **Options Appraisal**[2] was carried out on the different models available to deliver bus services including partnership models, bus franchising and municipal bus operations. The recommendations of the Options Appraisal were reported to SPT in March 2024.

1.2.4 SPT carried out a consultation on the recommendations from the options appraisal in April to May 2024. The outcomes of the consultation were reported to the SPT Strategy and Programme committee in September 2024.

1.2.5 The **draft SRBS**[3] has since been developed and in February 2025, the SPT Strategy and Programmes committee approved the strategy for public consultation. This consultation followed a similar format to the consultation carried out in 2024, involving stakeholders and the general public, providing them an opportunity to feedback on the draft strategy. The SRBS process has also been informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

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[1] https://www.spt.co.uk/media/2wrkfd2o/srbs-case-for-change.pdf
[2] https://www.spt.co.uk/media/2pkj4pjr/strathclyde-regional-bus-strategy-options-appraisal-final.pdf
[3] https://www.spt.co.uk/media/qcxp4qmy/spt_strathclyde-regional-bus-strategy-draft-for-consultation.pdf

1.2.6   The draft SRBS sets out what SPT feel is needed from bus in the future, including buses that are more frequent, more reliable, more affordable and easier to use. In addition, the SRBS notes that a better coordinated and more recognisable network is needed that provides 'turn up and go' service levels on key routes and ensures a consistent level of service for towns and villages. The draft SRBS also refers to the requirement of a bus network that is more accessible and safer to use, with the benefits of a zero-emission fleet felt across the region. As a core part of the strategy delivery, SPT proposes to progress with developing a bus franchising model for local services across the region.

1.3   Consultation

1.3.1   SPT carried out a 12-week consultation on the draft SRBS between March and May 2025 to gather views on key elements of the draft SRBS and consider if any changes are required before the SPT Partnership approve the SRBS for delivery. This report provides details on the consultation process, the overall findings from the consultation and recommendations for next steps.

1.4   Structure

1.4.1   The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2 – Consultation process:** outlines the methodology used and consultation approaches taken, alongside the approach to analysis and reporting;
- **Chapter 3 – Consultation response:** presents the overall response to the consultation, including the number of responses received through different channels;
- **Chapter 4 – Consultation findings: General views on the current bus network:** discusses feedback on this chapter of the draft SRBS, including satisfaction with the current bus network and whether respondents feel change is required;
- **Chapter 5 – Consultation findings: The Bus Network We Need:** details the feedback on the seven themes and individual policies / measures;
- **Chapter 6 – Consultation findings: The Delivery Plan:** presents the level of support and opposition for taking forward bus franchising, alongside stakeholder feedback on potential issues, risks and opportunities. This section also details feedback on the action plan within the draft SRBS;
- **Chapter 7 – Consultation findings: Other feedback:** details the findings relating to other areas in addition to the recommendations, such as feedback on the impact assessments and other comments received; and
- **Chapter 8 – Summary and next steps:** summarises the key findings from the consultation and outlines what will happen next.

2.   CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.1   Overview

2.1.1   This section sets out the consultation process undertaken to understand general public and stakeholder opinions on the draft SRBS, including the priorities, issues and opportunities identified.

2.2   Approach

Aim of the process

2.2.1   SYSTRA was commissioned to carry out a consultation exercise over a twelve-week period, between **Wednesday 5th March 2025** and **Thursday 29th May 2025** to gather feedback from stakeholders and the wider public on the draft SRBS. The purpose of the consultation was to understand views on key elements of the draft SRBS and consider if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

Communication

2.2.2   SPT aimed to consult widely on the recommendations and provide those with an interest with sufficient detail to form a view. Prior to and during the consultation, SPT published the draft strategy which outlined the bus network that is needed to improve bus for existing passengers, make it more attractive to new users, and ensure bus is providing essential access for everyone who relies on it. To deliver the strategy, SPT highlighted their aim to develop bus franchising arrangements for the region. Alongside this, SPT published a series of impact assessments to accompany the regional bus strategy including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

2.2.3   Before the consultation period, SPT publicised the consultation by:

November 2024
Reporting to SPT Strategy and Programmes committee

February 2025
Emailing local authority partners and providing an update to local authority transport officers at the SPT/Councils Liaison meeting

March 2025
Publishing a press release ahead of the SPT Partnership meeting
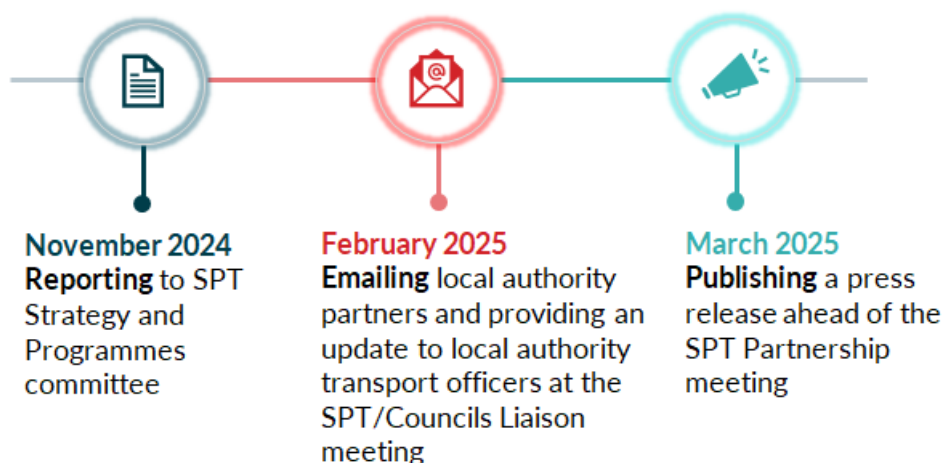
2.2.4   During the consultation period, the consultation was publicised through the following channels:

- SPT's website via the homepage and dedicated bus strategy page[4] (SPT);
- Press release to launch the consultation (SPT);
- Emails to c. 700 stakeholders with information on the consultation and how to participate. A follow up reminder was also emailed towards the end of the consultation period (SPT);

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[4] https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/

- Local authorities were requested to forward the stakeholder email to community councils in their local authority (247 active community councils) (SPT);
- Social media – promoted on the consultation launch date and at regular intervals throughout the consultation periods. Updates were published on SPT's X account and Partnership Board members and partners were encouraged to 'retweet' (SPT);
- Advert in The Glasgow Herald to publicise the consultation (SPT);
- Briefing session with MPs and MSPs, following the launch of the consultation (SPT and SYSTRA);
- Briefing session with Council Leaders and Chief Executives, following the launch of the consultation (SPT and SYSTRA);
- Briefing sessions with local authority transport officers and bus operators, following the launch of the consultation (SPT and SYSTRA); and
- Stakeholder interviews (SYSTRA).

Consultation process

2.2.5 Feedback from the general public and stakeholders was obtained through the following channels:

Online questionnaire
Available via SPT's SRBS webpage.

Stakeholder interview
Invited stakeholders including bus operators and transport groups.

Paper/Word questionnaire
Completing and submitting to SPT.

Letter/document
Submitting a freeform response to SPT.

Online questionnaire
Invited representative sample of the general public.
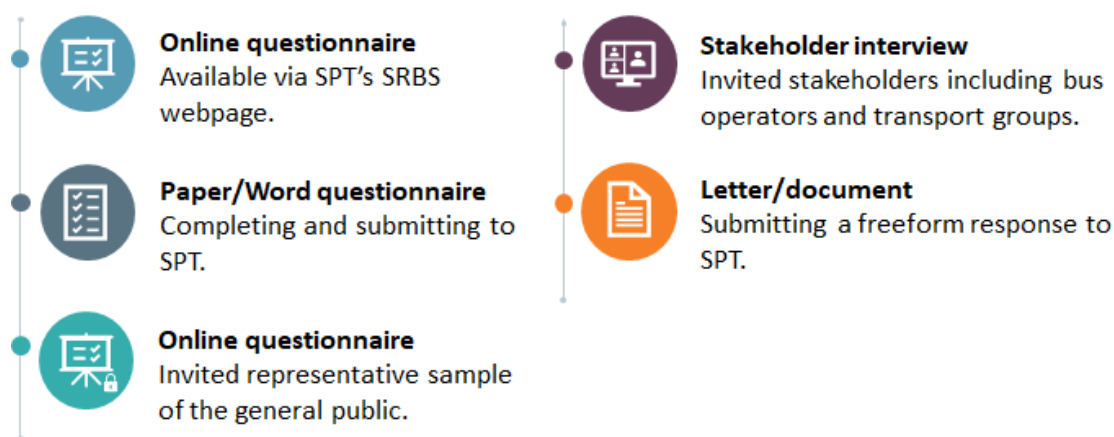
Online questionnaire

2.2.6 An online questionnaire was developed to allow the general public and stakeholders to share their views on sections of the draft SRBS. The online survey was available from **Wednesday 5th March 2025** to **Thursday 29th May 2025**. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in **Appendix A**.

2.2.7 The survey asked respondents about different elements of the draft SRBS, and this included:
- General views on the current bus network;
- Feedback on the themes, policies and measures to improve the bus network (The Bus Network We Need);
- Views on proposals to take forward bus franchising (Delivery Plan);
- Thoughts on key issues / key risks associated with the development of bus franchising, alongside feedback on the action plan (asked to stakeholders only) (Delivery Plan); and
- Feedback on accompanying documents to the draft SRBS.

2.2.8 Respondents were also invited to provide additional comments related to the bus strategy. The survey was accessed via a link on SPT's SRBS webpage and a total of **3,979 responses** were received (note, this is the total figure after cleaning/removal of duplicates – discussed in section 2.3).

Paper / Word questionnaire

2.2.9 A paper/Word version of the questionnaire was also made available to those that requested it, with respondents able to return their responses to SPT by email or post. A

total of **23 responses** were received via this method, and these have been added to the responses provided via the online questionnaire.

Online questionnaire with an invited representative sample

2.2.10   Alongside the online questionnaire, which was open to all members of the general public/organisations, via SPT's website, a similar online questionnaire was also sent to an invited representative sample of the general public. This sample of respondents was representative of the Strathclyde population in terms of gender, age and area, with quotas set to include both current bus users and non-users. The purpose of conducting a sub-set representative sample was to allow comparison against the findings from the online questionnaire that was open to all (via SPT's website), helping understand whether the findings are accurate and representative of the Strathclyde population. Where there are significant differences between the responses given via the SPT website and the invited representative sample, this is noted in the report.

2.2.11   This survey was answered by a sub-set representative sample of **1,200 members of the general public**, recruited through an online market research panel. Findings from the representative sample were analysed alongside the main survey. Taking together the online questionnaire via SPT, paper/Word surveys, and online questionnaire with an invited sample, the total number of responses to the questionnaire was **5,202 responses**.

Stakeholder interviews

2.2.12   A total of 20 stakeholder organisations were invited to take part in a 45-minute in-depth Microsoft Teams interview. The interviews asked participants to provide their feedback on aspects of the strategy in greater depth than the online survey, including on the policies/measures, potential issues/risks in developing franchising and opportunities. Topic guides were used for the interviews and a copy is provided in **Appendix B**. Stakeholders were identified by SPT and were a mix of bus operators and wider stakeholders including transport groups representing passengers and operators.

2.2.13   A total of **15 stakeholders** responded to say they would like to take part in an interview. Of the remaining stakeholders, two chose to provide a written response and three stakeholders did not respond. Each stakeholder was sent an initial email, and then (where applicable) reminder emails from SYSTRA. The breakdown of interviews by stakeholder type is provided in Table 1.

Table 1.   Organisation type

ORGANISATION TYPE	FREQUENCY
Bus operators	5
Transport group or association	6
Other organisation	4
Total	**15**

Stakeholder letter / document

2.2.14   A small number of stakeholders chose to submit a separate written response. In total, **six responses** were received from stakeholders who either wished to provide more detailed responses and/or an explanation to the responses they had made in the online questionnaire.

2.3   Approach to analysis

Data processing and cleaning

2.3.1   The online questionnaire was hosted using Snap software, and all online survey response data was downloaded by SYSTRA and analysed internally using SPSS software. For the online questionnaire for the invited sample, data was sent securely to SYSTRA by the fieldwork partner, and the data combined with the data from the open online questionnaire.

2.3.2   Separate questionnaire responses completed via the Word questionnaire were submitted to SPT and were sent to SYSTRA who then combined them with the online responses for analysis.

2.3.3   All data was subject to cleaning e.g. any incomplete or missing rows were removed. Data cleaning also involved checks to ensure the correct routing was followed and base sizes were correct for each question.

Ensuring robustness and authenticity of data

2.3.4   It is essential to ensure that the data collected is robust, particularly as the findings may influence the future direction of the bus strategy. To ensure the authenticity and reliability of questionnaire responses, the following steps were implemented:

- **Identification**: As with the previous consultation, respondents were required to provide a name and email address to complete the online questionnaire. After the consultation closed, checks for duplicate email addresses were conducted and also any identical or highly similar answers submitted within short timeframes. Details on how duplicate responses were handled are provided in the subsequent section.
- **Honest participation:** The introduction to the questionnaire included a message highlighting the importance of providing truthful and unique responses. This was included to foster trust and to discourage dishonest participation.
- **Comparative sampling:** A separate, representative sample subset was established, enabling the comparison of findings from the self-selecting respondents. This approach allowed analysis of the overall results against a representative Strathclyde population.

Duplicate responses

2.3.5   As noted in the previous section, the questionnaire requested basic contact information including name and email, for all respondents. SYSTRA conducted checks on email addresses to identify any potential duplicate responses. The following protocol was applied to manage duplicate email addresses:

CONDITION	ACTION TAKEN
Email addresses and names are the same, and responses are identical	Keep the latest entry, remove earlier entry/entries
Email addresses and names are the same, but responses are different	Keep the latest entry, remove previous entry/entries but merge the open response text
Email address is the same, but name of respondent is different	Keep both entries

2.3.6   A total of 74 duplicate responses were identified and processed according to this protocol. Numbers presented throughout this report are the numbers after duplicate responses were dealt with.

2.3.7   Checks on duplicate open responses were also carried out to identify whether there were repeat or campaign responses, however no responses of this nature were identified.

Data analysis – closed (quantitative survey questions)

2.3.8   All data cleaning and analysis of closed questions was conducted using SPSS, an industry-standard tool. SPSS enables comprehensive data cleaning, the reporting of descriptive statistics, and the application of inferential statistical analysis.

2.3.9   In addition to reporting frequencies to summarise the results for the full sample, a series of crosstabulations were produced. These are tables displaying the relationship between two variables; for example (1) support for an option (2) respondent type, to gain deeper insight into respondent sentiments. Chi-Square tests were also run, to identify whether any differences between key sub-samples were statistically significant.

2.3.10 Statistically significant differences between sub-samples have been noted throughout the report. Where no information is provided regarding sub-sample variations, no statistically significant differences were found. In some instances, low base sizes for certain questions, or segmentations limited the ability to identify statistically significant differences between sub-samples. Some questions were only asked to individuals in the survey (such as type of area lived in).

2.3.11 The variables used for crosstabulations included:

- Type of respondent (e.g. organisation or individual);
- Response method (e.g. completed via SPT website or invited through the panel);
- Type of area (e.g. rural, town) (individuals only);
- Location (individuals only);
- Access to a car, van, motorbike or moped, as a driver (individuals only); and
- Frequency of bus travel (individuals only).

Data analysis – open-ended coding (qualitative survey questions)

2.3.12 Responses to every open-ended question were read, in full, by trained coders and each sentiment or idea mentioned in relation to a specific question was allocated to a code or heading. These headings (and their relationships) are known as the 'coding framework'.

2.3.13 Initial outline coding frames were developed by SYSTRA based on the first batch of responses received. New codes were added as new sentiments were found in the responses. This allowed the coding frames to be fully data-led and developed and refined over time, ensuring all views were captured.

2.3.14 Coding was based solely on what the responses stated. Coders did not interpret or assess whether comments were valid. This ensured that the process of coding was as objective as possible, which in turn maximises inter-coder reliability (which is the extent to which independent coders reach the same conclusions from reviewing similar sentiments).

Data analysis – workshop / interviews

2.3.15 Interviews were semi-structured and followed a topic guide. Findings were recorded within a stakeholder interview analysis proforma which enabled consistency in reporting. For the workshops, an internal write up of each session was produced that captured the key points raised. Participants were asked for their permission for SYSTRA to record the transcript of the interview. They were informed that this recording was being made for the purposes of accurately writing up the notes of the session afterwards with the file then being deleted.

2.4   Reporting

2.4.1   As with all analysis of qualitative data, it should be noted that:

- The views and opinions reported are the views and perceptions of respondents and are not necessarily factually correct (and are not necessarily the views of SYSTRA or SPT); and
- Open question survey responses were optional, and are therefore self-selecting data, and therefore do not provide a sample that accurately represents the views of a larger population. Instead, it allows the views and opinions of different types of people to be heard.

2.5 Considerations when interpreting the findings

2.5.1 There are several factors which should be considered when interpreting the findings presented in this report:

- In the open questionnaire, respondents were self-selecting and consequently, this sample is not representative. However, as noted previously, an invited representative population sample of the general public was invited to complete the survey, and we have provided comparison with these results throughout.
- Where percentages do not total 100% this is either due to rounding or the multiple response nature of the question.
- Base sizes vary due to some questions being optional.
- The purpose of the research was to provide the general public and stakeholders and opportunity to express their views, and these have been reported as submitted. No assessment/evaluation of the veracity of that feedback has been undertaken for this report and, as such, statements may not necessarily be accurate or reliable.
- It should be noted that all findings have been reported as received, with no additional weighting applied to any particular stakeholder group.

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

3.1 Number of responses

3.1.1 The general public and stakeholders were invited to provide their feedback on the draft SRBS during the 12-week consultation period. As noted in chapter 2, respondents were able to provide feedback through various channels. Figure 1 displays the number of responses received through the various channels split by whether the participant was responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

Figure 1.   Number of responses received

		INDIVIDUALS	ORGANISATIONS
	Questionnaire Online and Word/ paper versions	3,935	67
	Questionnaire Invited representative sample	1,200	-
	Interviews Invited stakeholders	-	15
	Letter/document Freeform responses	0	6

5,223 responses in total
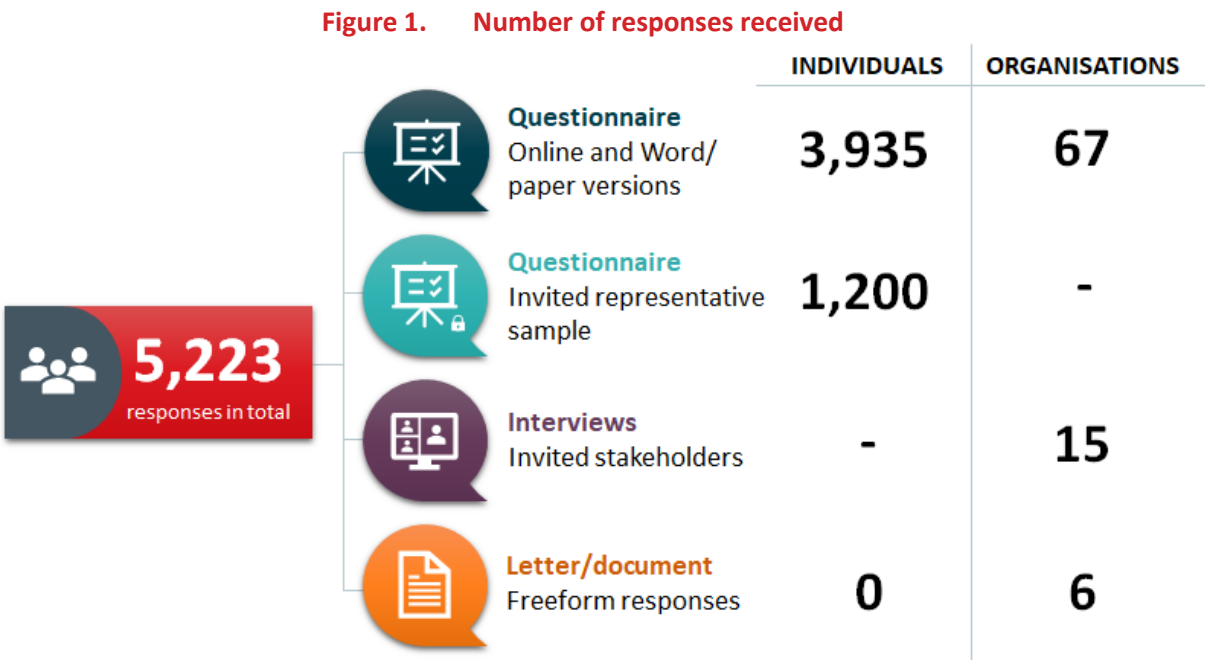
Note: The total shows the number of responses received overall. However a small number of organisations submitted a response via the online questionnaire as well as taking part in an interview or providing a freeform response.

3.1.2 A total of **5,223 responses were received** during the consultation period across all channels. The majority of responses were from the general public, with **5,135 responses received from individuals**.

3.1.3 In total, **88 responses were received from organisations**, with 15 of these being from organised in-depth interviews. Of the organisations completing the questionnaire, six responses were from bus operators (9%), eight were from local authorities (12%) and 53 classed themselves as another type of organisation (79%).

3.2 Distribution of responses (questionnaire)

3.2.1 Questionnaire respondents were asked which local authority they lived in (if responding as an individual) or operated in (for organisations). Some organisations noted they operate across multiple local authorities. Not all respondents answered this question; therefore the base size is less than the total sample.

3.2.2 As shown in Figure 2, the largest proportion of responses from individuals came from respondents residing in Glasgow City, accounting for over half of responses (55%). This is higher than Glasgow City's share of the Strathclyde population (31%)[5]. This difference is likely due to the open nature of the consultation, which was open to everyone in Strathclyde. To ensure the findings are robust, a separate survey was conducted with a panel sample representative of the Strathclyde population, as described in Chapter 2. The findings from the open questionnaire have been compared against this representative sub-sample to assess the extent to which the results reflect the wider population.

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[5] National Records of Scotland, mid-2023 population estimates

Figure 2.   Total survey respondents (individuals) by local authority

Argyll & Bute	86 responses (2%)
West Dunbartonshire	90 responses (2%)
Inverclyde	71 responses (1%)
Renfrewshire	308 responses (6%)
North Ayrshire	148 responses (3%)
East Renfrewshire	219 responses (4%)
East Dunbartonshire	288 responses (6%)
Glasgow City	2,833 responses (55%)
North Lanarkshire	347 responses (7%)
South Lanarkshire	455 responses (9%)
East Ayrshire	92 responses (2%)
South Ayrshire	101 responses (2%)
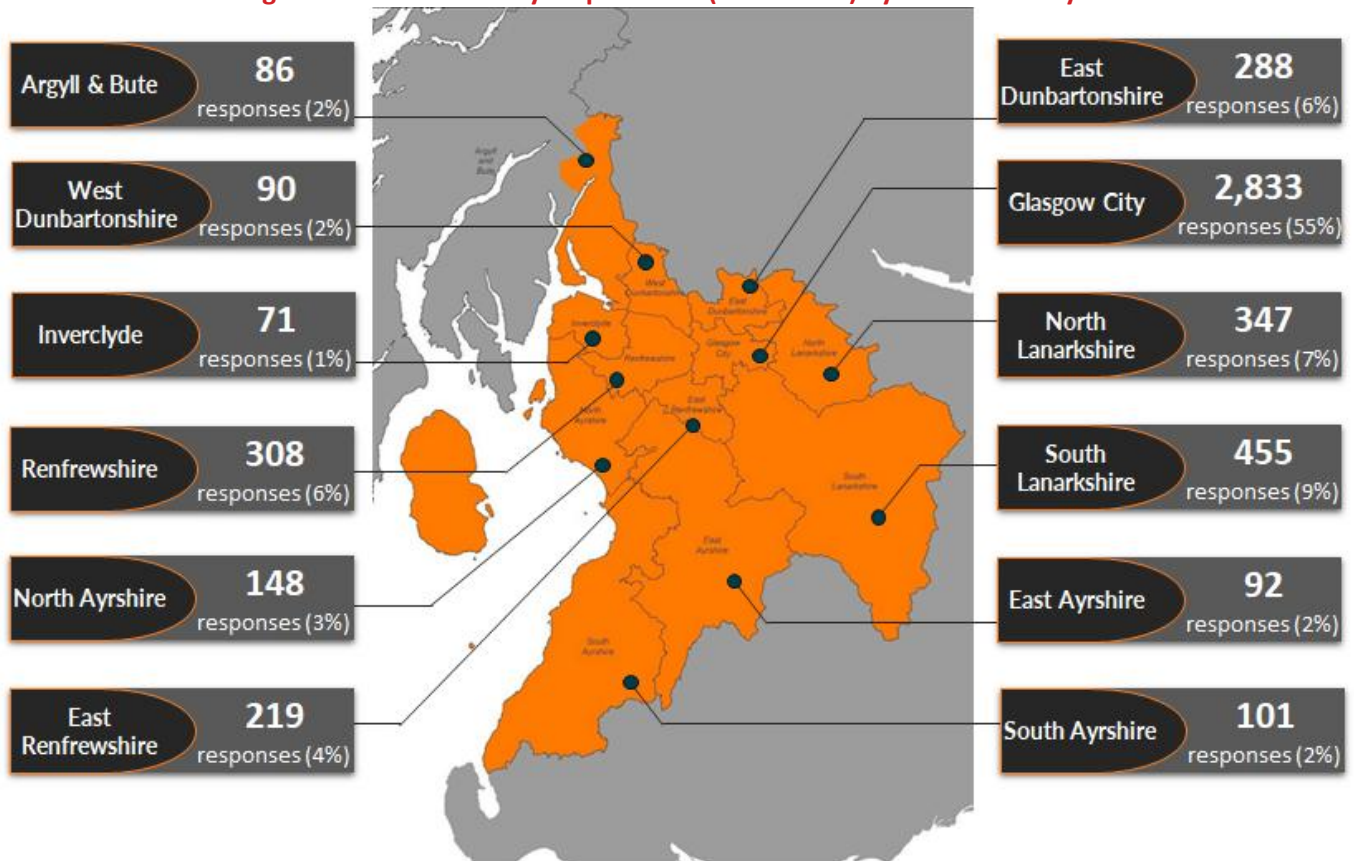
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Base: 5,038 responses (Questionnaire, responding as an individual).

3.2.3   Similarly for organisations, over half of organisations (28, 42%) noted that they operate in Glasgow City. This was followed by 20 organisations (30%) that operate in North Lanarkshire, 14 organisations in South Lanarkshire (21%) and 12 in West Dunbartonshire (18%). Organisations were permitted to choose multiple local authorities in their response.

3.2.4   Those responding to the questionnaire as an individual were also asked about the type of area that they live in. Nearly three fifths of respondents (58%) said they live in a city, whilst a third (31%) live in a town, 9% in a village and 2% in a rural area.

3.3   Travel characteristics

3.3.1   Respondents answering the survey as an individual were asked how frequently they travel by bus in Strathclyde. A small number of respondents chose not to answer this question, which is reflected in the base size being lower than the total sample. As illustrated in Figure 3, 57% of respondents are frequent users of the bus, in that they travel by bus at least once a week or more. A further 40% are infrequent users, travelling by bus fewer than once a week. A small proportion (4%) answered that they never travel by bus.

Figure 3.   Frequency of travel by bus

Five days a week or more	2-4 days a week	Once a week	Less than once a week, but at least once a month	Less than once a month, but more than twice a year	Once or twice a year	Never
14%	27%	15%	18%	13%	8%	4%
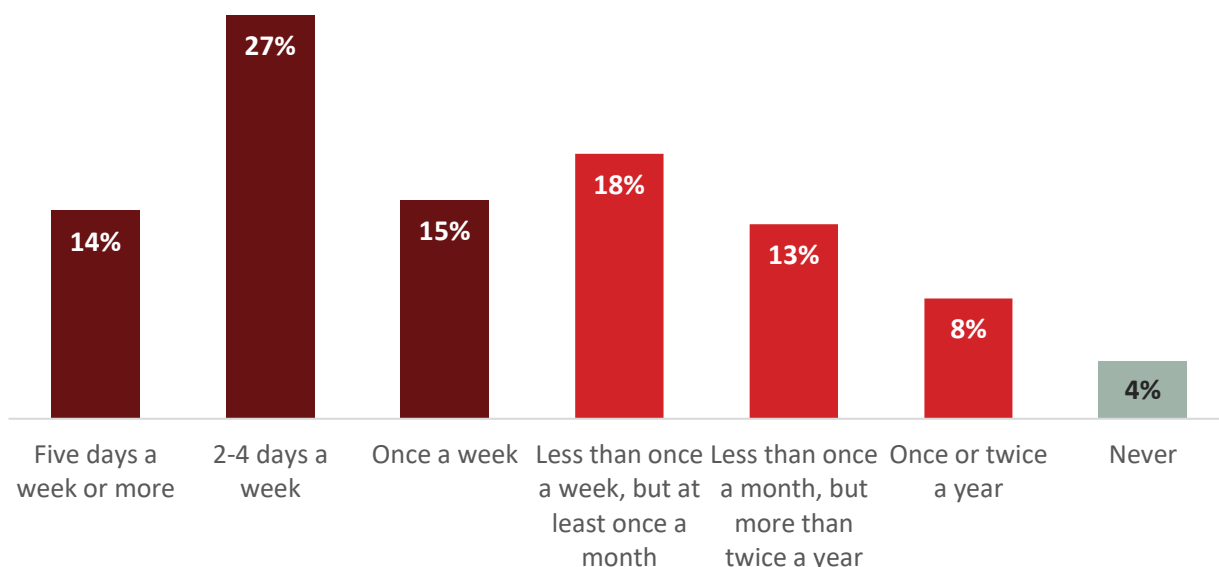
Base: 5,122 responses (Questionnaire, responding as an individual).

3.3.2   Those completing the open questionnaire via the SPT webpage were more likely to be a frequent bus user. Of those completing the questionnaire through SPT's website, 59% were frequent bus users compared to 48% of the invited representative sample.

3.3.3   Of those responding as an individual, 58% responded that they have access to either a car, van, motorbike or moped. However, 43% do not have access to any vehicle. A higher proportion of respondents completing the open questionnaire via the SPT webpage did not have access to any vehicle, compared to the invited representative sample (47% compared to 27%, respectively).

3.4   Awareness of the strategy

3.4.1   As the consultation focussed on understanding respondent's views on the draft SRBS, the questionnaire sought to gauge respondents' level of awareness of the strategy and whether they had read it to help contextualise their responses. As demonstrated in Figure 4, two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they had read the strategy (either in full or in part). A tenth of respondents had not read it but were aware of it, whilst just under a quarter (24%) were not aware of the draft bus strategy at all.

Figure 4.   Have you read the bus strategy?

- Yes, I have read it in full — 34%
- Yes, I have read some of it — 32%
- No, I have not read it, but I was aware of it — 10%
- No, I was not aware of the bus strategy until now — 24%
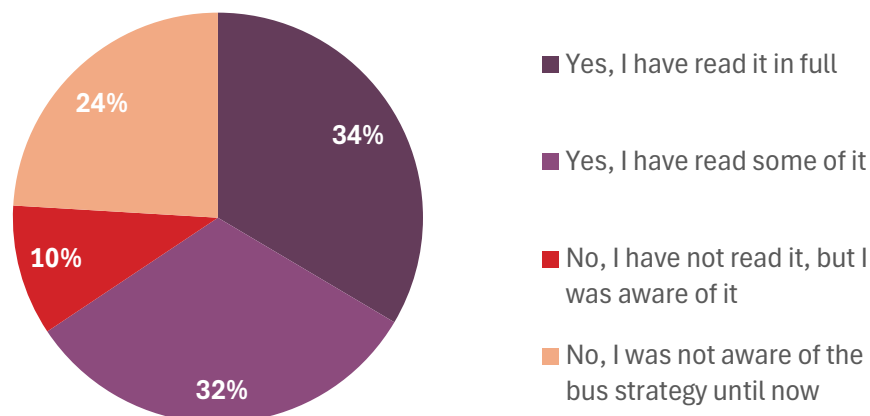
Base: 5,202 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

3.4.2   Awareness and knowledge of the draft SRBS was noticeably higher amongst those responding to the open questionnaire via the SPT website, compared to the invited representative sample. For instance, 10% of respondents via the SPT website were not

previously aware of the SRBS, compared with 70% of the invited representative sample. This is perhaps likely to be expected, as it is more probable that self-selecting respondents are will have engaged with, or taken an active interest in the SRBS before completing the questionnaire.

3.4.3 Respondents from the following sub-groups also differed significantly in their responses:

- **Satisfaction with the current bus network:** Those who were dissatisfied with the current bus network were significantly more likely to report being aware of the bus strategy, compared to those who were satisfied (42% vs 14%).
- **Frequency of bus use**: Frequent bus users (respondents who travel by bus at least once a week) were significantly more likely to have read the strategy in full (38%), compared to less-frequent bus users (28%) and non-bus users (18%).
- **Type of respondent**: Respondents representing an organisation were more likely to have read the strategy in full compared to those responding as an individual (69% vs 33%).

3.4.4 Both individuals and organisations were asked if they had participated in the 2024 consultation regarding recommendations from the options appraisal. Overall, the majority of respondents did not participate in the previous consultation (69%). There were some differences in type of response, however. A higher proportion of organisations took part in the 2024 consultation compared with individual respondents (58% vs 15%). A greater proportion of open questionnaire respondents also responded to the previous consultation compared to the invited representative sample (19% vs 6%).

4. CONSULTATION FINDINGS: VIEWS OF THE CURRENT BUS NETWORK

The consultation gathered general feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the current bus network. The questionnaire findings indicate that the majority of individual respondents are fairly or very dissatisfied with the bus network (62% respondents), while 18% of respondents are satisfied. Similarly, most organisational respondents (84%) disagreed that the bus network currently meets the needs of the general public. Comments provided in the questionnaire highlighted dissatisfaction relating to the cost of bus travel, issues with reliability, a lack of services in certain areas, long journey times and a perceived lack of integration between different modes of transport.

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The Case for Change chapter of the draft SRBS sets out the opportunity of bus in delivering better social, economic and environmental outcomes. It outlines the problems with the current bus network, including the bus 'cycle of decline'. The consultation gathered feedback from individuals and stakeholder organisations to understand how respondents feel towards the bus network in Strathclyde at present.

4.2 Satisfaction with the bus network

4.2.1 Questionnaire respondents (answering as individuals) were asked how they would rate their current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region. The results are shown in Figure 5, and illustrate that more respondents appear to be dissatisfied with the current bus network than satisfied. For instance, 18% were either very or fairly satisfied with the bus network compared to 62% that answered either fairly or very dissatisfied.

Figure 5. **How would you rate your current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region?**
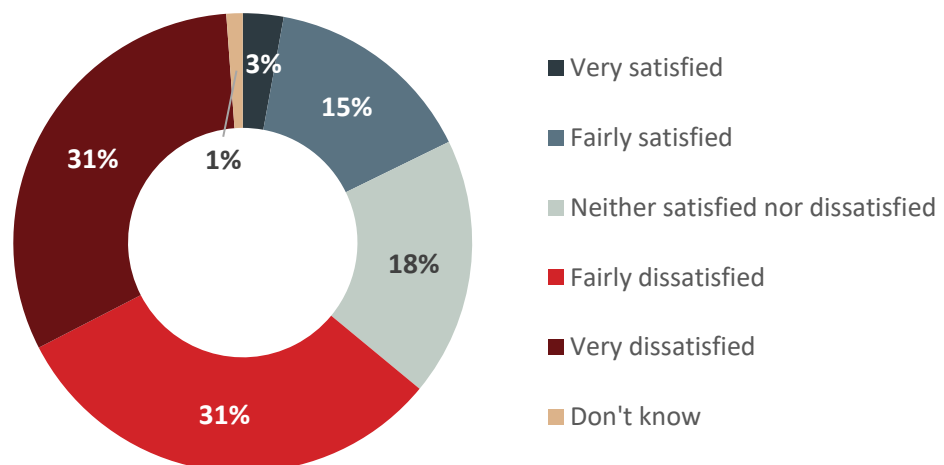
Base: 5,135 responses (Questionnaire, responding as an individual).

4.2.2 Respondents from the following sub-groups differed significantly in their responses:

 O **Response type:** The invited representative sample were more likely to be satisfied with the bus network compared with open questionnaire respondents via SPT's website (45% vs 9%).

 O **Familiarity with the strategy:** Those who have read at least some of the bus strategy were more likely than others to be very dissatisfied with the current bus network than those that have not read the strategy (38% vs 19%).

- **Previous consultation response:** Those who responded to the previous consultation regarding recommendations from the options appraisal, were less likely to report being very dissatisfied with the current bus network than those that did not respond to the previous consultation (39% vs 29%).
- **Frequency of bus use**: Frequent bus users (respondents who travel by bus at least once a week) were more likely to be satisfied with the current network (21%), compared to less-frequent bus users (14%) and non-bus users (11%).

4.2.3   Questionnaire respondents answering on behalf of an organisation were similarly asked whether they agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public. The responses to this question are displayed in Figure 6. Overall, 17% of respondents answering on behalf of an organisation strongly agree / agree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public, while three-quarters (76%) strongly disagree / disagree.

Figure 6.   Do you agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public?
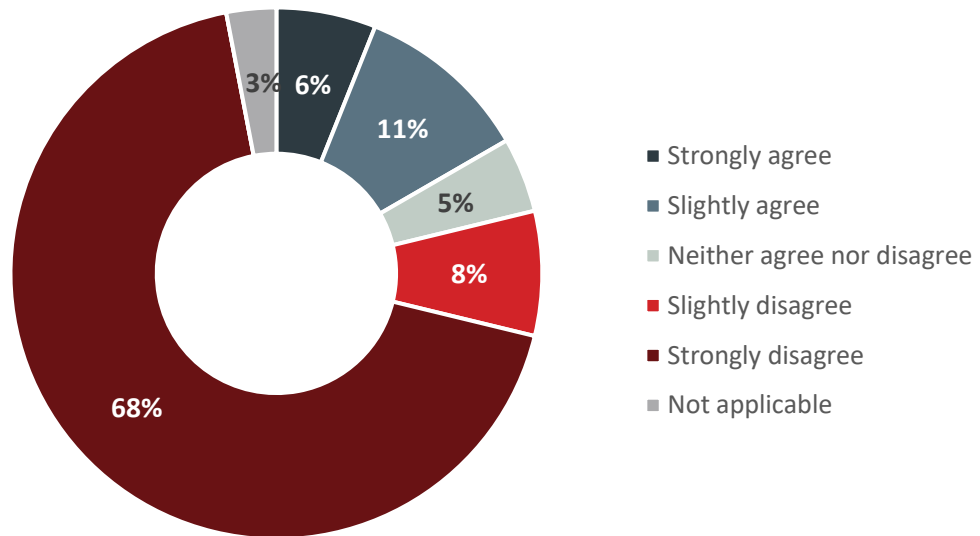
Base: 66 responses (Questionnaire, responding on behalf of an organisation).

5.   CONSULTATION FINDINGS: THE BUS NETWORK WE NEED

Feedback was gathered on the draft SRBS chapter 'The Bus Network We Need', which details seven key themes setting out what the SRBS aims to achieve, alongside policies and measures to support each theme. Respondents were asked about the importance of each theme and whether it should be included in the SRBS. The vast majority of respondents considered each theme to be important and felt it should be included within the SRBS. Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') had the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%), followed by Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing'). Stakeholders acknowledged these priorities as foundational to improving satisfaction and increasing patronage, especially in underserved areas such as rural and deprived communities.

5.1   Overview

5.1.1   The draft SRBS contains a chapter entitled 'The Bus Network We Need' which sets out the strategic framework of the strategy and outlines the strategy goals, objectives, policies and measures. The draft SRBS sets out seven key **themes** which set out what the strategy aims to achieve:

5.1.2   Section 5.2 of this report provides high level feedback from the general public and stakeholders on these seven themes, including how important they consider them to be, and whether they felt they should be included as part of the strategy.

5.1.3   Within each theme are a series of policies and measures. The **Policies are the principles that should be applied by SPT** and partners in decision making processes affecting bus in the region. The **Measures describe the activities and outputs** that are needed to support each of the policies. Stakeholders were asked for more detailed feedback on the themes, including whether they felt the individual policies and measures were appropriate to deliver each theme. Section 5.2 also provides this feedback.

5.2   High level feedback on themes

5.2.1   Questionnaire respondents were asked how **important** each theme is to them / their organisation, when thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved. A very

small number of respondents skipped this question, and therefore the base size is less than the total sample.

5.2.2   The results are presented in Figure 7 and show that across all themes, the vast majority of respondents considered each one to be important. Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') received the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%). It also had the highest proportion selecting 'very important' (80%). Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') had 97% rating it as 'very important' or 'important', though a slightly lower proportion selected 'very important' (74%). Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing') had the third highest level of support, with 93% of respondents rating it as 'very important' or 'important'.

Figure 7.   When thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved, how important or not is each theme to [you/your organisation]?
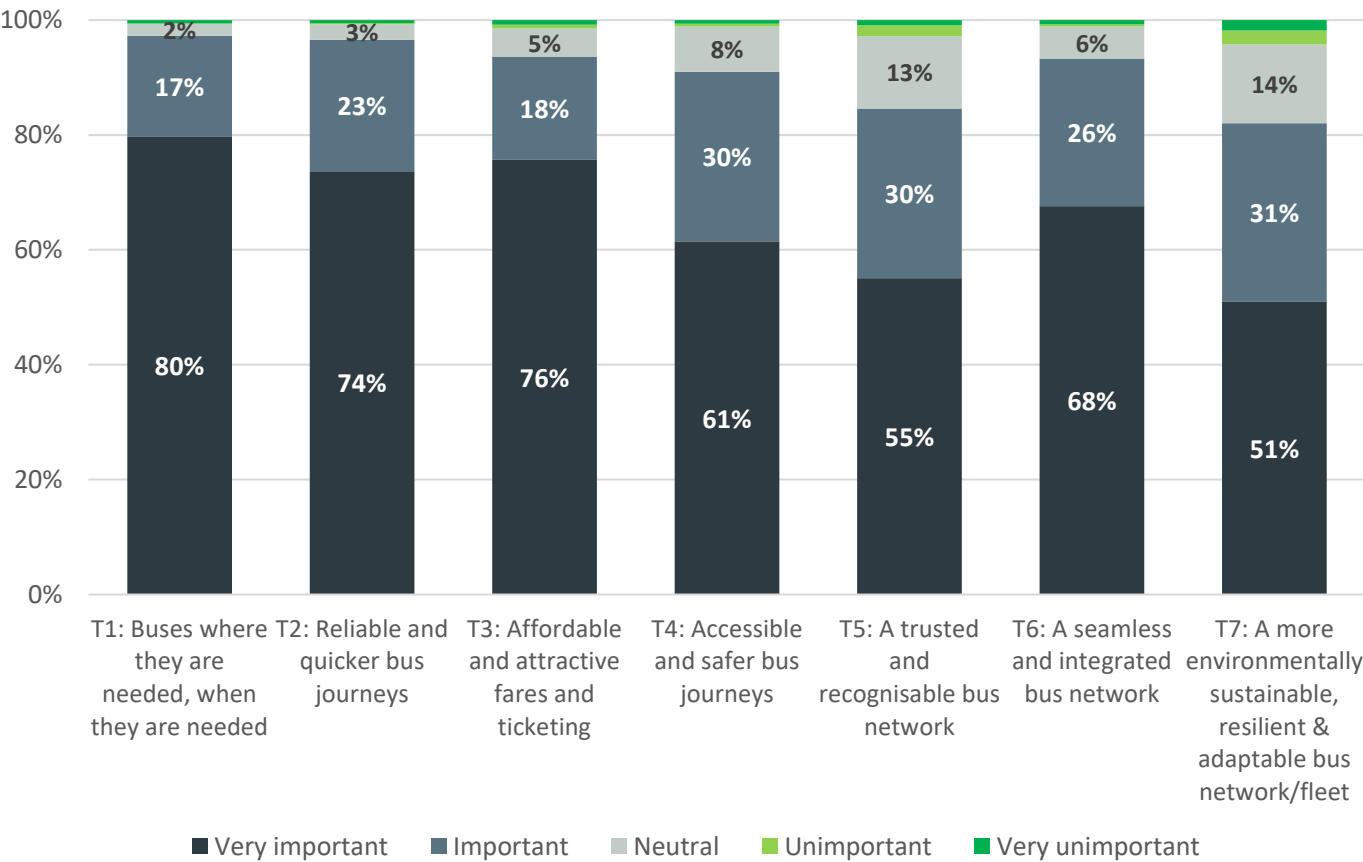
Base: 5,200 responses for each theme (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.2.3   Respondents were also asked to what extent they agreed that each theme should be included in the draft strategy. Similar to the previous question on importance, the majority of respondents agreed that each theme should be included within the SRBS. As before, the themes with the highest proportion of respondents that strongly agree / agree the theme should be included in the SRBS, were: Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') (97%); Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') (97%); and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing') (95%). As before, fewer responses than the total participants were received due to some respondents skipping this question.

Figure 8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each theme should be included within the bus strategy?

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Slightly agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Slightly disagree ■ Strongly disagree
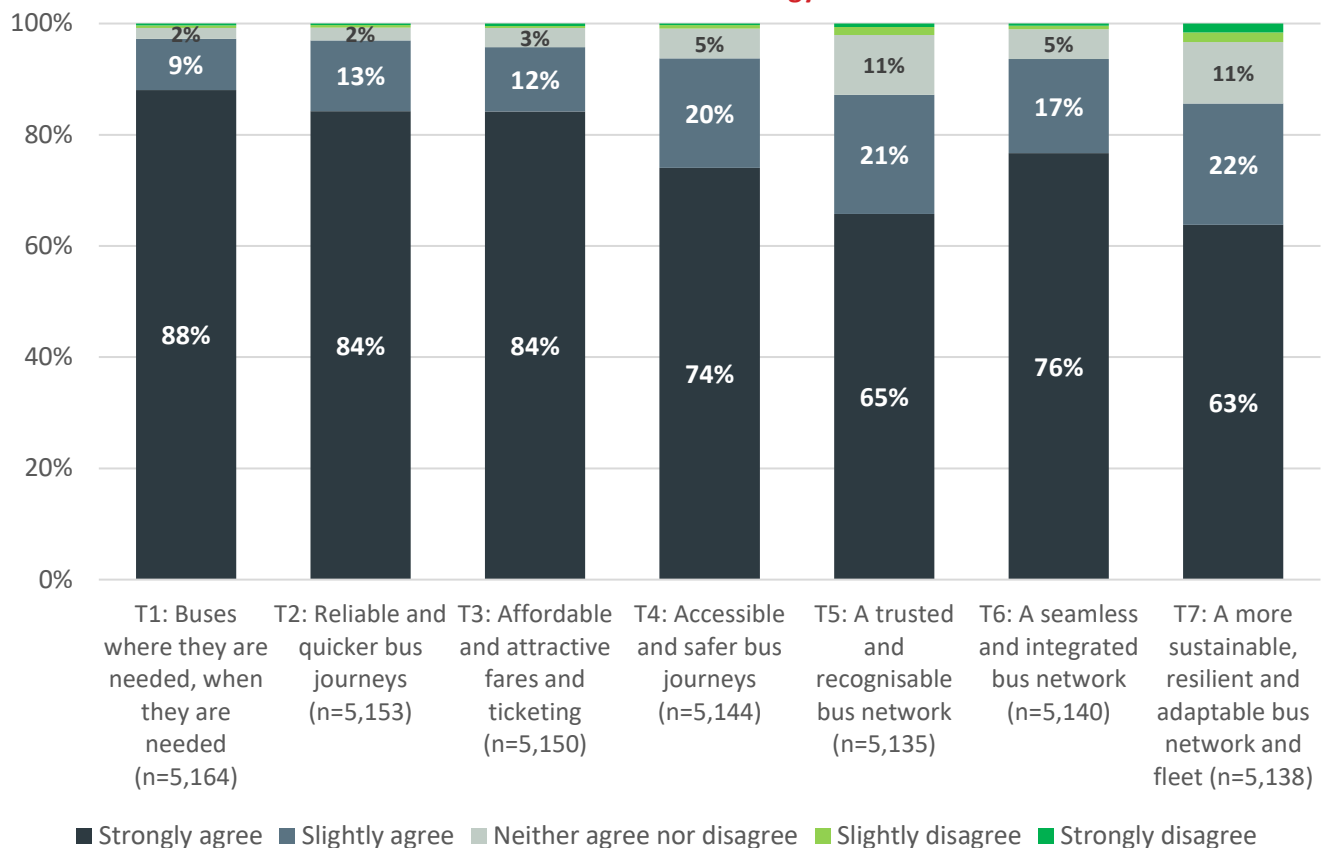
Importance of themes – Interview and free-form response feedback

5.2.4   In the interviews and freeform responses, stakeholders provided feedback about the importance of each of the seven themes. The key points made on the importance of the themes, were as follows:

○   **General support for all themes:** Most stakeholders agreed that all seven themes are important and should be included in the strategy, noting their interdependence and the importance of addressing bus challenges in a holistic manner. One stakeholder added that some themes may be more important to passengers, but then others more important to operators, therefore all themes were integral to the strategy.

○   **Theme 1 (Buses where they are needed, when they are needed)**: This was cited as being important to ensure rural and deprived areas are considered.

○   **Theme 2 (Reliable and quicker bus journeys):** Several stakeholders felt this was the most critical theme, and was seen as being transformative in addressing bus decline.
One stakeholder had mapped the major, moderate and minor benefits per number of policies and felt that the greatest benefit to customers, businesses, the delivery of public services, the regional economy and the environment comes principally from adopting the policies necessary to deliver Themes 2 and 6.

○   **Theme 3 (Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing)**: This was emphasised as being important to make bus travel more attractive to the public.

○   **Theme 6 (A seamless and integrated bus network):** This theme was recognised as being important, but stakeholders had questions around how different elements fit together and expressed concerns about potential gaps in provision for smaller communities.

○   **Other modes:** Some stakeholders felt that integration with other modes should be a key theme. One stakeholder referred to congestion causing delay to buses and felt political action needed to be taken to address car dominance. Another

stakeholder felt car use needed to be less attractive e.g. restricting the amount of parking available, and making that parking shorter duration or more expensive.

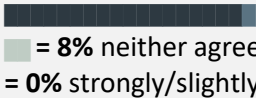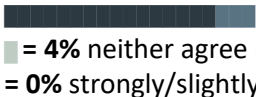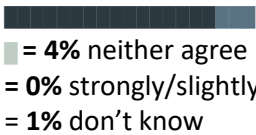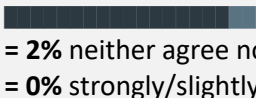## 5.3 Feedback on policies and measures
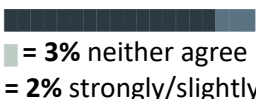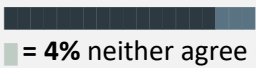
5.3.1 Each of the seven themes contains a number of policies and measures to deliver it. This section provides detailed feedback on each of the individual themes. These questions were optional and so base sizes reflect only those who answered each question.
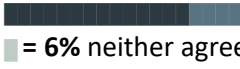
Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed

5.3.2 Theme 1 focuses on maximising the opportunity of bus by providing more high frequency services on busier routes, aiming for 'turn up and go' services over time (a service at least every 10 minutes). The strategy details that this should be supported by a well-defined 'feeder' network that is co-ordinated effectively with higher frequency routes, helping to extend the 'reach' of the high frequency network.

5.3.3 Theme 1 includes three policies and four measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 1. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. It can be seen in Table 2 that the majority of respondents felt that all Theme 1 policies and measures should be included.

Table 2.   To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required	= **98%** strongly/slightly agree = **8%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M1	A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity	= **95%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M2	Minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility, working towards more convenient service levels	= **95%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required	= **98%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M3	High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services at appropriate times	= **95%** strongly/slightly agree = **3%** neither agree nor disagree = **2%** strongly/slightly disagree
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network	= **95%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE	
		= 2% strongly/slightly disagree	
M4	An integrated bus network with better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural to regional express or bus to rail)	**= 92%** strongly/slightly agree **= 6%** neither agree nor disagree **= 2%** strongly/slightly disagree	

Base: 1,458 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.3.4   Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, and interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. Findings are summarised in Table 3 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I), Questionnaire (Q) or freeform response (FF)).

Table 3.   Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 1 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 1	**Urban-rural equity:** A number of respondents commented that they felt policies and measures are skewed towards urban areas. They felt that rural areas can face poorer coverage, have different needs and require tailored approaches.	7	I, Q
	Funding and commercial viability: There was a view that expanding or redesigning the network, especially to unserved/lower-demand areas, may require significant funding, currently uncertain after the Bus Partnership Fund ended.	6	I, FF
	Role of Community Transport: Some felt community transport could be leveraged to improve rural coverage via feeder services, but coordination and funding are considered to be lacking.	3	I
	Definitions: Two respondents suggested that greater clarification is needed on terms such as 'high frequency', 'reliable bus journeys', 'coverage' and 'where and needed', including what is achievable in rural contexts.	2	I, Q
	Calls for SPT to be **ambitious**: One respondent commented that network redesign is necessary to achieve accessibility targets and mode shift goals.	1	Q
P1	Additional **funding** is required to expand services and coverage—uncertainty about funding sources is a barrier. In addition, expanding coverage and operating times (e.g., evenings) would improve mobility but may not be commercially viable/profitable; funding gaps are a concern.	6	I, FF
	Extending only the high-frequency network risks overlooking the **value of smaller/local services**; local buses through residential areas supporting community connectivity and liveability are also important.	1	Q
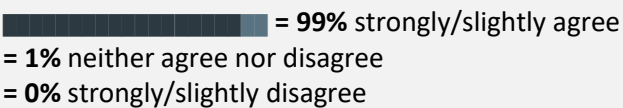
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	Achieving this theme requires **significant network redesign**, with a focus on reinstating lost routes and creating services that link communities (not just the city), with special emphasis on rural areas.	1	I
	The example of Dublin's BusConnects network redesign was considered relevant, and it was noted that SPT could follow this model, prioritising rural communities and creating a blueprint for sustainable transport for the rest of Scotland.	1	I
	Older people's needs are often considered to be unmet due to limited service levels, routes, operating times, and distance to bus stops. This is especially considered to be the case for rural/remote residents and those with mobility/health needs.	1	Q
M1	Respondent was unsure how **principles** for frequency and capacity can be **defined and applied** to the whole SPT region, as this will need to differentiate between urban and rural areas.	1	I
	One respondent felt this risks setting **unobtainable standards for rural areas**, or setting a low bar for urban centres and removes some of the agility that bus services can offer.	1	Q
	Felt the focus needed to be on **disadvantaged communities.**	1	I
M2	Welcome the inclusion of this measure.	2	I, Q
	Questions as to whether this also covers smaller areas (e.g. villages) with limited transport connections and the importance of these for economic development and improving prosperity in deprived areas. Consider using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (**SIMD**) as one of the criteria in assessing whether the bus network is delivering.	2	I, Q
	Would like more detail on '**minimum levels of service'** wording such as who defines this, and what this encompasses.	1	I
	Consider **involving stakeholders** in the design of timetables and routes, particularly those providing essential services which are time or appointment based.	1	Q
P2	No specific comments.		
M3	Consideration of **Peak Vehicle Requirement** (PVR): Increasing peak-hour frequency may be challenging and costly, as it requires more buses to maintain service levels during periods of congestion when all modes are busiest and bus speeds are reduced.	1	Q
P3	Decisions should not be based solely on routes with high passenger numbers; attention needs to be paid to other routes such as **routes that cover vital services** (healthcare, supermarkets etc.) or areas with limited transport options.	1	Q

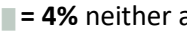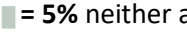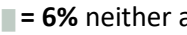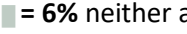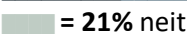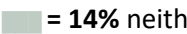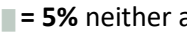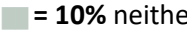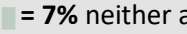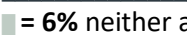| THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M4	It was noted that poor integration between services has a negative **impact** on older people, disabled people and those with young children, particularly where a journey requires using multiple operators and/or modes.	2	Q
	Existing bus network design **limits direct cross-region travel**. Consider radial routes and demand mapping for employment hubs.	2	I
	This will require improved **reliability** to ensure connections are on time – this will require bus priority measures, management of roadworks, consistent parking enforcement.	1	Q
	Need to not just consider the alignment of timetables, but how people move between modes and what **accessibility needs** have to be considered (such as time to transition, accessibility of routes and services).	1	Q
	Demand mapping should be collaborative – Transport and economic development agencies should be involved, particularly the regional city team and regional intelligence hub.	1	I

Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys

5.3.5   Theme 2 looks at reliability of services to encourage growth and mode shift from car to bus. The strategy explains that this includes buses that turn up when scheduled and arrive at destinations on time. The strategy details how buses need to be quicker, with journey times that are attractive compared to using a car, and refers to bus priority measures. Theme 2 includes two policies and nine measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 2. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond.

5.3.6   As shown in Table 4, there was strong support for most policies and measures under this theme. Notably, **P4: Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services,** received the highest level of agreement across all seven themes, with 99% of respondents considering this to be appropriate to deliver Theme 2. In general, over 90% of respondents agreed that most of the priorities and measures were appropriate.

5.3.7   However, **M10: Traffic management and enforcement measures** had the highest rate of disagreement, with 7% of respondents disagreeing this was appropriate to deliver Theme 2. Additionally, **M9: Support wider car demand management** received the lowest level of agreement among the policies, although it was still supported by 70% of respondents, with 21% answering 'neither agree nor disagree'.

Table 4.   **To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys?**

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P4	**Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services**	= 99% strongly/slightly agree = 1% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M5	Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways	= **93%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **2%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
M6	Bus services that better meet performance (e.g. punctuality and patronage) standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data	= **93%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M7	Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services	= **93%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
M8	Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
M9	Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations	= **70%** strongly/slightly agree = **21%** neither agree nor disagree = **3%** strongly/slightly disagree = **5%** don't know
M10	Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement)	= **78%** strongly/slightly agree = **14%** neither agree nor disagree = **7%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
M11	More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys	= **93%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
M12	Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre	= **88%** strongly/slightly agree = **10%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
P5	**Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times**	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **7%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M13	Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services	= **91%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **2%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know

5.3.8   As with Theme 1, those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. The findings are summarised in Table 5 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 5.   Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 2 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 2	Several participants agreed that **bus priority measures** on major corridors are key to making journeys quicker and more reliable. Without these, it was felt that congestion, roadworks, and car dominance will undermine reliability.	4	I, Q
	Road **congestion** was frequently mentioned by respondents. There were repeated calls for strong political will to reduce private car dominance and reallocate road space to buses and sustainable transport.	5	I, Q, FF
	Three participants felt that while SPT can start delivering improvements now, they perceived that only **franchising** would enable 'turn-up-and-go' services, comprehensive coverage throughout the day/evening, and reinvestment of passenger revenue into less-populated areas.	3	I, Q
	Impact of reliability: Two participants detailed how issues such as late buses are felt more acutely where frequencies are low or services have been reduced/withdrawn. They note that reliability is critical for time-dependent journeys, such as for work, education and health appointments, especially at peak times.	2	I, Q
	One participant commented that bus **driver shortages** are often a reason for delayed or unreliable journeys; workforce planning should be embedded in the strategy.	1	I
P4	**Existing congestion:** It was noted that frequency and reliability depend greatly on congestion and local road allocation. They felt that meaningful improvements would require more road space for buses or priority measures, not just more buses.	2	I
	It was noted that achieving reliable and punctual services would require **support and collaboration** from local authorities and Transport Scotland.	2	I, Q
	One participant commented that they feel **reliability is as crucial as frequency** or journey time improvements, as unreliable services can force people, especially carers and those with time-sensitive needs, to use taxis or drive, making buses a less viable mode.	1	Q
	One respondent commented that simply increasing frequency without addressing congestion may worsen reliability due to increased traffic. They felt **infrastructure and holistic measures** were required.	1	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M5	**Jurisdiction and responsibility concerns:** Several participants commented that SPT lacks control over the Strategic Road Network and the feasibility of this measure was questioned. It was felt that key decisions rest with Transport Scotland and SPT's leverage in delivering infrastructure is unclear.	4	I, Q
	Some felt that effective bus priority may require **bold car demand management,** potential reduction in car lanes and city centre accessibility, noting the strong political commitment is required. In addition, two participants had concerns that combining bus and cycle infrastructure may complicate priorities, and separate cycle provision should be considered to maximise the benefit of bus.	4	I, Q
	Criteria and rationale for bus priority: The importance of assessing the number of buses/services using a route before implementing infrastructure was noted. It was added that bus priority should not be limited to high-frequency routes and certain congestion hotspots may benefit more.	2	Q
	There were a couple of concerns that there may be a **negative impact on small businesses** due to loss of parking and accessibility and there may be need for mitigation to offset business impacts.	2	I
	Two participants expressed disappointment over lack of recent **progress** on bus priority. They saw implementation as being slow and requires additional commitment and funding to deliver tangible change.	2	I
M6	**Reliability**: This was seen as being an important measure, with some participants noting that people need to be able to trust that bus services will show up as scheduled. This would also help make bus journeys more attractive than car.	3	I
	Congestion: However some felt congestion was the biggest obstacle to adherence and is an issue that is not dependent on regulatory reform.	2	I, Q
	Bus priority infrastructure: These measures were welcomed, however one participant added that bus priority infrastructure should have been explicitly mentioned within the high level description of the theme.	3	I, Q
	One participant queried what the **performance standard** for patronage is/what the target for this is that SPT is trying to achieve.	1	I
	One participant noted they would like to see this data being **open to the public**, where feasible.	1	Q
M7	Some felt this measure needs to consider the entire route and all **facilities** it links up with (i.e. routes that also serve schools, hospitals, etc).	2	I, Q

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	In this measure, it was mentioned that **ferry services** should also be considered, given the reliance on this mode of travel for many island communities.	1	Q
	Deprived areas: Two participants felt deprived area services should be considered, believing that these areas need more prominence as this is an important step to addressing the high levels of worklessness in the area and a potential 'hurdle to overcome' in terms of getting people into employment. In line with the above suggestion, another participant felt an understanding of what existing service provision looks like to SIMD areas is needed.	2	I
M8	Some participants questioned the **measure wording** as they felt this implied this is not happening already. One participant added that they felt it was in the interests of bus operators to align services and fleet with existing and potential demand and felt it was unlikely that regulatory reform will identify further efficiencies. Another felt that the wording could be considered 'insulting' to operators.	3	I, Q
	Consideration of disabled people: One participant wanted to see capacity maximised for disabled passengers, such as those who require priority seats and wheelchair spaces. Whilst the participant acknowledged the importance of maximising passenger numbers, they felt this should not come at the detriment of currently available space on fleets, and SPT should also consider how they increase space for disabled passengers who are typically excluded for utilising public transport because of this.	1	Q
M9	**Consideration of groups:** It was noted that some people will always require the use of a private car or taxi (particularly if living rurally or if they have accessibility needs). Some essential services to support older people and others, such as care at home services and shopping deliveries, also require private vehicles to deliver these services. It was requested that consideration is given to these groups when assessing wider car demand management.	1	Q
	Enforcement: One participant reported receiving feedback that car demand/traffic management and enforcement measures should be stopped (i.e. car parking charges, low emission zones, bus gates), as these do not appear to have made any difference to bus journey times.	1	I
	One participant suggests M9 should only happen once existing **bus prioritisation** lanes have been enforced.	1	Q
M10	**Delivery**: Two participants noted they supported this measure but felt it did not rely on a franchise to be delivered.	2	I, Q
	Enforcement: As with M9, one participant felt that car demand/traffic management and enforcement measures should be stopped, as they believe these have not made any difference to bus journey times.	1	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M11	One respondent felt that faster and more reliable journeys was contingent on being able to operate free from **congestion**.	1	Q
	Clarity on measure: One participant was unclear if 'network planning' was in relation to just bus or wider public transport options.	1	Q
M12	**Delivery**: Two participants noted they supported this measure but felt it did not rely on a franchise to be delivered.	2	I, Q
	Benefits: It was felt this may be beneficial in tackling congestion, improving roadwork processes and enforcement of parking restrictions.	1	Q
	Clarity on measure: One participant was unclear if 'network communication' was in relation to just bus or wider public transport options. They were also unclear as to what a Regional Control Centre would encompass and if this is just for bus or a wider remit. They note that Glasgow already has its Operation Centre which is home to Glasgow City Council's Public Space CCTV monitoring services, Security Services, Partnership Intelligence Unit and Traffic Control Centre.	1	Q
P5	**Collaboration**: This priority will require support from Local Authorities and Transport Scotland if bus journey times are to be compared to cars.	1	Q
	Impact: It was felt that this priority would benefit older people who are reported to avoid using bus services due to longer journey times in comparison with car, particularly in rural areas.	1	Q
M13	**Bus stop rationalisation:** Some considered that this may only be beneficial at certain locations (e.g. town centres) and may present disadvantages in non-urban areas by increasing distances to bus stop and service provision. Additionally, there were concerns raised around those with accessibility needs as these may impact accessibility of bus for those who need a stop close to their home.	3	I, Q
	Consider all route types: Faster bus journey times should be considered for all routes. For example, many rural services may not be 'busier' but are essential and people do not use due to length of journey. Whilst this is sometimes unavoidable due to geography, there should be actions to reflect how these routes could be faster using similar measures, and also through provision of additional or new services/routes to cover areas and reduce journey times.	1	Q
	Accessibility: In addition to the reference of people with accessibility needs in relation to bus stop rationalisation, some concerns were raised around 'faster boardings'. Some noted that older people / disabled people have injured themselves when drivers have pulled away at speed before being seated. They required that drivers are not penalised for supporting passengers to board/disembark via	3	I, Q

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	pressure from faster journeys or punctuality targets. In terms of smart ticketing, it was noted that a proportion of the population will always rely on cash fares and advised not to remove these completely.		

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Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing

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5.3.10   Theme 3 looks to provide simple and easy fares and ticketing to attract people to bus and improve passenger perceptions around value for money. This theme includes discussion of simple fares structures, daily price capping, and best value season products with flexible payment options to be made available across the network.

5.3.11   There are three policies and five measures within Theme 3, and the questionnaire asked all respondents the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 3. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. Table 6 demonstrates that the **majority of respondents agreed that all Theme 3 policies and measures were appropriate** to deliver the theme.

Table 6.   To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P6	**Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities**	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M14	Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all	= **91%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **3%** strongly/slightly disagree
P7	**Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring**	= **96%** strongly/slightly agree = **3%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M15	Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made)	= **96%** strongly/slightly agree = **3%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
P8	**Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible**	= **98%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M16	Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M17	Accessible and easy to understand fares information	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **3%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M18	Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases	▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ = **95%** strongly/slightly agree ▓ = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 1,354 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.3.12 As with the other themes, those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. The findings are summarised in Table 7 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 7.   **Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 3 and its policies and measures**

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 3	There was **support for affordable, flat fares** (with reference to London, Manchester, Edinburgh), daily/weekly capping, and "hopper" rights to allow multiple journeys or "trip chaining" for one fare. Such features remove complexity, promote value, and are seen as 'urgent' for Strathclyde. It was noted that there are already schemes in place for fare deals (e.g., Glasgow Tripper, discounted staff tickets); there is a need for coordination and scaling up via franchising/integration.	5	I, Q
	Some participants called for integration across all public transport in the region (bus, train, subway, ferry, cycle hire), with **tickets that work seamlessly across modes**, replacing complex systems like ZoneCard with something simpler and cheaper.	2	Q
	The need for clear, easily available information about fares is highlighted. Digital-only information and payments exclude some users and participants felt that **cash payment options must remain**, and information should be accessible offline.	3	I, Q
	It was felt that **fare structures must adapt** for changing work/life patterns (e.g., not everyone commutes 5 days a week); schemes and pricing should reflect flexibility, good value for shorter/occasional travel and "complex" journeys.	2	I
P6	Several participants mentioned that improving **fare affordability** must focus on those in poverty, low-income households, older people not yet eligible for free transport, supporters/carers, and rural/remote communities.	4	I, Q
	Some were concerned that a shift to digital ticketing may disadvantage those without **digital access or literacy**, often overrepresented in disadvantaged groups. They felt fare policy must consider those excluded from digital/pay-as-you-go innovations.	3	I
	There were calls for SPT to introduce **easy-to-understand flat fares**, daily/weekly capping and "hopper" fares to avoid penalising users who need to change buses, reduce planning burden, and model good practice from London/Manchester.	3	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	The **Young Person's Card** was deemed to have changed travel behaviour patterns positively by encouraging young people onto buses, but it was added that future pricing must keep young people on the buses.	1	I
	Suggestion that fare structures should allow **flexibility** for longer journeys, so operators in high-cost or longer distance/rural routes aren't financially penalised under a strict flat fare regime.	2	I
M14	**Funding and Commercial Sustainability Concerns:** Extending or expanding concessionary/discounted fares is perceived to be costly and raises questions of long-term funding certainty. Operators and stakeholders are unclear if reductions would be subsidised and question the impact on commercial network viability and service quality.	6	I, Q, FF
	It was also noted that **retaining free/discounted fares** is vital for older people and disabled individuals; removing these would have major social, health, economic, and well-being impacts. Public transport is deemed to be a 'lifeline' for those who cannot drive, preventing isolation and dependency.	2	I, Q
	Some called to expand concessionary **eligibility** to include more community and demand responsive services (especially rural/island areas). They felt current coverage is inconsistent, and extension could address access gaps for the most vulnerable.	2	I
	Clarification was required from some stakeholders about whether the aim is to reduce all fares, only target groups, or give operators subsidies; and there were requests for more clarity and transparency on how M14 would apply in practice across a diverse bus sector.	3	I
	Some operators highlight that claims of "unaffordable" fares can be **subjective**. They acknowledge that walk-up fares may seem high, but most use discounted/multi-use tickets considered affordable. "Expensive" is context-dependent.	2	I
P7	No specific comments.		
M15	One participant expressed concern over how **capped fares** will affect the ability of some operators to run their services. More specifically, a non-for-profit operator noted that a capped fare/ hopper fare could mean they would not make enough to run their services into Glasgow.	1	I
P8	No specific comments.		
M16	It was suggested that SPT could work with operators on the delivery of this through a **Bus Service Improvement Plan** (BSIP).	2	Q, FF
M17	This measure was welcomed, and it was suggested that information must also be accessible and available in **offline or physical formats**, as well as being digitally available.	1	Q
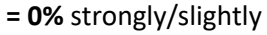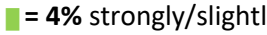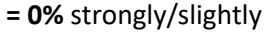
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	One participant suggested that work of the **National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB) and Bus Open Data** will likely deliver further improvements to the already good work demonstrated through operators' digital channels and Traveline Scotland.	1	Q
M18	It was noted that consideration of those who are **not online nor digitally confident** should be considered when communicating fare increases. They request that SPT ensure that any changes to services or fares are communicated more widely than online platforms, and make every effort to raise awareness of changes with harder to reach groups, by working with partners (local groups, third-sector, and public sector) who are in direct contact with those groups.	1	Q

Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys

5.3.13   Theme 4 focuses on making bus travel convenient and accessible to all passengers, as a core component of achieving a fully accessible door-to-door journey experience in the region. This includes well-maintained and accessible routes to bus stops, and more accessible vehicles, stops and stations. The theme also covers travel information, noting this needs to be easily available in accessible formats. Customer service is also included, noting it needs to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for all passengers, informed by training in disability and equality matters.

5.3.14   Theme 4 includes one policy and six measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 4. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents felt that all Theme 4 policies and measures should be included.

Table 8.   **To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys?**

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P9	**Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers**	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M19	Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **2%** strongly/slightly disagree
M20	Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses	= **93%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M21	Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M22	Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations	**= 95%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M23	CCTV on buses and at bus stations	= **88%** strongly/slightly agree = **7%** neither agree nor disagree = **4%** strongly/slightly disagree
M24	High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops	= **96%** strongly/slightly agree = **3%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 733 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.3.15   As with the other themes, those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual themes, policies and measures. The findings are summarised in Table 9 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 9.   Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 4 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 4	Respondents frequently called for all vehicles, stops, stations, information and ticketing to be completely **accessible**, and not just "more accessible". Features required included level boarding, space for wheelchairs / scooters on board, ramps and accessible toilets. However there was some confusion over interpretations of accessibility mentioned in the draft Strategy. One thought this referred to disability types, another felt this meant wheelchair access or on-street infrastructure. One operator commented that different people have different interpretations.	7	I, Q
	Safety should encompass **personal safety and security as well as physical safety**. Concerns include anti-social behaviour, lighting, shelter, CCTV/help points, partnership with police/local authorities, and harmonised reporting mechanisms. Although some queried the meaning of safety as they felt bus travel was relatively safe compared to other modes.	6	I, Q
	There were requests for **information** (e.g., timetables, fares, next stops) to be available in **multiple formats** (audio, visual, BSL, other languages) and offline to avoid excluding non-digital/confident users. It was requested that cash payments remain for all ticket types.	5	I, Q
	Some felt that there should be **co-design with disabled people**, parents (prams), and users with sensory/mobility needs. Continuous monitoring and user feedback (including from seldom-heard groups) was seen as essential for improvement and trust.	3	I, Q
	Clarification of terminology: Some wanted exact and consistent definitions of 'accessible' and 'safe', noting that operators may	4	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	interpret these differently. In addition, a definition of 'convenient' was required, and 'major network redesign'.		
	Some participants referred to the barriers some disabled people face with obtaining a **wheelchair space** on board. It was felt a solution was needed, such as taxi alternatives or better managed priority / reserved spaces.	3	I
	Some noted ongoing, standardised **staff and driver training** for accessibility and inclusion was required. Consistent support for people with mobility, sensory, and cognitive impairments should be provided.	3	I
	The role of **community transport** was mentioned, as was seen as vital for some groups. In addition, community transport fleet accessibility should be considered, alongside driver support, and funding should be considered under the same standards as mainstream networks.	2	I
	Two participants mentioned on-board **anti-social behaviour** (feet on seats, noise, vaping etc.) which they felt undermines comfort and sense of safety; with a focus on this needed alongside physical security features.	2	I, Q
	Two respondents mentioned the role of **data and monitoring**, with consistent ways to gather and use personal security and accessibility data to drive improvements, share good practice and provide reassurance.	2	Q
P9	One organisation for older people said that the **feedback** they receive is that passengers do not feel buses are accessible or physically safe. They therefore welcomed this policy to improve accessibility. Another noted that concerns around the experience of disabled passengers was raised by the Connectivity Commission.	2	I, Q
M19	Two participants noted that accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, staff and planning teams is **already provided**. They also added that drivers undertake continuous professional development through the Drivers CPC.	2	I, Q
	Another stakeholder expressed their support for this measure. They asked that the training considers the diverse needs of groups and how vulnerabilities might **intersect**, and what additional support people might need because of this. For example, how being older and from an ethnic minority might exacerbate challenges in using buses, such as increased feelings of being unsafe due to age and race, or needing support with boarding and also information that is easy to understand in a different language.	1	Q
	Also highlighted was a need for **dementia-informed training** for all groups mentioned, so that drivers, staff, and those designing services know how to support people living with dementia and understand the unique challenges they may have. They added that this was vital	1	Q
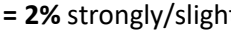
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	that this includes design and planning teams, so they are able to create buses and services which are more dementia-friendly (for example, contrasting colours on handrails and visual communications on signs).		
M20	It was felt that operators **already abide by all accessibility legislation**, and work is currently in progress to deliver in areas such as audiovisual information on buses.	3	I, Q
	One respondent noted that SPT should explore options to provide **audio information at bus stops.**	1	Q
	One respondent expressed support for this measure, noting that information should be in **different accessible formats** such as easy-read, translated versions, large print or braille. In addition, the process for getting these formats should be widely publicised to passengers and relevant organisations who might support passengers with these needs.	1	Q
M21	There was some confusion as to what **passenger assistance** encompasses or refers to.	2	I, Q
	It was requested that this should cover **every type of assistance** an older person might need, from journey planning and ticket purchasing to boarding and help with luggage or mobility aids. This includes support for specific disabilities or for those living with dementia. It was added that a single-network wide approach may make it easier for passengers to understand what assistance is available, how to access it, and what expected levels of service should be. Further, this mitigates the 'postcode lottery' risk, meaning older people regardless of where they live or need to go will be able to access the same type and quality of assistance.	1	Q
M22	Some felt that operators already provide this, while others felt it was the **responsibility** of SPT to address bus stop accessibility.	3	I, Q
	One organisation felt it is important that SPT considers where more **stops on routes** may be needed to enable older people to access bus services, and also that they work with other stakeholders responsible for road and pavement infrastructure to improve the safety and accessibility of routes to stops and stations.	1	Q
	It was requested that accessibility standards, improvement plans, and a specific accessibility complaints process be **made available to the public.** This stakeholder felt this would let passengers know what level of services they can expect, and help SPT identify areas of further improvement.	1	Q
M23	Some stakeholders commented that 95%/96% of the Scottish bus fleet currently has CCTV, and felt this measure was **already being delivered.**	3	I, Q

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	Further detail was requested as to how measures could be **implemented**.	2	I
M24	This was deemed to be an important measure, although there was a lack of knowledge as to who the **responsibility** for this measure lies with.	3	I, Q
	It was noted that **maintenance** should also cover seating and rest areas (including more accessible seating/rest options and less hostile architecture), structural safety (such as windows, panelling, and canopies), up-to-date and accurate timetables and signage, improved sheltering and cover from weather, improved visibility, easy to read information, and maintenance of any technology such as digital boards or adverts.	3	I, Q
	One participant added that it would be beneficial for all bus stops to be **'smart' bus stops** with bus information, so that timetables are clear to all passengers.	1	I

Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network

5.3.17   Theme 5 covers how the bus network should be a trusted and valued regional asset, offering a consistent, high-quality experience for all users, regardless of location or travel frequency. The strategy notes that this involves clear, passenger-oriented branding, stable and well-communicated services, and a strong focus on customer service. Key elements include establishing a customer charter, ensuring accountability, and prioritising positive interactions with drivers. Ongoing mechanisms for passenger feedback and satisfaction monitoring are essential to maintaining and improving service standards.

5.3.18   Theme 5 includes four policies and five measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 5. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. It can be seen in Table 10 that the majority of respondents felt that all Theme 5 policies and measures should be included, although the proportion was a little lower for 'A network-wide Customer Charter'.

Table 10.   **To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network?**

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P10	**Develop a consistent network identity across the region**	= **91%** strongly/slightly agree = **7%** neither agree nor disagree = **3%** strongly/slightly disagree
M25	A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services)	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **2%** strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P11	**Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region**	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M26	A network-wide Customer Charter	= **85%** strongly/slightly agree = **11%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree = **2%** don't know
M27	Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
P12	**Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers**	= **95%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M28	Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **2%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
P13	**Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region**	= **94%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M29	Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g. travel centres, contact centres, customer services)	= **93%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 711 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.3.19   Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. This is summarised in Table 11 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 11.   Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 5 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 5	Some respondents feel emphasis on network-wide branding/identity is more **political** than public-serving, and less important than affordability, punctuality, and reliability**.** Others added that reliability, punctuality, helpful staff, real-time information, and clean vehicles are primary drivers of trust, with branding alone not sufficient and can be secondary.	5	I, Q

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	That said, others felt consistent branding (including at stops, stations, digital platforms) may help make the network **easier to understand,** better for new/occasional users, and support perceptions of integration.	4	I, Q
	Some discussed how theme and branding language need **precise definitions** and they were unclear what compliance looks like and how far requirements would go.	2	I
	Some felt a higher priority was clear, accessible, and unified **information**, especially through channels like a single journey planning app and more effective marketing/communication.	2	I
P10	One respondent felt this policy could lead to a **loss of identity** for good operators.	1	Q
	Another had concerns that it may be **difficult to adopt a 'one-size fits all' approach**, as network identity will be influenced by a number of variables including specific location, coverage, demographics etc.	1	Q
M25	Some questioned whether this measure should be a priority for SPT and whether it is **worth the cost**, with one noting that it does not feature as an issue in any bus passenger surveys. Some felt that passengers do not care or realise who the operator is.	4	I, Q
	Two participants referred positively to **rebranding carried out elsewhere** (TfGM Bee Network, Lothian Buses).	2	I
	One respondent argued that branding makes the bus system **easier to use.** They added that public ownership should be considered within this measure as consistent branding as part of public ownership is how the theme can be delivered.	1	I
P11	Three felt that a **better understanding of perceptions** around bus travel was required, and understanding how to address these through better communication and engagement. In addition, they added that SPT should collaborate with bus companies who will also have an interest.	3	I
M26	One respondent suggested that a network-wide customer charter could be built upon this **without the need for franchising.**	1	Q
M27	One participant felt that most operators **already do this**, however another respondent felt that surveys should **not be limited to online platforms**, and should include in-person engagement opportunities or physical formats such as paper surveys.	2	Q
P12	No specific comments.		
M28	Several respondents had concerns that restricting changes to set dates **undermines the benefits of bus travel:** ability to adapt quickly to demand, access, or local change. They felt that buses, unlike	5	I, Q
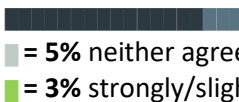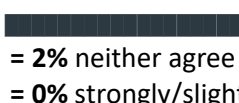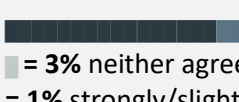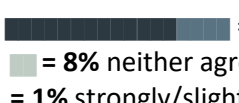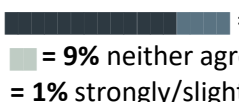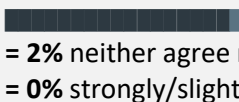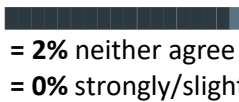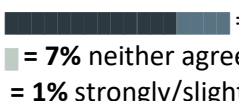
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	trains, can flexibly respond because they operate on public streets/roads, not fixed tracks.		
	Additionally, several were unclear how major **events** (sporting, concerts, etc.) are to be supported if changes are limited to fixed dates, which may worsen the current difficulties in flexing to event demand.	5	I, Q
	However, some respondents did support the provision of better advanced notice of changes, with participants wanting clear and open communication about *why* and *when* service changes happen. This includes rationale, evidence base, and improved passenger engagement/advance information.	3	I, Q
	Two respondents felt the current measure/policy wording is ambiguous regarding event management and whether provisions for flexibility or exceptions exist. They felt clearer language was needed in the strategy.	2	Q
P13	No specific comments.		
M29	One operator commented that they are **already committed** to providing high quality customer service and invest in ongoing professional development to facilitate this.	1	Q

Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network

5.3.20 Within Theme 6, SPT seeks to minimise the inconvenience of changing buses or modes, known as the 'interchange penalty', which is seen as being essential to increasing bus patronage and creating an inclusive network. The strategy details how Theme 6 will focus on achieving seamless integration across timetables, interchange facilities, ticketing, and passenger information to make bus journeys easy and convenient. The strategy notes that the network should be designed as a unified system, fully integrated with active travel, rail, and other public transport modes (including future projects like Clyde Metro), enabling straightforward end-to-end journeys.

5.3.21 As with the previous themes, respondents largely supported the policies and measures proposed, with nearly nine out of ten respondents reporting they strongly or slightly agreed that each policy and measure was appropriate to deliver Theme 6 (see Table 12).

Table 12. **To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network?**

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P14	**Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS**	= 97% strongly/slightly agree = 3% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M30	Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer	= **91%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **3%** strongly/slightly disagree
M31	Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
P15	**Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region**	= **96%** strongly/slightly agree = **3%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M32	High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region	= **91%** strongly/slightly agree = **8%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M33	Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessible and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations	= **86%** strongly/slightly agree = **11%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree = **2%** don't know
M34	Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network	= **89%** strongly/slightly agree = **9%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree = **1%** don't know
P16	**Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region**	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M35	Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region	= **98%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M36	Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements	= **92%** strongly/slightly agree = **7%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 1,146 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.3.22   Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. This is summarised in Table 13 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 13. **Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 6 and its policies and measures**

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 6	Integration was widely seen as a **high priority** for passenger growth and experience, but should include bus, rail, Subway, Metro, and Community Transport.	6	I, Q
	However, participants also wanted **clarity** around the term '**integration'** and felt this was undefined in the strategy. Respondents wanted to see specifics around which modes, what actions, realistic limits, avoiding 'forcing' interchanges, and to clarify if bus-to-bus as well as bus-to-rail is included.	6	I, Q
	There was support for **integrated ticketing**, and simpler, more flexible multi-modal tickets (ideally with capped fares and real-time integration). However, participants wanted to see cash payment maintained as an option to avoid exclusion.	3	I, Q
	Several interviewees highlight that it is impossible and unnecessary to integrate "all" buses with "all" trains. Specific **local priorities, flows, and markets** must be considered.	3	I
	Some operators noted they wanted more **practical opportunities for real collaboration**, e.g., shared depots, feeder services, information sharing, possibly joint franchise participation.	3	I
P14	Smart/cashless systems **must not exclude older passengers**, those in poverty or anyone unable/unwilling to use digital tools or apps. Participants noted that systems must be inclusive. Two respondents referred to smartcards (such as those used for concession schemes) as a potential way to include those without smartphones.	4	I, Q
	However several participants agreed that genuinely integrated ticketing (covering bus, rail, Subway, future Metro, cycle hire, etc.) makes travel much **easier and more attractive** for users. There was some frustration around the lack of existing integration.	3	I, Q
	Two stakeholders commented that a **single, unified digital** (and non-digital) **source** for tickets, journey planning, and customer service could be effective (citing Manchester as a model to follow).	2	I, Q
M30	As mentioned previously, many participants had concerns that smart/cashless systems **may exclude people** who cannot or will not use digital tools, noting that some people still require cash fares.	7	I, Q
	In addition to the above, non-digital and cash-based options must be as **easy to use and give access** to the most affordable fares, with no discrimination against those who cannot use digital channels.	4	I, Q
	Some felt that simpler, more intuitive ticketing products and payment processes would **remove uncertainty and attract more passengers**, especially from groups who currently find bus access confusing. However, it was added that these were things SPT should be working towards already. It was added that some smart and cashless ticketing is already being addressed by operators and	4	I, Q

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	national groups, and SPT should not unnecessarily duplicate or diverge from these efforts.		
M31	One stakeholder specifically commented that integrated ticketing across the network would make it easier for users and felt that the current lack of such option **reduces attractiveness** of public transport for most people.	1	I
P15	One stakeholder noted that they welcome this policy but added it may not always be possible to locate bus stops in the most **convenient location** due to restrictions within the existing road network. They felt that the wording should be changed from 'ensure' to being an 'aim' instead.	1	Q
M32	**Ensure quality, accessible and comfortable** waiting facilities (including free, quality Wi-Fi, and free accessible toilets).	5	I, Q
	Stakeholders also requested this measure should include **real-time information and information in multiple formats**, including in-person information / support and access to paper timetables and maps.	3	I, Q
M33	One stakeholder cited **long waiting times** at interchanges, and called for better collaboration between bus and rail operators.	1	Q
M34	One stakeholder noted that they felt this is the current responsibility of SPT.	1	Q
P16	There were again calls for information to be **high quality, accurate and consistent** which would also have a beneficial impact on older people. Another stakeholder noted that it would be useful to conduct research into how much bus travel information is an obstacle for bus use.	2	Q
M35	Some stakeholders commented that they assume this measure means digital real-time information, but suggested that **other sources of information** should be available too (e.g. route maps). They suggested that SPT could work with local community groups and associations to provide information and ensure communities are involved in the delivery and promotion of the service. One participant added that SPT should work with partners to set up a portal that everybody is made aware of and can access to find out this information.	4	I
	One stakeholder commented that **connectivity** may be an issue in rural areas, including lack of broadband in some areas.	1	Q
	One stakeholder felt SPT should note that the provision of real time passenger information has an **ongoing revenue impact** for local authorities. Without an appropriate revenue stream to provide real time passenger information (RTPI) this would likely have an impact on them.	1	Q
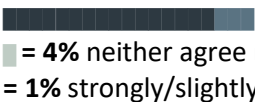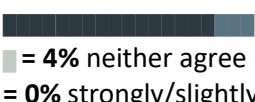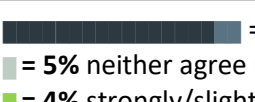
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M36	One stakeholder felt that this measure could be achieved through franchising.	1	I

Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet

5.3.23   Theme 7 focuses on operating the bus network in an environmentally sustainable and resilient manner to support net zero carbon goals and improved air quality. The strategy emphasises the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet, supported by appropriate infrastructure and skilled workers. Achieving this will be challenging, especially as the network expands, but is necessary to align with national and European climate targets. Additionally, the strategy highlights the need for an adapted and resilient road network to address climate-related risks, such as surface flooding and ensuring continued service reliability as Scotland moves toward its 2045 net zero commitment.

5.3.24   The majority of respondents strongly or slightly agreed that each policy and measure was appropriate to deliver Theme 7. Whilst at least 9 out of 10 respondents agreed that each policy/measure was appropriate, 5-6% of **respondents disagreed that P17: Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles** and **M37: High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets**, were appropriate; and, similarly, 4% disagreed that M41 was appropriate: **EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions** (see Table 14).

Table 14.   To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P17	**Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles**	= **90%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **6%** strongly/slightly disagree
M37	High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets	= **89%** strongly/slightly agree = **6%** neither agree nor disagree = **5%** strongly/slightly disagree
P18	**Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region**	= **98%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M38	Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network	= **96%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
P19	**Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network**	= **97%** strongly/slightly agree = **2%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M39	A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change	= **94%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **1%** strongly/slightly disagree
M40	Resilient and skilled-up workforce	= **95%** strongly/slightly agree = **4%** neither agree nor disagree = **0%** strongly/slightly disagree
M41	EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions	= **90%** strongly/slightly agree = **5%** neither agree nor disagree = **4%** strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 627 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.3.25   Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. This is summarised in Table 15 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 15.   **Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 7 and its policies and measures**

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 7	Several felt that **considerable progress** has already been made under this theme. Some noted that Strathclyde has a high number and fast-growing percentage of zero emission buses, and many operators have ambitious plans. With this in mind, some participants added this theme is *'already happening'* and less challenging than other priorities.	6	I
	Funding Uncertainty: Some respondents commented that National decarbonisation funding has ended; successful transition and infrastructure upgrades are reliant on large external funding sources not yet secured.	4	I
	Challenges for rural and community transport operators: Some felt that EV/zero emission transitions bring major challenges for rural/community transport infrastructure, such as charging and vehicle type not always being practical. It was added that community transport operators may need support for fleet renewal, access to shared infrastructure, and upfront capital for transition to electric/zero emission vehicles.	3	I
	General public perception: Some participants felt that passengers are not especially concerned about vehicle emissions and predicted that this theme would have lower importance to passengers than other themes.	2	I
	Barriers to rapid EV infrastructure expansion: Two participants commented that infrastructure supply / EV depot upgrades are slow,	2	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	challenging and may not align with operator needs, especially outside of the city centre.		
	Additional information: One respondent noted they would like to see more information under this theme on embodied carbon and lifecycle analysis of the network assets.	1	Q
P17	**Rural / island considerations:** One respondent noted that while supportive of this policy, some remote, rural and island locations may find this difficult to achieve and would require a significant level of investment.	1	Q
M37	**Funding**: It was noted by one participant that operators have already invested significantly in low and zero emission vehicles. For SPT to accelerate this would be fully dependent on Scottish Government decarbonisation schemes and currently unidentified funding.	2	I, Q
P18	No specific comments.		
M38	Some felt that the depot network is already efficient, resilient and well maintained, and the measure wording suggests this is not the case.	2	I, Q
P19	No specific comments.		
M39	One participant agreed with the measure, but noted that substantial central government **investment** in the existing road network is required to make this possible.	1	Q
M40	No specific comments.		
M41	It was suggested an audit of depots is required to understand the ability of depots to support zero emission buses.	1	Q
M41	Potential barriers to this measure were identified as the **cost** of charging infrastructure and **timescales** for installation.	1	Q

5.4 Other feedback on themes, policies and measures

5.4.1 Participants representing organisations, through the questionnaire and interviews, were invited to provide any further feedback on themes, policies and measures. This included feedback not already incorporated under the above themes, and/or any areas that they felt were missing from the strategy or where they wanted to reemphasise the importance of certain factors. The key themes raised were as follows:

○ **Give greater consideration to rural and peripheral areas (5 stakeholders):** Some felt the strategy was too focused on Glasgow and city centre travel and should consider rural travel and peripheral areas. There were calls for a comprehensive network that serves all parts of the Strathclyde region.

○ **Importance of integration (5 stakeholders):** Several stakeholders felt the strategy should put emphasis on seamless connections between different transport modes, including multimodal ticketing, coordinated timetables, and especially better integration of community transport for first/last mile and accessibility. The role of

community transport in serving accessibility needs and rural areas is highlighted by multiple stakeholders.

- **Affordability of bus travel and simplified/integrated ticketing (4 stakeholders):** several stakeholders commented that there was demand for fare capping, integrated ticketing and availability of clear fare information. They called for simplified, one-stop information about tickets and journeys.

- **Reliability, frequency and network quality (4 stakeholders):** This was a frequent concern for stakeholders, especially in terms of bus travel in rural areas. More specifically concerns were raised about low service frequency in outlying areas, and overall reliability of bus services.

- **Accessibility and inclusivity (3 stakeholders):** Some felt the priorities and measures did not go far enough to improve accessibility for older people, disabled people and mobility scooter users.

- **Ownership and governance (3 stakeholders):** This topic was discussed in depth by a few participants. These stakeholders advocated for greater public ownership (municipal or regional), arguing it is under-emphasised despite perceived strong public support. They commented that they see franchising as a pathway to regaining public control/ownership, but not as the only required model. Clarity was also requested on accountability and oversight (e.g. monitoring, watchdog role), which they felt is missing, with specific calls for SPT to report on bus performance and enable user feedback. In addition, there were calls for stronger accountability mechanisms. For instance, it was suggested that SPT should publish statistics on bus punctuality/cancellations and be accountable to users, such as through a watchdog or complaints body.

- **Bus priority and traffic management (4 stakeholders):** Some stakeholders called for bolder bus priority measures, including enforcement and reducing private car dominance in key corridors. They felt more political will is required to ensure buses are timely and not delayed by traffic.

6.   CONSULTATION FINDINGS: THE SRBS DELIVERY PLAN

Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that 83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising, while 5% oppose. Stakeholder support for franchising was due to a view it would provide stronger public control and oversight, while others felt it may improve integration and lead to bus travel improvements, particularly in rural areas. However there are concerns about the costs involved and uncertainty over funding sources. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.

The majority of stakeholders agree with the key issues listed in the draft SRBS, but wanted to see the inclusion of accessibility, rural service coverage and integration. Stakeholders also agreed with the key risks, particularly around funding and governance.

Stakeholders consider the SRBS action plan an essential foundation, but some perceive it as lacking detail, urgent timelines, and sufficient ambition, especially regarding public ownership and integrated system reform. There are calls for clearer timelines (distinguishing short/medium/long-term priorities), greater clarity on what constitutes a 'minimum level of service,' and explicit commitment to equity across geographies, particularly rural areas.

6.1   Overview

6.1.1   The draft SRBS has a chapter which sets out how it will be delivered. A core element of the delivery plan is the development and implementation of a franchising model. In the consultation, participants were asked whether they support/oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising.

6.1.2   The draft SRBS chapter on the delivery plan also sets out key issues and risks associated with the development of franchising. Again, consultation respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with these issues/risks and whether they felt any were missing.

6.1.3   The delivery plan chapter of the draft SRBS also displays the process to initiate franchising development described in the 'Franchising Route Map', which also sets out an Action Plan covering actions for the Franchising Route Map, Pre-franchising period, Bus Infrastructure and Traffic Management, and Bus 'Friendly' Environment. Stakeholders were also asked for feedback on the action plan.

6.2   Feedback on bus franchising

6.2.1   The draft SRBS notes that SPT is proposing to develop bus franchising for the region's bus network, following the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. Questionnaire respondents were asked to what extent they support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising.

6.2.2   Figure 9 illustrates the results of this question, demonstrating that over four fifths of respondents (83%) either strongly or slightly support SPT taking forward bus franchising (69% were in strong support). In turn, 5% either slightly or strongly opposed.

Figure 9. **To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?**

- Strongly support
- Slightly support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Slightly oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know
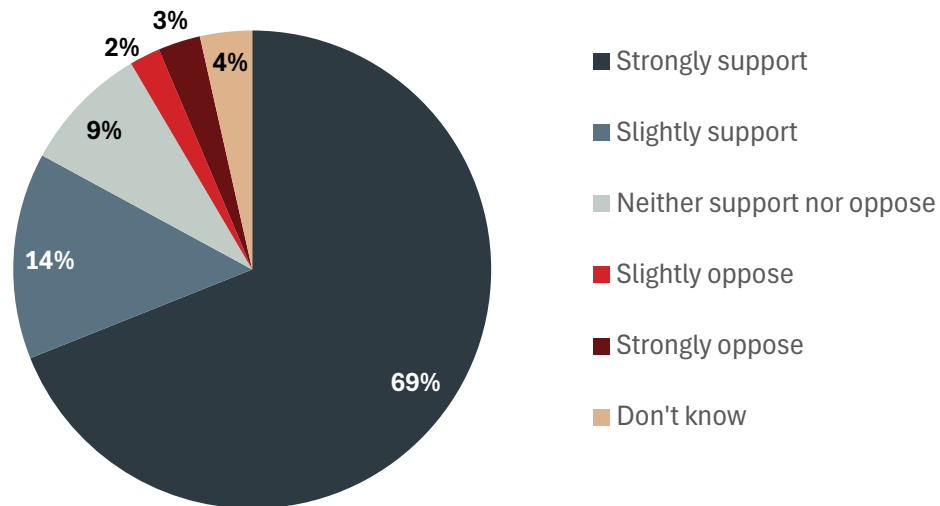
Base: 5,199 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

6.2.3 Response varied slightly depending on the source. Respondents who completed the open questionnaire via SPT's website were much more likely to select 'strongly support' than those in the invited representative sample (80% vs 34%). However, the overall level of support (combining 'slightly support' and 'strongly support') showed a smaller difference between the two groups (86% vs 72%).

6.2.4 Respondents from the following sub-groups differed significantly in their responses:

- **Familiarity with bus strategy**: Those who had either partially or fully read the bus strategy were more likely to strongly support franchising, compared to those who had not read it (79% vs 51%). However, the overall level of support (combining 'slightly support' and strongly support) showed a smaller difference between the two groups (88% vs 74%).
- **Current satisfaction:** Those who previously answered that they were dissatisfied with the current network, were more likely to strongly support taking forward franchising, compared to those who are satisfied with the current bus network (81% vs 48%). Again, this difference was smaller when viewing the overall level of support (slightly/strongly support) – 88% vs 75%.
- **Frequency of bus travel:** Those who travelled frequently (at least once a week) were more likely to strongly support franchising compared to non-bus users (72% vs 44%). When combining the overall level of support (strongly and slightly support), 84% of frequent bus users strongly/slightly support franchising, compared to 67% of non-bus users.

6.3 Reasons for support or opposition

6.3.1 Within the questionnaire, stakeholders provided further feedback on whether they supported or opposed franchising. Franchising was also discussed in the stakeholder depth interviews.

Support for franchising

6.3.2 The key themes as to why stakeholders were in support of franchising are as follows (responses raised through the questionnaire are denoted by a 'Q'; interviews by an 'I'; freeform responses by 'FF'):

- **Public control and accountability** (9 responses, Q, I): Several stakeholders view franchising as a route to stronger public control and oversight. They feel this approach emphasises standards, accountability and service quality, rather than profit.

- **Greater integration** (7 responses, Q, I): Respondents expect franchising to deliver better integration across bus services, rail, and other transport modes. They comment that joined-up ticketing, one-stop information, and coordinated timetables depend on unified network planning.
- **Bus travel improvements** (8 responses, Q, I): Several respondents felt that franchising is linked to more reliable, frequent, accessible, affordable bus services. Respondents believe it will deliver higher standards and better experiences for all, with regional rather than perceived profit-based priorities.
- **Better service coverage, especially for rural, peripheral or poorly-served areas** (5 responses, Q, I): Franchising is seen as way to ensure people in rural, peripheral, or poorly-served areas have reliable services. They feel it will empower regional authorities to plan networks inclusively.

Franchising considerations and concerns

6.3.3   Throughout the interview conversations and questionnaire responses, participants raised points of consideration and concern regarding elements of franchising. The most frequently raised themes are listed as follows (note – some of the risks and issues raised will also be discussed in the following sub-sections):

- **Funding and financial risk** (24 responses, Q, I, FF): Some respondents are concerned that franchising is resource-intensive, with costs for setup and ongoing operation (subsidy, infrastructure, decarbonisation, integration, etc.). Sustained Scottish Government funding and strong financial planning are seen as pre-conditions. There is an element of fear that costs may fall on local authorities, limit improvements, or divert funds from other vital projects.
- **Uncertainty over outcomes and greater detail required** (14 responses, Q, I, FF): There is some scepticism about whether franchising will resolve systemic delivery issues. Some point to perceived poor outcomes in other regions (e.g. Manchester). Many respondents (including those neutral or positive toward franchising) cite a lack of granular detail on how franchising would operate, be governed, staffed, funded and tailored to local priorities. Key areas where detail is perceived to be lacking includes implementation plans, business cases, funding model, performance standards, and operator engagement. This lack of clarity hinders stakeholder buy-in and informed decision making. Stakeholders called for comprehensive detail on how franchising will be adapted to address the needs of rural areas. One stakeholder wanted detail on the level (or intensity) of franchising to be implemented (i.e. basic, moderate or advanced) and felt SPT should be clear on this.
- **Operator impact** (13 responses, Q, I, FF): Some stakeholders, including operators, fear 'theft' of established commercial routes and loss of business. In addition, some feel there is a lack of recognition for commercial investments and potential loss of local knowledge. One operator in particular notes that operators are already trying to address issues mentioned by SPT, such as investing in ticketing, user information and vehicles (including zero emission vehicles). They feel there is a risk that transition to franchising will delay delivery of bus prioritisation measures and that it will discourage investment in bus companies due to them not knowing / not having a guarantee that they will have control of their fleets in the long-term. Some are concerned over the impact to bus operators, staff and their livelihoods. Some felt that the largest of the bus operators would be affected differently (and more adversely) than other operators. Some requested that SPT should consider potential losses to operators and what steps could be taken to mitigate such losses being suffered.
- **Infrastructure, bus prioritisation and wider policy** (13 responses, Q, I, FF): Several stakeholders see underlying issues (particularly congestion, lack of bus priority, and dominance of private vehicles) as more pressing factors. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.

- **Governance and accountability** (8 responses, Q, I): Stakeholders wanted to see early consideration and ongoing input from SPT, member authorities, and local communities alongside clear accountability for performance.
- **Urban – rural balance** (7 responses, Q, I): In the previous sub-section, some stakeholders viewed franchising as a way of improving service delivery to rural areas. However stakeholders also raised concerns that a 'one size fits all' franchising approach may fail to accommodate rural realities or differing council needs. They commented that there was a risk of urban-centric focus or dilution of local priorities.

6.4 Key issues in developing franchising

6.4.1 The draft SRBS lists a number of key issues that are anticipated in the development of bus franchising. The questionnaire asked respondents (answering on behalf of an organisation) the extent to which they agree or disagree that each is a 'key issue' to be considered.

6.4.2 The feedback is displayed in Figure 10. The **majority of respondents agree that the listed topics constitute key issues for the development of bus franchising**. At least three-quarters of all respondents either slightly or strongly agreed that each topic should be considered during the franchising process.

6.4.3 Nearly nine in ten stakeholders (89%) either strongly or slightly agreed that 'fares and ticketing' was a key issue needing consideration – this issue received the highest overall agreement. The same proportion (89%) also agreed that 'bus priority and a bus friendly environment' is a key issue to be included, though a slightly smaller proportion strongly agreed with this item compared to fares and ticketing. The issue with the lowest level of agreement was 'scale and pace of change across the region'; however, 75% of respondents still agreed it was a key issue for consideration. The greatest proportion of disagreement was for the 'funding environment,' but this accounted for only 3% of respondents, indicating generally strong consensus across all areas. Perhaps most notable from Figure 10 is that the strength of agreement was lowest for 'Fleets and Depots' with less than half of respondents 'strongly agreeing' that this needed consideration.

Figure 10.   To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a 'key issue' to be considered in the development of bus franchising?
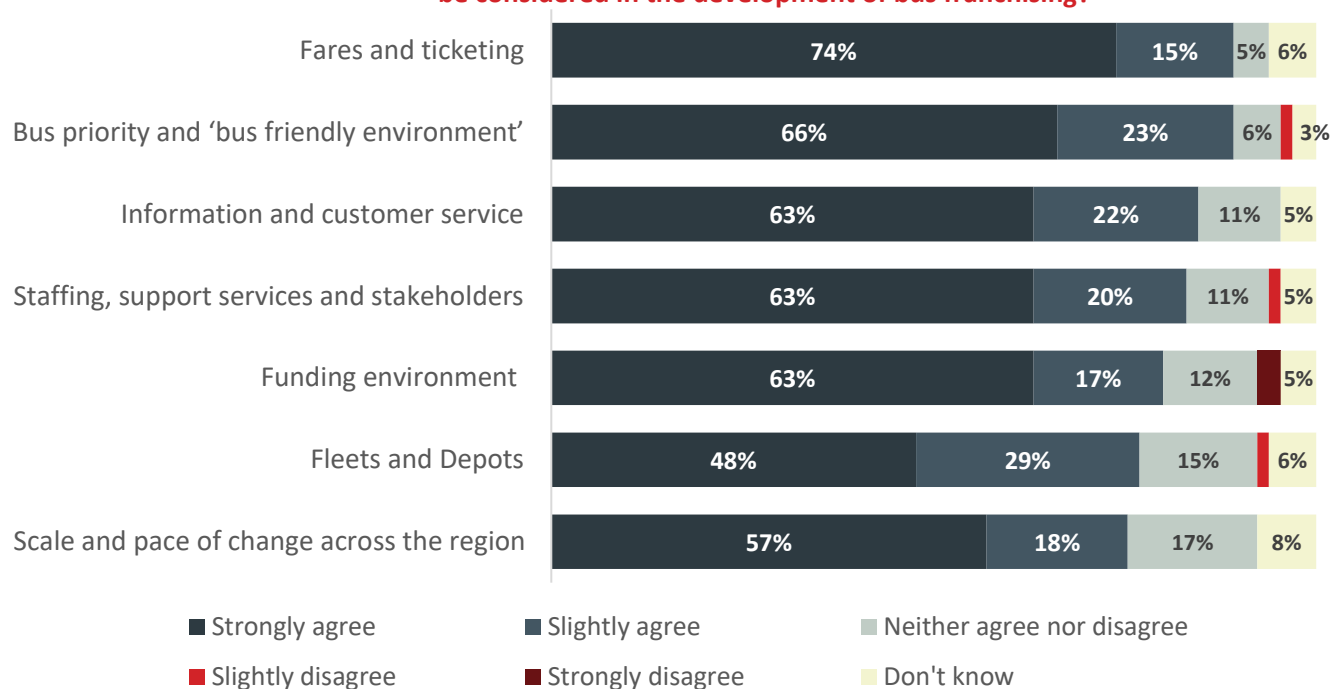
Base: 66 responses (Questionnaire, responding on behalf of an organisation)

6.4.4   In both the questionnaire and depth interviews, stakeholders were invited to share any further thoughts on key issues, including any they felt were missing from the list presented within the draft SRBS. Stakeholders chose to provide feedback both on the key issues presented in the draft SRBS but also additional ones they felt could be included:

Feedback on key issues for the development of franchising

- **General agreement with key issues** (6 responses, I, Q): Some respondents commented that the list of key issues broadly reflects the main challenges associated with the development of franchising.
- **Fares and ticketing** (7 responses, I, Q): Some mentioned the importance of affordability, integration and multi-operator options. Some feel current ticketing is already competitive, while others call for wider integration with metro and rail.
- **Bus priority and bus friendly environment** (8 responses, I, Q): Stakeholders felt that progress would require action to be taken on congestion, bus lane enforcement and wider road/traffic policies, which they felt can and should commence even without franchising.
- **Information and customer service** (4 responses, Q): Some stakeholders wanted to remind SPT about ensuring information was inclusive and accessible to all, both before boarding and while on the bus.
- **Funding environment** (13 responses, I, Q, FF): Stakeholders had some concerns around long-term certainty of funding sources and a lack of clarity around the funding environment.
- **Fleets and depots** (7 responses, I, Q): Financing and replacing fleets for zero-emission buses was seen as a risk, and the importance of aligning franchise length with vehicle life-span. In addition, there were some concerns around Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) and staff transfer, with stakeholders commenting that any TUPE agreements should be fully thought out and practical.
- **Scale** and **pace of change across the region** (6 responses, I, Q): Some warned about transition time for franchising and the risks of either moving too quickly or slowly. Some suggested using a phased model, as other areas have.

6.4.5   Stakeholders also suggested a number of additional key issues for consideration, and these covered the following topics:

Accessibility / inclusion (9): Call for accessibility to be a standalone key issue, especially for older / disabled / pregnant people.	**Rural service coverage (7):** Strategy should give more consideration to rural areas and consider challenges unique to less populated areas.	**Integration (6):** Requests to consider multi-modal integration, particuraly in rural areas.
Personal safety / security (4): Some felt that passenger safety at stops and on vehicles should be more prominent in the strategy.	**Accountability / transparency (4):** Calls for more open, transparent, and democratically accountable governance for franchised bus services, including public reporting and stakeholder participation.	**Operator sustainability / small operators (4):** Another key issue raised was that franchise models potentially risk excluding smaller operators.

6.5   Key risks in developing franchising

6.5.1   The bus strategy lists a number of key risks for the 'franchising route map' when developing and implementing franchising. This includes:

- Political and partnership support and leadership
- Requirement for a strong governance framework
- Funding
- Resourcing
- Market uncertainty
- Untested legislation

6.5.2   As with the 'key issues', questionnaire respondents (representing organisations) and stakeholders interviewed were asked whether they had any comments on these 'key risks' or whether they felt there were any other 'key risks' that SPT should be considering in the development of franchising. Some freeform responses also covered key risks.

6.5.3   Feedback on the list of key risks was as follows:

POLITICAL AND PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

Political will is seen as being key at Scottish Government, local authority, and cross-party/MSP-level. However there are concerns that there is the **risk of policy reversal** or waning support if leadership changes. **Partnership risks include** operators' potential withdrawal or legal challenge, erosion of collaborative working during transition, resistance from car/road lobbies.

REQUIREMENT FOR A STRONG GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

A strong governance framework was seen as being **essential for franchising** but there were queries about what structure this will take. Some stakeholders expressed a need for democratic/local representation in governance bodies and cross-sectional stakeholder involvement in decision-making. They felt there was risk of inappropriate or insufficient governance leading to either a lack of accountability and/or inequitable enforcement against large/small operators.

FUNDING

Funding challenges dominated as the most frequently commented on risk by stakeholders. Many expressed concern about a **perceived lack of information** on sufficient, reliable, and long-term funding for franchising model setup and ongoing operation. Some stakeholders discussed high expectations for service improvements vs limited budgets and had concerns that ambitions may be diluted due to funding shortages. There was some uncertainty about **specific funding sources.** For instance, would the Scottish Government or SPT be responsible? Would there need to be dedicated new revenue streams? Some noted risks of **funding 'gaps'** in the period between existing arrangements and franchising being implemented, and concern that service quality could decline during implementation. Finally, some stakeholders had concerns about responding to **inflation**, especially fuel costs and staff wages.

RESOURCING

Participants feel that **significant skills and staff resources** will be needed for network planning, procurement, contract management, and system oversight. Some had concerns over a potential lack of expertise in SPT or local authorities due to long period of deregulation.

MARKET UNCERTAINTY

Some stakeholders see a key risk as being the **reaction of operators** to franchising, with concerns over a **reluctance to invest** in the interim which may lead to service decline. Some anticipate legal challenges to the franchising process or legalisation. Others had concerns over **smaller operators**, due to bidding complexity and costs. They added that this is an important consideration given their importance to the local area as they tend to employ staff locally and therefore spending wages in the local economy. Other potential risks to smaller operators included the potential for market concentration, for instance franchising could undermine objectives of a competitive, locally responsive market.

UNTESTED LEGISLATION

Some commented on **legislative risks**, including potential complexity and ambiguity of Scottish franchising powers. There was also r**egulatory uncertainty** e.g., role and attitude of Independent Panels/Traffic Commissioners, and whether the Traffic Commissioner Panel would approve a proposed franchising framework. There were also potential risks raised from reserved matters such as accessibility regulations not devolved may make some requirements hard to enforce. One stakeholder noted that SPT aim to mitigate risks by liaising with Transport Scotland and the Competition and Marketing Authority, however one stakeholder raised concerns that there is uncertainty that any change to the legislation would be passed.

6.5.4   Other potential risks raised by stakeholders that do not fit into the above categories were as follows:

- **Transition/interim service and reputational risk**: There were concerns as to what may happen if service degrades or if public support wanes mid-process. For instance, some have concerns that during transition, operators may reduce investment or disengage, leading to a decline in service quality. Additionally, some felt that unrealistic expectations may lead to a loss of public support if 'headline' improvements are not delivered rapidly.
- **Operator insolvency risk**: Raised in several interviews and there were concerns this could have a major short-term disruptive effect.
- **Complexity risk**: Numerous stakeholders commented about SPT/the Government's ability and resources to be able to deliver the scale of change successfully. Including whether there is adequate time, resource, and legal/technical certainty.

- **Integration risk**: Comments included integration with other modes, as well as ticketing and technical infrastructure.
- **Customer/community engagement risk**: Some felt this was not fully recognised and could be crucial for building/maintaining support.

6.6 SRBS action plan

6.6.1 SPT aim to progress the 'Franchising Route Map', subject to the outcomes of this consultation and approval by the SPT committee through initial actions set out in the draft SRBS action plan. Stakeholders responding via the questionnaire, through interviews and via freeform responses shared their views on the action plan. This included feedback on the action plan as a whole, as well as the following sections of the action plan:

- **Franchising route map;**
- **Pre-franchising period;**
- **Bus infrastructure and traffic management; and**
- **Bus friendly environment.**

6.6.2 Feedback has been summarised by theme for the action plan as a whole, as well as the areas listed above. The key points raised are described in this section, and the five most frequently raised themes (mentioned by at least nine stakeholders) are displayed by a star (⭐) icon:

Action plan as a whole

- ⭐**Urgency and ambition:** Some stakeholders perceived the pace of delivery to be 'slow'. There were also calls for SPT to be more ambitious, particularly on public ownership.
- ⭐**Political Support and Funding:** Delivery is seen to depend on ongoing, strong political will at all levels and explicit, secure funding sources. Fears were expressed over national funding pressures.
- ⭐**Greater clarity required on action plan:** Some respondents found the action plan too high-level or *'light on the details'* to comment fully and want to see a more developed version of the action plan. As per earlier comments, they queried some of the terminology, for example, what 'minimum level of service' would entail.
- ⭐ **Equity Across Geographies:** Some felt there was a risk that rural/outlying communities may be overlooked in favour of urban centres. It was requested that consideration is given to strategic corridors affecting outlying areas including more isolated/rural communities.
- **Communications and engagement:** A small number of stakeholders commented that early and meaningful involvement with all stakeholders (including grassroots passengers, community transport, business, LAs, and operators) would be critical.
- **Ownership and fleet models:** One stakeholder provided input on alternative bus and battery ownership models to reduce capital risk and facilitate SME participation.

Franchising route map

- ⭐**Clarity of timelines:** There were multiple requests for the final action plan to include clear timescales, or at least classification of actions as short/medium/long-term.
- ⭐**Passenger and community representation:** There were requests for authentic bus user and community input (formed of actual bus users rather than user representatives). Others mentioned the importance of co-production and the need for a disabled passenger forum.

- **Inclusion of vulnerable and community transport representatives:** In addition to the above point, respondents noted that input should also include those relying on services due to access needs. Participants mentioned community transport users, as often those reliant on community transport are excluded from public transport because it is not accessible, and may be able to offer insights and lived experience in making local buses more accessible.
- **Transparency and accountability:** It was noted by a small number of stakeholders that governance structures should ensure all operators (large and small) are held to the same standard with no favouritism. They felt there needs to be strong governance which takes prompt action to deal with operators who do not meet contractual requirements.
- ⭐ **Public ownership:** Several stakeholders stressed that franchising should be a step toward full public ownership.

Pre-franchising period

- **Resourcing:** There were some concerns around 'organisational readiness' for franchising, including resourcing staff, skills, and financial resources and whether these are sufficient to deliver transition tasks.
- **Need for early actions/benefits:** Some stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see improvements (service, infrastructure, fares, behaviour change) begin in the pre-franchising window.
- **Role of Partnerships and BSIPs:** Several stakeholders commented that they believe partnerships and statutory Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) should remain on the table to deliver quicker wins and secure partner buy-in, even if franchising is the longer-term trajectory. Another stakeholder felt that BSIPs as an option had not been fully assessed by SPT.
- **In-house trial:** One stakeholder suggested that SPT could consider running some currently contracted services directly in pre-franchising period as practical preparation.
- **Operator engagement:** Some operators noted that they should be listed as key partners, and the approach should not be purely unilateral from SPT.

Bus infrastructure and traffic management

- **Funding uncertainty:** As above, there were some concerns over where funding for major infrastructure improvements will come from, especially given recent lack of access/support.
- ⭐ **Bus priority measures:** There was support from stakeholders for bus lanes, parking enforcement, etc., to increase bus reliability/attractiveness, but also warnings that bus priority measures should not be at the expense of cycling/walking infrastructure.
- **Inclusive/accessible infrastructure:** Some stakeholders felt bus stop/shelter design guidelines should be reviewed with passenger experience in mind. One stakeholder offered to share with SPT recent research they had conducted into what passengers want from bus shelters. Some wanted to see consistency in information provided across operators, such as clear route mapping.
- **Business community as stakeholder:** Input from late-working and hospitality-focused business groups was suggested, particularly given the impact of timetabling and priority on their operations.
- **Role of park & ride:** Some stakeholders suggested setting up more park & ride schemes in outlying areas.
- **Integration with emerging developments:** It was suggested that the action plan should account for strategic corridors and areas of new development and to better understand evolving workforce/commuter patterns. One stakeholder referred to

the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland (AMIDS) as an example of a significant employment destination.

Bus friendly environment

○ **Travel information:** Several stakeholders requested clearer, more integrated, consistent and more accessible travel information.
○ **Staff training:** A small number mentioned the need for driver and staff training, particularly in customer care and dealing with antisocial behaviour.

7. CONSULTATION FINDINGS: OTHER FEEDBACK

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 This section provides the findings from the consultation on the accompanying documents to the draft SRBS. Both individuals and those representing organisations were given the option of providing feedback on the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. In addition, this section includes any other comments received on the draft SRBS, either made through the questionnaire or through stakeholder interviews.

7.2 Accompanying documents

7.2.1 The SRBS has been assessed through the following:
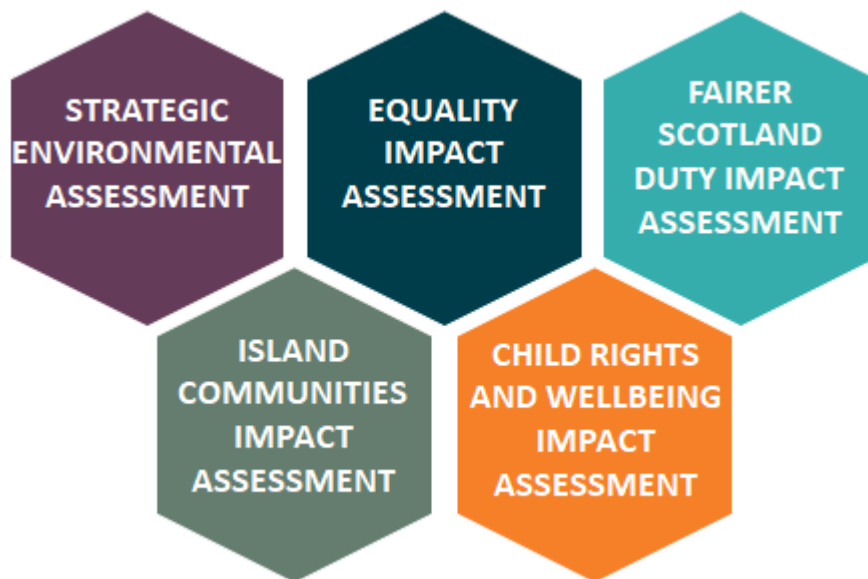
7.2.2 These documents were all made available by SPT alongside the draft SRBS. Within the questionnaire, both individuals and those representing organisations were asked if they would like to provide feedback on any of these documents. A summary of the feedback given is provided in the following sub-sections.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

7.2.3 The Strategic Environment Assessment's purpose is to identify, assess, and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of a qualifying plan, programme or strategy (in this case, the SRBS). A key objective of the assessment is to enhance the environmental and wider sustainability performance of a plan or programme. This is achieved through identifying any likely significant effects from implementation of the plan or programme as drafted, proposing mitigation measures to address any identified significant adverse environmental effects, and identifying enhancement measures to improve the overall performance of the plan or programme.

7.2.4 All questionnaire respondents were invited to provide comments on the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and 130 chose to do so (all of which were responding as an individual). Despite the number of comments, many were unrelated to the strategic environmental assessment, instead choosing to reiterate previous points made about bus travel. Comments that were directly related to the environment tended to focus on the environmental direction of the SRBS and bus travel in general, rather than specifically on the assessment document, however some themes are directly related:

- **Support for zero-emission / electric buses** (17 respondents): Respondents expressed a desire for cleaner, greener buses and/or a shift to electric vehicles as a clear outcome of the plan.
- **Timescales** (14 respondents): Some respondents added that they felt there was an urgent need to tackle climate change and the importance of environmental policies.
- **Data, targets and transparency** (7 respondents): Some respondents asked for clearer targets, measurable outcomes, quantifiable benefits and transparent/ongoing monitoring. With the latter point, some felt quantified headline benefits would make the report stronger, e.g. tonnes CO_{2-e} saved. Some commented on the visibility of the targets and how these would be measured/reported, but also communicated to the public.
- **Scope of the document** (4 respondents): A small number suggested the document may benefit from broader alternatives, and stronger cumulative impact analysis. Others felt it could be improved by including more detail on long term impacts and better integration with social and economic aspects.

7.2.5   When looking specifically at the Strategic Environmental Assessment, it appears that respondents wanted to see **clear monitoring, measurable targets and independent verification** of these. Some respondents want the assessment to have more focus on rural fleets and *"not just prioritising urban areas"*. There are also suggestions for **whole-life carbon analysis** of zero-emission buses.

Equality Impact Assessment

7.2.6   The accompanying Equality Impact Assessment to the draft SRBS evaluates strategy in relation to the three requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty states that public sector authorities consider the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; promote equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without. This document was made available for public review alongside the draft SRBS.

7.2.7   In total 127 individuals and stakeholders provided comments on the Equality Impact Assessment, however a large proportion of these were unrelated to the document / equality. Key themes on the topic are as follows:

- **Improve accessibility for disabled people** (25 responses): The most frequently raised theme was respondents highlighting the necessity for all services, stops and vehicles to be accessible for disabled people, including those with non-visible disabilities. This included level boarding, clear information and payment systems, and driver behaviour.
- **Support for safer, inclusive and equitable networks** (14 responses): Several respondents felt there was a need for a focus on safety (especially for women at night and vulnerable groups), and equal access regardless of income, location, or characteristics.
- **Improved driver and staff training** (8 respondents): Some commented that better disability awareness, diversity and equality training should be provided for drivers and staff.
- **Accessibility of documents** (4 responses): A small number considered the published equality impact assessment to not be accessible or easy to understand. One respondent felt that the document should be published in an accessible/inclusive format so that passengers could understand, including an Easy Read version and British Sign Language version. They also noted they would expect to see a Human Rights Impact Assessment.

Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

7.2.8   The purpose of the Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment is to demonstrate how proposals for the SRBS show due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD). The FSD places a legal responsibility on certain public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they

can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions or developing policy. This document was provided alongside the draft SRBS for respondents to view and comment through the questionnaire.

7.2.9   When respondents were asked if they would like to provide feedback on the document, 39 respondents chose to do so, one of which was responding on behalf of an organisation. Some themes are broader rather than specifically on the impact assessment itself, but the key points made are as follows:

- **Cost and affordability of bus travel** (12 respondents): Many highlighted bus fares as a direct barrier to bus travel, especially compared to other modes, and flagged the impact of fare policy on lower income groups.
- **Focus on rural and outlying areas** (9 respondents): Some commented that unequal access for rural areas is problematic, and the impact of poor bus provision for those with no alternative transport. They felt this should have more consideration in the assessment and the SRBS.
- **Positive comments on the document and specific suggestions** (5 respondents): A smaller number of respondents welcomed the inclusion of the Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment and felt it clearly set out the issues relating to social and economic inequalities. One respondent suggested that more explicit links to specific legal or policy obligations would strengthen compliance with the Fairer Scotland Duty principles. It was also suggested that the assessment should flag that delays or cuts to external funding streams (e.g. Bus Partnership Fund rounds) could widen socio-economic gaps, and suggested that SPT should set contingency plans to protect affordable coverage if that risk materialises.

Island Communities Impact Assessment

7.2.10   The Island Communities Impact Assessment demonstrates how proposals for the draft SRBS show due regard to island communities through the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. This Act provides a legal basis for greater decision making at a local level within Scottish Islands and seeks to increase economic prosperity for island communities. This document was provided alongside the draft SRBS for respondents to view and comment through the questionnaire.

7.2.11   Very few respondents (a mix of individuals and organisations) commented on the island communities impact assessments, and just six respondents commented specifically about the document. Most commented that they agreed with how the document had highlighted the challenges and difficulties that island communities face and that improvements were required. Other comments included:

- Better **integration** of bus and ferry timetables would have a large impact on island living;
- One respondent felt the final version should publish **baseline and monitoring** tables disaggregated by each inhabited island and SIMD quintile, and then set targets.
- Two stakeholders felt the document should be more specific around actions to **mitigate** disproportionate impacts. For instance, contingency measures for periods of ferry disruption, as these disproportionately hit islanders. In addition, one stakeholder added that there should be a commitment to **publishing annual progress updates**, ensuring transparency and continuous community co-design in line with best practice from the National Islands Plan implementation reports.

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

7.2.12   The Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment evaluates the draft SRBS in relation to the duties required under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The purpose of the document is to assist SPT in fulfilling the duties of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 by reviewing the implications of the SRBS and associated

measures on children and young people. The assessment process involved consultation to inform the impact evaluation. This document was provided alongside the draft SRBS for respondents to view and comment through the questionnaire.

7.2.13   Eight stakeholders requested that bus services better align with **school start and finish times**.

7.2.14   Two stakeholders flagged issues in North Lanarkshire due to the removal of dedicated **school transport for secondary schools**. They note that it is presenting challenges with the number of children trying to use public transport to get to school, citing instances where children had not been able to board a bus due to it being full then being late for school. They felt attention in this area was urgently needed.

7.2.15   One stakeholder noted that children living in some areas of Strathclyde (including rural areas) are entitled to free bus travel, but cannot use it due to **lack of bus services** in their area.

7.2.16   Another stakeholder requested that the final version of the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment should include **baseline and monitoring data**, and adopt SMART, time bound **targets**. They wanted to see a commitment to ongoing child participation via the Lundy model, in line with Scottish Government Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment guidance.

7.3   Other feedback

7.3.1   At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to leave further comments related to the draft SRBS. A total of 2,119 respondents chose to leave further comments, and these align to the following key themes:

Feedback on current bus travel:

7.3.2   A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding their current experience with the provision of buses as they are at present. This included:

- **Cost** of bus travel (214 responses), which is considered to be a barrier to travel for some.
- **Reliability** of bus travel (196 responses).
- A perceived **lack of bus services** in certain areas (61 responses), particularly in rural areas.
- A perception that journey times are **too long** (61 responses), particularly in comparison to other modes.

Feedback on future bus travel:

7.3.3   A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding their vision of the future bus network, and how it could be improved. Several comments were the 'solution' to the issues respondents had about bus travel at present. This included:

- Would like bus travel to be more **affordable** (223 responses).
- Would like to see improved **integration** with other modes of public transport (195 responses).
- Requests for improvements to **reliability** of buses (178 responses).
- Some respondents (93 responses) commented that they would **travel by bus more** if improvements to services and the network detailed in the draft SRBS were made.
- Requests for improved frequency of services (83 responses), including services that start earlier and finish later (76 responses).

Specific comments on the bus strategy:

7.3.4   A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding the bus strategy. This included:

   ⭕ **Support** for the strategy / the work SPT is conducting (213 responses).
   ⭕ A desire to see **quicker progress** made and for change to happen as soon as possible.
   ⭕ However some wanted SPT to be more **ambitious** / as ambitious as possible.
   ⭕ A desire for SPT to consider the role of community transport, and not lose existing services (specifically noting the 3C Strathaven – Glasgow service).

SRBS delivery plan:

7.3.5   A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding their views on franchising and the draft SRBS delivery plan. This included:

   ● Requests to 'nationalise the buses' and for buses to be under **public ownership** (176 responses).
   ● **Comparisons** made with Edinburgh (Lothian Buses) and aspirations for a similar bus network (138 responses).
   ● General **support for franchising** (91 responses).

Feedback on the consultation:

7.3.6   A small minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding the consultation itself. This included:

   ⭕ Positive comments regarding the consultation process and the opportunity to be able to provide feedback (40 responses).
   ⭕ Requests for ongoing engagement with stakeholders and the community on the strategy (11 responses). Several other stakeholders also noted their desire to support and engage with SPT on the strategy moving forwards.

7.3.7   In the stakeholder interviews, some participants also provided some final thoughts and feedback, and this included:

   ⭕ The main theme, around the importance of **communicating** well with stakeholders (including the general public and bus operators) and how **collaboration** would be key. One bus operator noted that they are keen to collaborate with SPT and work together, noting that they share the same goal of wanting to get more people on buses and out of cars. Another stakeholder saw the relationship with bus operators as being a big risk to the delivery of the SRBS, and felt SPT should convince operators as to how changes would benefit them.
   ⭕ Another stakeholder added that it was important to get the general public 'on side', which would include making it clear to the public on potential beneficial impacts. Another stakeholder was keen to ensure the voice of passengers and communities is captured in the SRBS process, utilising groups such as the bus operator forum and including community transport representation.
   ⭕ One stakeholder felt the draft strategy summarised the key issues impacting the bus well and feels there is consensus that these are the issues affecting bus travel. But the main challenge is the differing view from stakeholders on the best way to tackle these issues.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Overview

8.1.1   SPT carried out a non-statutory consultation exercise over a twelve-week period, between **Wednesday 5th March 2025** and **Thursday 29th May 2025.** The purpose of the consultation was to understand views on key elements of the draft SRBS and consider if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery. Feedback from the general public and stakeholders was gathered, with **5,223 responses** received in total across the following channels:

- Online questionnaire (Paper/Word versions also available);
- Online questionnaire with an invited representative sample;
- Interviews; and
- Stakeholder letters/ documents.

8.2 Summary of findings

Views on the current bus network

8.2.1   The consultation gathered feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the current bus network. The questionnaire findings indicate that the **majority of individual respondents are fairly or very dissatisfied with the bus network** (62% respondents), while 18% of respondents are satisfied. Similarly, most **organisational respondents (84%) disagreed that the bus network currently meets the needs of the general public**. Comments provided in the questionnaire highlighted dissatisfaction relating to the **cost** of bus travel, issues with **reliability**, a **lack of services** in certain areas, long **journey times** and a perceived lack of **integration** between different modes of transport.

The Bus Network We need

8.2.2   Feedback was gathered on the draft SRBS chapter 'The Bus Network We Need', which details seven key themes setting out what the SRBS aims to achieve, alongside policies and measures to support each theme. Respondents were asked about the importance of each theme and whether it should be included in the SRBS. The **vast majority of respondents considered each theme to be important and felt they should be included within the SRBS.** Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') had the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%), followed by Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing').

8.2.3   Most respondents agreed with the policies and measures described in the draft SRBS. Of particularly note is **Policy 4: 'Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services', which received the highest level of agreement**, with 99% of respondents considering this to be appropriate to deliver Theme 2. **Measure 10: 'Traffic management and enforcement measures' had the highest rate of disagreement,** with 7% of respondents disagreeing this was appropriate to deliver Theme 2, the highest rate of disagreement of any policy or measure across all themes. Additionally, Measure 9: 'Support wider car demand management' received the lowest level of agreement among the policies, although it was still supported by 70% of respondents.

8.2.4   The feedback also highlighted nuanced challenges and priorities for implementation. Stakeholders expressed the need for tailored approaches to urban and rural service provision, and emphasised the necessity for integrated multi-modal transport. They also identified potential barriers such as funding uncertainties, digital exclusion, and infrastructure. Measures such as bus priority lanes, accessible vehicles, real-time passenger information, and simplification of fare structures were widely endorsed by respondents. Accessibility was a recurring theme throughout the consultation.

Respondents emphasised the importance of making public transport accessible for everyone by involving disabled people in the design and planning process and ensuring that ticketing and information systems accommodate all users. This included retaining cash payment options for those who are reliant on this form of payment, and actively consulting with disabled passengers to inform decisions.

The SRBS Delivery Plan

8.2.5   Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that **83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising**, while 5% oppose. Stakeholder support for franchising was due to a view it would provide stronger public control and oversight, while others felt it may improve integration and lead to bus travel improvements, particularly in rural areas. However there are concerns about the costs involved and uncertainty over funding sources. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.

8.2.6   The majority of stakeholders agree with the key issues listed in the draft SRBS, but wanted to see the inclusion of accessibility, rural service coverage and integration. Stakeholders also agreed with the key risks, particularly around funding and governance.

8.2.7   Stakeholders consider the SRBS action plan an essential foundation, but some perceive it as lacking detail, urgent timelines, and sufficient ambition, especially regarding public ownership and integrated system reform. There are calls for clearer timelines (distinguishing short/medium/long-term priorities), greater clarity on what constitutes a 'minimum level of service,' and explicit commitment to equity across geographies, particularly rural areas.

8.3   Next steps

8.3.1   SPT will review the findings from this consultation to understand how the draft SRBS has been received and consider whether any changes are required. The SRBS will then go to the SPT Partnership for approval.

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this research

1.1.1 Bus services are vital to our communities, connecting towns, villages and city neighbourhoods across the west of Scotland. Despite the significant value of bus to society, economy and the environment, the bus network has been experiencing a decline.

1.1.2 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) wants to reverse this cycle of decline and grow the bus network. This means a bus network that attracts more people to buses and ensures access for communities who rely on buses for every day travel needs. This also means a bus network for everyone.

1.1.3 To achieve this, SPT has been developing a **Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy** that sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered. The draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy can be accessed from SPT's website: https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/

1.1.4 This survey will help SPT understand views on key elements of the draft strategy and consider if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

1.2 This survey

1.2.1 Throughout this survey, we will refer to the **draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy as 'the bus strategy'.**

1.2.2 It is important that the bus strategy meets the needs of people, businesses and organisations of the west of Scotland. SPT is holding this consultation so they can hear your views on the bus strategy and supporting documents.

1.2.3 SPT has commissioned SYSTRA, an independent transport consultancy, to consult with stakeholders and the general public on the bus strategy. Your views are important and will be gratefully received. This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All feedback received will be considered and will help to develop the final version of the bus strategy. You are able to provide a response to the survey from now until **Tuesday 27th May 2025.**

1.2.4 If you would prefer to fill in a paper version of the questionnaire, you can request this by emailing RTS@spt.co.uk. A 'text only version' link is also available at the top of each page to aid accessibility.

1.3 Your data

1.3.1 All survey responses are confidential and results will be analysed and reported anonymously by SYSTRA. The research complies with the Market Research Society Professional Code of Conduct and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You can withdraw from the research at any time.

1.3.2 The survey will ask you for some basic contact information for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses, as well as asking for your feedback on the bus strategy. Those responding on behalf of an organisation will also be asked to provide some basic details about their organisation. Those responding as an individual will be asked about the area they live in and their current travel behaviour.

1.3.3   To develop a bus strategy that truly reflects the needs and preferences of the community, it is crucial that each participant provides honest and unique responses. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping a bus network that serves everyone effectively. We kindly ask that you complete the survey only once to ensure the integrity of the results.

1.3.4   You have rights in relation to how your personal data is handled and you can find full details by clicking here: https://www.systra.com/uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2025/02/spt-srbs-privacy-notice.pdf.

0.   Question text: Are you happy to proceed with the survey?
Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: None
Other: Forced

a	Yes
b	No [Thank & Close]

ABOUT YOU

These first few questions are to understand a little bit more about you / your organisation.

1.   Question text: Are you completing this questionnaire as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?
Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: None
Other: Forced

a	I am responding as an individual
b	I am responding on behalf of an organisation

2.   Question text: What is the name of the organisation that you are responding on behalf of?
Instruction text: Please enter your organisation's name below

Question type: Open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

3.   Question text: Which of the following best describes your organisation?
Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

a	Bus operator
b	Local authority
c	Other organisation

4.   Question text: In which local authority area does your organisation primarily operate?
Instruction text: Please select all that apply

a	Argyll and Bute
b	East Ayrshire
c	East Dunbartonshire
d	East Renfrewshire
e	Glasgow City
f	Inverclyde
g	North Ayrshire
h	North Lanarkshire
i	Renfrewshire
j	South Ayrshire
k	South Lanarkshire
l	West Dunbartonshire
m	Other (please specify)

5. **Question text: Please provide your name, job title, and email address below.**
   Note, this information is being requested for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses. A list of all organisations that respond to the consultation will also be included in reporting, but will not be linked to responses. Your details will not be used for any other purpose.
   Instruction text: Please enter your name and email address below.

Question type: Open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

Name:
Job title:
Email:

6. **Question text: Please provide your name and email address below. Note, this information is being requested for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses. It will not be used for any other purpose.**
   Instruction text: Please enter your name and email address below.

Question type: Open
Routing: Q1_a (INDVIDUAL)
Other: Forced

Name:
Email:

7. **Question text: Have you read the bus strategy?**
   Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Forced

a	Yes, I have read it in full
b	Yes, I have read some of it
c	No, I have not read it
d	I was not aware of the bus strategy until now.

8. **Question text: In 2024, SPT carried out a consultation regarding recommendations from the options appraisal. Did [you/your organisation] respond to this consultation?**

Question type: Single select
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Forced

a	Yes
b	No
c	Don't know

YOUR VIEWS ON THE BUS NETWORK

9. **Question text: Firstly, how would you rate your current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region?**

   Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / Smiley face (emoji)
Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)
Other: Forced

a	Very satisfied
b	Fairly satisfied
c	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
d	Fairly dissatisfied
e	Very dissatisfied
	Don't know

10. **Question text: Firstly, do you agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public?**

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know
g	Not applicable

THE BUS NETWORK WE NEED

The bus strategy sets out policies and measures. The **Policies** are the principles that should be applied by SPT and partners in decision-making processes affecting bus in the region, while the **Measures** describe the activities and outputs that are needed to support the Policies. In the bus strategy, these policies and measures are grouped under seven **themes**. The themes are set out below alongside brief explanatory text, with further details available in chapter 4 of the draft bus strategy.

Buses where they are needed, when they are needed

A bus network that provides more **high frequency services on busier routes.**

More **consistent levels of service** across the region and at different times of day.

Better coverage during early morning hours, evenings, and Sundays.

5

A trusted and recognisable bus network

A bus network that people trust to deliver a **consistent, high-quality service** no matter where one lives in the region or how often one travels by bus.

2

Reliable and quicker bus journeys

Buses **turning up** when scheduled, arriving at destinations **on time.**

Bus journey times that are **attractive compared to using a car.**

6

A seamless and integrated bus network

A bus network that is **easy and convenient to use**

Better **integration** of timetables, services, interchange locations, ticketing and information.

3

Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing

Fares and ticketing that are **simple and easy to understand**

Affordable bus travel, particularly for those who face cost-related travel barriers.

7

More environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network / fleet

Zero emission buses and **infrastructure** that is resilient to effects of climate change

4

Accessible and safer bus journeys

Convenient, accessible and safer bus journeys for all.

11. **Question text: When thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved, how important or not is each theme to [you/your organisation]?**

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Grid
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Forced

For each of the seven themes:

Very important
Important
Neutral
Unimportant
Very unimportant
Don't know

Themes:

a	Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed
b	Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys
c	Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing
d	Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys
e	Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network
f	Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network
g	Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet

12. **Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that each theme should be included within the bus strategy?**

Instruction text: Please select one

[Show each theme]

Question type: Carousel – respondents will select an answer option for each theme separately
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Optional

a	Strongly agree

b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

13. Question text: Would you like to provide feedback on any of the Policies within the following Themes?

Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select check box
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Forced

a	Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed
b	Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys
c	Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing
d	Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys
e	Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network
f	Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network
g	Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet
h	No – I do not wish to provide any further feedback.

14. Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_a
Other: Forced

Policies

i	P1: Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required
ii	P2: Improve the frequency of bus services, where required
iii	P3: Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network

Measures

i	M1: A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity , periods of operation, coverage and connectivity
ii	M2: Minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility, working towards more convenient service levels
iii	M3: High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services at appropriate times
iv	M4: An integrated bus network with better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural to regional express or bus to rail)

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_b
Other: Forced

Policies

i	P4: Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services
ii	P5: Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times

Measures

i	M5: Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways
ii	M6: Bus services that better meet performance (e.g. punctuality and patronage) standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data
iii	M7: Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services
iv	M8: Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity
v	M9: Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations
vi	M10: Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement)
vii	M11: More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys
viii	M12: Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre
ix	M13: Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_c
Other: Forced

Policies

i	P6: Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities
ii	P7: Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring
iii	P8: Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible

Measures

i	M14: Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all
ii	M15: Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made)
iii	M16: Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys
iv	M17: Accessible and easy to understand fares information
v	M18: Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policy and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_d
Other: Forced

Policy

i	P9: Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers

Measures

i	M19: Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams
ii	M20: Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses
iii	M21: Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach
iv	M22: Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations
v	M23: CCTV on buses and at bus stations
vi	M24: High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_e
Other: Forced

Policies

i	P10: Develop a consistent network identity across the region
ii	P11: Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region
iii	P12: Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers
iv	P13: Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region

Measures

i	M25: A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services)
ii	M26: A network-wide Customer Charter
iii	M27: Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction
iv	M28: Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change
v	M29: Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g. travel centres, contact centres, customer services)

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_f
Other: Forced

Policies

i	P14: Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS
ii	P15: Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region
iii	P16: Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region

Measures

i	M30: Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer
ii	M31: Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro - networks/services/hub, ticketing and information
iii	M32: High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region
iv	M33: Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations
v	M34: Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network.
vi	M35: Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region
vii	M36: Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements.

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid
Routing: Q13_g
Other: Forced

Policies

i	P17: Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles
ii	P18: Ensure high quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region
iii	P19: Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network

Measures

i	M37: High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets
ii	M38: Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network
iii	M39: A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change

iv	M40: Resilient and skilled-up workforce
v	M41: EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

15. Question text: Would you like to provide a reason for why you answered disagree?

a	No **[Single select]**
b	**Yes (open text box)**

16. Question text: Do you have any other comments on the chapter 'The Bus Network We Need' within the bus strategy?

Instruction text: Please select one

a	Yes – please state
b	No **[Single select]**

DELIVERY PLAN

To deliver the bus strategy, SPT is proposing to develop bus franchising for the region's bus network, following the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

The bus strategy provides an overview of bus franchising, sets out the rationale for pursuing franchising, 'key issues' to be considered in the development of franchising and the processes required to take forward the development of franchising.

17. Question text: To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

Instruction text: Please select one

a	Strongly support
b	Slightly support
c	Neither support nor oppose
d	Slightly oppose
e	Strongly oppose
f	Don't know

18. **Question text: Would you like to provide a reason for your response? This may include presenting alternatives to SPT's proposals (which for the avoidance of doubt, may include making no changes to the way bus services are currently delivered).**

If there is any information that you wish to provide in support of your views, please include this in the text box below. If the space provided is not sufficient, or you would like to provide further supporting material, please email this to rts@spt.co.uk

Question type: Single select / open
Routing: : Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)
Other: Forced

a	No **[Single select]**
b	**Yes (open text box)**

19. **Question text: The bus strategy lists a number of key issues for the development of bus franchising. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a 'key issue' to be considered?**

Instruction text: Please select your ranking for each issue

Question type: Carousel – respondents will select an answer option for each theme separately
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced, randomise

Scale and pace of change across the region
Fares and ticketing
Information and customer service
Funding environment
Fleets and Depots
Staffing, support services and stakeholders
Bus priority and 'bus friendly environment'

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

20. **Question text: Do you have any other comments on these 'key issues' or think there are any other 'key issues' that should be considered by SPT in the development of bus franchising?**

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)
Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No **[Single select]**

The bus strategy lists a number of key risks for the 'franchising route map' when developing and implementing franchising. This includes:

- Political and partnership support and leadership
- Requirement for a strong governance framework

- Funding
- Resourcing
- Market uncertainty
- Untested legislation

21. Question text: Do you have any other comments on these 'key risks' or think there are any other 'key risks' that should be considered by SPT in the development of franchising?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)
Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No **[Single select]**

A draft Action Plan is included in the Delivery Plan, with actions arranged under 4 topics:
- **Franchising Route Map** - initial actions to progress the development of franchising;
- **Pre-franchising period** - actions to support the management of the transition period ahead of the implementation of any franchising scheme;
- **Bus infrastructure and traffic management** - actions to support delivery of bus infrastructure (including bus priority) and traffic management measures.
- **Bus friendly environment** – actions related to wider transport policies, interventions or programmes complementary to the bus strategy

22. Question text: Would you like to provide any feedback on the action plan?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

a	Yes
b	No

23. Question text: Please click on the specific actions in the plan where you would like to leave a comment, or select the first box if your comment relates to the action plan as a whole.

Instruction text: Please select all that apply – only the actions you select will be shown for comment

Question type: Multi-choice checkbox list
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER), Q22_a
Other: Forced

a	Action plan as a whole
b	Franchising route map
c	Pre-franchising period
d	Bus infrastructure and traffic management
e	Bus friendly environment

Action plan as a whole

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open
Routing: Q23_a
Other: Forced

Franchising route map

No	Action(s)
Franchising Route Map	
1	Report an outline programme for bus franchising development to SPT Partnership within c. 3 months following approval of the final SRBS.
2	Develop and agree governance plan for bus franchising development programme
3	Develop a bus operator forum to facilitate transition to franchising and to address concerns and issues throughout the process
4	Liaise with Transport Scotland and Competition and Marketing Authority regarding application of existing legislation for bus franchising
5	Hold regular briefing sessions and funding discussions with Transport Scotland, Councils and elected officials
6	Develop a bus passenger forum to support the planning and engagement on bus franchising and other specific matters e.g. accessibility and inclusive design
7	Continue to engage with transport authorities across the UK to learn emerging best practice in relation to bus franchising
8	Consider and, as necessary, make the case for any changes to relevant Scottish legislation, including learning from the emerging legislative developments in England and Wales

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image
Routing: Q23_b
Other: Forced

Pre-franchising period

No	Action(s)
Pre-franchising period	
1	SPT will continue its core activities in bus, including supporting socially necessary services subject to budgetary availability, managing bus stations, delivery of bus improvement capital projects with councils and others, provision of bus stops and shelters, information and school transport on an agency basis
2	SPT will work with councils and operators to develop the goals of the voluntary bus partnership, with a key focus on delivery of bus infrastructure
3	SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland on funding, legislative issues, and bus policy
4	SPT will continue to work with bus operators to promote service continuity in the interim period
5	Continue to work with Transport Scotland on the delivery of the Fair Fares review action plan
6	Support the outcomes of the Bus Decarbonisation Task Force
7	Develop business case for small scale municipal bus operation, alongside identification of any area-based supply side challenges identified in the process to develop franchising

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image
Routing: Q23_c
Other: Forced

Bus infrastructure and traffic management

No	Action(s)
Bus infrastructure and traffic management	
1	Deliver bus priority and other enhancements on the 5 bus corridors already appraised though the Bus Partnership Fund. As part of this, carry out a rapid review of the appraisal outcomes for the 5 bus corridors, ensuring that the level of ambition is sufficiently high across relevant local authorities and identify funding and delivery plans. The 5 corridors include: • Dumbarton Road • Great Western Road • Maryhill Road • Paisley Road West • Pollokshaws Road
2	**Enforcement of existing measures and 'quick wins':** Work with operators and local authorities to develop targeted enforcement plans for priority locations. Work with local authorities to identify 'quick win' actions at priority locations e.g. renew road linings and signage.
3	**Regional bus corridor plan:** Development of key corridor principles including network identity, quality, journey times and accessibility, integrated with relevant Clyde Metro developments and wider active travel interventions as appropriate. Appraise and identify infrastructure requirements and projects for regional corridors, including relevant town centres and key interchange locations, integrated with the development of the bus network redesign plan, regional active travel network and Clyde Metro network development. Create a single, prioritised plan for bus corridor upgrading across the network and a programme for detailed design and construction for individual corridors/routes. This should build on existing work already carried out for the Bus Partnership Fund, avoiding duplication of work but ensuring a cohesive and ambitious region-wide approach linked to network plans under franchising.
4	**Regional hospitals, Colleges/Universities and town centres:** Review arrangements for bus at key sites including vehicle access/circulation, passenger waiting facilities, and RTPI. Develop and deliver solutions, as required. Ensure appropriate bus arrangements are developed for new Monklands Hospital.
5	**Bus stops quality and access:** Review bus stop design guidelines and update as required. This should include principles for accessible and inclusive design, provision of lighting, shelters, travel information and RTPI, and bus stop location. This should include consideration of vehicle access and passenger boarding needs. Assess bus stops in line with updated guidance and develop programme of upgrading as required. In tandem with local and regional active travel strategies, develop programme of assessing and upgrading walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops.
6	**Interchanges and Mobility Hubs:** Identify suitable locations to provide interventions that promote easy, effective interchange between bus, rail, active travel, and private vehicles where appropriate (for example, rural hubs). These locations would entail bus stations and local bus stops within both urban and rural areas, ensuring that the region's population have appropriate solutions which reflect their specific needs.
7	**Bus termini / driver welfare:** Review conditions for drivers at bus termini locations and develop proposals for improvements as required.
8	**Regional network communication and transport co-ordination centre:** Develop and assess options for improving co-ordination of transport network communications, monitoring and management, including consideration of a regional transport co-ordination centre. Develop business case as required.
9	**Road network resilience:** Work with roads authorities to identify and develop mitigations for surface flooding affecting bus network. Continue to chair the Climate Ready Clyde Transport Resilience Working Group. Lobby for increased resources for local authority road maintenance.

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image
Routing: Q23_d
Other: Forced

Bus friendly environment

No	Action(s)
Bus friendly environment	
1	**Reducing need to travel and car demand management:** SPT will advocate for development of car demand management measures including road user charging at a national level. SPT will encourage and work with councils to develop local parking policies that support sustainable transport. SPT will also continue to participate in the Local Development Plan process.
2	**Behaviour Change:** SPT will continue to work with partners to deliver travel behaviour change focused on encouraging and promoting sustainable travel choices. SPT will continue to work with Bus Users Scotland, operators and other partners on bus promotions and events such as Catch the Bus Week. SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland, councils and other partners to deliver the People and Place Programme to support behaviour change.
3	**Clyde Metro and integrated sustainable transport network:** SPT, with council partners, will continue to progress the development of Clyde Metro, and to align Clyde Metro and bus developments. SPT will develop an integrated network plan incorporating the long-term Metro proposals, bus network and active travel networks.

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image
Routing: Q23_e
Other: Forced

24. Question text: Are there any other actions that SPT should consider?

Question type: Single select / open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)
Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No **[Single select]**
c	Don't know **[Single select]**

25. Question text: Do you have any other comments on the Delivery Plan?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)
Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No **[Single select]**

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

The bus strategy has been assessed through Strategic Environment Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. The relevant documents are available at: https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/

26. Question text: Would you like to provide feedback on any of these documents:
Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select
Routing: None
Other: Forced

a	Yes – Strategic Environmental Assessment

b	Yes – Equality Impact Assessment
c	Yes – Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment
d	Yes – Island Communities Impact Assessment
e	Yes – Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
f	Yes – I would like to provide comments on the documents overall
f	No **[Single select]**

27. Question text: Please leave feedback relating to supporting documents below

Question type: Open – bring up text box for each separate document chosen in Q24
Routing: 26_a, b, c, d, e, f
Other: Optional

ABOUT YOU

Finally, the following questions will ask where you live and about your current travel behaviour. These questions will be used to understand how views differ by different types of people. They will not be used for any other purpose. All questions are optional and your responses are confidential and results will be analysed and reported anonymously.

28. Question text: In which town/area do you live?
Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)
Other: Optional

a	Argyll and Bute
b	East Ayrshire
c	East Dunbartonshire
d	East Renfrewshire
e	Glasgow City
f	Inverclyde
g	North Ayrshire
h	North Lanarkshire
i	Renfrewshire
j	South Ayrshire
k	South Lanarkshire
l	West Dunbartonshire
m	None of the above

29. Question text: Which of the following best describes the area you live in?

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)
Other: Optional

a	City
b	Town
c	Village
d	Rural

30. Question text: Do you live on an island?

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q29_a,g
Other: Optional

a	Yes
b	No

31. Question text: Do you have access to a car, van, motorbike or moped, as a driver?

Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select
Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)
Other: Optional

a	Yes – car or van
b	Yes – motorbike or moped
c	No – none of these **[Single select]**

32. Question text: In the last 12 months, how often, on average, have you travelled by bus?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)
Other: Optional

a	Five days a week or more **[Current/frequent user]**
b	2-4 days a week **[Current/frequent user]**
c	Once a week **[Current/frequent user]**
d	Less than once a week, but at least once a month **[Less frequent user]**
e	Less than once a month, but more than twice a year **[Less frequent user]**
f	Once or twice a year **[Less frequent user]**
g	Never **[Non-bus user]**

FINAL COMMENTS

33. Question text: Finally, if you have any further comments related to the bus strategy, please enter them here.

Question type: Open
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Optional

That's all of our questions. Thank you so much for your time.

Please click 'Submit' to save your response.

1. INTRODUCTION [5 MINS]

- ○ Hello, thank you for your time and agreeing to speak with us today.

- ○ My name is ..., I am part of SYSTRA's Social and Market research team. We undertake independent research to understand views and experiences on different topics.

- ○ Strathclyde Partnership for Transport has been developing a regional bus strategy which sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered. SPT has commissioned SYSTRA to gather stakeholder views on key elements of the draft strategy and to see if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.
  - ▪ This consultation builds on previous consultation stages relating to the development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy.
  - ▪ As a summary of the overall process, work on the bus strategy began in mid-2023 by establishing a Case for Change, followed by an options appraisal on the different models available to deliver bus services including partnership models, bus franchising and municipal bus operations.
  - ▪ SPT held a public consultation on the recommendations from the options appraisal in April - May 2024. Subsequently, the SPT Partnership approved an approach that would see SPT taking forward the development of franchising whilst working with partners and stakeholder to interim period, and to further investigate opportunities for municipal bus operations.
  - ▪ Following this, the draft bus strategy was developed in the latter half of 2024 and subsequently approved for consultation by SPT committee in February 2025.
  - ▪ The SRBS process also has been informed by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty. Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

- ○ The feedback you give today will be really valuable in helping SPT better understand what key stakeholders, such as yourself, think of what they are proposing in the Strategy. In this interview, I will ask you about your opinions on different sections of the draft Strategy.

- ○ The interview will last up to 45 minutes.

- ○ I have some questions to ask around different elements of the draft Strategy to help steer the conversation.

- ○ Please be as honest as you feel comfortable being. Your honest and expert opinion, as a key stakeholder, is integral to developing a Strategy which can set out a path for having a resilient bus network for the future. There are no right or wrong answers.
  - ▪ Everything you say will be analysed and reported anonymously.
  - ▪ There may be instances where we use verbatim quotations to bring your views to life, but these will not be attributed to you as an individual but rather grouped by stakeholder type (this includes bus operators and [stakeholder type such as charity]).

- ○ Is it okay with you if we record this interview? We're asking that as it helps us capture your views accurately and means I don't have to take notes at the same time as talking

to you now. The recording will be deleted as soon as we've finished taking notes and anything you say will be anonymised. **Are you happy for our discussion to be recorded? Y/N**

- This research is conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and Data Protection legislation.
  - Your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.
  - More information can be found in the privacy notice for the research, which was attached to the email organising this session.

- Do you have any questions?
- **Are you happy to start the interview? Y/N**

2. BACKGROUND [5 MINS]

- Please could you tell me about your role at [organisation] and what that involves?
- How familiar are you with the regional bus strategy? [e.g. have they read it, and in what level of detail, were they aware of it beforehand etc.]
- What impact, if any, would the bus strategy have on your organisation and the work it carries out?

3. PERCEPTION OF DRAFT STRATEGY POLICIES [15 MINS]

[Show slide with seven themes]

The bus strategy sets out **Policies** and **Measures**. Just to explain, the **Policies** are the principles that should be applied by SPT and partners in decision-making processes that affect buses in the region. The **Measures** describe the activities and outputs that are needed to support the Policies. In the bus strategy, these are grouped under seven themes.

I'd firstly like to ask for your feedback on the themes at a high level, and then we can look at the individual themes (and their policies and measures) in more detail.

- When thinking about the bus network and how it might be improved, how important (or not) is each theme to your organisation?
- Do you have any feedback as to whether each theme should be included/be a priority within the strategy?

As mentioned, under each theme are a number of policies and measures.
- Are there any in particular you would like to give feedback on? [jump to the questions of the themes mentioned, this may include all of them]

[Show slide 1 with theme 1 (policy and associated measures)]

- The first theme in the draft Strategy is **"Buses where they are needed, when they are needed"**. This theme in the strategy explains that the bus network needs to have more frequent services on busier routes and more consistent levels of service across the region. It also notes that there's a need for better coverage at different times, including mornings, evenings and on Sundays. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

[Show slide 2 with theme 2 (policy and associated measures)]

○ The second theme is **"Reliable and quicker bus journeys".** Under this theme, the strategy notes a desire for buses to turn up as scheduled, and that they arrive on time and that bus journey times should be attractive compared to using a car. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

[Show slide 3 with theme 3 (policy and associated measures)]

○ The third theme is **"Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing".** This theme covers a need for fares and ticketing to be simple and easy to understand. This also covers the affordability of bus travel , especially for the people who experience cost as a barrier to travel to access their everyday needs. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

[Show slide 4 with theme 4 (policy and associated measures)]

○ The fourth theme is **"Accessible and safer bus journeys".** This theme in the bus strategy covers a need for bus to be convenient, accessible and safer for all. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

[Show slide 5 with theme 5 (policy and associated measures)]

○ The fifth theme is **"A trusted and recognisable bus network".** This theme in the strategy priorities setting up a singular bus network in Strathclyde. This network should be trusted by people to deliver a consistent, high-quality service regardless of where in the region they live or how often they travel by bus. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

[Show slide 6 with theme 6 (policy and associated measures)]

○ The sixth theme is **"A seamless and integrated bus network"**. Here, the strategy notes a priority for the region is to have a bus network that is easy and convenient to use with better integration of timetables, services, interchange locations, ticketing and information. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

● Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

[Show slide 7 with theme 7 (policy and associated measures)]

○ The seventh and final theme of the draft Strategy is **"A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet".** This theme covers a desire to work towards zero emission buses and infrastructure that is resilient to the impact of climate change. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

● Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing]

○ Thank you for all your input on the themes, policies and measures. Do you have any other comments on the themes, policies or measures before we move on to discuss the next part of the strategy?

4. PERCEPTION OF DELIVERY PLAN [15 MINS]

As part of the bus strategy, SPT is proposing to develop bus franchising for the region's bus network. This would be done following the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

Explain bus franchising if needed:

> **What is bus franchising?** Bus franchising is when a transport authority, like SPT, specifies the bus services which are provided in an area and contracts with bus operators for those services. This is different to the current situation where, for the majority of bus services, bus operators decide which services to provide and what fares to charge. Under bus franchising, the transport authority decides when and where buses run, how they connect with other transport options, and what the fares will be, ensuring that the services meet community needs and stays within budget.

○ To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

○ Why is that? *(Probe to understand reasons for support or opposition, would they support it if there were modifications, if they oppose then what would they like to see introduced instead, this might include no changes.)*

In the draft Strategy, SPT have identified and described **key issues and risks** in franchising. I would now like to get your feedback on these.

Key issues in developing franchising

The key issues in developing franchising SPT have described in the bus strategy are:

1. Scale and pace of change across the region
2. Fares and ticketing
3. Information and customer service
4. Funding environment
5. Fleets and Depots
6. Staffing, support services and stakeholders
7. Bus priority and 'bus friendly environment'

⭕ Do you have any initial thoughts on these 'key issues'?

● [If yes] To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the key issues for franchising? Why do you agree / disagree?
   ■ Are there any other key issues that haven't been considered here? If yes, what are these?
   ■ Which of these issues do you feel is the most prominent in terms of bus franchising? [Probe to understand reasoning].

Key risks in developing franchising

The 'key risks' for the 'franchising route map' identified in the draft Strategy are:

1. Political and partnership support and leadership
2. Requirement for a strong governance framework
3. Funding
4. Resourcing
5. Market uncertainty
6. Untested legislation

⭕ Would you like to comment on any of these identified key risks to bus franchising?

● [If yes] To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the key risks for franchising? Why?
   ■ Do you disagree with any of these key risks? (Probe to understand reasoning).
   ■ Are there any other key risks that you think haven't been considered here?

● [If no] In your view, what do you see as being key risks in bus franchising being developed in Strathclyde? (Probe to understand reasoning).

Action Plan for delivery of bus franchising

The bus strategy includes an Action Plan which covers the actions required to deliver bus franchising, and this will be progressed subject to the outcome of this consultation and approval by the SPT committee. The action plan is split into four areas *(franchising route map, pre-franchising period, bus infrastructure and traffic management, and creating a bus friendly environment)*.

- ⊙ Would you like to provide any feedback on the Action Plan?

  - [If yes] do you agree / disagree with this approach? Why/why not?
  - Will it help SPT achieve their goals?
  - Do you have any comments on the specific actions included?
  - Are there any actions not shown in the draft Strategy that you think SPT should be considering? If yes, what are these actions? Why should these actions be considered?
  - Are there any risks to the delivery of these actions? Or any other factors that should be considered?

5. END OF INTERVIEW [5 MINS]

Thank you so much for your time today, and all your input. This feedback will be useful for SPT to understand how their draft Regional Bus Strategy is received by key stakeholders including you.

We will report our findings from the consultation back to SPT and they will use this as the basis for making any changes to the draft Strategy before it goes to the SPT Partnership for approval.

Before we wrap up, is there any other feedback on the draft Strategy you would like to provide?

Thank and close.

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Madrid, Rabat, Rome, Sofia, Tunis

Middle East:
Cairo, Dubai, Riyadh

Asia Pacific:
Bangkok, Beijing, Brisbane, Delhi, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Manila,
Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Shenzhen, Taipei

Africa:
Abidjan, Douala, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Libreville, Nairobi

Latin America:
Lima, Mexico, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, São Paulo

North America:
Little Falls, Los Angeles, Montreal, New-York, Philadelphia,
Washington

APPENDIX 2

SRBS policies and measures as updated following consultation

Tables A2.1 and A2.2 set out the proposed amendments to the SRBS policies and measures. The table columns are as follows:

- "Draft Ref" and "SRBS Policy/Measure - draft version" refer to the reference numbers and policies and measures as set out in the draft SRBS for consultation;
- % agree – this shows the percentage of respondents who agreed that the policy or measure was appropriate to be included in the SRBS
- "New Ref" and "SRBS Policy/Measure – final version" refer to the amended reference numbers and policies and measures following consultation;
- Rational for change – this provides a summary rationale for the amendment to the policy or measure. If 'NA', the policy or measure is unchanged or only slightly reworded for clarity.

Table A2.1: SRBS policies as updated following consultation

Draft Ref	SRBS Policy – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Policy – final version	Rationale for change
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required.	98%	P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required.	NA
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required.	98%	P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required.	NA
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network.	98%	P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network.	NA
P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services.	99%	P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services.	NA
P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times.	92%	P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times.	NA
P6	Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities.	97%	P6	Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities.	NA
P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring.	96%	P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring.	NA
P8	Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible.	98%	P8	Ensure that bus fares and ticketing are easy to understand and flexible.	This policy was amended slightly to broaden the scope to fares and ticketing.
P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.	97%	P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.	NA
P10	Develop a consistent network identity across the region.	91%	P10	Ensure a consistent network identity across the region.	NA

Draft Ref	SRBS Policy – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Policy – final version	Rationale for change
P11	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high-quality standard of customer service across the region.	97%	P11	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high-quality standard of customer service across the region.	NA
P12	Ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers.	95%	P12	Ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers.	NA
P13	Ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region.	94%	P13	Ensure high quality and consistent customer experience across the region.	This policy was amended slightly to broaden the scope from driver standards to customer service standards.
P14	Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.	97%	P14	Ensure a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.	NA
NA	NA	NA	P15	Ensure bus services and networks are closely integrated across the region with other modes.	This policy was added to align with the amendments to M31 and M32 (new), ensuring all key integration features are clearly specified within the policies and measures framework.
P15	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.	96%	P16	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.	NA
P16	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region.	97%	P17	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region.	NA

Draft Ref	SRBS Policy – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Policy – final version	Rationale for change
P17	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.	90%	P18	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.	NA
P18	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region.	98%	P19	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region.	NA
P19	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.	97%	P20	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.	NA

Table A2.2: SRBS measures as updated following consultation

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
M1	A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.	95%	M1	Develop, provide and maintain a regional bus network based upon defined principles according to area or route type for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.	"Area or route type" has been added to the measure to clarify that any level of service principles will need to be differentiated by a range of categories and considerations, whilst ensuring an overall policy consistency across the region.
M2	Minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility, working towards more convenient service levels.	95%	M2	Develop, provide and maintain essential levels of service for towns, villages, disadvantaged communities and key destinations (e.g. hospitals), working towards improved levels of service over time	"Essential" and "improved" have been substituted for "minimum" and "more convenient" to clarify the intent of this measure, which is, *at minimum*, to deliver a basic level of accessibility. "Villages and disadvantaged communities" have been added to clarify that the scope of the measure includes these types of areas.

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
M3	High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services at appropriate times.	95%	M3	Develop, provide and maintain high frequency services on core bus routes, aiming for a minimum 10-minute service at peak times	The measure has been reworded to improve clarity.
M4	An integrated bus network with better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural to regional express or bus to rail).	92%	M4	Develop, provide and maintain an integrated bus network with better coordination between services, modes and areas, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural bus services better integrated with regional express bus services).	"Areas" has been included to clarify the intent of the measure, in response to stakeholder queries regarding cross-regional travel and rural areas. The example has also been expanded upon to improve clarity.
M5	Develop and deliver bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways.	93%	M5	Develop and deliver bus priority infrastructure on routes that have high frequency service levels and on routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways.	NA
M6	Bus services that better meet performance (e.g. punctuality and patronage) standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data.	93%	M6	Develop, provide and maintain bus services that better meet punctuality and reliability performance standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data.	The measure has been amended to specifically reference reliability performance monitoring due to importance of this factor to the overall theme.
M7	Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services.	93%	M7	Develop and deliver better coordination of rural bus services with regional/express bus services, rail services and ferry services.	Ferry services have been added to better acknowledge the importance of bus/ferry service co-ordination for reliable and quicker journeys for island communities.
M8	Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.	92%	M8	Develop and deliver better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.	NA

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
M9	Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations.	70%	M9	Develop and deliver wider car demand management policies and measures.	The measure has been amended to improve differentiation with M11 and M12.
M10	Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement).	78%	M10	Develop and deliver traffic management and enforcement measures at appropriate locations (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement).	"At appropriate locations" has been added to this measure to provide assurance to stakeholders that appropriate location-based assessment processes will be carried out.
M11	More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys.	93%	M11	Develop and deliver more effective and coordinated network and infrastructure planning for regional bus corridors.	The measure has been amended to clarify that the measure applies to whole network planning as pertaining to regional bus corridors.
M12	Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre.	88%	M12	Develop and deliver co-ordinated regional network communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to events and disruption impacting regional bus corridors.	The measure has been amended to clarify that the focus of the measure is regional bus corridors and movements.
M13	Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services.	91%	M13	Develop and deliver package of options to achieve faster bus journey times for appropriate routes including bus priority, smart ticketing, bus stop optimisation, faster vehicle access/egress and express services.	The measure has been amended to widen the scope to include a potential focus on lower demand routes/services if/where appropriate.
M14	Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all.	91%	M14	Develop and deliver, as appropriate, concessionary or discounted fares for groups most in need, progressing towards increased affordability for all.	The measure has been amended to reflect that increased affordability for all can be achieved through a number of

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
					ways e.g. overall fare reductions or improved access to season tickets.
M15	Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made).	96%	M15	Develop and deliver automatic fare capping, ensuring best fare is applied for actual journeys made	NA
M16	Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys.	97%	M16	Develop and deliver simplified and flexible fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket and accessible payment options for all journeys	This measure has been slightly amended to reflect stakeholder comments regarding availability of cash payments and ensuring fare structures are flexible and reflect the ways people need to travel.
M17	Accessible and easy to understand fares information.	97%	M17	Develop and deliver accessible and easy to understand fares and ticketing information.	This measure has been amended slightly to broaden the scope to fares and ticketing.
M18	Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases.	95%	M18	Develop and deliver consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases.	NA
M19	Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams.	92%	M19	Develop and deliver consistent and high-quality accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams.	The measure has been amended to clarify the intent of the measure, which is to deliver a consistent standard across the region.
M20	Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses.	93%	M20	Develop and deliver inclusive and accessible travel and journey planning information, including on buses and at bus stations and waiting facilities.	"On buses and at bus stations and waiting facilities" has been added to clarify the scope of the measure.
M21	Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach.	92%	M21	Develop and deliver passenger assistance services on buses, aiming	NA

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
				for a single, network-wide approach.	
M22	Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.	95%	M22	Develop and deliver accessible infrastructure including improvements for buses, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.	The measure has been slightly amended to clarify that this measure covers accessibility of infrastructure design and provision.
M23	CCTV on buses and at bus stations.	88%	M23	Deliver CCTV on all buses and at all bus stations.	The measure is slightly amended in recognition of the extent of existing CCTV coverage and signifying the aim for full coverage on buses and at stations.
M24	High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops.	96%	M24	Deliver and maintain high quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops and bus stations.	The measure is slightly amended to clarify that this includes passenger waiting facilities at bus stations.
M25	A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services).	92%	M25	Develop and deliver a strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services).	NA
M26	A network-wide Customer Charter.	85%	M26	Develop and deliver a network-wide Customer Charter.	NA
M27	Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.	92%	M27	Develop and deliver inclusive, network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.	Inclusive has been added to the measure to clarify the intent to ensure broad representation in any passenger monitoring.
M28	Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change.	92%	M28	Develop and deliver processes to align any significant service changes to well-defined dates each year with a clearly reported rationale for change.	The measure has been slightly reworded to improve clarity.

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
M29	Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g. travel centres, contact centres, customer services).	93%	M29	Develop and deliver high quality and consistent customer service standards for bus across the region.	The measure has been amended to clarify that the measure applies to all customer-facing services.
M30	Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer.	91%	M30	Develop and deliver smart ticketing options and simplified product offer.	Cashless has been removed to clarify that the intent of the measure is to improve/extend smart ticketing rather than to *remove* cash payment options.
M31	Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro - networks/services/hub, ticketing and information.	97%	M31	Develop and deliver bus tickets integrated with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro.	The original measure has been disaggregated, with this measure now focused on ticketing integration and the (new) M32 measure focused on an integrated network. Integrated information has been added to M35 and (new) M36. This ensures all key integration features are clearly specified in the policies and measures framework.
NA			M32	Develop and deliver more integrated public transport network and service planning between bus, ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional services and the emerging Clyde Metro.	As per rationale for M31.
M32	High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region.	91%	(NA)		This measure has been rationalised with M33.

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
M33	Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.	86%	M33	Develop and deliver high quality passenger facilities that are better integrated with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.	As per rationale for M32.
M34	Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network.	89%	M34	Review, improve and optimise passenger waiting facility infrastructure and locations where appropriate	"Rationalise" has been replaced with "optimise" to clarify that the intent of the measure is not necessarily to remove bus stops.
M35	Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region.	98%	M35	Develop and deliver accurate, reliable and integrated real time bus travel information across the region.	As per rationale for M31.
M36	Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements.	92%	(NA)		This measure has been rationalised with M6.
NA			M36	Develop and deliver accurate, reliable and integrated travel and journey planning information.	This is a new measure to better differentiate between real time information (covered in M35) and all other forms of integrated travel and journey planning information including 'paper'/hard copy formats.
M37	High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.	89%	M37	Develop and ensure high quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.	NA
M38	Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.	96%	M38	Develop and deliver an efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.	NA

Draft Ref	SRBS Measure – draft version	% agree	New Ref	SRBS Measure – final version	Rationale for change
M39	A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.	94%	M39	Develop and deliver road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.	NA
M40	Resilient and skilled-up workforce.	95%	M40	Develop and increase bus workforce resilience and skills.	The measure has been slightly reworded to improve clarity.
M41	EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.	90%	M41	Develop and deliver EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.	NA

Table A2.3: SRBS Policies and Measures – updated August 2025

REF	Policies	REF	Measures
Theme: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed			
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required.	M1	Develop, provide and maintain a regional bus network based upon defined principles according to area or route type for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.
		M2	Develop, provide and maintain essential levels of service for towns, villages, disadvantaged communities and key destinations (e.g. hospitals), working towards improved levels of service over time
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required.	M3	Develop, provide and maintain high frequency services on core bus routes, aiming for a minimum 10 minute service at peak times
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network.	M4	Develop, provide and maintain an integrated bus network with better coordination between services, modes and areas, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural bus services better integrated with regional express bus services).
Theme: Reliable and quicker journeys			
P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services.	M5	Develop and deliver bus priority infrastructure on routes that have high frequency service levels and on routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways.
		M6	Develop, provide and maintain bus services that better meet punctuality and reliability performance standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data.
		M7	Develop and deliver better coordination of rural bus services with regional/express bus services, rail services and ferry services.
		M8	Develop and deliver better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.
		M9	Develop and deliver wider car demand management policies and measures.
		M10	Develop and deliver traffic management and enforcement measures at appropriate locations (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement).
		M11	Develop and deliver more effective and coordinated infrastructure planning for regional bus corridors.
		M12	Develop and deliver co-ordinated regional network communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to events and disruptions impacting regional bus corridors.
P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times.	M13	Develop and deliver package of options to achieve faster bus journey times for appropriate routes including bus priority, smart ticketing, bus stop optimisation, faster vehicle access/egress and express services.
Theme: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing			
P6	Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities.	M14	Develop and deliver, as appropriate, concessionary or discounted fares for groups most in need, progressing towards increased affordability for all.

REF	Policies	REF	Measures
P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring.	M15	Develop and deliver automatic fare capping, ensuring best fare is applied for actual journeys made
P8	Ensure that bus fares and ticketing are easy to understand and flexible.	M16	Develop and deliver simplified and flexible fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket and accessible payment options for all journeys
		M17	Develop and deliver accessible and easy to understand fares and ticketing information.
		M18	Develop and deliver consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare changes.
Theme: Accessible and safer bus journeys			
P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.	M19	Develop and deliver high quality and consistent accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams.
		M20	Develop and deliver inclusive and accessible travel and journey planning information, including on buses and at bus stations and waiting facilities.
		M21	Develop and deliver passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach.
		M22	Develop and deliver accessible infrastructure including improvements for vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.
		M23	Deliver CCTV on all buses and at all bus stations.
		M24	Deliver and maintain high quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops and bus stations.
Theme: A trusted and recognisable bus network			
P10	Ensure a consistent network identity across the region.	M25	Develop and deliver a strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services).
P11	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region.	M26	Develop and deliver a network-wide Customer Charter.
		M27	Develop and deliver network-wide and inclusive passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.
P12	Ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers.	M28	Develop and deliver processes to align any significant service changes to well-defined dates each year with a clearly reported rationale for change.
P13	Ensure high quality and consistent customer experience across the region.	M29	Develop and deliver high quality and consistent customer service standards for bus across the region.
Theme: A seamless and integrated network			
P14	Ensure a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.	M30	Develop and deliver smart ticketing options and simplified product offer.
		M31	Develop and deliver bus ticketing integrated with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro.
P15 (NEW)	Ensure bus services and networks are closely integrated across the region with other modes.	M32 (NEW)	Develop and deliver more integrated public transport network and service planning between bus, ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional services and the emerging Clyde Metro.
P16	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.	M33	Develop and deliver high quality passenger facilities that are better integrated with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.

REF	Policies	REF	Measures
		M34	Review, improve and optimise passenger waiting facility infrastructure and locations where appropriate
P17	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region.	M35	Develop and deliver accurate, reliable and integrated real time passenger information across the region.
		M36 (NEW)	Develop and deliver accurate, reliable and integrated travel and journey planning information
Theme: A more environmentally sustainable, efficient and adaptable bus network and fleet			
P18	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.	M37	Develop and ensure high quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.
P19	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region.	M38	Develop and deliver an efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.
P20	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.	M39	Develop and deliver road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.
		M40	Develop and increase bus workforce resilience and skills.
		M41	Develop and deliver EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.

APPENDIX 3

SRBS delivery plan updates following consultation

This appendix presents twelve key issues raised during the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) consultation related to the SRBS Delivery Plan, and the response to this feedback.

Issue 1: Cost, financial risk, and funding uncertainty

Summary of feedback

Some stakeholders highlighted that franchising entails high public costs (both up-front and ongoing) and exposes SPT to revenue risk and funding streams which have not yet been clearly identified. Some stakeholders also believed that value for money in respect of franchising has not yet been evidenced, though this would be covered in any Franchising Framework Assessment going forward. Some stakeholders are wary of shifting revenue risk from private operators to the public sector, especially on such a large scale. Some stakeholders also raised doubts about the robustness of the financial case, with suggestions that the proposals are led by political wishes over practical considerations. A lack of detailed costings or anticipated funding sources are highlighted as critical gaps, as is the inherent risk of public sector funding, which is tied to changing political priorities.

Response to feedback

Any cost or value for money estimates undertaken at this stage have been relatively high-level, commensurate with the wider development of the SRBS and intended to support the SRBS development process. Although considered over and above what would normally be required for a strategy, the undertaking of the Options Appraisal (which included high-level costs, value for money and potential required subsidy estimates) accounted for the fact that there is a governance and regulatory option in terms of franchising set out in the SRBS.

A decision point regarding franchising will only be reached at the conclusion of any subsequent Franchise Framework Assessment (FFA) that may be undertaken, post approval of the SRBS. The FFA is the assessment process that is set out as a requirement in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. If a decision is taken to proceed with an FFA, the FFA will incorporate all elements of a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Detailed Appraisal for franchising and will include the appraisal of an alternative governance and regulatory option, in line with the approach for any standard transport business case. The FFA will also incorporate a detailed Financial Case (alongside the Commercial and Management Cases that part of an Outline Business Case, in line with

Transport Scotland, Department for Transport and Green Book guidance), which will set out in detail the costs, funding and revenue implications of each option considered.

The FFA is then audited as set out in the legislation, after which the FFA itself will be subject to additional scrutiny by a Panel convened by the Scottish Traffic Commissioner. This process is set out in the draft SRBS under '***Indicative programme and timescales to develop franchising'*** section of the Delivery Plan.

It should be noted that the draft SRBS includes within the Delivery Plan a section on the funding environment, which accepts the likelihood that public funding will be required (at least in the short term) to support the bus network. It also sets out minimum requirements in terms of funding support and potential additional funding sources that will be explored in order to further support the bus network. Furthermore, the draft SRBS/Delivery Plan includes a commitment to secure a fair funding agreement with Transport Scotland to provide a robust starting point for financial and commercial planning.

Considering the above, further detail on the FFA process is provided in the updated SRBS, including more detail on the assessment and technical work to be carried out. This text has been updated and included within the ***Indicative programme and timescales to develop franchising*** section of the updated SRBS.

Issue 2: 'Business confiscation'

Summary of feedback

Some bus operators are concerned that franchising could effectively lead to the "confiscation" of their businesses without any compensation. The feedback received suggests that this would undermine years of investment from private operators and risks the stagnation of services (and even the loss of assets, such as modern buses being moved to other business units elsewhere) in the period between confirming the intention to franchise and the commencement of services.

Response to feedback

The draft SRBS/Delivery Plan sets out the 'market uncertainty' key risk, highlighting how the transition to a different delivery model may affect existing operator confidence and investment decisions in the region. Alongside this there will, of course, be opportunities created by the ability to compete for contracts in new operating areas, and secure medium-term business certainty through these contracts. The draft Delivery Plan also states that SPT will engage regularly with operators through the process, including the development of a bus operator forum and development of contingency plans to address the potential risk of operators exiting the market. These contingency plans may include secural of transitional funding and exploration of procurement options.

The draft SRBS/Delivery Plan also sets out the 'untested legislation' key risk, noting that SPT will liaise with Transport Scotland and the Competition and Markets Authority, and make the case for changes to Scottish legislation if deemed necessary. This is also included as an action in the draft Delivery Plan.

Considering the above, text was amended within the **Key Risk: Untested legislation** section of the updated SRBS to more explicitly state some of the key differences between the equivalent English legislation (Bus Services Act 2017) and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

Text was also amended in the **Key Risk: Market uncertainty** section of the updated SRBS to more strongly acknowledge the concerns of operators around procurement experience and resource (particularly for SMEs) and the risks of operators of exiting the market. The amended section now also provides greater context and detail around the proposed bus operator forum that will seek to work through some of these issues for operators.

Issue 3: Disadvantages for SME operators

Summary of feedback

SME operators are concerned about impacts on their future viability, including potential risks to staff livelihoods. This is a well-documented concern about franchising across the UK, following on from SMEs losing out in Greater Manchester.

Response to feedback

The draft SRBS/Delivery Plan sets out the 'market uncertainty' key risk, noting that many of the existing operators are SMEs or may not have had direct experience with franchising, and that exiting the market could be a result. It is expected that the bus operator forum, identified in the draft SRBS, will work through concerns from SME operators and text in the **Key Risks: Governance and accountability** section of the updated SRBS has been amended to provide more context for the bus operator forum.

However, given the number of SME operators that currently exist in the region, and the concerns raised during the consultation period and during operator briefing sessions, amended text was also included within the **Key Risk: Market Uncertainty** section of the updated SRBS to strengthen the key points. This includes acknowledgment of the lack of franchise experience among many existing operators in the region, the risks of market exit(s) (particularly in the case of SMEs who may not have operations in other geographical areas to fall back on) and clarifying that the bus operator forum should cover issues such as transitionary pressures faced by operators, updates on the Route Map and transitionary process, and how operators can best prepare for future developments.

Issue 4: Urban vs rural balance

Summary of feedback

Some stakeholders raised concerns that franchising could take a 'one size fits all' approach that might not adequately address rural and peripheral service needs, risking urban-centric solutions.

Response to feedback

The nature of the SPT region is that there are a large number of rural services and communities that need to be accounted for, and the solutions for these areas will not necessarily be the same as more urban areas. Similar feedback was also received on the policies and measures section of the draft SRBS.

Considering the above, no changes were deemed to be necessary to the Delivery Plan as further emphasis and clarification on rural matters has been included in ***Theme: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed*** and ***Theme: A seamless and integrated bus network*** in chapter 4 of the updated SRBS.

Issue 5: Service quality

Summary of feedback

Concerns about congestion, unreliable timetables, and road priority for buses were regularly raised, with requests for more decisive action on bus lanes and car dominance. There is also some scepticism from some stakeholders that franchising is either necessary to achieve improvements in these areas, or sufficient to do so.

Response to feedback

The draft SRBS includes policies, measures and actions on bus infrastructure, traffic management and car demand management, and highlights that investment and action on these is required to deliver the strategy. The strategy does not state that franchising is required to deliver these, although the strategy highlights the opportunity of franchising to incentivise action on these e.g. councils will have greater incentive to deliver bus priority infrastructure if there is greater certainty that bus service levels will be enhanced.

It is also considered that successfully addressing the problems identified in the Case for Change, and successfully delivering on the SRBS policies, will not solely be achieved through infrastructure delivery and the resolution of congestion. They will also be achieved by delivery in other areas such as fares and ticketing, passenger information and experience and multi-modal integration.

Considering the above, revisions to the introduction and structuring of the Delivery Plan are included in the updated SRBS. This will help clarify the *concurrency* of actions related to:

- Development of franchising;
- Management of the interim period prior to franchising implementation; and
- Delivery of infrastructure, traffic management and complementary policies (e.g. car demand management).

Issue 6: Pace of change

Summary of feedback

Stakeholders were divided between those wanting rapid, transformative change and those cautioning against large-scale, disruptive shifts, with some warning about organisational readiness for transition and others desiring clear progression timelines. Franchising is also seen as a long-term solution, but many call for more immediate action – particularly through BSIPs or early SPT-led interventions to avoid further decline during transition.

Response to feedback

The draft SRBS/Delivery Plan provides an indicative programme and timescales for franchising, making it clear that the franchising process will likely take several years and is not a change that can be delivered in the short term.

The draft SRBS/Delivery Plan also sets out the scale and pace of change as a key issue, outlining broad scenarios that could be applied in improving service levels over time and stating that a phased approach may be required as funding, demand and supply allows.

The draft SRBS also highlights that investment in bus priority should be progressed and that existing partnerships and relationships can be used to facilitate this action.

Considering the above, greater detail around the FFA process, including clarifying that the appraisal will need to include an alternative 'non-franchising' option, is included in the ***Indicative programme and timescales to develop franchising*** section of the updated SRBS. It is noted that stakeholders were divided between long-term transformative change and short-term immediate action. Providing more detail on the FFA process in the strategy, and clarifying that the FFA will be holistic and consider these issues, may help to address these stakeholder concerns.

Furthermore, a revised introduction and structuring of the Delivery Plan in the updated SRBS above will help to clarify that infrastructure investment should be progressed alongside the FFA process.

Issue 7: Public perception

Summary of feedback

Public perception is one point of evidence presented in the Case for Change, highlighting public perceptions from the Regional Transport Strategy and Glasgow Transport Strategy engagement processes and satisfaction with local public transport from the Scottish Household Survey timeseries data, which provides representative results for the region. Operators have highlighted Transport Focus Your Bus Survey results that show that Strathclyde has a far higher satisfaction level than Greater Manchester in 2023 and 2024. However, it is noted Your Bus Survey does not cover all bus operators in the region.

Response to feedback

The public consultation held in 2024 found significant support for ruling out the business-as-usual option (80% of individuals, 72% of organisations), as well as significant support for franchising (76% of individuals, 71% of organisations) and municipal bus operations (86% of individuals, 74% of organisations). Furthermore, in the most recent consultation on the SRBS itself, 83% either strongly or slightly supported SPT taking forward franchising.

Therefore, it is considered that based on the evidence gathered for the SRBS development process, there is sufficient support for changing the status quo. A summary of public and passenger views is provided in the Case for Change section of the SRBS, demonstrating dissatisfaction with local public transport services.

In terms of continuing to collect public views and perceptions, the draft and updated SRBS (as per Appendix 2) includes a measure on monitoring of passenger satisfaction (Measure 27: Develop and deliver inclusive, network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction in the updated SRBS). The draft SRBS also includes an action to develop operator and bus passenger forums to support the planning and engagement on franchising and other matters, which will enable SPT to continue to engage with passengers, the public and operators.

Considering the above, text in the ***Key Risks: Governance and accountability*** section of the updated SRBS has been amended to provide more context for the bus operator and passenger forums.

Issue 8: Alternative models

Summary of feedback

Some stakeholders raised concerns that it appears that franchising is being advanced without a rigorous, transparent comparison against other models like Enhanced Partnerships, BSIPs, or the status quo. Operators argue that appraisals may not adequately examine whether franchising uniquely enables service improvement versus alternatives, and the process is seen as predetermined in favour of franchising.

Response to feedback

The SRBS has set out the challenges facing buses in the SPT area, and the case for change. The SRBS favours franchising as the preferred delivery model, because alternatives do not appear to be capable of delivering the outcomes required. Nevertheless, any decision to implement franchising is underpinned by rigorous legislative checks and balances. This includes a statutory Franchise Framework Assessment process that is set out as a requirement in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The FFA incorporates all the requirements for a robust public sector Business Case following UK HM Treasury best practice (the Treasury Five Case Business Model as set out in the Green Book) alongside Detailed Appraisal of franchising using Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. This will include the appraisal of an alternative governance and regulatory option, as any standard transport business case would, in order to determine a preferred option. As already noted in response to Theme 1 above, a decision point on whether to award a franchise, notwithstanding it being the preferred SRBS option, will only be reached at the conclusion of any subsequent FFA that may be undertaken, post approval of the SRBS, and following independent audit of the FFA and scrutiny by an independent panel convened by the Scottish Traffic Commissioner.

This process of assessment, audit and scrutiny will ensure robust and transparent decision-making, taking into account all the costs and benefits allowing SPT to make an informed decision regarding franchising and the form that its implementation would take in the region.

The FFA will be subject to a formal independent audit followed by scrutiny by a Panel of experts, in line with the legislative requirements. This will represent two independent checks of the process and guidance followed, and the risks and assumptions in the appraisal process, to ensure that the FFA represents a robust assessment.

The assessment of a BSIP proposal has been undertaken during the Options Appraisal and a partnership option could potentially be included as an alternative in the FFA if this was to be progressed by SPT. The formal assessment of a partnership (if included) alongside franchising in the FFA would then be subject to independent audit and statutory consultation, after which the Panel will scrutinise the franchising proposals and specifically: "the deliverability, sustainability and affordability of the proposed franchising framework". This is consistent with the recommendations to emerge from the Options Appraisal.

It is also worth noting that the scale and type of franchising that will ultimately be assessed in the FFA has not at this stage been confirmed, with the draft SRBS stating that phasing franchising by area may be required and that there may be circumstances in certain areas, such as lack of operators, that may necessitate a different approach. In a scenario where a franchising scheme does not cover the whole SPT area, it would be reasonable to assume and possible that a partnership approach could still be pursued in non-

franchised areas, particularly if the funding environment means that phasing or the pace of franchising is over a long period of time.

Considering the above, further detail on the FFA process is provided in the updated SRBS as per Theme 1 above.

Issue 9: Importance of infrastructure over regulation

Summary of feedback

Some stakeholders contend that many aspirations of the SRBS may be best achieved through investment in bus priority measures and infrastructure, not necessarily through franchising.

Response to feedback

As already noted under Issue 5: Service Quality, the draft SRBS includes policies, measures and actions on bus infrastructure, traffic management and car demand management, and highlights that investment and action on these is required to deliver the strategy. The strategy does not state that franchising is required to deliver these, although the strategy highlights the opportunity of franchising to incentivise action on these e.g. councils will have greater incentive to deliver bus priority infrastructure if there is greater certainty that bus service levels will be enhanced.

It is also considered that successfully addressing the problems identified in the Case for Change, and successfully delivering on the SRBS policies, will not solely be achieved through infrastructure delivery and the resolution of congestion. They will also be achieved by delivery in other areas such as fares and ticketing, passenger information and experience and multi-modal integration.

Considering the above, revisions to the introduction and structuring of the Delivery Plan are included in the updated SRBS, as per Issue 5, to help clarify the *concurrency* of actions.

Issue 10: Integration, fares and accessibility

Summary of feedback

Many stakeholders highlighted the desire for simpler, multi-modal, integrated fares and ticketing, and to address challenges faced by communities such as infrequent services on Sundays, information accessibility and limited/poor integration across modes. Also emphasised were accessible services for disabled users and the need to involve disabled passengers in service design. A number of stakeholders highlighted the need to retain cash payments and to ensure digitally excluded people were not disproportionately impacted by fares, ticketing and information being available only on digital formats.

Response to feedback

The draft SRBS includes policies and measures covering integration, fares and ticketing and accessible travel, including:

- Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing – including policies on affordable fares and simplified and flexible fares structures and ticketing.
- Accessible and safer bus journeys – including a policy to improve accessibility and safety for all bus passengers.
- A seamless and integrated network – including policies on integrated multi-modal ticketing, infrastructure and information to ensure seamless multi-modal interchange.

The draft Delivery Plan also includes an action to develop a passenger forum to facilitate passenger input to processes including inclusive design matters.

In consideration of the feedback on policies and measures, some changes were made as per Appendix 2. These include:

- Clarifying that fares structures should be flexible as well as simplified to account for variable travel patterns.
- Clarifying that ticketing should be integrated across modes.
- Proposing a new policy specifically around the integration of bus services with other modes, supported by a new measure related to integrated multi-modal network planning.
- Amending supporting measures to clarify that travel and journey planning information should be inclusive.

Considering the above, it is considered that no further amendments to the draft Delivery Plan are required.

Issue 11: Governance and accountability

Summary of feedback

Some respondents stressed the need for strong, transparent governance arrangements, with representation from local communities, authorities, and operators. There were concerns about the risk of insufficient political support or reversal of decisions due to leadership changes.

Response to feedback

The draft SRBS/Delivery Plan includes key risks on political support and leadership and governance and actions to develop and agree a governance plan for franchising, hold regular briefing sessions with Transport Scotland, councils and elected officials and

develop forums for both bus passengers and operators to facilitate continued engagement and planning. The draft SRBS also sets out key 'asks' of partners and stakeholders to support the delivery of the strategy.

Considering the above, and as per Issue 7, text in the **Key Risks: Governance and accountability** section of the updated SRBS has been amended to provide more context for the bus operator and passenger forums.

Issue 12: Passenger growth, social inclusion and mode shift

Summary of feedback

There is broadly consensus on the need for substantial passenger growth, social inclusion, and modal shift to meet social, economic, and environmental goals but debate over whether franchising is necessary or sufficient to drive this.

Response to feedback

It is considered that the goals, objectives and policies set out in the SRBS are consistent with the need for passenger growth, social inclusion and modal shift, with measures and actions that are ambitious and comprehensive enough to deliver on these.

It is accepted that the question over whether franchising is necessary or sufficient enough to drive this change may be up for debate and without universal agreement, with the case made in the SRBS through the technical work undertaken and evidence gathered over a number of years that it is. The consultation exercises undertaken to date also indicate that there is significant support for this position from the public and organisations.

The technical work to potentially follow the SRBS through the FFA and subsequent audit and panel scrutiny, as noted earlier in this document, will further test the rationale set out in the SRBS and the potential for franchising (and/or another delivery option) to deliver on the SRBS objectives.

Considering the above, and as per Issue 1, further detail on the FFA process is provided in the updated SRBS, including more detail on the assessment and technical work to be carried out. This text has been updated and included within the **Indicative programme and timescales to develop franchising** section of the updated SRBS.

Additionally, the section **Rationale for pursuing a franchising model** has been amended to improve the communication of key points including that SPT believes franchising is the model that provides the greatest certainty in delivering an improved bus network.

Strathclyde Regional
Bus Strategy

Strathclyde Partnership
for Transport

Contents

1 Foreword

Councillor Stephen Dornan
Chair, SPT (Glasgow)

Councillor Alan Moir
Vice Chair, SPT (East Dunbartonshire)

Councillor David Wilson
Vice Chair, SPT (Inverclyde)

Buses are at the heart of our public transport network, with one in every four adults living in our region using a bus at least once a week in the past month[1].

Bus services are also at the heart of our communities, connecting towns, villages and city neighbourhoods across the west of Scotland.

Buses help us to get to our places of work and education, make it to our healthcare appointments, do the shopping, and spend time with our friends and family. Buses support our town centre economies and connect business with the regional labour market. Buses are more energy and space efficient, less carbon intensive and less polluting than cars. Buses free us from the demands of driving and provide essential access for people who cannot, or do not want to, use cars.

Despite the huge value of bus for our society, economy and environment, the bus network has fallen into a cycle of decline. Buses are increasingly stuck in traffic, making bus journeys slower, less reliable and costlier to operate. As operating costs are rising, fares are going up and services are becoming less convenient and available, pushing more people towards car use. The network is not holistically co-ordinated, satisfaction with local public transport is down, and stakeholder perceptions of bus are poor.

So be in no doubt – bus in Strathclyde is not in a good place.

SPT, through its role in providing socially necessary bus services, oversees a small, but essential portion of the bus network – representing 12% of total bus mileage operated and a small number of passenger journeys. Private bus operators are largely in control of the bus network, deciding which services to run and what fares to charge. Operators, though, have no control over many of the wider factors underpinning the cycle of decline particularly increasing car use and road congestion.

The purpose of this strategy is therefore to change this pattern of the cycle of decline to a cycle of growth. This means a bus network that attracts more people to bus and ensures access for communities who rely on bus for everyday travel needs. This means a bus network for everyone.

This strategy sets out what we need from bus in the future - buses that are more frequent, more reliable, more affordable and easier to use. A better co-ordinated and more recognisable network that provides turn up and go service levels on key routes and ensures a consistent level of service for towns and villages. A bus network that is more accessible and safer to use, with the benefits of a zero-emission fleet felt across the region.

The delivery of this strategy will require working collaboratively with passengers, partners and the bus industry. It will be important to continue to support and build on good practice including developments in ticketing technologies and progress in bus decarbonisation, as well as everyday challenges such as enforcing parking violations at bus stops and bus lanes to allow passengers to board safely and helping buses to run on time.

As a core part of the strategy delivery, SPT proposes to progress with developing a bus franchising model for local services across the region. SPT believes that a bus franchising model will better align incentives across all bus stakeholders, drawing upon the expertise in the private sector to deliver better bus services for passengers, making bus more accountable to the public and securing commitment to delivering bus priority.

Franchising can also support wider investment in sustainable transport, including connecting and integrating with the future Clyde Metro, through better planning and co-ordination of a fully integrated transport system that works for everyone.

For SPT, the 'day job' of delivering services on which people rely for their livelihoods must always be top priority. But at the same time, we need to take the time to plan and deliver the change our network needs to be able thrive in future. The delivery of this strategy is the first step on that journey!

Councillor Stephen Dornan, *Chair, SPT*
Councillor Alan Moir, *Vice Chair, SPT*
Councillor David Wilson, *Vice Chair, SPT.*

SPT Area Map

"About SPT"

SPT is the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the west of Scotland. Regional Transport Partnerships were established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to bring together local authorities and other key regional stakeholders to strengthen the planning and delivery of regional transport. SPT is a 'Model 3' RTP, with powers in the planning, operation and delivery of transport services, infrastructure and projects.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has a statutory duty under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to produce a **Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)**.

SPT also provides a range of transport services including:

- Managing, owning and operating the Subway and six regional bus stations;

- Managing socially necessary bus services, including the demand responsive transport services MyBus/MyBus Rural;

- Managing and maintaining bus stop and shelter infrastructure and arranging school transport on behalf of councils;

- Providing travel information, including the bus Real-Time Passenger Information system;

- Providing the secretariat for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme on behalf of councils and administering the multi-modal ZoneCard ticket on behalf of participating transport operators; and

- Smartcard ticketing.

The SPT region encompass East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire and the Helensburgh & Lomond area of Argyll and Bute.

SPT's Partnership Board comprises 20 Councillor members representing the 12 constituent local authorities and between seven and nine appointed members. In addition to our partner councils, SPT works with Transport Scotland, public transport operators, Sustrans, Network Rail, ClydePlan, NHS and many others. SPT is also a statutory Key Agency in Development Planning and statutory participant in Community Planning.

2 About the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

Background and development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

The need for the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) was identified by SPT during the development of the current Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)[2]. The RTS identifies the critical connectivity role of bus in Strathclyde and establishes a policy to enhance and integrate the bus network, provide reliable, attractive bus services and offer good value for money to passengers. The RTS also establishes that the new powers enabling local transport authorities to improve bus services in their area, as set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019[3], should be further investigated and implemented, where appropriate.

The development of the SRBS commenced in 2023 by establishing a Case for Change[4] followed by an options appraisal[5]. SPT held a public consultation on the recommendations from the options appraisal in April - May 2024[6,7]. The draft strategy was then developed in the latter half of 2024, guided by the consultation outcomes and the direction of the SPT Partnership Board[8].

In February 2025, the SPT Strategy and Programmes Committee approved the draft SRBS for a public consultation, which was carried out for 12 weeks in March – May 2025. Following consideration of the consultation feedback, the final version of the strategy was approved by the SPT Partnership Board on XXX.

The SRBS process has been informed by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty. Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

Figure 1 (next page) illustrates a timeline of key events and milestones in the development of the SRBS.

Further details of the process including the SRBS Technical Report, Environmental Report and Impact Assessments are available at: **www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy**.

Structure of this document

Chapter 3: The Case for Change

This chapter makes the case for change in the bus network by setting out the opportunity of bus in delivering better social, economic and environmental outcomes and outlining the problems with the current bus network and the bus 'cycle of decline.'

Chapter 4: The Bus Network We Need

This chapter introduces the strategic framework of the strategy, outlines the strategy goals and objectives and describes the bus network that is needed to grow patronage and improve access to bus through a set of policies and measures.

Chapter 5: The Delivery Plan

This chapter sets out the rationale for developing a bus franchising model in the region, and the key issues, risks and processes for the development and implementation of franchising. This chapter also sets out initial actions for the development of franchising, delivery of bus infrastructure and wider activities to support bus.

Chapter 6: Monitoring Plan

This chapter sets out how the strategy will be monitored against the strategy goals and objectives.

Figure 1: SRBS development – timeline of key events
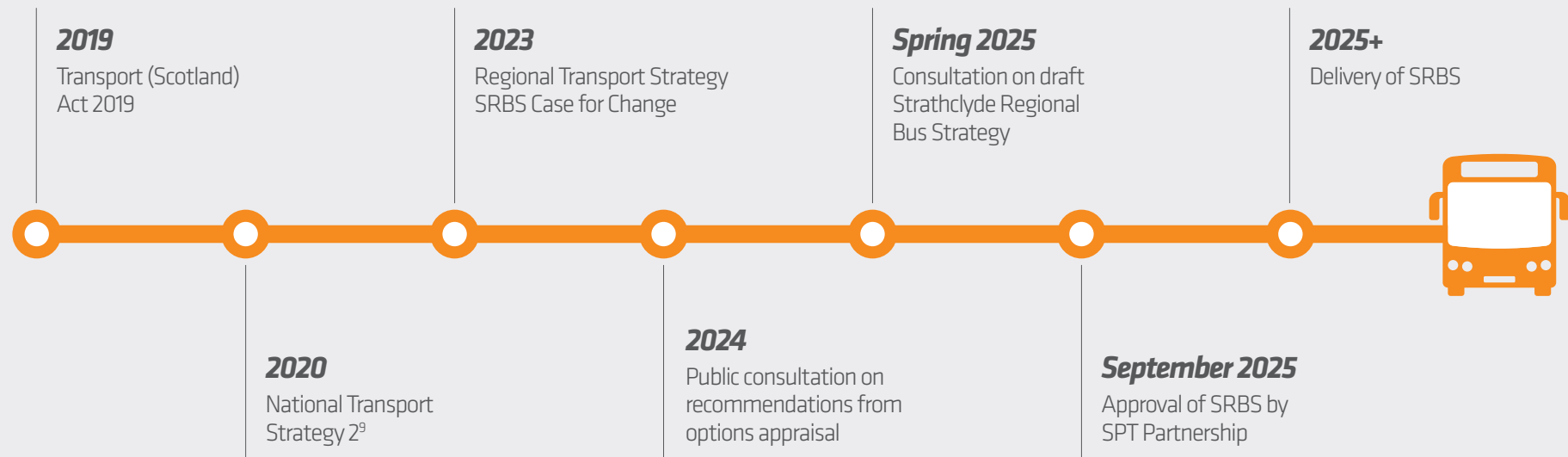
2019
Transport (Scotland)
Act 2019

2020
National Transport
Strategy 2[9]

2023
Regional Transport Strategy
SRBS Case for Change

2024
Public consultation on
recommendations from
options appraisal

Spring 2025
Consultation on draft
Strathclyde Regional
Bus Strategy

September 2025
Approval of SRBS by
SPT Partnership

2025+
Delivery of SRBS

3 The Case for Change

This chapter makes the case for change in the bus network by setting out the opportunity of bus in delivering better social, economic and environmental outcomes and outlining the problems with the current bus network including the bus 'cycle of decline.'

The opportunity of bus

Bus can support better public policy outcomes

The role of bus, on the face of it, is quite simple – to get people where they need or want to go. This supports wider economic policies by connecting people to education, training, jobs, goods and services.

Bus also provides a viable alternative to car travel, offering, on a per passenger basis, lower carbon emissions, less air pollution and more efficient use of energy, road space and land than private cars.

Bus also provides essential travel for people who cannot or do not want to use cars. This means bus helps to ensure a more equitable and inclusive society and economy by reducing inequalities of access to work and helping people to lead active, fulfilling lives.

Bus is therefore strongly linked to the three priorities of the Regional Transport Strategy – Inclusive economic growth, Improved quality of life and a healthier environment – as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The role of bus in delivering public policy

Role of Bus

Bus gets people to where they need to go...

...as an alternative to using a car

...as an essential mode

RTS Priority

Inclusive economic growth

Improved quality of life

A healthier environment

Wider Policy

E.g. Regional Economic Strategy

E.g. Accesible Travel Framework; Equality Act

E.g. Cleaner Air for Scotland: Climate Change Plan
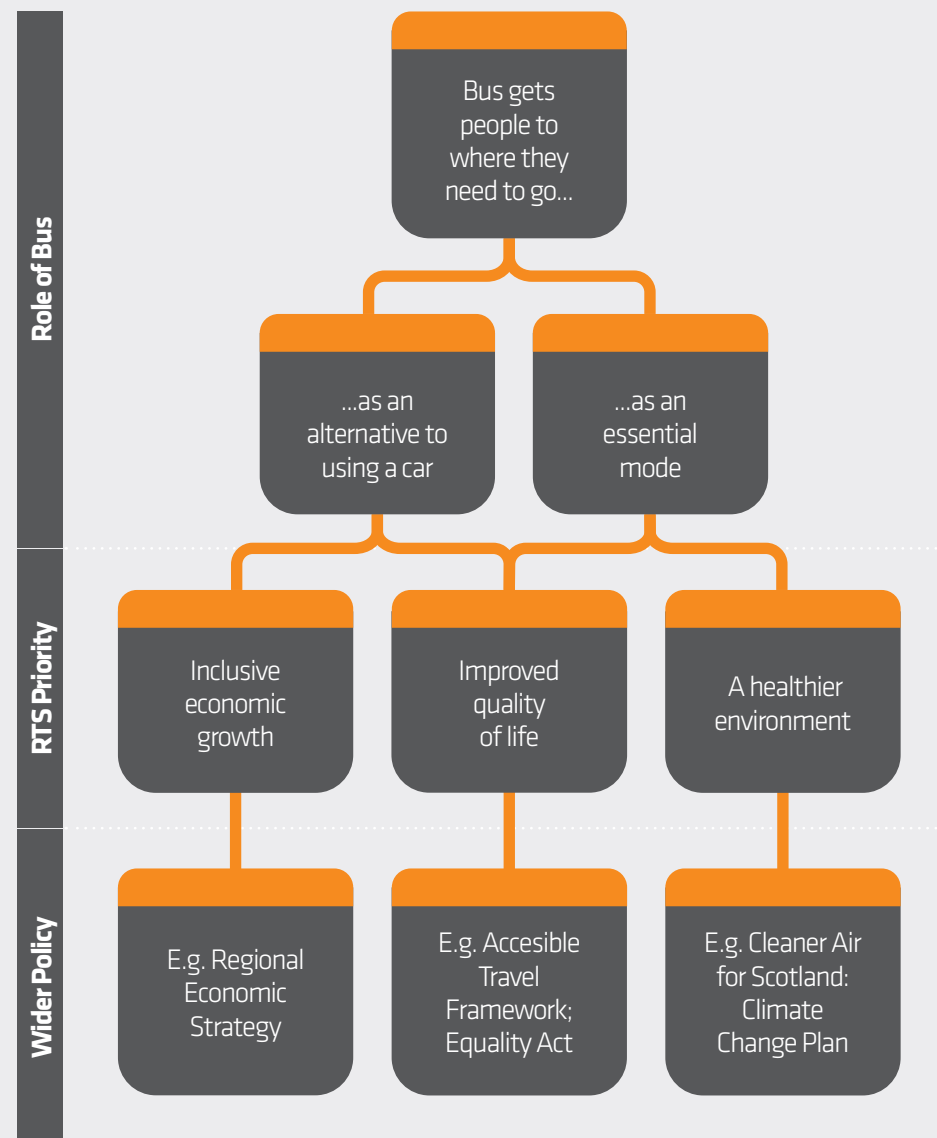
Bus supports the regional economy

Bus users are likely to be making economically valuable journeys, with around seven in every 10 bus journeys in Scotland being made for the purposes of commuting, education or shopping[10] as shown in Figure 3. This makes bus important to the functioning of the regional economy by connecting people to jobs and consumers with goods and services.

Bus can ease traffic congestion

Buses can move people efficiently through busy corridors. Research has shown that traveling by car, at an average occupancy of 1.5 people per car, requires 133 cars, one kilometre of carriageway and 4 minutes to move 200 people through a junction[11]. Buses, assuming 20 passengers per bus, would require c. 134 metres and 30 seconds to move the same number of people[12]. This example is illustrated in Figure 4, and demonstrates the value of bus in reducing the economic costs of congestion.

Bus investment delivers good value for money

There is strong evidence that public investment in bus makes good economic sense. The Department for Transport found that every £1 investment in bus infrastructure delivered roughly £4 in benefits[13]. Further, the Urban Transport Group, which is the UK's network of city region transport authorities, found that a substantial proportion of the economic benefits of bus accrue to other road users and society as whole through "decongestion, reduced accidents, pollution, the value of bus as an option, and increased economic productivity"[14]. A good bus network therefore benefits everyone, not just those who travel by bus.

Figure 3: Bus journeys by main purpose, Scotland-wide

Commuting 34%
Education 12%
Shopping 23%
Visiting others 7%
Health 2%
Personal business 2%
Sport/Entertainment 2%
Any other purpose 18%
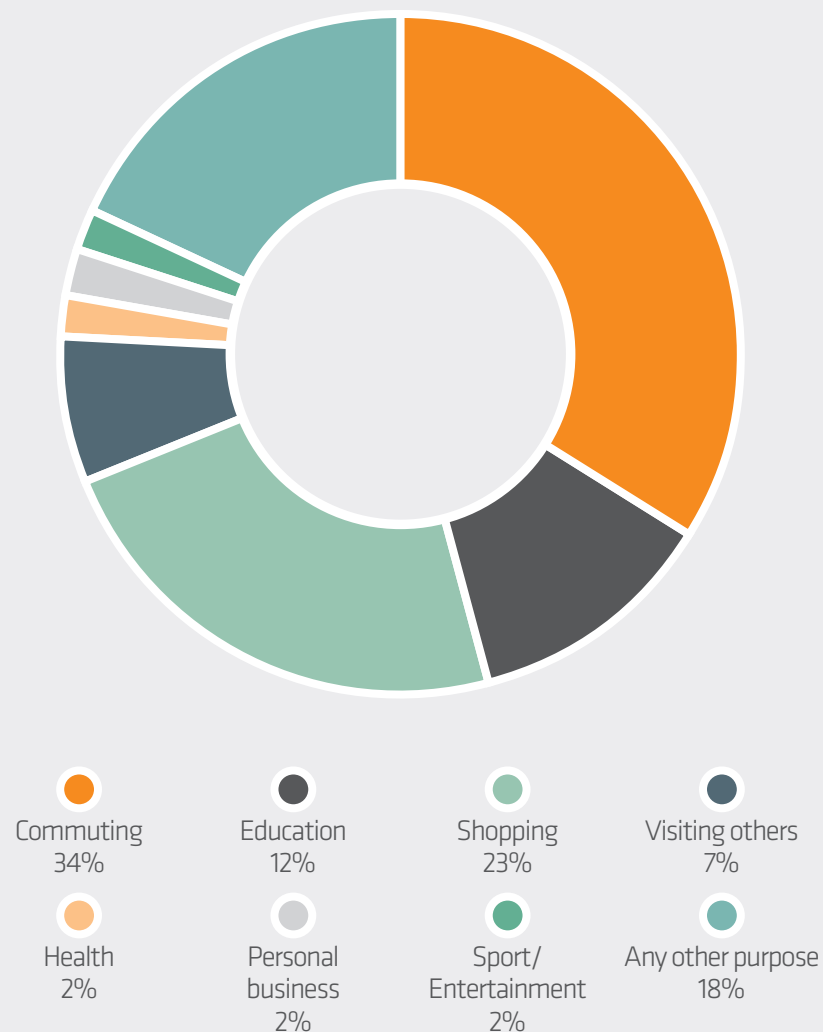
Figure 4: Moving 200 people through a junction -
road space and time requirements by mode

200 pedestrians. Take **38 seconds** to pass through a junction.

200 cyclists. Take **1 minute 59 seconds** to pass through a junction.
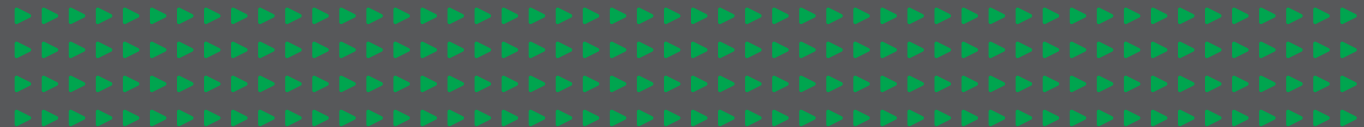
5 trams with average of 40 people. Take **32 seconds** to pass through a junction.

10 buses with average of 20 people. Take **31 seconds** to pass through a junction.

133 private cars with average of 1.5 people. Take **4 minutes 8 seconds** to pass through a junction.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Bus is flexible to the region's changing needs

Bus has been a key component of the regional public transport network for many decades, but it continues to be a mode well-suited to the region's future needs. Bus services can be redesigned and improved relatively quickly and comparatively cheaply to meet the needs of changing community demographics and travel patterns and serve new development.

The region has more than 50 town centres, 13 general hospitals, 35 tertiary education campuses and many other strategic economic development and investment locations, which are distributed widely across the region, as illustrated in Figure 5[15]. These locations require environmentally friendly and accessible transport services to support sustainable development and inclusive economic growth in the region. Bus has a large role in this sustainable transport provision.

The region is also spatially diverse with one city, many larger and smaller towns, and many rural, remote and island communities. This is illustrated in Figure 6[16]. The region is also experiencing migration and population change, with decreasing population in many coastal and rural areas and increasing population within parts of the Glasgow conurbation. Bus provides a flexible transport solution for these varying needs and changing travel patterns resulting from population change.

Bus is also a core component of the region's wider sustainable transport network. Bus can link well with active travel networks to support the development of 'connected communities' and healthier places. Bus can connect communities to the rail, Subway and ferry networks and will be critical to the success of the future Clyde Metro system by providing local connector services to mass transit interchanges and providing high frequency services on routes that do not have alternative mass transit modes.

Bus can support an improved quality of life for all

Bus provides essential mobility for people who cannot drive or do not have access to a car. This ensures people can get to work or education, helps prevent social isolation and loneliness, supports access to essential services including healthcare, and promotes wider participation in society.

Bus users in Scotland are more likely to be women and non-drivers and more likely to be living in a lower-income household[17], as illustrated in Figure 7. This is particularly relevant to the SPT region, which has about two-thirds of the most income deprived areas in Scotland[18]. The region also has the highest proportion of households that do not have a car available for their private use, as shown in Figure 8[19], whilst, in Glasgow, more than two in every 5 households (44%) do not have a car[20]. This highlights the importance of bus to tackling wider inequalities in the region through the provision of essential transport services.

The critical role of bus in providing essential access to work, particularly for people on lower incomes, was highlighted during the COVID19 pandemic when bus patronage fell less than rail, with bus commuters being less likely to be in a job that supports working from home or to have alternative transport options like a car.

Figure 5: Strategic economic development & investment spatial priorities

Strategic economic development & investment spatial priorities
(from Regional Spatial Strategies - indicative locations)

- ■ Glasgow City Region
- ■ Ayrshire & Arran
- ■ Argyll and Bute
- ■ Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park *(strategic tourism development opportunities)*
- ▨ Clyde Mission-Clyde Corridor (indicative)
- ▨ Helensburgh & Lomond Growth Area

Key centres & hubs

- ◉ Town centre
- ◉ Industrial & Business Parks
- ◉ Regional Hospital
- ◉ College / University Campus
- ◉ Tourism destination
- ● Airport
- ● Seaport
- ● Rail freight terminal
- ● Ferry terminal

Boundaries, roads and rail lines

- ▢ Council boundary
- ◼ SPT boundary
- ----- Rail line
- —— A road
- —— Motorway
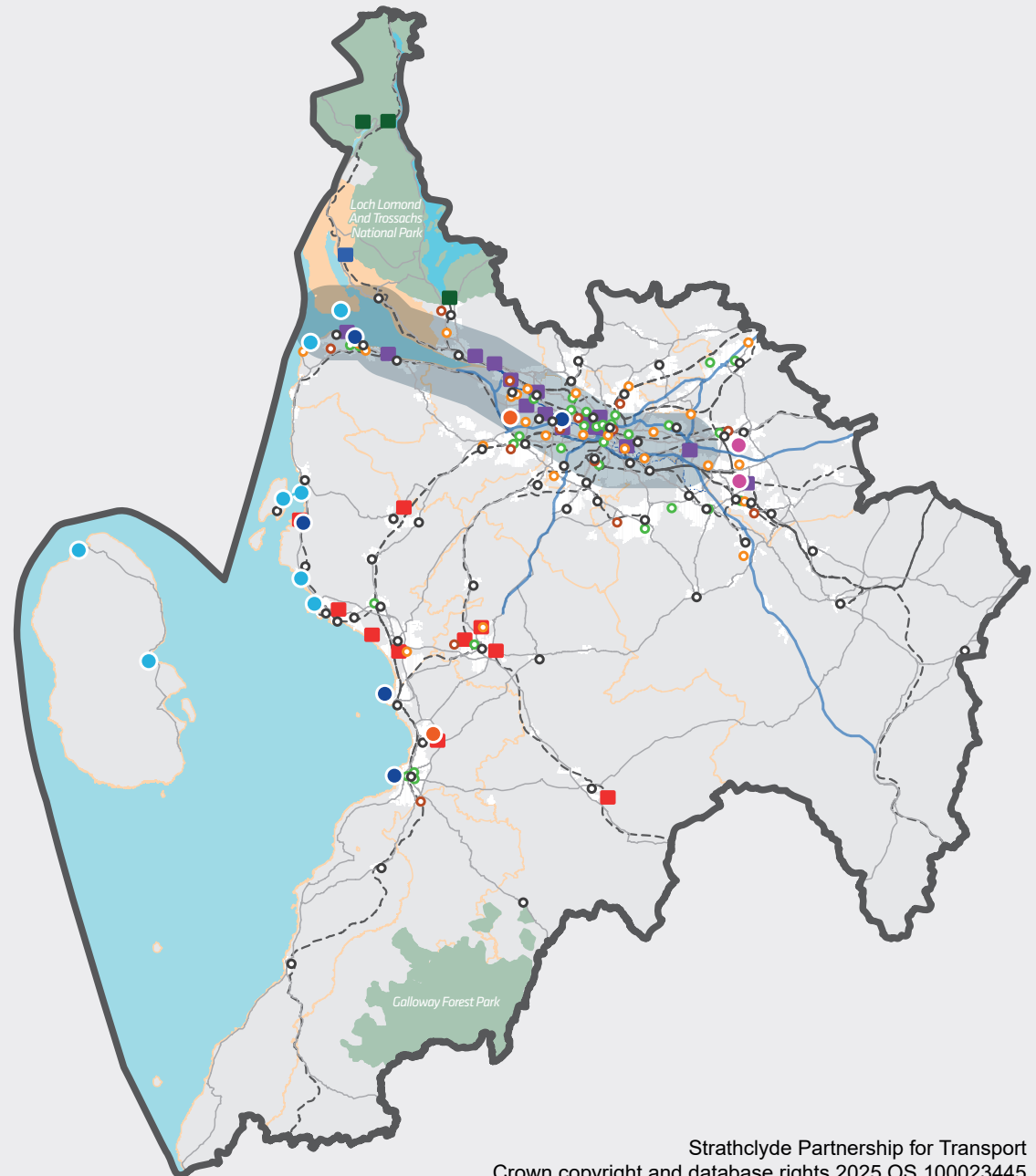
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Crown copyright and database rights 2025 OS 100023445.

Figure 6: Urban areas, small towns and rural or remote areas

SPT Region: Urban, Small Towns and Rural

- Urban 1
- Urban 2
- Accessible Small Town
- Remote Small Town
- Accessible Rural
- Remote Rural
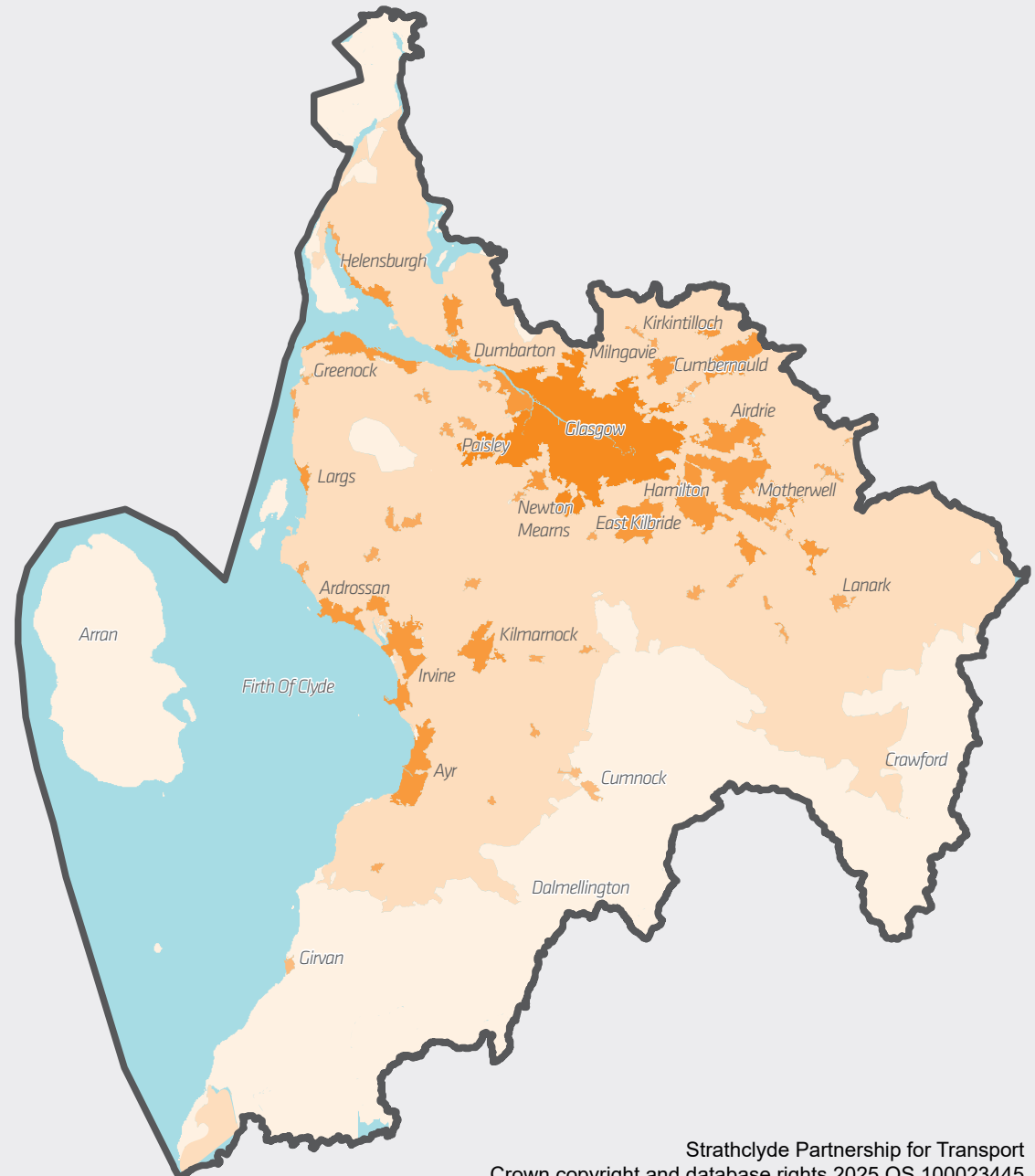
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
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Figure 7: Percentage of bus users by household income

24%

22%

20%

17%   17%

Lower income   Higher income
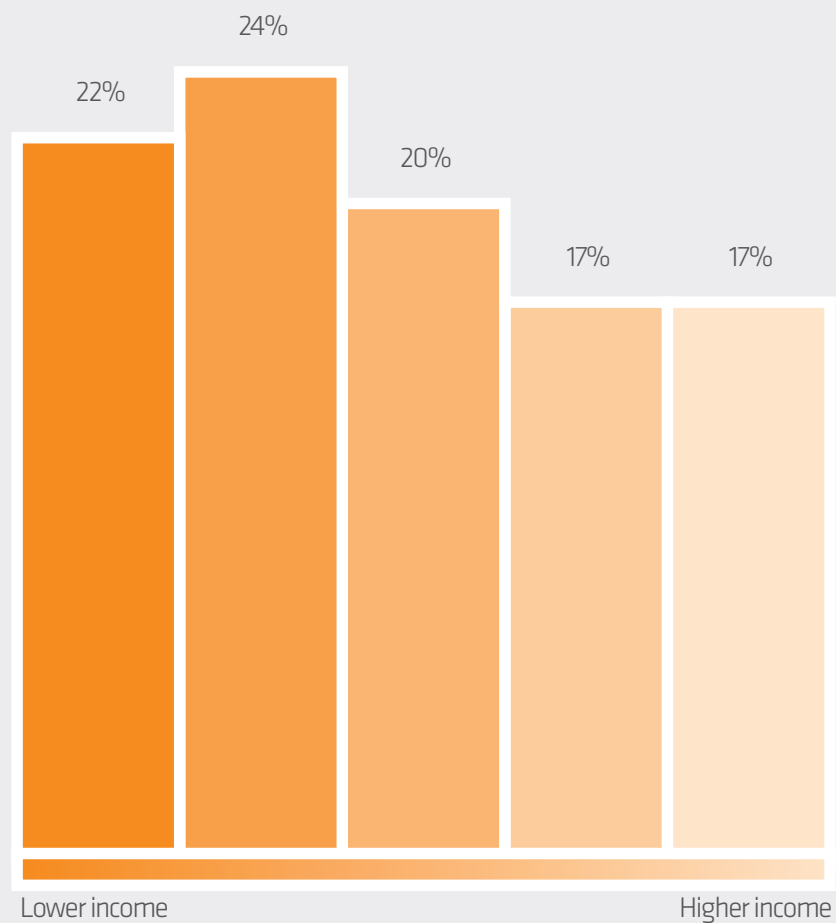
Figure 8: Percentage of households without access to a private car

Highlands & Islands
19%

Shetland
14%

North East
19%

South West
17%

Tayside & Central
26%

South East
25%

Strathclyde
31%
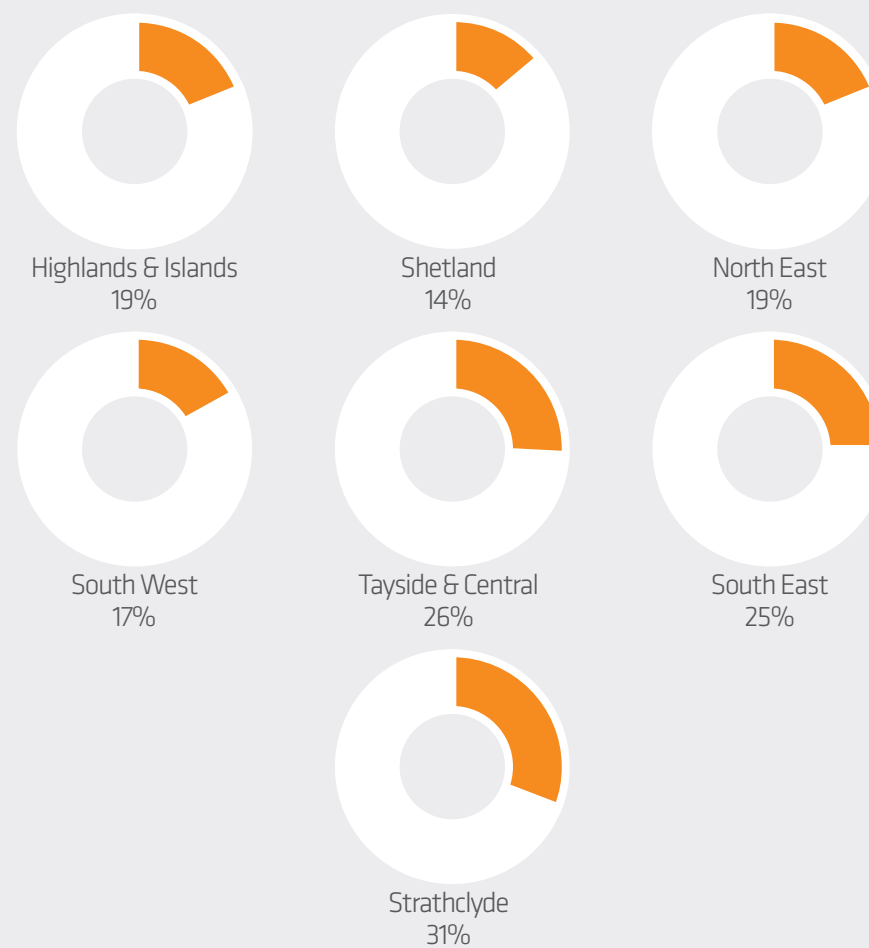
Bus can support a healthier environment

Bus offers a more sustainable and efficient way to travel compared to private car use, helping to reduce harmful transport emissions and congestion in our towns and cities. An average petrol or diesel car emits more than 1.5 times as much CO2 per passenger as a bus (at average occupancy), as illustrated in Figure 9[21]. Buses that are fully occupied will emit even less per person compared to travelling by car.

Buses, compared to cars, require far less road space per person[22]. Figure 10 shows the average road space requirement per person when travelling by car or bus at different speeds. Buses are also likely to be occupied productively throughout an average day rather than being parked, often on public land, for an average of 23 hours per day[23]. Buses, therefore, can help ease the urban space requirements of motorised transport, opening development opportunities for competing land uses and providing more attractive spaces for communities.

Figure 9: Carbon emissions per passenger km (UK-wide)

| Coach | Bus | Hybrid car | Petrol car | Diesel car |
| 27 | 102 | 119 | 164 | 170 |

gCO_2e per passenger kilometre
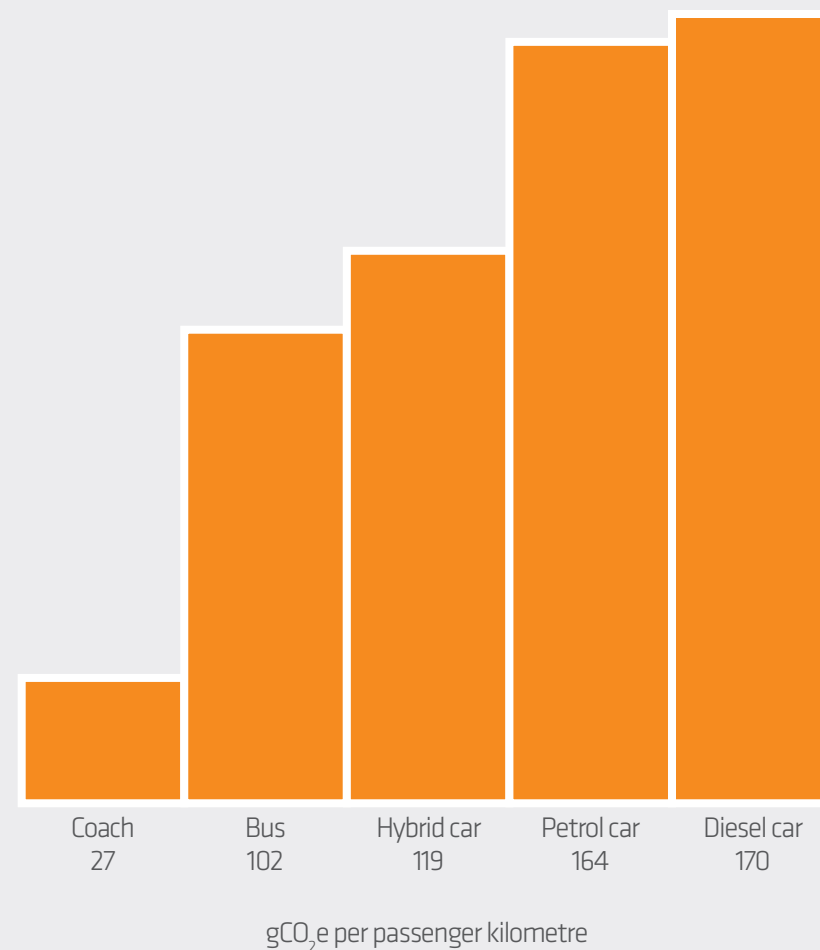
Figure 10: Road space requirements per passenger (car and bus)

Private Car
(1.4 person occupancy)

● 13.5m² ● 65.2m² ● 140m²

Bus
(20% occupancy)

● 2.5m² ● 8.6m² ● 15.9m²

Bus
(40% occupancy)

● 1.2m² ● 4.5m² ● 8.1m²

■ **Standstill**

■ **30km/h**

■ **50km/h**
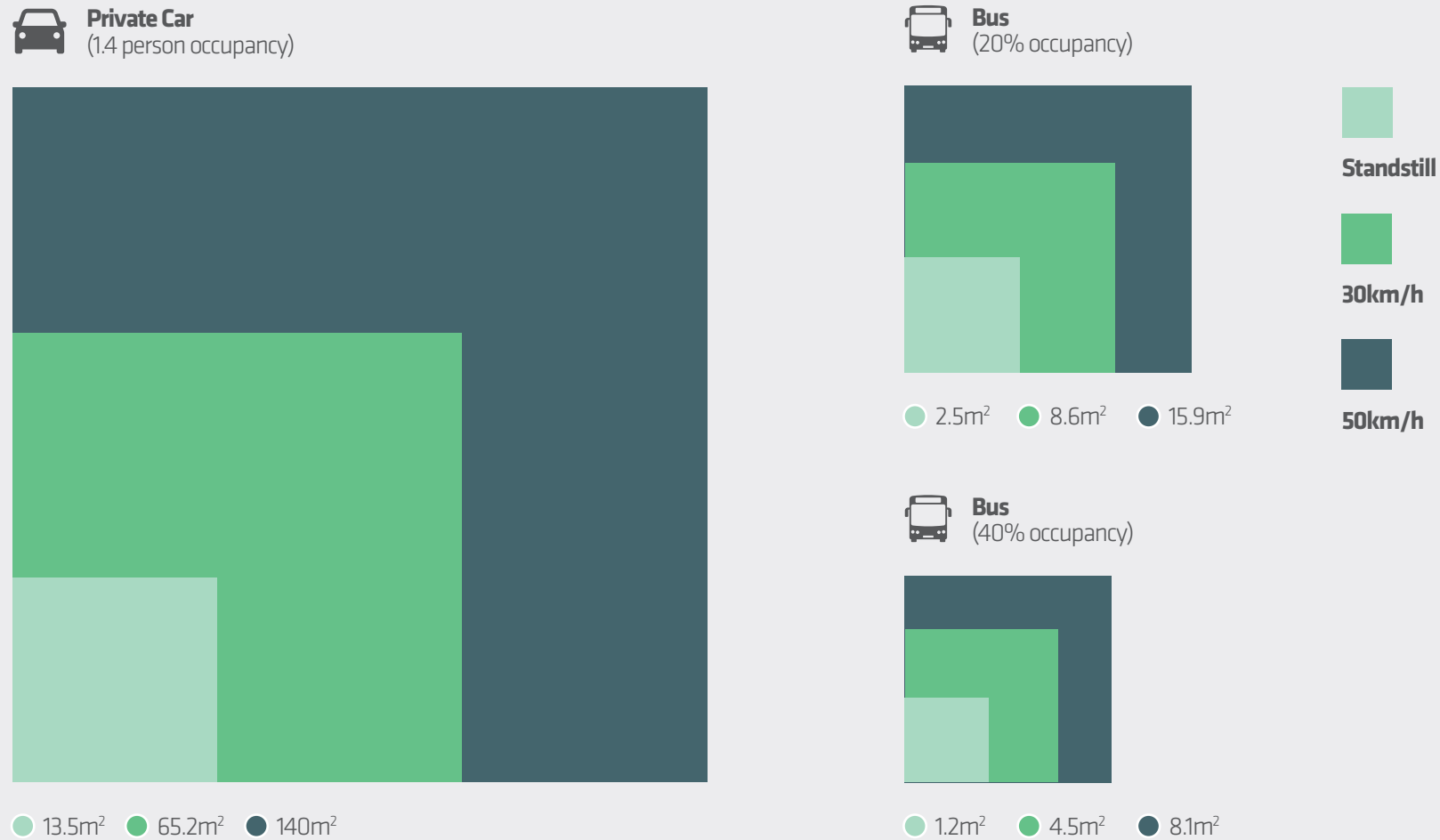
The challenges for bus

The cycle of decline

Despite the efforts of many, our bus system isn't working as effectively as we need it to be for passengers and for the region as a whole.

It isn't working for passengers and communities who are experiencing higher fares, poorer reliability, and a shrinking network.

It isn't working for operators who are experiencing rising costs, driver shortages and increasing requirements to support essential environmental policies set against a backdrop of growing car use and falling use of bus.

It isn't working for public services, business or the regional economy that needs buses to connect people to jobs, services and activities and positively influence perceptions of the region as a place for investment and sustainable development.

Bus is stuck in a 'cycle of decline.' An ineffective system where increasingly car-dominated travel creates poorer conditions for buses, driving up journey times and driving down bus reliability. Operating costs increase and passenger satisfaction goes down, further reducing passenger numbers. Fewer passengers mean higher fares or service cuts to compensate for lost income, further reducing satisfaction and pushing more people towards car use.

The consequence is that the opportunity of bus is not fully realised.

Figure 11: Bus – The 'cycle of decline'

- Increasing car use and road traffic
- Reducing bus reliablity, longer journey times and increasing operating costs
- Lower satisfaction and reducing passenger numbers
- Reducing revenues, fare increases and service reductions
- Satisfaction and patronage decline further

Use of buses is down, car use is up

The number of people using buses has been generally decreasing over a long period of time[24], as shown in Figure 12[25]. There has been some recent recovery in passenger numbers since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the overall trend continues to be downward.

The patronage decline in the region has been more substantial than other parts of Scotland. In 2019/20, bus passenger journeys were 31% lower than ten years earlier[26]. This compares to a 11% decrease in the rest of Scotland over the same period[27].

The way people are using buses is also changing. People are far less likely to use buses every day. In 2007/08, nearly half of adults (48%) in the SPT area used a local bus at least once in the past month and about one in 7 adults (15%) used a bus every day, as shown in Figure 13[28]. About fifteen years later, in 2023, frequency of bus travel had fallen to about two in five (39%) adults using a bus at least once in the past month and about one in 20 (6%) using a bus every day[29].

The COVID19 pandemic also affected travel patterns and demand, with car travel rebounding more quickly than public transport and a slow recovery of the concessionary travel market for older persons.

At the same time, more people have more cars, and they are driving them more often. Compared to two decades ago, many more households have at least one car, and households with two or three cars are far more common, as shown in Figure 14[30]. These trends result from long-term, complex factors that include increases in household income and aspirations for car ownership and car-oriented development.

This increasing use of cars exacerbates many transport problems including traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, transport carbon emissions and road accidents. This also reduces the viability of local bus services as the passenger base is eroded, making it more difficult to provide services for communities who depend on bus and further increasing inequalities of access to everyday needs.

Figure 12: Annual bus patronage (in millions)

240m
225m
182m
118m

2005/06 ⟶ 2022/23

Strathclyde   Rest of Scotland
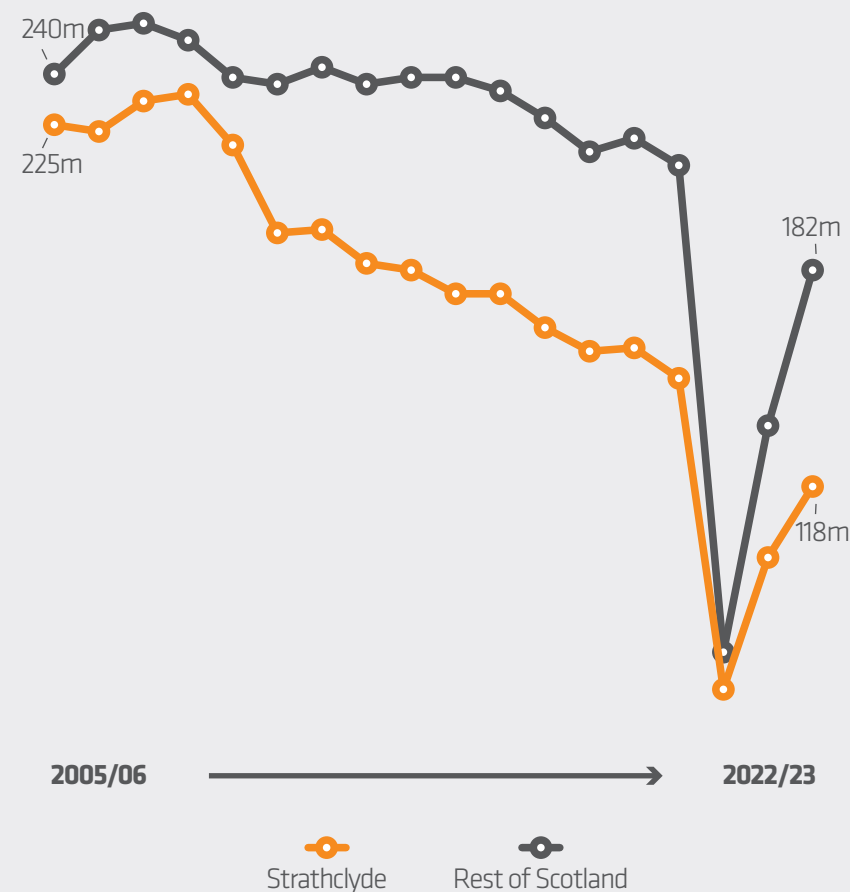
Figure 13: Use of local bus services in the past month, Strathclyde

Every day, or almost every day

Two or three times per week

About once a week

About once a fortnight, or about once a month

Not used in past month
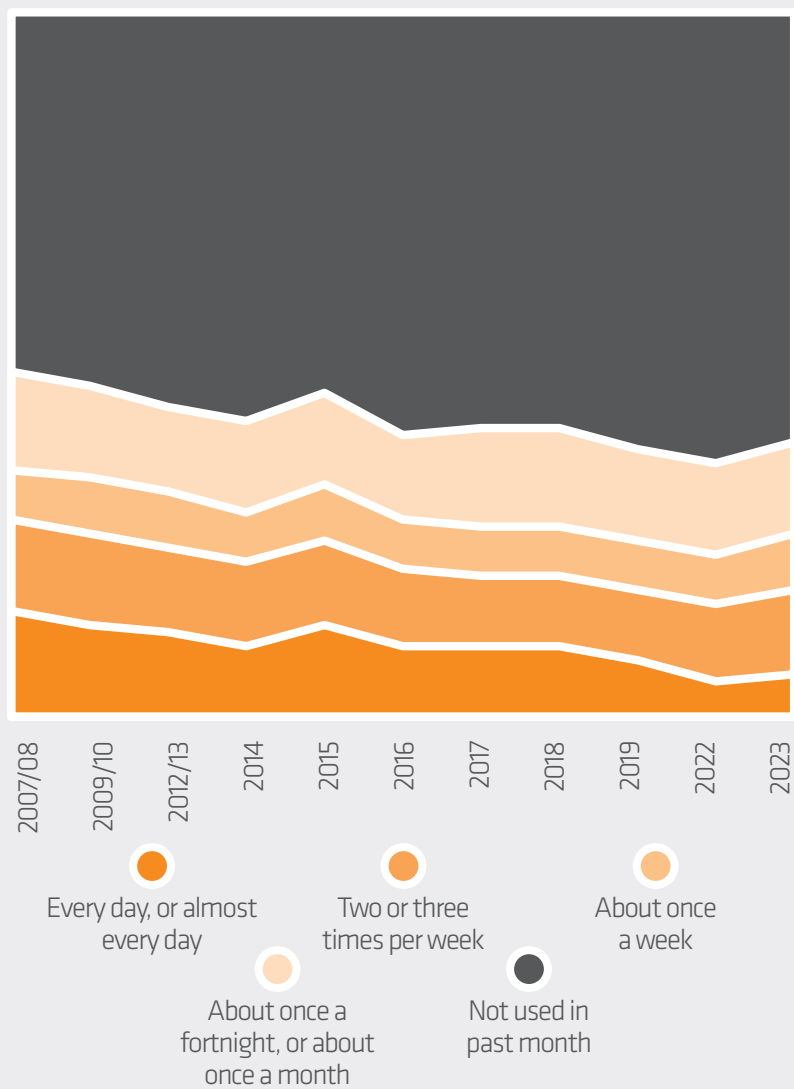
Figure 14: Number of cars available to households for private use (% of households), Strathclyde

2023

31%   43%   21%   5%

2001/02

42%   41%   15%   2%

No car   One car   Two car   Three or more cars
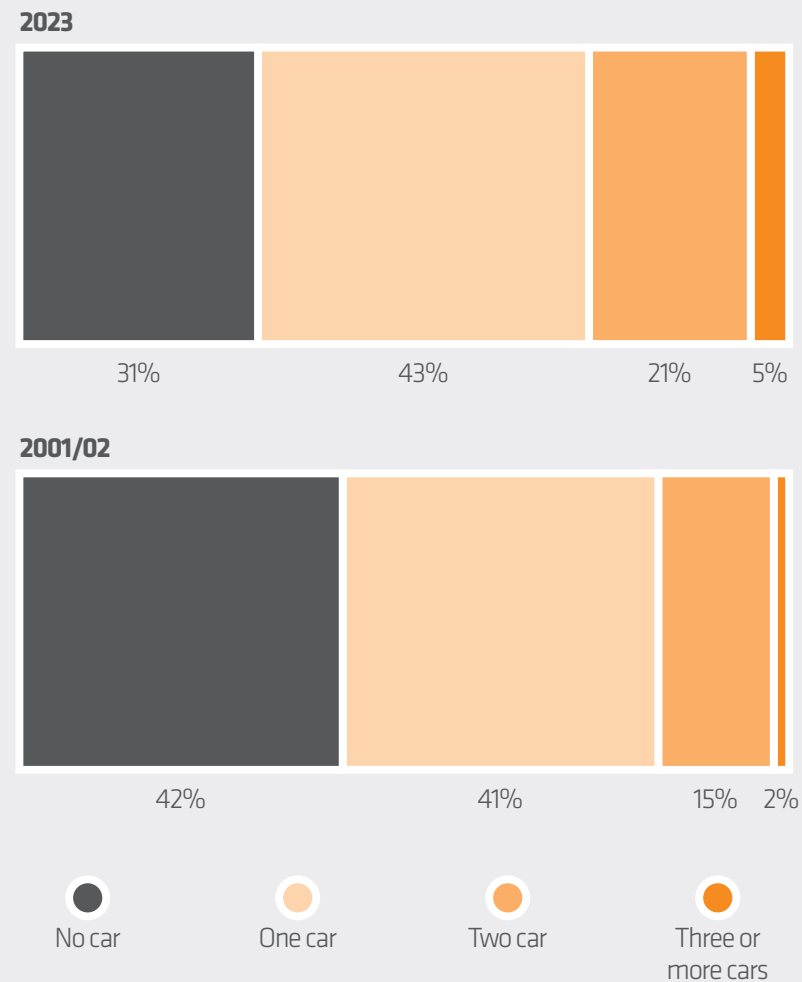
Poor bus service reliability and increasing journey times

Poor bus reliability, and perceptions of this, is a problem that is cited frequently by everyone with an interest in bus including operators, passengers, elected officials and local authorities.

Reliability matters. It is a critical driver of passenger satisfaction[31], and it affects wider perceptions of the bus network[32]. Poor reliability can force people to build in additional travel time to ensure they are able to arrive at their destination on time[33]. People may forego some activities, such as leisure or socialising events, or opt for more expensive travel options, like taxis, if they feel they cannot rely on buses to get them to their destination. Poor reliability may lead people to choose to use a car if they have a choice.

For business and service provides, poor reliability means that bus is less able to get people to work, school, hospital and other destinations on time.

Buses run on the same roads as cars and other vehicles and are mostly unprotected from the effects of variable traffic volumes, speeds and levels of congestion. Bus reliability is also affected by problems such as parked vehicles blocking bus stops or traffic lanes and limited co-ordination and communication of road works and closures including emergency works. These conditions make it difficult for bus operators to provide a reliable service and can result in late running buses, buses not 'showing up' and longer journey times.

Bus journey times across the region have been found to be generally far longer than the equivalent journey time by car - in many instances, bus journey times may be more than double the car journey time, and frequently more than three times longer[34].

The availability of vehicles and drivers also impacts on reliability when there is an insufficient number of drivers or buses available to operate a service according to its timetable. Driver shortages is a long-standing challenge across the road transport industry but has been particularly critical during the recovery from the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The position is improving with operators reporting that driver vacancies fell from 14% in September 2022 to 4% in September 2023[35], although this is within a context of reducing service levels. Ensuring bus driving is an attractive and accessible career choice will continue to be important to the industry to ensure services can be operated as scheduled.

Operators are required to run their services to their scheduled timetable, though without obligation to openly share service punctuality performance metrics unless instructed to do so by the Traffic Commissioner. Operators may use a range of strategies to improve service performance including deploying more buses on a route. This will help keep a service running to timetable but comes at a substantial increase in costs that are likely to be passed on to passengers in the form of higher fares[36]. This is a challenging approach for operators to take as bus operating costs in Scotland have been increasing over a long period of time and were 42% higher in 2022/23 compared to 2004/05 as shown in Figure 15[37]. Operators may also reduce service frequencies or increase the timetabled journey time to keep buses running 'on time'[38], but the overall impact of this is a poorer service for the passenger.

"I have to leave [home] way before a reasonable time based on distance just to ensure I'm on time for my appointment."

– RTS Public Survey:

Figure 15: Bus operating costs per vehicle kilometre, Scotland (2022/23 prices)

246p

173p

2004/05 → 2022/23

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
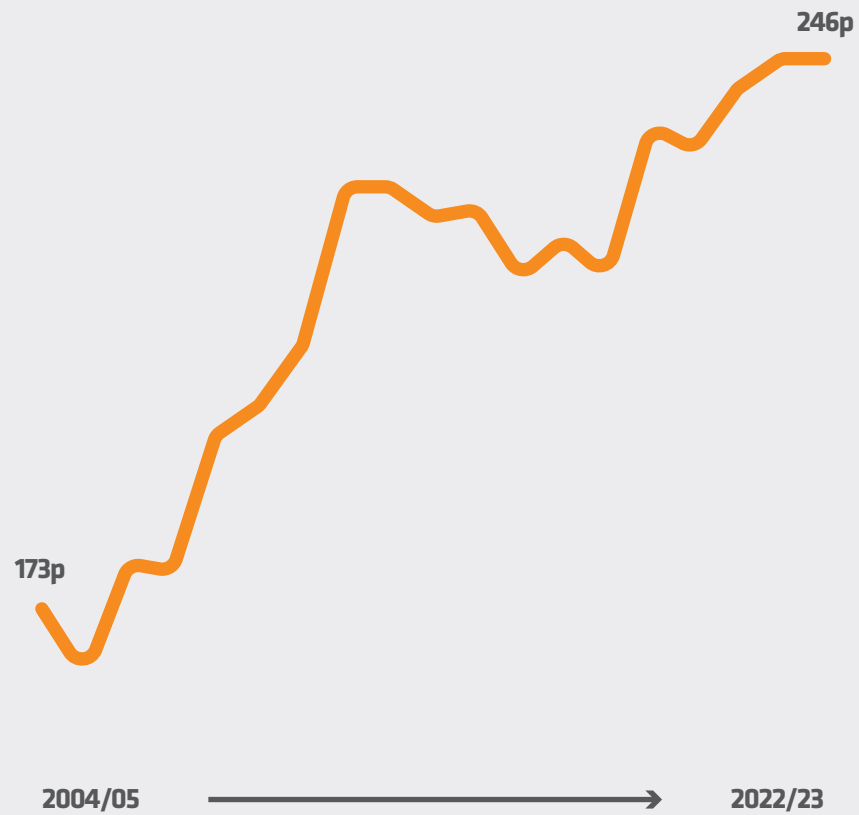
Bus service levels are reducing

The frequency of bus services is a key driver of demand for bus travel[39,40]. Higher frequencies provide convenience for passengers, reduce waiting times, make it easier to make connections and increase the chance of getting a seat on the bus at peak travel times.

Conversely, reducing service levels make bus less attractive as an alternative to car and make it more difficult for people to plan and fulfil their daily travel needs. This can lead to more people choosing car as the only practical transport option for their travel needs. For others, reducing service levels may make it difficult to access work and everyday needs.

The size of the regional bus network has been reducing over a long period of time - in 2019/20 bus vehicle kilometres were 21% lower than ten years earlier[41] and, by 2022/23, bus vehicle kilometres had only recovered to 69% of the pre-pandemic level[42]. Bus vehicle kilometres in the Strathclyde and Southwest area now represent about one-third (34%) of the total bus kilometres in Scotland – far less than 2019/20, when it was 43%, and in 2009/10, when it was 47%.

To the passenger, these figures mean a mix of lower service frequencies, reduced operating hours, route changes or loss of whole services. In the region outside of Glasgow, the bus service frequency for nearly two in every three households (65%) is less than one bus every 30 minutes[43].

Figure 16: Annual local bus kilometres (in millions)

2005/06 → 2022/23

● Strathclyde & Southwest   ○ Rest of Scotland
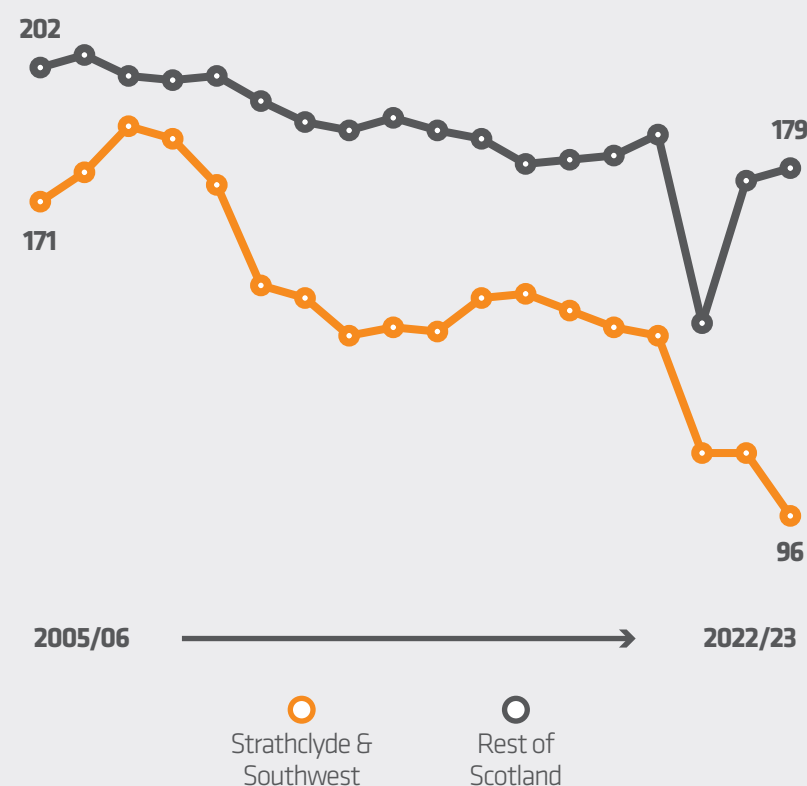
The increasing cost of travelling by bus

The increasing cost of bus travel is a problem for people living on lower incomes as fares may represent a substantial proportion of their monthly expenditure[44]. This may make it difficult to access better work or essential services and limit opportunities to get on with everyday activities like shopping and socialising. For people who have a choice, the increasing cost of fares may make car appear more attractive than travelling by bus.

In Scotland, bus fares increased by 3% between June 2023 and June 2024 compared to a 2% increase in the Consumer Price Index[45]. Furthermore, the relative cost of bus travel has risen more than travel by car over a long period of time[46]. Travelling by private motor car is generally cheaper now than the equivalent bus fare for the average distance of a bus journey[47].

National concessionary bus travel schemes[48] are widely used in the region[49] and available to people who are disabled, and/or aged under 22 years or over 60 years. Concessionary schemes do not cover everyone experiencing problems with the cost of bus travel, though, including many people in working poverty. People living on lower incomes also may be less able to access the best value tickets[50] (for example, annual tickets) due to higher upfront costs or lack of access to banking or technology pre-requisites[51,52].

It is noted that the national concessionary schemes, whilst benefiting many people, have the unintended effect of pushing up the price of single bus fares for fare-paying passengers, further adding to the affordability challenge. This is due to the way operators are reimbursed for carrying people under the terms of the schemes.

Figure 17: Bus Fares Index, current prices (March 2005 = 100)

200

150

March 2005 → June 2024

Bus Fares (Scotland)   RPI   CPI
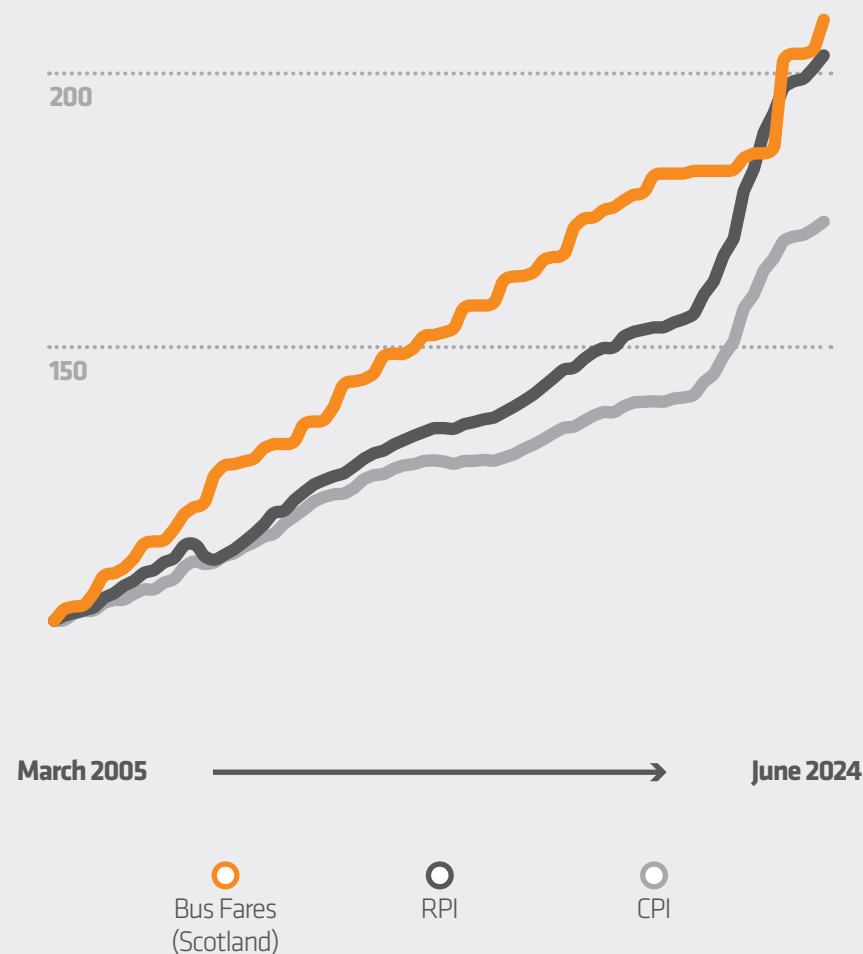
Limited integration with other services and complex ticketing

The bus network is not organised in a way which delivers a seamless, integrated network for passengers[53]. Each operator's timetables, services and routes are not planned to integrate with other bus operator networks. Other factors such as service quality, route numbering, fare structures, ticketing products, some accessibility features, travel information and customer service also may differ between individual operator networks.

Integration is an issue in Strathclyde, perhaps more than some other areas in Scotland, due to the nature of the market in the region. In 2024, 34 operators provide locally registered services - four bus companies providing around 82% of mileage in the SPT region and 30 smaller operators providing the remaining 18% of mileage as shown in Figure 18[54]. Nowhere else in Scotland or the UK has a wider mix of suppliers for the local bus market.

Limited integration makes it more difficult to make some types of journeys and may suppress demand for bus if it is perceived to be too difficult or time consuming to make a journey by bus. In rural areas, with lower service frequencies, limited integration can be problematic as changing buses may be often required to reach destinations such as larger town centres and hospitals. This can lead to inconvenient and lengthy wait times when changing services.

The bus network is not necessarily co-ordinated with the rail or ferry network except where bus services are provided on a socially necessary basis or where the operator has made a commercial decision to integrate with other modes. This poses challenges for future public transport proposals and investment including Clyde Metro, which is likely to require local 'feeder' services to integrate well with mass transit interchanges to deliver the transformational change envisioned in current proposals.

The array of ticketing options also creates a complex structure for bus passengers to navigate, which may make it difficult to determine the best value ticket for a journey. The range and structure of ticket products in the region is particularly complex with many single and multi-operator products covering a range of different journey types and geographical areas[55]. Journeys involving more than one bus operator network are also generally more expensive for the passenger than making a journey of similar distance within a single operator network.

There are good examples of partnership working on integrated ticketing in the region including the multi-modal ZoneCard[56] and the bus-only Glasgow Tripper[57]. However, neither product provides travel across the entire region geographically and operators generally have less incentive to promote integrated products over their own range of tickets due to the competitive nature of the local bus market. This type of ticketing is also subject to competition rules which allow only certain types of multi-operator tickets.

Figure 18: Proportion of bus mileage by operator

82%
Four larger
operators
(combined)

18%
All other
operators
(combined)

"Several jobs were 20-30 minutes from home by car, but 2-3 hours and 2-3 different bus companies by public transport."

– RTS Public Survey:

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Barriers to using bus

Complex ticketing

Ticketing is complex with operators offering different ticket types, pricing, and ways to purchase. This may offer greater choice for frequent users who understand 'how things work.' Infrequent users, though, may not be confident in accessing best value tickets and the overall complexity may be a barrier to attracting new users.

Fares

Bus fares have been increasing in real terms, making bus less attractive compared to other modes and less able to help tackle societal inequalities.
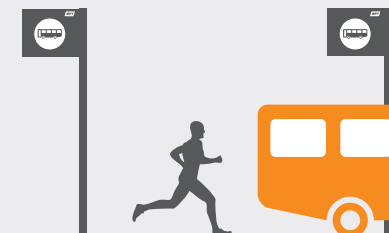
Lack of integration

There are 34 bus operators in the region providing their own network of services. These different networks are not fully co-ordinated by time or place, which may discourage bus use if a journey requires changing buses.

Delays and journey times

Passengers lose confidence in using bus when buses turn up late or not at all. Delays and slower journey times due to congestion also make bus less attractive compared to other modes.

Lack of services

Bus services are often very limited at certain times and days including early mornings, evenings and on Sundays.

Public and passenger views

Engagement with the public undertaken during the development of the Regional Transport Strategy asked about the challenges that stopped people from using public transport. The most common responses were lack of direct services, service frequency, fares, reliability, and longer journey times compared to the same trip by car. Conversely, features that were most likely to encourage modal shift from car to public transport were more suitable services, faster journeys, improved frequency and reliability and more direct services.

Consultation undertaken during development of the RTS focussed around five main themes: transport emissions, access for all, regional connectivity, active living and public transport quality and integration. Across these themes, the public transport quality and integration was, of the five key themes, noted of high importance to the greatest percentage of respondents, with respondents noting the importance of:

- transport integration across all modes
- a high-quality transport system that is attractive to use
- affordable transport
- integrated ticketing
- reliable, frequent services and integrated services.

Stakeholder feedback gathered during the Connecting Communities 'Public Conversation' on Glasgow's transport future in 2020 noted the top transport problems mentioned in responses included:

- quality, reliability and connectivity issues with public transport (particularly buses)
- high cost of public transport (particularly buses)
- lack of integration in the public transport system including ticketing.

Furthermore, it was noted that:

- there is a lack of affordable integrated ticketing options between operators in the region
- the public have a lack of faith in the reliability of bus services
- passengers do not consider bus a reliable alternative to car.

Satisfaction with local public transport has been decreasing, down from 75% in 2012/13 to 65% in 2023[58]. Passengers who are very satisfied has decreased from 22% to 15% over the same period, as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Percentage of Strathclyde residents who are very satisfied with local public transport

2012	2014	2016	2018	2022	2023
22%	23%	19%	19%	12%	15%
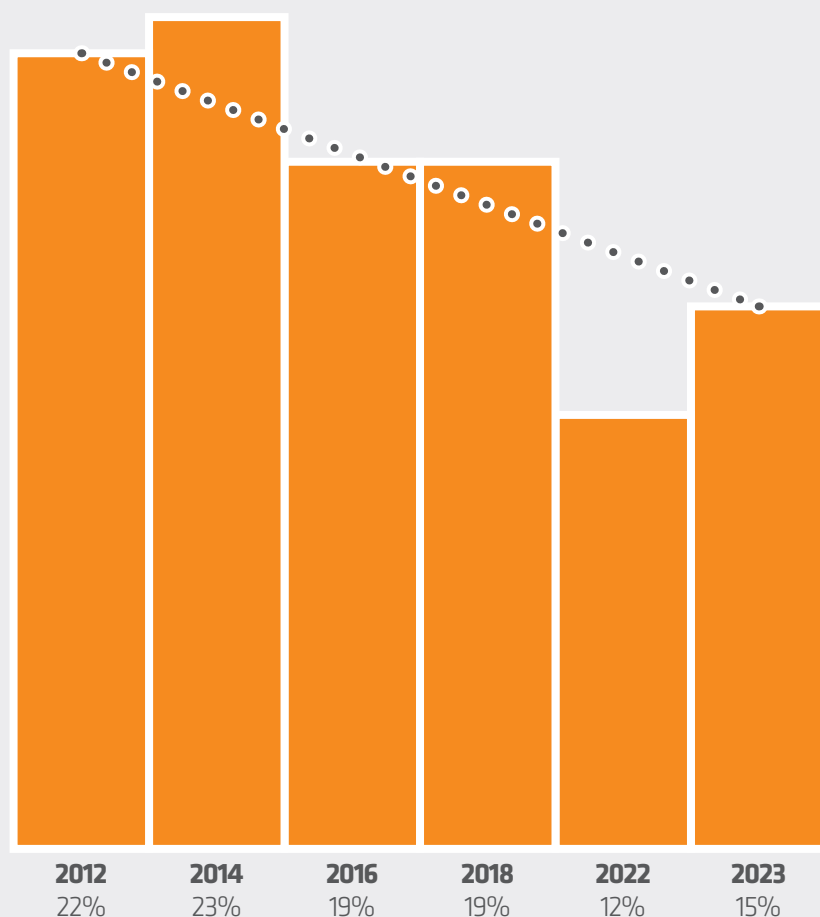
Access for all

Bus has a critical role in providing access to work, services and other places for communities with low levels of car ownership and for people who do not have alternative transport. To do so, bus needs to provide a basic level of connectivity for towns and villages and be accessible to individuals.

In the region, about one in every 5 households in the region do not have access to a scheduled bus service, as defined by reasonable walking distances between one's home and a nearest bus stop[59]. Other communities experience very limited provision or a lack of services in the evening and on Sundays[60].

SPT provides 'socially necessary bus services' under contract to private bus operators to plug gaps in the commercial bus network. These services may be provided on a whole route basis or to extend the range or hours of operation of an otherwise commercially provided service. However, in the region, most services are provided on a commercial basis, with about 88% of bus network mileage provided commercially and 12% provided under contract to SPT[61].

Even where a bus service is provided, it may not be easily accessible to some passengers. Journey planning information may not be provided in accessible formats. The route to a bus stop may not feel safe, may lack accessible features such as dropped kerbs or may be blocked by cars parked on pavements. The bus stop may lack shelter, appropriate seating and lighting, or accessible information about services that use the stop.

For passengers who use wheelchairs, boarding and navigating the internal layout of buses can be difficult. People who use wheelchairs have also highlighted that there are inconsistent approaches to the use of wheelchair spaces on the bus, which creates uncertainty over being allowed to board a bus at some busy times.

Knowing when to depart a bus is a challenge for many passengers including people who are blind or visually impaired and people unfamiliar with an area or a service. This is also a problem when it is difficult to see outside the bus including when services are crowded. Passengers cite audio-visual information as a helpful technology but note that many buses do not provide information in this format. Following introduction of the Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations 2023, though, a majority of buses will be required to provide audible and visible route and upcoming stop information by 2026[62].

Figure 20: Proportion of bus mileage by commercial or supported

Commercial
88%

Supported
12%

The challenge of decarbonisation

The bus sector in Scotland has made significant progress in the transition from diesel to zero emission buses, set within the wider context of the need to improve air quality and support the Scottish Government's national target to be net zero carbon by 2045.

FirstGlasgow has delivered the largest electric charging station in the UK through their upgrading of the Caledonia Depot to enable operation of 300 electric buses and aims to have an entirely zero emission fleet by 2035. McGill's Buses has upgraded 4 depots to support its zero-emission fleet and operates over 110 electric buses. Stagecoach West Scotland has upgraded Kilmarnock and Ayr depots and now operates 60 electric buses and aims to have an entirely zero emission fleet by 2035. West Coast Motors has transitioned the Glasgow City Sightseeing buses to a fully electric fleet whilst Shuttle Buses and Community Transport Glasgow are transitioning to electric fleets.

It is anticipated that the up-front cost of zero emission buses will eventually reduce as the market matures, but currently the cost of purchasing zero emission buses is far higher than diesel equivalents. Therefore, government policy and funding has been a critical catalyst of fleet decarbonisation in the region through Transport Scotland's Scottish Zero Emission Bus (ScotZEB) challenge fund, awarding over £62 million to operators across Scotland in 2021/22 for the purchase of zero emission buses. In 2024, another £41.7 million has been awarded to a bus industry consortium including 8 operators and Zenobē Energy Ltd, aiming to add more than 250 electric buses to Scotland, provide tailored financing structures to reduce both upfront and lifetime costs of electric fleet operations, deliver key infrastructure and provide ongoing support for electric vehicle operation. The consortium has also committed to opening their new charging infrastructure to third party fleet operators.

In 2025, the Scottish Government announced a further investment of up to £40 million through the second Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund (ScotZEB2). It is estimated that this investment could bring as many as 300 zero-emission buses to Scotland's bus operators.

Building on progress made through ScotZEB, the Bus Decarbonisation Taskforce, a joint initiative between industry and government, will set out a collaborative pathway for achieving a zero-emission bus sector in Scotland. The taskforce will identify and co-design creative and practical solutions to maximising opportunities and tackling any hurdles remaining in relation to:

- Charging infrastructure (electric and hydrogen) including on-route charging
- Technology (battery-electric, hydrogen fuel-cell and other potential zero-emission technologies; on-route charging; depot considerations)
- Costs, including economies of scale and warranties
- Finance, including suitable financial structures, products and guarantees
- Knowledge and experience
- Vehicle and charging requirements in rural, island and urban areas.

Bus operators in the region have also highlighted further challenges including:

- lengthy planning or legal processes
- grid connectivity and depot upgrading particularly for depots in remote locations
- poor reliability of some current technologies and impacts of inclement weather on service performance – which could lead to higher peak vehicle requirements
- lack of on-route charging network in Strathclyde;
- leveraging economies of scale and uncertainty around the development of a second-hand market for ZEBs.

Funding the bus network

The case for public funding of bus is well established, linking directly to the opportunity of bus set out earlier in this document. Bus can deliver better social, economic and environmental outcomes and is the most widely used public transport mode. However, subsidy per passenger is far lower for bus than other forms of public transport and transport funding more generally continues to be allocated heavily to carbon intensive transport.

Sources of operator revenue

Passenger revenue (i.e. ticket sales) has been decreasing over a long period of time, reflecting the loss of passengers across the network and the increasing proportion of passengers carried under concessionary travel schemes.

The Scottish Government's budget allocation for concessionary travel is £370 million in 2024/25, which includes the scheme for older and disabled persons and the scheme for young persons under 22 years of age. CPT highlighted in 2023 that the reimbursement rate for carrying concessionary passengers had changed from 73.6% at the time of the launch of the older and disabled persons scheme to the current rate of 56.8%.

The Network Support Grant (NSG) is a discretionary grant to operators to help maintain the bus network by subsiding operating costs. The Scottish Government budget allocation for NSG is £49.5 million in 2024/25. The Confederation of Public Transport (CPT) highlighted in 2023 that the NSG rate of 14.4p/km had not changed in 10 years and amounted to a real terms reduction of 20% due to rising operating costs.

Another source of bus operator revenue is delivery of socially necessary services under contract to SPT. Funding for socially necessary services in the SPT region is by budget requisition from SPT's partner councils, with a budget of £12.3 million in 2024/25. The cost of providing socially necessary services has been increasing in line with increasing operating costs – increasing by more than £2.3 million between 2019/20 and 2023/24, as shown in Figure 22.

Capital funding

The rising cost of capital projects and lack of long-term funding sources makes it more challenging to deliver crucial infrastructure to support the bus network. The Scottish Government's £500m Bus Partnership Fund (BPF), launched in 2020, was to be allocated to bus priority measures in cities and towns. The BPF was highlighted in the Strategic Transport Projects Review recommendation for bus priority as a key funding source for delivery of this intervention. However, the BPF was paused in 2023/24 and has now been replaced by a general bus infrastructure fund.

Despite lack of long-term funding, though, SPT and councils have worked together to deliver a large number of bus projects over the past 15 years though the SPT capital programme including:

- Traffic light priority for buses and new or upgraded urban traffic control systems;

- Redevelopment and upgrading to regional bus stations including key projects at Kilmarnock, Partick, Govan, and Hamilton

- Improvements to bus stops and shelters, routes to bus stops and high access kerbs

- Real time passenger information at bus stops and interchanges.

Roads

Well maintained roads are also critical to the performance of the bus network. In 2024, the estimated cost of fixing local roads across Scotland was more than £2.6 billion.

Figure 21: Proportion of revenue on local bus services by source, Scotland 2022/23

Network Support Grant 20%

Concessionary fares 36%

Socially Necessary Services 7%

Ticket Sales 37%
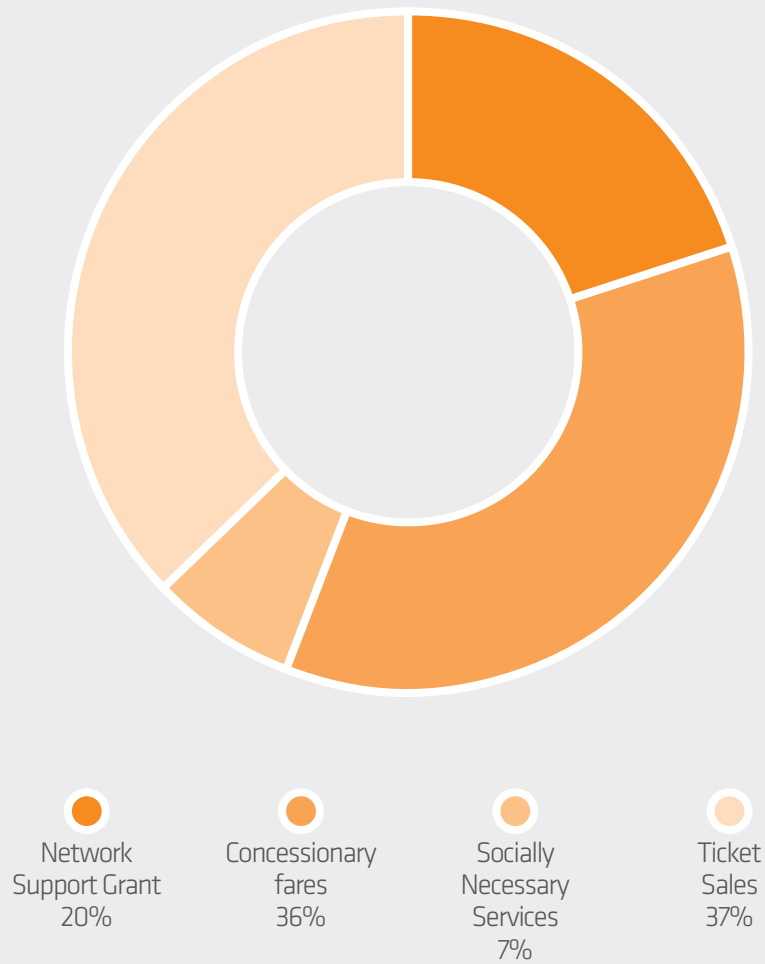
Figure 22: Cost of socially necessary services in the SPT region

Year	Cost
2015/16	£7.43m
2016/17	£7.44m
2017/18	£7.70m
2018/19	£7.93m
2019/20	£8.57m
2020/21	£8.76m
2021/22	£8.83m
2022/23	£9.78m
2023/24	£10.98m

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
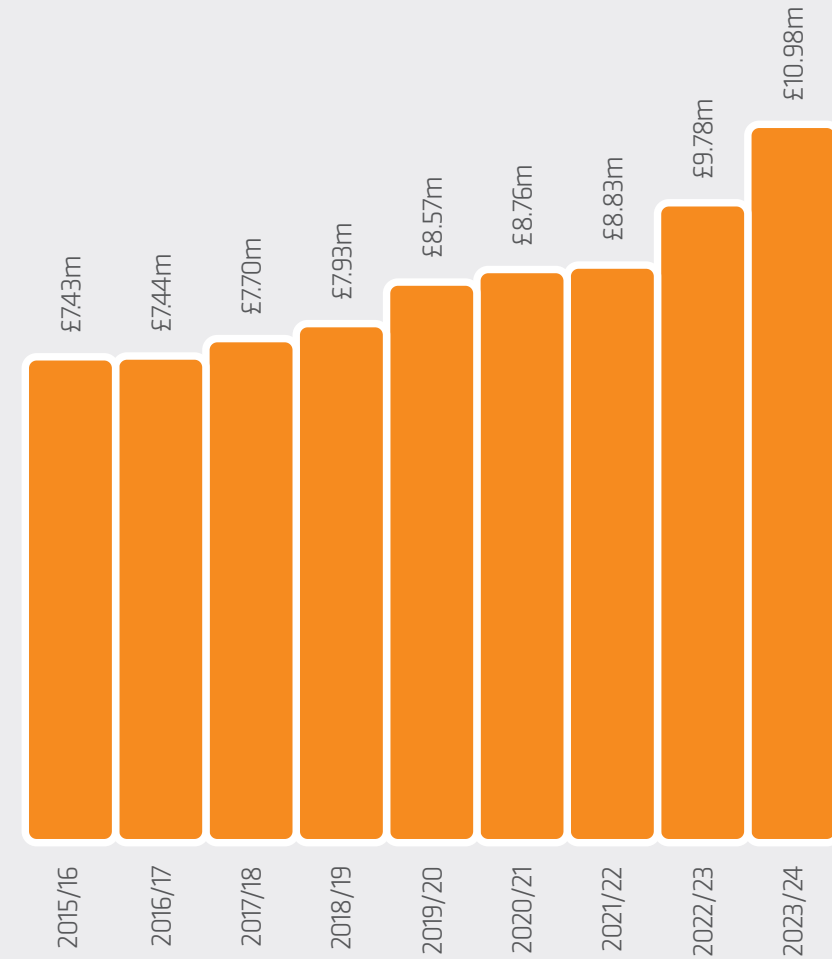
The need for change, and making change happen

For too long, bus in the west of Scotland has found itself on the periphery of any serious dialogue regarding its role in the delivery of wider public policy aspirations at national, regional and local level.

When actions of scale on bus have been considered, they have tended to towards an oversimplified approach e.g. 'one-off' investments in infrastructure, apparently not fully appreciating the wide-ranging scope, nature and nuance of our region's bus network, and the need for a more sophisticated, holistic solution to deliver effective change.

The preceding section of this document, building on work undertaken for the SRBS Case for Change and as part of the development of the Regional Transport Strategy, has set out a clear picture of the opportunities and challenges for bus, both being of significant scale.

In addressing this, there is a choice: to continue to facilitate circumstances in which the 'cycle of decline' is allowed to prevail, or to take action to create conditions for a new 'cycle of growth' for bus in Strathclyde.

As the previous sections have highlighted, bus in our region is too important to allow the former to continue, and therefore bold, clear and direct action is required. It is imperative to stop the 'cycle of decline' and build a 'cycle of growth' that fully realises the opportunity of bus.

The next chapter of this document sets out the Bus Network We Need in Strathclyde for passengers and communities and to attract more people to bus. Following this, the Delivery Plan is set out in chapter 5. The Delivery Plan covers the approach to bus franchising and an action plan to take this strategy forward and make it a reality.

4　The Bus Network We Need

The bus cycle of growth

The SRBS aims to change the story of bus from the 'cycle of decline' to a 'cycle of growth' that better meets existing passenger needs, attracts new passengers and maximises the role of bus in delivering public policy outcomes.

This cycle of growth means a bus network that is more attractive for existing and new users, to get more people using buses, and using them more often. This can lead to a 'shift' from car use to bus use, helping to realise a range of wider outcomes including reduced transport emissions, more efficient use of road space and energy, and more sustainable economic growth and development.

This cycle of growth also means bus services are available for all communities who need bus for everyday travel, particularly for people who do not have alternative transport. This places bus at the heart of communities, ensuring we all have good connections to our everyday travel destinations and helping tackle inequalities of access across the region.

Driving up bus use will improve the financial sustainability of the bus network, which, in turn, helps ensure that bus services are available for those who need them most.

Embedded in the cycle of growth diagram are the two strategy **Goals**, derived from the strategic roles of bus set out earlier in the Case for Change.

Figure 23: The bus 'cycle of growth'

▌ The SRBS Strategic Framework

The SRBS Strategic Framework outlines what the strategy aims to achieve and its key components. The Framework is shown in Figure 24 (next page).

The strategy aims to deliver long term changes to the way we travel, with more people using buses, and people using buses more often and more communities having access to bus for everyday travel. These are the strategy **Goals**.

To achieve the goals, the bus network should provide:

A consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services.

Affordable, safe and accessible bus travel for all.

An attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network.

These are the strategy **objectives**.

The strategy also sets out policies and measures to guide investment decisions and the development of projects, activities and services. These are arranged under seven themes:

- Buses where they are needed, when they are needed
- Reliable and quicker bus journeys
- Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing
- Accessible and safer bus journeys
- A trusted and recognisable bus network
- A seamless and integrated bus network
- A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet.

The detailed policies and measures are set out in a table at the end of this chapter.

The Delivery Plan outlines how the strategy is proposed to be delivered. The Monitoring Plan outlines how the strategy will be monitored. These are set out in chapters 5 and 6.

Figure 24: SRBS Strategic Framework

Goals

Objectives

Policies and Measures

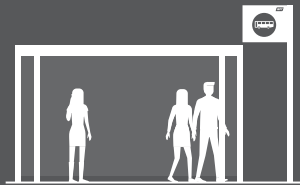Delivery Plan

Monitoring Plan

Key themes

Buses where they are needed,
when they are needed

Reliable and quicker
bus journeys

Affordable and attractive
fares and ticketing

Accessible and safer
bus journeys
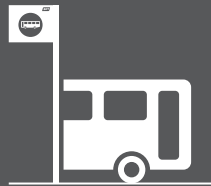
A trusted and recognisable
bus network

A seamless and integrated
bus network

A more environmentally
sustainable, resilient and
adaptable bus network fleet

| **Theme 1:** | *Buses where they are needed, when they are needed* |

The bus network needs to provide high frequency services on busier routes, aiming for turn up and go service levels – meaning a service at least every 10 minutes - where there is high demand or growth opportunities. This should be supported by a well-defined 'feeder' network that is co-ordinated effectively with higher frequency services.

The bus network also needs to provide access for all. This means more consistent levels of service across the region and improved levels of service during early morning hours, evenings, and Sundays. The network also needs to co-ordinate and integrate efficiently across the region, with rural, remote and peripheral areas better connected to higher frequency or express services.

Improving service levels at less busy times, such as evenings, is also a driver of passenger growth. This is because passengers are usually making 'return' journeys or more complex 'trip chains', which means the ability to make the return leg of a journey in the evening will affect daytime patronage as well[63].

The bus network provides a 'mass transit' function on busier urban corridors and provides cross-regional and inter-town connections that support the regional labour market and facilitate access to major regional destinations such as general hospitals, larger employment centres, colleges and universities. This means the bus network needs to integrate well with rail and future Clyde Metro proposals to ensure the overall public transport offer for the region provides an efficient and appropriate level of service and collectively delivers passenger growth and modal shifts from car.

The bus network should also effectively integrate with Community Transport (CT) where community-based groups can provide efficient and locally tailored services. This can be particularly effective where CT services link rural, remote areas and peripheral areas to towns or interchanges for onward travel on local bus services.

Indicative network redesign

An indicative network redesign exercise was carried out as part of the SRBS development, with the purpose of informing the strategic direction for the strategy. It is noted that any future proposal for a major network redesign and enhancement would require significant additional work including engagement with stakeholders and communities and sharing of key data. It also needs to be developed alongside the emerging Clyde Metro.

The key principles applied to the indicative network redesign were based upon Regional Transport Strategy spatial policies and relevant proposed policies for the SRBS, as follows:

- Enhancing connectivity to destinations including town centres, hospitals and tertiary education;
- Standardising frequencies and extending hours of operation;
- Simplifying the network; and
- Uprating level of service across the region by:
  - Applying minimum frequency standards on 'radial' routes to/from Glasgow and on 'local' routes in towns outside Glasgow;
  - Improving direct connectivity between town/city centres and other major destinations; and
  - Improving interchange, where required, by feeding connecting services into designated interchanges.

Proposals were developed within three indicative 'scenarios', which can also be potentially seen as indicative implementation 'phases'

- 'Basic': embedding a new structure for the network by introducing route changes (and some new routes, where replacements or amalgamations are required) with minimal frequency adjustments
- 'Moderate': increasing frequencies to intermediate levels to grow capacity
- 'Major': increasing frequencies to maximum levels and introducing new routes for areas that are currently unserved.

Indicative assessment of these scenarios demonstrate that increasing frequencies, even at 'Moderate' levels, is likely to have a large positive impact on patronage. However, fleet requirements rise substantially in a 'Major' scenario. This is shown in Figure 26, as a highly indicative summary.

Critically, connectivity benefits increase more substantially in a 'Major' scenario, as the bus network would provide greater coverage and connections for communities. This means any future bus network planning will need to achieve the right balance between more frequent and faster journeys and increased network coverage. Examples of recent practice in bus network planning in Dublin and rural Ireland are outlined on the following pages.

It is noted that a nearly 50% increase in patronage on the 'pre-COVID' 2019/20 levels would be required to return patronage to the levels seen 10 years earlier (i.e. 2009/10).

Figure 26: : Indicative increases in fleet requirements and patronage by network redesign scenario (% change from base)

Fleet requirements (peak vehicle requirement)

Patronage

- Basic scenario
- Moderate scenario
- Major scenario
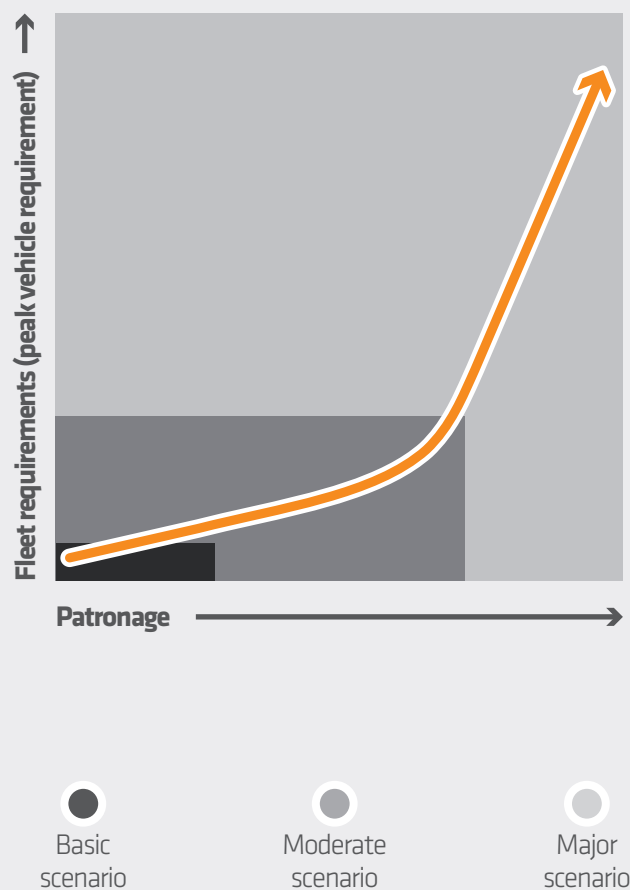
Bus developments in other cities and regions

Dublin BusConnects Network Redesign:

In Dublin, the BusConnects Network Redesign represents a major investment in enhanced bus services, delivering a 35% increase in annual "in-service" kilometres, a significant increase in overall capacity and frequency for customers, as well as more evening and weekend services.

The purpose of the redesign was to create a large increase in patronage by reducing complexity of the existing network and creating a high frequency 'grid effect' network through the creation of high frequency orbital routes that criss-crossed with high frequency radial routes. The strategy employed for the redesign was based on 4 principles:

- Organise most radial services into super-frequent spines
- Redistribute service to create frequent orbital (cross-town) routes
- Increase frequency in outer areas by using feeders into suburban centers.
- Define a high-frequency service brand.

This new bus network plan also considered issues raised by over 72,000 submissions at the various stages of public consultation.

The benefits of the Network Redesign include an overall increase in bus services of 23%, increased peak hour capacity, increased evening and weekend services, 24-hour operations on some routes, a 16% increase in the number of residents located within 400m of a frequent bus service to the city centre, new connections to schools, hospitals and other essential services and increased access to jobs and education.

The implementation of the new network is being delivered in phases over a number of years, starting in 2021. Passenger boardings have increased 26% between 2019 to 2023 on the network that has been redesigned and implemented compared to 0.6% increase on parts of the network that have not been redesigned.

Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan

The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major public transport initiative developed by the Irish National Transport Authority (NTA), aiming to improve mobility in rural areas and reduce car dependency by addressing gaps in the network, enhancing existing services and taking an innovative approach to serving remote areas. Proposals are developed in collaboration with local communities. It is estimated that implementation of the Plan will result in:

- Over 70% of those living outside of cities in the Republic of Ireland will have access to a public transport service that provides at least three return trips each weekday to a nearby town

- Improved mobility options for those in remote areas with the provision of Demand Responsive and other innovative transport services

- Over 100 new Local Centre connections from rural settlements in the hinterland

- Over 100 new County Town connections from all types of settlements around County Towns; and

- Over 60 new Regional Centre/City connections, from all types of settlements around these Centres/Cities.

Theme 2: *Reliable and quicker bus journeys*

The bus network needs to deliver reliable services to encourage people out of cars and to ensure communities can rely on bus for everyday travel needs. This means buses turning up when scheduled and arriving at destinations on time. Buses also need to be quicker, with journey times that are attractive compared to travelling by car.

Bus priority is important to providing reliable bus services. These are measures that give buses priority over other motorised traffic to reduce delays and inconsistent running speeds resulting from general traffic management requirements and congestion, and thereby improving bus speed and reliability. Examples include direct priority measures such as bus lanes and bus stop build outs, indirect priority measures such as traffic light priority and waiting restrictions to keep routes clear of parked vehicles, and complementary measures such as enforcement of direct or indirect measures (e.g. bus lane cameras).

Bus priority is most successful as part of a whole corridor approach and particularly should be implemented on routes or at times where there is too much traffic or too little capacity for traffic to flow freely. This places the emphasis on maximising the movement of people rather than the number of vehicles due to bus's greater efficiency in the use of road space. Bus priority also helps buses run on time and makes bus journeys quicker and more consistent. Bus priority may also lead to reduced operating costs if the journey time savings are sufficiently high to reduce the number of buses required to operate a service to its timetable.

Bus priority needs to be delivered on busier, congested routes that have frequent bus services. Bus lanes should be provided where buses encounter significant delay, if necessary by removal of parking and imposing loading restrictions. Enforcement is critical to prevent parked vehicles from creating delays, thus reducing the benefit of bus priority investment. Enforcement measures should be provided on a consistent basis to be a sufficient deterrent.

Well-designed bus priority schemes can be part of a wider upgrade of an area that aims to improve conditions for people who are walking, wheeling or cycling, reorganise parking and loading areas, and revitalise local places and town centres. Bus priority can also support a more efficient road network for all users, by moving more people quickly on congested roads and encouraging more people onto bus.

Bus priority is key, but other measures can support more reliable and quicker bus journeys including faster boarding times enabled through technology, information and capacity enhancement. More express services, where appropriate, and improved co-ordination of rural or 'feeder' bus services with higher frequency and express services can improve the overall journey time experienced by passengers.

An improved and more co-ordinated approach to communication and monitoring of the bus network, particularly in relation to 'real time' events and incidents such as emergency road works and road accidents, could help improve the daily management of the bus network as well as improve communication to passengers about any unavoidable delays or changes to services.

Open and transparent reporting of network and route performance is also required, allowing for appropriate accountability and better evidence to identify the best solutions.

Sprint bus priority corridor on the A45 in Birmingham.
Photo: Transport for West Midlands.

Bus developments in other cities and regions

West Midlands Regional Transport Coordination Centre

The Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) provides a single hub for the West Midlands transport authorities and agencies, emergency services and bus, rail and tram, allowing a co-ordinated approach to managing congestion and disruptions on the transport network and managing travel for major events.

The RTCC brings together real time information across all modes of transport in one place working with existing control centres around the West Midlands to provide up to the minute journey information for operators, residents, businesses and visitors.

The centre stores the data it gathers, which can be used by all its partners to plan future transport projects that support regional goals to create a reliable, affordable, accessible and integrated transport system.

The centre was delivered as part of a £28 million package of measures to manage congestion, funded by the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund.

The Dublin Bus Corridors project

The Dublin Bus Corridors project involves the development of on-going bus priority infrastructure, as well as improved pedestrian and cycling facilities on key corridors across the Dublin region. Its objectives are (1) to increase the capacity of the public bus system by improving the speeds, reliability and punctuality of buses through bus lanes and other measures that prioritise the movement of buses over general traffic movements and (2) to increase cycling capacity through the provision of safe cycle infrastructure, where feasible separated from general traffic.

The project includes the provision of approximately 230km of designated bus lanes and 200km of cycle tracks in 12 separate schemes across five local authority areas. The project aims to deliver journey time savings of up to 40% - 50%.

Theme 3: *Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing*

Fares and ticketing need to be simple and easy to understand to encourage more people to use bus. Easy and simple fares also increase passenger confidence in choosing the best fare, leading to improved passenger perceptions of value for money[64].

Simple fare structures and daily price capping with 'tap on, tap off' capabilities make bus travel easy and convenient for different types of passengers including people who are less familiar with local buses such as tourists and help ensure regular users receive the best value for their actual journeys made.

Bus journeys also need to be affordable, particularly for those who face cost-related travel barriers to accessing their everyday needs. Ways to achieve this include increasing the availability of flexible payment options and best value season ticket products. Additional targeted support on fares should also be considered for people and communities most in need to ensure the bus network is available to all. Retaining cash payment options is also important for some groups for the foreseeable future to avoid creating barriers to buses for people who have limited access to digital and banking technologies.

Any fare increases should be also consistently and effectively communicated and, as far as practicable, aligned to established time periods to help passengers plan for any changes that may affect them.

Bus developments in other cities and regions:

Transport for Greater Manchester ticketing and fares

Transport for Greater Manchester is partnering with Greater Manchester Credit Unions to make it easier for people to purchase annual season tickets for bus travel across the Bee Network.

Passengers will be able to spread payment, at no extra cost, throughout the year with a Credit Union loan – offering substantial saving compared with purchasing multiples of seven- or 28-day Bee Network bus tickets. The initiative comes on the back of a recent survey in Greater Manchester showing that more than half of respondents (55%) say that their cost of living has increased over the last month, while 52% report their mental health has been negatively impacted in the last month by a cost-of-living pressure. TfGM will also be introducing a 'hopper fare', allowing passengers to board as many Bee Network buses as they like within one hour for a single £2 fare.

Transport for West Midlands Workwise

The aim of Transport for West Midlands Workwise scheme is to remove a key barrier for those starting a new job – paying for transport before they have received their first pay packet. Workwise offers travel support for new job starters to get to their place of work in the form of two 4-week travel passes free and a third pass at half price. A survey of previous users found that 81% of respondents were still in employment six months after getting Workwise support with 52% saying they would have been unable to accept the work without that support.

Transport for London fare capping

Fare capping limits how much passengers pay for all of their journeys undertaken in one day or one week when using contactless or Oyster smartcard to "pay as you go". The weekly cap limits how much a passenger pays for all of their journeys in a fixed Monday to Sunday period.

Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys

Bus travel should be convenient, accessible and safe for all passengers, as a part of achieving a fully accessible door-to-door journey experience in the region. This means well-maintained and accessible routes to bus stops and inclusively designed vehicles, stops and stations. Travel and journey planning information needs to be easily available in accessible formats while bus customer services need to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for all passengers, informed by training in disability and equality matters.

People should also feel safe when travelling by bus. Well-lit, maintained bus stops and public spaces with 'live' departure information can help people feel safer[65], especially in the evening. Increasing awareness of CCTV provision and ensuring passengers know what to do if they are having a problem on the bus are important, whilst drivers need to be supported with appropriate training to handle passenger issues.

Bus developments in other cities and regions:

TfGM Disability Design Reference Group

Transport for Greater Manchester's Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) involves working closely with disabled people to support the design and delivery of transport services focusing on an inclusive, integrated transport network. DDRG has been fundamental in the development of the Greater Manchester Bee Network, having influenced projects such as:

- expansion and enhancement of the Metrolink tram system,
- bus fleet design,
- junction design,
- customer travel information including signage, audio visual information and the Bee Network App.

'Please offer me a seat'

Not all disabilities and conditions are visible making it hard for passengers to know who may need a seat. "Please offer me a seat" badge schemes are designed for passengers who have difficulty standing on public transport. The simple badge indicates to other passengers that someone needs to sit down. The schemes are built on trust and mutual co-operation between passengers, making it easier for passengers to understand each other's needs and feel confident in offering support.

Tackling sexual harassment on London's public transport network

Transport for London has a comprehensive approach to tackling sexual harassment on the public transport network. This includes an extensive CCTV network and staff training on how to deal with these behaviours, with TfL committed to training all frontline and enforcement staff. Other measures include partnership working with police and community support officers, with police carrying out targeted policing and investigation activity to identify and apprehend sexual offenders and harassers, and deployment of TfL enforcement officers across the network. Awareness raising campaigns are also a core component to the overall approach, with TfL Project Guardian providing a free one-off session for Year 9 students to raise awareness of sexual harassment on public transport and Active Bystander campaign aims to empower the public to intervene safely to disrupt hate crime and harassment.

Theme 5: *A trusted and recognisable bus network*

The bus network should be a valued regional asset that people trust to deliver a consistent, high-quality service no matter where one lives in the region or how often one travels by bus. The bus network should provide a recognisable 'offer' for both regular and infrequent users.

This means branding that is focused on building passenger awareness and understanding of the network. This means aiming for a network that is not regularly changing and, when changes are made, ensuring that this is done in a consistent and well-communicated manner.

Passengers should also expect a consistently, high quality experience, backed by a customer charter setting out what passengers can expect from the bus network and who is accountable for the services provided. The bus driver has a critical role in the overall passenger experience, with friendly and helpful drivers being particularly key to delivering 'great' bus journeys[66].

This requires consistent and inclusive ways of capturing passenger feedback and monitoring passenger satisfaction across the network.

Bus developments in other cities and regions:

Dublin Bus's Customer Charter

Dublin Bus's Customer Charter is the company's policy on quality of service. It details Dublin Bus's commitment to customer service aligned to agreed objectives and targets that are incorporated into their contract with the National Transport Authority.

The Customer Charter includes targets for meeting customers' service needs based on what passengers have reported during customer research.

The Charter includes company policy on:

- Customer Service
- Offering a fully accessible service
- Service reliability
- Vehicle cleanliness
- Lost property
- Investigating customer comments and complaints

The charter is reviewed and updated, where appropriate, on a regular basis.

Theme 6: *A seamless and integrated bus network*

The bus network should provide a 'seamless' journey with integration across key features – services/timetables, interchange locations/facilities, ticketing, and information[67,68] - making it easy and convenient for people to use the bus network. The bus network also needs to be more integrated with active travel, rail and other public transport including future Clyde Metro proposals to make it easy to make a whole journey by public transport and active travel.

Reducing the 'interchange penalty' is important to growing patronage and providing a bus network for everyone. Passengers perceive unproductive interchange time as far longer than the actual waiting time. Interchanging between services can also increase passengers concerns about missing connecting services, uncertainty of the quality and safety of the waiting environment and potentially confusing ticketing choices.

The bus network should be perceived as a single system that is easy, attractive and efficient for people to transfer between buses and to other modes. The location and access arrangements at bus stops should allow for convenient and attractive interchanging between services or modes, particularly in town centres and rail stations. This can be facilitated by the development of a 'mobility hub' network, which are spaces for integrating public, active and shared transport. Integrating bus with placemaking schemes can also help mitigate the 'interchange penalty' by improving the quality and attractiveness of the passenger waiting environment.

Strathclyde benefits from multi-modal integrated ticketing, but future developments should aim to provide greater convenience and flexibility such as tap-and-go multimodal ticketing with daily and weekly price capping based upon the actual number of journeys made. Travel information that is integrated, accessible, high quality and 'real time' for all passengers is also important to the 'seamless' travel experience.

Bus developments in other cities and regions:

Transport for West Midlands Swift Card

Transport for West Midlands Swift card is a smart ticketing scheme to pay for public transport in the West Midlands. Swift provides a range of options for passengers including:

- Season tickets with a choice of travel modes on bus, rail and tram
- 'Tap on, tap off' with daily and weekly price capping for travel on bus and tram
- Pay-as-you-go top up for less frequent travellers or for people who want to share their card or do not have access to a bank account.

Theme 7: *A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet*

The bus network should be operated in an environmentally sustainable and resilient way, supporting goals for net zero carbon and better air quality. Transitioning the bus fleet to zero emission vehicles, delivering the supporting infrastructure and upskilling the workforce is a huge challenge for government and industry, but one which is already well underway in Scotland and in Strathclyde as described earlier in this document.

Increasing bus service frequencies and network coverage could make this challenge even greater as more buses may be required to deliver these improvements to the bus network. It is likely that a majority of the bus fleet in Strathclyde will need to be zero emission vehicles within 10 years to align well with the Scottish Government's target to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Although challenging, this is in line with developments across Europe where 50 cities have already set targets to have fully zero-emission bus fleets by 2035 or earlier, as shown in Figure 27.

Alongside this, the bus network needs to be supported by a road network that is well maintained and adapted to mitigate effects of climate change. Mitigating surface flooding problems is important to avoiding disruption to bus services and passengers.

Figure 27: Cities with targets for zero emission bus fleets by 2035 or earlier
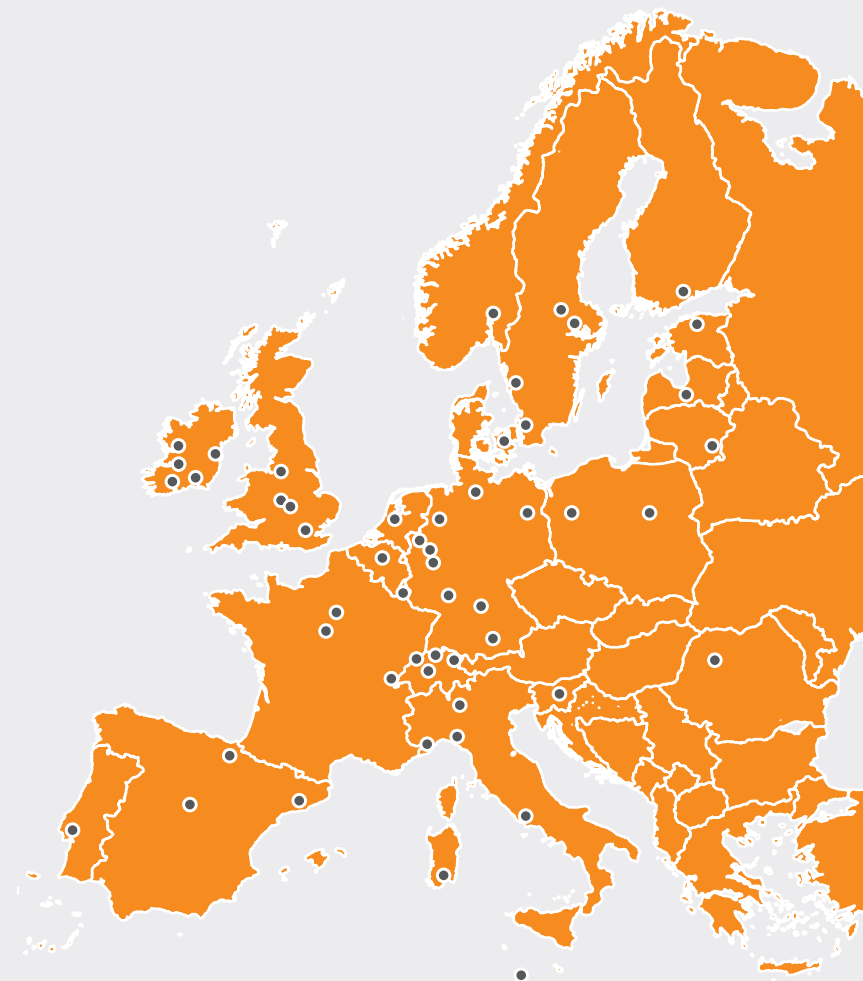
SRBS Policies and Measures

The SRBS Policies and Measures are set out in Table 1, grouped by each theme set out previously in this chapter. The Policies set out the principles to be applied in decision-making about bus, and the Measures describe the activities and outputs that are needed to deliver the Policies.

Table 1: SRBS Policies and Measures

Reference	SRBS Policy	Reference	SRBS Measure
Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed			
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required	M1	Develop, provide and maintain a regional bus network based upon defined principles according to area or route type for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.
		M2	Develop, provide and maintain essential levels of service for towns, villages, disadvantaged communities and key destinations (e.g. hospitals), working towards improved levels of service over time.
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required	M3	Develop, provide and maintain high frequency services on core bus routes, aiming for a minimum 10-minute service at peak times.
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network	M4	Develop, provide and maintain an integrated bus network with better coordination between services, modes and areas, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural bus services better integrated with regional express bus services).

Reference	SRBS Policy	Reference	SRBS Measure
Theme 2: Reliable and quicker journeys			
P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services	M5	Develop and deliver bus priority infrastructure on routes that have high frequency service levels and on routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways.
		M6	Develop, provide and maintain bus services that better meet punctuality and reliability performance standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data.
		M7	Develop and deliver better coordination of rural bus services with regional/express bus services, rail services and ferry services.
		M8	Develop and deliver better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.
		M9	Develop and deliver wider car demand management policies and measures.
		M10	Develop and deliver traffic management and enforcement measures at appropriate locations (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement).
		M11	Develop and deliver more effective and coordinated network and infrastructure planning for regional bus corridors.
		M12	Develop and deliver co-ordinated regional network communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to events and disruption impacting regional bus corridors.
P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times	M13	Develop and deliver package of options to achieve faster bus journey times for appropriate routes including bus priority, smart ticketing, bus stop optimisation, faster vehicle access/egress and express services.

Reference	SRBS Policy	Reference	SRBS Measure
Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing			
P6	Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities	M14	Develop and deliver, as appropriate, concessionary or discounted fares for groups most in need, progressing towards increased affordability for all.
P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring	M15	Develop and deliver automatic fare capping, ensuring best fare is applied for actual journeys made.
P8	Ensure that bus fares and ticketing are easy to understand and flexible	M16	Develop and deliver simplified and flexible fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket and accessible payment options for all journeys.
		M17	Develop and deliver accessible and easy to understand fares and ticketing information.
		M18	Develop and deliver consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases.
Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys			
P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.	M19	Develop and deliver consistent and high-quality accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams.
		M20	Develop and deliver inclusive and accessible travel and journey planning information, including on buses and at bus stations and waiting facilities.
		M21	Develop and deliver passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach.
		M22	Develop and deliver accessible infrastructure including improvements for buses, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.
		M23	Deliver CCTV on all buses and at all bus stations.
		M24	Deliver and maintain high quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops and bus stations.

Reference	SRBS Policy	Reference	SRBS Measure
Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network			
P10	Ensure a consistent network identity across the region.	M25	Develop and deliver a strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services).
P11	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region	M26	Develop and deliver a network-wide Customer Charter.
		M27	Develop and deliver inclusive, network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.
P12	Ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers	M28	Develop and deliver processes to align any significant service changes to well-defined dates each year with a clearly reported rationale for change.
P13	Ensure high quality and consistent customer experience across the region.	M29	Develop and deliver high quality and consistent customer service standards for bus across the region.
Theme 6: A seamless and integrated network			
P14	Ensure a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.	M30	Develop and deliver smart ticketing options and simplified product offer.
		M31	Develop and deliver bus tickets more closely integrated with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro.
P15	Ensure bus services and networks are closely integrated across the region with other modes	M32	Develop and deliver more integrated public transport network and service planning between bus, ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional services and the emerging Clyde Metro.
P16	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region	M33	Develop and deliver high quality passenger facilities that are better integrated with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.
		M34	Review, improve and optimise passenger waiting facility infrastructure and locations where appropriate.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Reference	SRBS Policy	Reference	SRBS Measure
P17	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region	M35	Develop and deliver accurate, reliable and integrated real time bus travel information across the region.
		M36	Develop and deliver accurate, reliable and integrated travel and journey planning information.
Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, efficient and adaptable bus network and fleet			
P18	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.	M37	Develop and ensure high quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.
P19	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region	M38	Develop and deliver an efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.
P20	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.	M39	Develop and deliver road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.
		M40	Develop and increase bus workforce resilience and skills.
		M41	Develop and deliver EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.

5 The SRBS Delivery Plan

Overview of delivery plan

SPT has identified, through this strategy's development processes, that franchising appears to be the optimum way to ensure that the ambitions of the bus strategy are achieved. Consultation processes have also demonstrated that there is broad support for SPT to pursue development of a franchising model, with many stakeholders feeling that the current bus network is falling short of what is required to deliver long-term, sustainable passenger growth and better access for communities.

The SRBS sets a strategic position in support of pursuing franchising, but there are steps mandated in legislation that SPT will need to take to confirm that franchising offers the best overall approach to transforming the bus network in Strathclyde. This Delivery Plan outlines the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 for a Franchise Framework Assessment (FFA), which includes the development of a Full Business Case and independent scrutiny and democratic approval of that process. The Delivery Plan also highlights the key issues and risks that must be considered and addressed throughout the process to develop and implement franchising including developing appropriate models for funding and financing, governance, organisational structures, and asset ownership.

At the same time, SPT understands that a lengthy process to make the case for franchising creates uncertainty regarding the long-term commercial sustainability of bus operators in the region, which could lead to further deterioration of the bus network in the interim period. The Delivery Plan sets out actions to mitigate this, including an action to formalise engagement mechanisms with bus operators to ensure they are well informed of processes and to facilitate feedback loops.

SPT also shares the views of stakeholders that policies set out in the SRBS regarding bus infrastructure, traffic management and wider policies that encourage and promote bus user (including car demand management measures) should be progressed concurrently with the process to develop and implement franchising. These actions require a continued collaborative, partnership approach between SPT, bus operators, councils, Transport Scotland, passengers and other stakeholders, with key actions set out in the Delivery Plan.

Bus Franchising: Breaking the Cycle of Decline, Building the Cycle of Growth

Overview of bus franchising

Bus franchising replaces on-road competition between commercial operators with a competition for operating contracts. The contracts are specified and tendered by a transport authority, which places a higher degree of control over service specifications and fares in the hands of the transport authority. The franchising contracts specify the levels of service the transport authority considers to be required to meet the needs of communities, to integrate with other transport modes and services, and to be affordable within the finances available to it. The transport authority usually also sets fares, which means the authority takes on the risk that changes to fares or bus patronage numbers have on farebox revenue.

A franchising scheme would therefore represent a significant step-change in how bus services are delivered in Strathclyde. Currently, bus services that are no longer commercially viable are at the risk of service level reductions, at relatively short notice, or fare rises to ensure the operator can continue to run them without making a loss (notwithstanding any funding support that may be available). Under franchising, major decisions regarding service level changes, fares and routes would fall to a local transport authority, who also have a responsibility to the communities they serve and the wider transport network that they operate or are partly responsible for.

Under franchising, SPT would determine, with appropriate engagement and consultation, for example: what bus services are to be provided, when and where; fares that are charged; and the standards those services should meet. Franchising also provides a means to achieve fully integrated bus services and fares across the network and closer integration with other public transport modes.

Rationale for pursuing a franchising model

The SRBS Case for Change described how "the commercially operated bus network is reducing – requiring increased public intervention. The existing network limits its use both by those with no access to the network, and through limited evening and Sunday services", how the "relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration, and ticketing complexity" and that whilst "bus can help achieve improved social, environmental and economic outcomes […] the sustained decline in bus use is limiting its role in supporting wider policy." Doing nothing is not a credible option, and therefore this strategy must consider suitable alternatives. Post-pandemic, revenue from passenger fares has only accounted for 42% of operator income[69] – the sector therefore has an increasing reliance on public sector funding to sustain existing passenger levels.

The work that SPT has carried out to date on investigating different bus delivery models suggests that franchising provides the greatest opportunity to deliver transformational change to the bus network in the form of more frequent and co-ordinated services, more affordable fares and improved and consistent service quality. It also can effectively support the nationally significant Clyde Metro proposal and closer integration with the wider public transport and active travel networks.

Franchising allows SPT, and our partners, to take a strategic approach to planning the bus network rather than patching up gaps in the commercial network. Franchising means networks can be planned as a whole to serve communities, support local and regional priorities -striking the right balance of investment for passenger growth and better access for communities - and integrate with other modes and transport development plans. As a local transport authority, SPT can reinvest any surpluses generated back into the network in support of these goals.

SPT therefore believes that franchising is the best model to deliver an improved bus network in Strathclyde. Franchising can harness the expertise and innovation of the private sector whilst ensuring stronger public accountability and better alignment of funding and investment to local and regional needs and priorities. Franchising is an established model for providing bus services in many cities and regions across Europe and provides the greatest certainty around delivering an integrated bus network for Strathclyde. Franchising also strengthens the relationship between council commitments to delivering bus priority and delivery of improved services under franchising; creates a consistent, accessible network; improves transparency of decision making; and enables strategic, region-wide progress on bus decarbonisation and infrastructure.

Key issues in the development of franchising

Key Issue: Partnership agreement on the scale and pace of change across the region

This strategy describes the features of a better bus network and makes it clear that the network will need to be enhanced to deliver growth and improved access. The scale of service level improvement has not been specified in the strategy as it will be necessary to reach agreement with local authority partners on this through the process to develop franchising and in accordance with funding availability. However, the broad scenarios that may be considered by SPT and partners are likely to include:

- A basic scenario would bring all services up to a defined minimum service level, following logical structures and conventions (such as route numbering, service categories, frequencies and hours of operation) that passengers can more easily follow, rely on and that can be intuitively built upon in later phases as funding and demand allows.

- A moderate scenario would embed a new structure for the network by introducing route changes and some new routes, where replacements or amalgamations are required, with minimal frequency adjustments.

- A major scenario would embed a new structure for the network by introducing route changes (and some new routes, where replacements or amalgamations are required) with enhanced frequencies.

In practice, it is likely that a phased approach to service level improvements may be required as funding, demand and supply within the market allows. Phasing by area may also be required for several reasons including procedural matters related to the legislation covering franchising and the potential for differing funding commitments across the region. A lack of operators may also affect the scale and pace of change by area. In such a case, the development of a small-scale municipal bus operation(s) may be an appropriate consideration for these areas.

Key Issue: Development of enhanced fares and ticketing systems

The strategy highlights the complexity of ticketing in the region and the challenges for some passengers regarding affordability of fares.

A franchising model provides the opportunity for SPT to have greater control and oversight of fares and ticketing in the region, simplifying ticket structures and available products, lowering fares (subject to funding or subsidy) and introducing measures and systems to improve the customer experience in purchasing and using tickets.

A franchising model would likely mean the following for fares and ticketing within the franchised area:

- SPT introducing and managing fares and ticket products for franchised services, sitting alongside a reviewed suite of multi-modal tickets.

- SPT operates gross cost contracts with operators whereby SPT retains all fare revenue and assumes the revenue risk.

- Operators on service contracts required to accept and issue specified tickets and charge specified fares.

- New ticketing systems allowing the introduction of, for example:
  - best value fare capping
  - flat single fares
  - 'hopper' fares, allowing multiple journeys within a specified time limit.

In a franchised network, it is likely that SPT would operate gross cost contracts with operators, whereby SPT will be responsible for collecting all passenger fare revenue and implementing a common fare and ticketing policy across all franchised services. SPT would also take ownership of the risk for any decreases in fare revenue (due to falls in patronage for example) and will be required to fund any resulting shortfalls. However, this model would allow SPT to reinvest fare revenue back into the network and its services.

SPT would also need to enhance its capabilities for managing revenue protection, such as operating a ticket inspections team, particularly if revised vehicle boarding and ticket checking arrangements were put in place. However, a first line of defence will remain with the private sector (through compliance checking for example, as part of the franchise contract).

Responsibility for setting fares and managing ticketing would allow SPT, as funding allowed, to set simpler fare structures and lower fares. There would also be the opportunity to simplify zonal fare structures and standardising fares across local areas and service types. Deeper fare and ticketing integration with other modes, including with the future Clyde Metro proposals, would also be more feasible.

Key Issue: Development of enhanced Information and customer service systems

A franchising model provides opportunity to integrate, standardise and enhance customer and journey planning information and customer service provision across the region. At the most ambitious level, SPT would be responsible for, and operate all, customer information and services related to the franchised network, providing a consistent, accurate and accessible service and standard of information for all bus users across the region. All information and services would be provided as part of a single brand identity through a "one-stop shop" of customer information and services operated by SPT, with services including:

- App and website (ticketing and services)
- Real-time data
- Timetables and maps
- Customer services
- Passenger Charter
- Ticketing products
- Social media.

Consolidating information and services for the whole regional bus network would allow SPT to more easily integrate the bus network and the information and services underpinning it with other modes, including the future Clyde Metro proposals.

Key Issue: Funding and financing franchising

It is likely that a future franchised network, at least in the short term while the market and revenue returns are stabilised and returned to growth, will rely on the availability of sizeable public funding to support the bus network, assume operational control and pay for required investments to deliver improvements.

Given the challenging current situation regarding public sector finances, and specifically support for local bus initiatives, it is uncertain that funding will be maintained at current levels in real terms. Thus, the affordability of delivering on franchising commitments is also uncertain, and the level of risk transferred to the public sector will require securing a contingency to allow for fluctuations in the marketplace (e.g. unforeseen reductions in passenger volumes). Reduced funding for the bus sector will inevitably continue the cycle of decline identified earlier in this document.

A franchising scheme could be delivered as a self-funded scheme through farebox revenue and existing revenue streams. However, this is unlikely to deliver more frequent services, affordable and attractive fares and other features of a better bus network. Therefore, it is likely that funding environment will require, at minimum:

- Reinstatement of the Bus Partnership Fund or a revised replacement long-term capital investment fund to support bus priority infrastructure

- Network Support Grant reformed to give SPT eligibility to claim to support services.

- Access to bus decarbonisation funding

- Reimbursement of concessionary fares.

Pursuing a more ambitious level of change will likely require additional funding sources, likely to include a mix of the following:

- A long-term, multi-year funding commitment from the Scottish Government to support the operation and enhancement of bus services in the west of Scotland.

- Devolution of National Concessionary Travel Scheme (NCTS) funding

- Revenue from new funding streams, such as workplace parking licensing, to be invested into the bus network.

- Additional funding streams explored in consultation with Scottish Government / Transport Scotland and Local Authorities. From experience elsewhere in the UK, this might include regional precept, municipal borrowing, or direct financial support.

The funding environment will be further explored with partners and stakeholders as the level of ambition is further detailed and agreed in the process to develop franchising.

It is noted that the options appraisal carried out for the SRBS identified an indicative high-level estimate of £45m - £85m per annum additional revenue subsidy to deliver a regional franchise of a transformational nature. These figures provide stakeholders with a likely 'highest cost' scenario for subsidy, but final costs will not be known until the scale of ambition is agreed with partners through the process to develop franchising. It is important to highlight that these costs do not include fleet and depot scenarios, which are described in the following section.

Key Issue: Ownership and control of fleets and depots

The ownership and control of fleets and depots is a critical decision within the development of a franchising scheme. No decision has been made on the intended approach as this will be developed through the process to develop franchising, as detailed later in this chapter, which includes liaison with the Competition and Marketing Authority. However, indicative options could look like the following:

- Operators retain own vehicle fleets and depot sites, and responsibility for procurement, maintenance and operation of vehicles. Operators are required to ensure their vehicle fleet and depots meet the specifications of the franchising contract they are operating; or

- SPT owns and procures all vehicle fleets, leasing them to operators contracted to run the franchising contracts to maintain and operate the vehicles during the length of the contract. SPT acquires or leases some or all bus depots, undertaking a consolidation of depot infrastructure in the medium to long-term. Depots are provided to operators for the term of the service contract; or

- SPT leases all vehicle fleets from a private bus vehicle rolling stock leasing company (similar to ROSCOs in the rail industry), providing them to operators contracted to run the franchise contracts. Leasing company remains responsible for maintenance and renewal of vehicles. Operators retain depot sites and incorporate the cost of providing the depot into their contract price. Operators are required to ensure their sites meet the requirements of the fleet provided by the leasing company and the specifications of the franchise contract they are operating.

Options where SPT acquires greater control (and greater risk) of the fleet and depot infrastructure have the effect of levelling the playing field when it comes to procuring any future franchise contracts, potentially broadening the market, avoiding market distortion and encouraging greater competition, innovation and value for money. However, these options will require far more upfront financing and funding.

It may be appropriate for a hybrid of the options to be deployed, depending on the size and location of franchise contracts, the availability of assets that could be acquired, and the location of existing depots, allowing SPT to spread the financial and operational risks between itself, the leasing company, and the operators, whilst retaining control over the specification of the vehicle for each route and how it meets regional priorities such as Zero Emission Buses (ZEB), branding, maintenance schedules and vehicle capacities.

Key Issue: SPT organisational development and stakeholder management

A franchised bus network in Strathclyde will require additional supporting services and resources within SPT to implement and operate a franchising scheme. Staffing and support services is likely to include:

- Contract management

- Procurement

- Network planning and development

- Commercial and pricing analysis

- Customer services

- Compliance and monitoring

- Stakeholder management and consultation

- Policy analysis and development

- Data and IT

- Marketing and passenger engagement.

The team that SPT would require to manage franchising would potentially be significantly larger than the team it currently has in providing oversight of services in the region. Dependent on the nature of the franchising model, network planning and scheduling could remain the responsibility of the operator of franchise contracts. This could reduce the resource and administrative burden on SPT as the franchising authority, however it would also reduce SPT's oversight and level of control over the structure of the network and services.

Key Issue: Delivery of complementary policies and investment

The delivery of the SRBS and bus franchising also requires investment in bus infrastructure and traffic management measures, particularly commitment to deliver bus priority on key corridors to facilitate more reliable and quicker bus journeys. It will also require delivery of integrated transport policies including car demand management and behaviour change to encourage modal shift away from car use and better integration of bus with the emerging Clyde Metro.

Indicative programme and timescales to develop franchising

The process for creating a Bus Franchising Scheme is based on statutory requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 legislation and will adhere to Department for Transport, Transport Scotland and HM Treasury guidance, as follows:

- Prepare a framework for bus franchising, outlining the case for a proposed scheme and its proposed scope.

- Prepare a Franchise Framework Assessment (FFA). This would represent a 'five case' Outline Business Case, following relevant transport appraisal processes and HM Treasury's Green Book guidance. The FFA would consider franchising against other bus reform options, such as partnerships. The FFA would include the following:

  - The Strategic Case, detailing the strategic rationale for and objectives of the scheme, drawing on the work undertaken to date;

  - The Socio-Economic Case, comprising a STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) 'Detailed Appraisal'. This is a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of a transport scheme or proposal against a range of criteria specified in guidance;

  - The Commercial and Financial Cases, comprising a detailed assessment of the commercial and financial viability of the proposals;

  - The Management Case, assessing the achievability and deliverability of the proposals; and

  - A range of supporting technical workstreams and assessments including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment.

- Commission an independent audit of the FFA.

- Undertake a statutory public consultation on the proposed framework and the FFA.

- Place the proposed framework and the FFA in front of an independent panel appointed by the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, which will consider the case for franchising and determine whether or not to approve the making of the proposed franchise framework.

- Make the bus franchising framework and enact it on the ground.

SPT estimates that the process, up to the point of a panel decision and including a preliminary 6-month mobilisation period, will take around 3 years. The transition and implementation period following the panel decision could take between 12 months and 30 months dependent upon the scale and complexity of the franchising model to be implemented.

SPT has identified some funding to commence the development of franchising. SPT has also sought contributions from the Scottish Government, with discussions on-going.

Key Risks to be considered in the development of franchising

The most significant risks involved in the development of franchising have been outlined in this section.

Key Risk: Political and partnership support and leadership

Development of franchising requires consistent, long term political support and leadership across 12 local authorities and continued alignment with national policy. Elections and changes in national or local priorities may be disruptive to the process. Any local funding requirements may be challenging to deliver.

To mitigate, SPT will need to ensure elected members, council leaders and chief officers, MSPs, senior transport officers and other influential stakeholders are regularly briefed and are prepared to promote and support the delivery of the bus strategy. The process to develop franchising will need to reflect the requirements of the election cycle.

Key Risk: Governance and accountability

Whilst the need for change is broadly agreed, the specific outcomes to be delivered by franchising and the allocation of risk will require detailed consideration through the process to develop franchising. Similarly, the geographic scope and phasing of franchising requires detailed discussion and agreement across partners.

To mitigate, a strong governance framework will be required, providing for transparency, equity and accountability across partners. This framework will include the development of bus operator and passenger forums. The aim of these forums will be to address the concerns and issues that may arise during the franchise development process, and to allow partners to feed into planning, engagement and design matters at appropriate stages.

Key Risk: Resourcing

Franchising will bring considerable change to internal structures and resourcing within SPT, which may also impact on delivery of existing services.

To mitigate this risk, SPT will continue to engage with English Combined Authorities to learn from their experiences, and continue to develop our plans for organisational change and recruitment linked with the planning for Clyde Metro.

Key Risk: Market uncertainty

Transition in the bus delivery model and uncertainty around funding will undermine confidence amongst existing operators, many of whom are SMEs, may not have had direct experience with franchising, and may not have established procurements teams or processes in place to respond to franchising tenders. This may lead to short-term decision making, profit maximisation and limited investment, or increase the risk of operators exiting the market, particularly in the case of SMEs who may not have operations in other geographical areas to fall back on. Bus operators have told SPT that providing certainty as soon as practicable is essential and that SPT must ensure processes are transparent and fair. Operators have also noted that, if franchising is taken forward, SPT should consider how to provide opportunities for different types of operators, including SMEs.

SPT will need to set out more detailed plans as these develop and engage in regular dialogue with operators to avoid unintended consequences. SPT will also need to develop contingency plans if any operators exit the market ahead of franchising. SPT will develop a bus operator forum to support this, ensuring that all operators have opportunity to stay informed of, and feed into, detailed plans at appropriate stages. It is anticipated this forum will cover issues such as transitionary pressures faces by operators, updates on the FFA and transitionary process, and how operator can best prepare for future developments.

Key Risk: Untested legislation

The franchising powers within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 are entirely untested, with key elements differing significantly compared to English legislation. The franchising framework and its assessment, following audit and consultation, must be referred to a panel appointed by the Traffic Commissioner. This is an untried procedure and there is no guarantee that the Panel will approve the franchising proposal. The Panel may reject or require changes, which will cause significant delay with the latter triggering a renewed cycle of the franchising framework and assessment process.

The provisions of the Scottish legislation place tight and onerous timescales for utilising the franchising powers, which may place excessive burden on SPT to deliver transition or may require a less ambitious definition of franchising in terms of area or specification or both. However, the provisions also allow for such timescales to be varied utilising secondary legislation, on approval by Scottish Ministers.

To mitigate this, SPT will liaise with Transport Scotland and the Competition and Marketing Authority regarding the application of the existing legislation. SPT will continue to engage with other bodies including English and Welsh transport authorities, Urban Transport Group and the Department for Transport to consider the applicability of features of legislation covering England and Wales and will make the case for changes to Scottish legislation, such as Direct Award powers, if deemed appropriate. Some of the key differences between the equivalent or emerging English legislation (e.g. Bus Service Act 2017 and emerging Bus Service (No 2) Bill) and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 include:

- There is no requirement for scrutiny of the framework or its assessment by an independent panel under the Bus Services Act 2017.

- The franchising authority in England is not bound by a restrictive time window set out in legislation following approval of the proposal in which the franchising scheme has to be made.

- Direct award of contracts to incumbents under a franchising scheme in England may in future be made easier through the Bus Services (No 2) Bill currently going through the UK parliament; however, this legislation would not apply in Scotland.

SRBS Action Plan

Actions to develop franchising and mitigate key risks

SPT will work with partners to develop franchising and mitigate key risks of this process through the initial actions set out in Table 2.

Actions to deliver bus Infrastructure, traffic management and wider transport policies

SPT will work with bus operators, councils, Transport Scotland and other partners, including through existing voluntary partnership arrangements, to deliver key SRBS policies related to bus infrastructure, traffic management and wider transport policies alongside the development of franchising. These actions are set out in Table 3.

Table 2: Actions to develop franchising and mitigate key risks

No	Actions	Key partners and stakeholders
Franchising development process		
1	Report an outline programme for bus franchising development to SPT Partnership within c. 3 months following approval of the final SRBS.	SPT Partnership
2	Develop and agree governance plan for bus franchising development programme.	Councils
3	Consider and, as necessary, make the case for any changes to relevant Scottish legislation, including learning from the emerging legislative developments, such as the addition of direct award powers, in England and Wales.	Transport Scotland; Urban Transport Group; DfT
Engagement and liaison		
4	Develop a bus operator forum to facilitate transition to franchising and to address concerns and issues throughout the process.	Bus operators, Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
5	Liaise with Transport Scotland and Competition and Marketing Authority (CMA) regarding application of existing legislation for bus franchising.	Transport Scotland, CMA
6	Hold regular briefing sessions and funding discussions with Transport Scotland, Councils and elected officials.	Transport Scotland; Council Leaders and Council Senior Officers; MSPs; MPs
7	Develop a representative bus passenger forum to support the planning and engagement on bus franchising and other specific matters e.g. accessibility and inclusive design.	Transport Focus; Bus Users Scotland; Passenger representative groups
8	Continue to engage with transport authorities across the UK to learn emerging best practice in relation to bus franchising.	Urban Transport Group; other UK Transport Authorities
9	SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland on funding, legislative issues, and bus policy including delivery of the Fair Fares Review.	Transport Scotland
10	SPT will continue to work with bus operators to ensure service continuity ahead of any changes to bus governance.	Bus operators, CPT

Table 3: Actions to deliver bus Infrastructure, traffic management and wider transport policies

No	Actions	Key partners
Bus infrastructure and traffic management		
1	SPT will work with councils and operators to develop the goals of the voluntary bus partnership, with a key focus on delivery of bus infrastructure.	Councils; Operators; Bus Partnership
2	SPT will continue its core activities in bus ahead of implementation of franchising, including supporting socially necessary services subject to budgetary availability, managing bus stations, delivery of bus improvement capital projects with councils and others, provision of bus stops and shelters, information, and school transport on agency basis.	
3	Support the outcomes of the Bus Decarbonisation Task Force, ahead of implementation of franchising.	Transport Scotland, Bus operators, CPT, other stakeholders
4	**Deliver bus priority and other enhancements on the 5 bus corridors already appraised though the Bus Partnership Fund.** As part of this, carry out a rapid review of the appraisal outcomes for the five bus corridors, ensuring that the level of ambition is sufficiently high across relevant local authorities, and identify funding and delivery plans. The five corridors include: • Dumbarton Road • Great Western Road • Maryhill Road • Paisley Road West • Pollokshaws Road.	Councils; Bus Partnership; Transport Scotland
5	**Enforcement of existing measures and 'quick wins'** Work with operators and local authorities to develop targeted enforcement plans for priority locations. Work with local authorities to identify 'quick win' actions at priority locations e.g. renew road linings and signage.	Councils; Bus Partnership

No	Actions	Key partners
6	**Regional bus corridor plan** Development of key corridor principles including network identity, quality, journey times and accessibility, integrated with relevant Clyde Metro developments and wider active travel interventions as appropriate. Appraise and identify infrastructure requirements and projects for regional corridors, including relevant town centres and key interchange locations, integrated with the development of the bus network redesign plan, regional active travel network and Clyde Metro network development. Create a single, prioritised plan for bus corridor upgrading across the network and a programme for detailed design and construction for individual corridors/routes. This should build on existing work already carried out for the Bus Partnership Fund, avoiding duplication of work but ensuring a cohesive and ambitious region-wide approach linked to network plans under franchising.	Councils; Transport Scotland; Bus Partnership
7	**Regional hospitals, Colleges/Universities and town centres** Review arrangements for bus at key sites including vehicle access/circulation, passenger waiting facilities, and RTPI. Develop and deliver solutions, as required. Ensure appropriate bus arrangements are developed for new Monklands Hospital.	SPT; Councils; Health Boards; Other Stakeholders; Bus Partnership
8	**Bus stops quality and access** Review bus stop design guidelines, and update as required. This should include principles for accessible and inclusive design, provision of lighting, shelters, travel information and RTPI, and bus stop location. This should include consideration of vehicle access and passenger boarding needs. Assess bus stops in line with updated guidance and develop programme of upgrading as required. In tandem with local and regional active travel strategies, develop programme of assessing and upgrading walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops.	SPT; Councils; Bus Partnership
9	**Interchanges and Mobility Hubs** Identify suitable locations to provide interventions that promote easy, effective interchange between bus, rail, active travel, and private vehicles where appropriate (for example, rural hubs and P&R). These locations would entail bus stations and local bus stops within both urban and rural areas, ensuring that the region's population have appropriate solutions which reflect their specific needs.	SPT; Councils; Bus Partnership
10	**Bus termini / driver welfare** Review conditions for drivers at bus termini locations and develop proposals for improvements as required.	SPT; Bus Partnership

No	Actions	Key partners
11	**Regional network communication and transport co-ordination centre** Develop and assess options for improving co-ordination of transport network communications, monitoring and management, including consideration of a regional transport co-ordination centre. Develop business case as required.	Councils; Transport Scotland; Emergency Services; Operators
12	**Road network resilience** Work with roads authorities to identify and develop mitigations for surface flooding affecting bus network. Continue to chair the Climate Ready Clyde Transport Resilience Working Group. Lobby for increased resources for local authority road maintenance.	Councils; Climate Ready Clyde
Wider actions and activities to support bus		
13	Consider development of business case for small-scale municipal bus operation, alongside identification of any area-based supply side challenges identified in the process to develop franchising.	SPT, Councils
14	**Reducing need to travel and car demand management** SPT will advocate for development of car demand management measures including road user charging at a national level. SPT will encourage and work with councils to develop local parking policies that support sustainable transport. SPT will also continue to participate in the Local Development Plan process.	Councils; Transport Scotland
15	**Behaviour Change** SPT will continue to work with partners to deliver travel behaviour change focused on encouraging and promoting sustainable travel choices. SPT will continue to work with Bus Users Scotland, operators and other partners on bus promotions and events such as Catch the Bus Week. SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland, councils and other partners to deliver the People and Place Programme to support behaviour change.	Councils; Transport Scotland; Community and Sustainable Travel Organisations
16	**Clyde Metro and integrated sustainable transport network** SPT, with council partners, will continue to progress the development of Clyde Metro, and to align Clyde Metro and bus developments. SPT will develop an integrated network plan incorporating the long-term Metro proposals, bus network and active travel networks.	Councils; Transport Scotland

'Asks' of key partners and stakeholders

This section sets out SPT's 'asks' of key partners and stakeholders – specifically Transport Scotland, Councils and Operators – to support the delivery of the SRBS. These are noted below and will form the basis of future discussions as the SRBS is taken forward for delivery.

SPT asks councils to work with SPT:

- to support delivery of the SRBS action plan
- to support development and implementation of franchising, including the funding requirements.

SPT asks Transport Scotland to work with SPT:

- to support delivery of the SRBS action plan
- to support development and implementation of franchising, including the funding requirements
- to provide capital funding for bus infrastructure.

SPT asks operators to work with SPT in voluntary partnership to deliver relevant aspects of the SRBS action plan and to participate in an operator forum as part of the process to develop franchising.

6 Monitoring Plan

Progress towards the SRBS Goals and Objectives will be monitored on an ongoing basis to understand what is working well and what may need additional focus. A set of proposed monitoring indicators are set out in Table 4. Additional indicators will be developed as plans develop and more data sources become available to support monitoring.

Table 4: SRBS monitoring indicators

Indicator	Goal 1	Goal 2	Obj 1	Obj 2	Obj 3
Number of bus passenger journeys	✖				
Modal share of all journeys	✖				
Modal share of all journeys to work	✖				
Modal share of journeys to school	✖				
Proportion of adults who use local bus services at least 2 times per week	✖				
Proportion of households by public transport journey time (categories/ranges) to hospital, town centre, etc		✖			
Proportion of households within 400m of a bus stop, by service frequency			✖		
Proportion of adults who feel that local bus services are stable and are not regularly changing			✖		
Bus vehicle kilometres			✖		
Transport components of retail prices index				✖	
Concessionary Card Take up				✖	
Proportion of adults who feel personally safe and secure on the bus (day and evening)				✖	
Proportion of bus stops with a high access kerb				✖	
CO2 emissions estimates from road transport					✖
Proportion of adults who are satisfied with local public transport					✖
Proportion of adults who feel that local bus fares are good value					✖
Proportion of adults who feel that local bus services are on time					✖
Proportion of adults who feel that it is easy to change from local bus services to other forms of transport					✖
Proportion of adults who feel that it is simple deciding the type of ticket I need on local bus services					✖

7 Reference & Notes

[1] Based upon Transport and Travel in Scotland Local Authority Table LA11: Adults (16+) – use of local bus services in the previous month, 2023. Results for Strathclyde region.

[2] www.spt.co.uk/media/nr2c0jjt/spt_regional-transport-strategy-2023-2038.pdf

[3] www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/17/contents www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2/

[4] www.spt.co.uk/media/2wrkfd2o/srbs-case-for-change.pdf

[5] www.spt.co.uk/media/2pkj4pjr/strathclyde-regional-bus-strategy-optionsappraisal-final.pdf

[6] www.spt.co.uk/media/3xcngdsj/spt_srbs-consultation-document-april-2024-final.pdf

[7] www.spt.co.uk/media/ub5jxlpj/srbs-consultation-report-final.pdf

[8] www.spt.co.uk/media/termb3fe/sp060924_agenda7.pdf

[9] www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2/

[10] Using data from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Table 2.10

[11] https://blog.ptvgroup.com/en/city-and-mobility/simulation-road-space-cars/

[12] https://blog.ptvgroup.com/en/city-and-mobility/simulation-road-space-cars/

[13] Value for Money Assessment for Major Bus-Related Schemes. Department for Transport, 2016. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81b125ed915d74e6233a2d/Value_for_Money_Assessment_for_Major_Bus-Related_Schemes.pdf

[14] The Case for the Urban Bus. Passenger Transport Executive Group (pteg), 2013. www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/pteg%20Case%20for%20bus%20report%20FINAL.pdf

[15] Figure is from The new Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland: Draft Case for Change report www.spt.co.uk/media/afccz0gi/spt-regional-transport-strategy-case-for-change-report-for-consultation-april-2021.pdf

[16] Figure is from The new Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland: Draft Case for Change report www.spt.co.uk/media/afccz0gi/spt-regional-transport-strategy-case-for-change-report-for-consultation-april-2021.pdf

[17] Based upon data from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Table 2.10

[18] Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020, as set out in the RTS Case for Change.

[19] Transport and Travel in Scotland 2023, Table LA4.

[20] Transport and Travel in Scotland 2022, Table LA4.

[21] Using figures from Scottish Transport Statistics Table 13.5 UK Carbon Dioxide equivalent emissions 2023

[22] www.zukunft-mobilitaet.net/78246/analyse/flaechenbedarf-pkw-fahrrad-bus-strassenbahn-stadtbahn-fussgaenger-metro-bremsverzoegerung-vergleich/

[23] www.racfoundation.org/media-centre/cars-parked-23-hours-a-day

[24] SRBS Case for Change, page 12

[25] Based upon figures in Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 Table 2.2b

[26] IBID

[27] IBID

[28] Using figures from Scottish Household Survey Transport: Local Area Analysis 2007/08 Table 13. Results for Strathclyde.

[29] Using figures from 2023 Transport and Travel in Scotland Table LA11. Results for Strathclyde.

[30] Using figures from Scottish Household Survey Local Area Analysis 2001/02 and 2023 Transport and Travel in Scotland Table LA4.

[31] For example: www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/making-great-bus-journeys-2/

[32] For example: Hu, Xiaojian & Zhao, Linna & Wang, Wei. (2015). Impact of perceptions of bus service performance on mode choice preference. Advances in Mechanical Engineering. 7. 10.1177/1687814015573826. And What's Driving Bus Patronage Change?, Urban Transport Group (2019).

[33] RTS Case for Change page 41

[34] SRBS Case for Change, pages 27 and 29.

[35] www.transport.gov.scot/publication/bus-taskforce-summary-report/driver-shortages-sub-group/#:~:text=Operators%20in%20Scotland%20report%20an,mileage%20due%20to%20driver%20shortage.

[36] SRBS Case for Change, page 24.

[37] Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 Table 2.6 Operating costs per vehicle kilometre for local bus services (Scotland-wide).

[38] SRBS Case for Change, page 24.

[39] SRBS Case for Change, page 24.

[40] Factors affecting local bus demand and potential for increase. The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. 2021. Available at: https://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Policy_AK/BCPG_LocalDemand_FINAL.pdf?ver=2021-04-13-114655-943&timestamp=1618310835837

[41] Using figures from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 Chapter 2 Table 2.3c Vehicle kilometres by region for local bus services. Figures for Strathclyde and Southwest Scotland (i.e. Dumfries and Galloway).

[42] IBID

[43] SRBS Case for Change, page 2 and page 18.

[44] SRBS Case for Change, page 30.

[45] Department for Transport Quarterly bus fares statistics: April to June 2024

[46] SRBS Case for Change, page 30

[47] Report on affordability of public transport, 2022. Produced by SYSTRA Ltd on behalf of SPT. Available at: www.spt.co.uk/vision

[48] Includes 'The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons Young Persons' and 'The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons'

[49] 980,800 concessionary travel passes were issued to people eligible for the national The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons Young Persons' and 'The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons, as of November 2023. Using information from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Table 2.14, including the whole of Argyll and Bute.

[50] Such as those for monthly periods (or longer)

[51] RTS Case for Change, page 36.

52 Report on affordability of public transport, 2022. Produced by SYSTRA Ltd on behalf of SPT. Available at: www.spt.co.uk/vision

53 SRBS Case for Change

54 SPT local bus registration data

55 SRBS Case for Change, page 31

56 The ZoneCard is a flexible season ticket for travel by ScotRail, Subway and most buses in the Strathclyde region. The ZoneCard commercial ticketing arrangement has been in existence since the late 1980s, and SPT administers the ZoneCard on behalf of the ZoneCard Forum. The ZoneCard Forum is a collection of transport operators of which SPT is a member but not the Chair. The ZoneCard Forum, not SPT, agrees the ticketing prices and Zones. An updated smart ZoneCard was launched in 2024, introducing a simplified zone structure and more flexible ticket options including a one-day ticket and flexi tickets (e.g. 3 days in 7).

57 The Glasgow Tripper is a multi-operator bus ticket arranged and managed by First Glasgow, McGill's, West Coast Motors, Stagecoach West and Whitelaws. The ticket provides travel in Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and a portion of Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire.

58 Transport and Travel in Scotland 2012-2013 and 2023 Table LA13.

59 SRBS Case for Change, page 16.

60 SRBS Case for Change, pages 22 – 23.

61 SPT local bus registration data

62 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-accessible-information-onboard-local-bus-and-coach-services/providing-accessible-information-onboard-local-bus-and-coach-services#introduction

63 https://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Policy_AK/BCPG_LocalDemand_FINAL.pdf?ver=2021-04-13-114655-943&timestamp=1618310835837

64 Factors affecting local bus demand and potential for increase. The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. 2021. Available at: https://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Policy_AK/BCPG_LocalDemand_FINAL.pdf?ver=2021-04-13-114655-943&timestamp=1618310835837

65 Transport for London research identified a third of passengers who use real time information felt somewhat or much safer.

66 Making great bus journeys. Transport Focus, 2024.

67 For example: The Benefits of Simplified and Integrated Ticketing in Public Transport (2009). PTEG

68 For example: Door to Door Journeys, Transport Research Laboratory (2011) https://bettertransport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/legacy-files/research-files/door-to-door-journeys-full-report.pdf

69 In 2023-24, £352 million, 46% of operator revenue, came from concessionary passenger support, and £87 million, 11%, came from local or central government: through Network Support Grant or supported services. (Scottish Transport Statistics 2024 Bus and Coach Travel, page 4)