Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy
Reference number GB01T24C53

14/02/2025




STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL BUS STRATEGY – TECHNICAL REPORT

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IDENTIFICATION TABLE	
Client/Project owner	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Project	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy
Study	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy – Technical Report
Type of document	Technical report
Date	14/02/2025
File name	SRBS Technical Report DRAFT v2.docx
Reference number	GB01T24C53
Number of pages	93

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
1	Author	LV	Associate	17/01/2025	
	Checked by	NB	Director	17/01/2025	
	Approved by	NB	Director	17/01/2025	
2	Author	LV	Associate	14/02/2025	
	Checked by	NB	Director	14/02/2025	
	Approved by	NB	Director	14/02/2025	

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the report

1.1.1 This reports sets out the technical work undertaken to support the development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) on behalf of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT). The purpose of the report is to provide supporting evidence and background to the main SRBS document and to provide an overview of the various workstreams undertaken since 2023.

1.2 Structure of the report

1.2.1 The report has been set out according to the workstreams undertaken, and is structured as follows:

- Case for Change
- Development of SRBS policies
- Options Appraisal
- Public consultation
- Development of goals, objectives, policies and measures
- Engagement with partners
- Development of delivery plan
- Monitoring plan

2. CASE FOR CHANGE

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A Case for Change was developed and reported to the SPT Partnership Board in September 2023. The Case for Change was the first stage in the development of the SRBS and defined an initial set of objectives and core policies to frame the strategy and inform the subsequent appraisal of options. This chapter provides an overview of the Case for Change. The full Case for Change report is set out in Appendix A: SRBS Case for Change, which accompanies this document.

2.1.2 The foundations of an SRBS are embedded in A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the west of Scotland (2023–2038)[1], and the RTS's vision, priorities, objectives, and clear policy statement setting out the aim for a world class passenger focused public transport system. The RTS was published in 2023, and reinforces national policy ambitions, setting out the following Vision for transport in the region:

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

2.1.3 Of the five objectives of the RTS, objective 4 is:

> To make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone.

2.1.4 The RTS recognises the need to invest in transformative public transport, ensuring a sufficiently attractive 'offer' to move more people by more sustainable transport modes rather than by car. Therefore, a key theme within the strategy encompasses enhancing the quality and integration of public transport, stated through the objective presented above.

2.1.5 To achieve this, one of the key policy themes is enhancing the quality and integration of public transport, with enabling policies related to bus such as:

- An integrated public transport system
- Ticketing and information
- Mobility as a Service
- Bus quality and integration
- The integration of public transport with other sustainable modes

2.1.6 The RTS is clear that its strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network, and sets out a policy aiming for a world class passenger focused public transport system. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of the SRBS was recognised with the new powers and opportunities

[1] A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland 2023-2038 (SPT)

available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 requiring consideration in its development.

2.2 The bus network in Strathclyde

A declining trend

2.2.1 Bus has a catalytic role to play in the successful delivery of a range of national, regional and local policy, supporting social inclusion, carbon reduction and energy, economic and local environmental objectives and outcomes. In particular, the emerging Clyde Metro will have major impacts on the way public transport interacts across Glasgow and the wider area and its success requires deeper integration of public transport services and fares, currently not easily provided through the existing commercial bus delivery model.

2.2.2 Despite this major role for bus in the successful delivery of a range of policies, the bus network in the region has been on a downward trajectory since most recently peaking in 2008/9[2]. Bus passenger journeys (as shown in Figure 1) and bus vehicle kilometres operated across the region have been steadily falling, with this decline not mirrored across other transport modes. Bus is the only transport mode to see long term decline this century and this decline in the west of Scotland has been greater than in other Scottish regions. Satisfaction with public transport has also fallen.

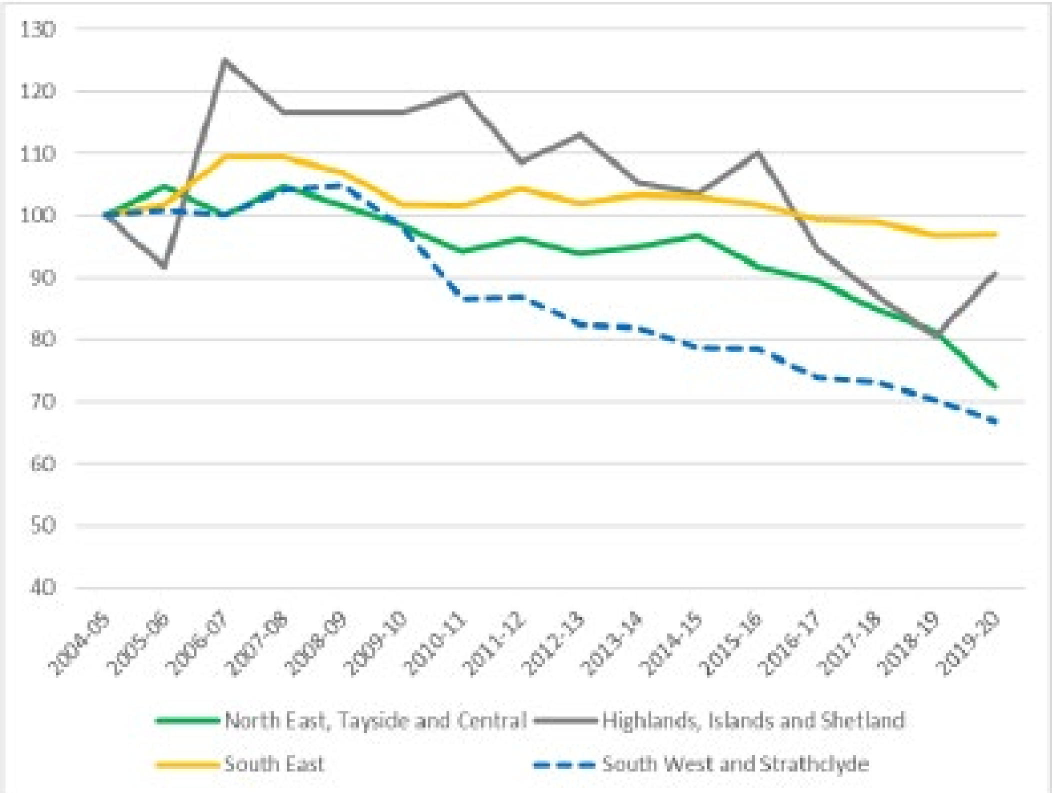


Figure 1 Annual passenger journeys (2004/5-2019/20) (indexed to 2004/5 = 100)

[2] Scottish Transport Statistics

The current network

2.2.3 The existing network is a mixture of commercial and subsidised services. Between 2019 and 2023, there was a decrease in the range and extent of the commercial bus network over time, with an increase in subsidised services over the same time period. The COVID-19 pandemic had a range of temporary and medium-term impacts on travel behaviour, which have exacerbated both passenger and network decline. This has required greater public spend to support bus networks.

2.2.4 Service frequencies have been reducing and coverage can be very limited on evenings or Sundays in some areas, making bus less convenient as a transport mode and limiting connectivity to key destinations.

Network delay

2.2.5 Increasing urban congestion is a problem facing bus operators in Strathclyde, and a particular issue for those operating within the greater Glasgow conurbation. Previous research showed that Glasgow had experienced some of the worst average bus journey times increases per annum compared to other UK cities, with this delay impacting operating speeds and costs, leading to longer journey times, higher fares and ultimately fewer passengers. Bus operating costs and fares are also rising, illustrating the relationship between delay, higher costs for passengers, and a less attractive service.

Fares and tickets

2.2.6 The relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with concessionary travel making up an increasingly higher proportion of all bus journeys on the Strathclyde network. Furthermore, fares and ticketing are complex and not well integrated across the sizeable number of operators in the region, making it difficult for bus users to navigate and ensure they are receiving the best value for money for their trip.

Competition

2.2.7 There are around 34 operators across the region, however three main operators are responsible for over 80% of all bus kms. As a result, most local authorities have a dominant operator, creating a lack of competition for most services and restricting passenger choice.

Current delivery model and funding

2.2.8 In the current de-regulated environment, private operators are responsible for planning and designing their own networks on a commercial basis. SPT is responsible for the tendering of socially necessary services, as well as maintaining stops and shelters, and owning and operating some bus stations and Park & Ride facilities in the region. Subsidised services cannot compete with commercial services, and neither SPT nor its constituent local authorities have powers to stipulate the make-up of the network, save for active engagement with operators through voluntary partnerships where possible.

Initial vision, objectives and outcomes for the SRBS

2.2.9 Considering the findings of the Case for Change, it was determined that there was a need for change in the delivery of bus operations across the region and overall bus reform to start closing the gap between existing operations and a world class bus network. Therefore, an initial aim and outcomes were established. The outcomes link SRBS to the wider social, economic and environmental policy framework by focusing on attracting more people to bus and ensuring more communities have access to bus for everyday needs.

2.2.10 Initial objectives were also developed, and a set of three core policy areas established to deliver on these objectives and set out in more detail SPT's aspirations for a world class bus network. Figure 2 sets out this process and the initial framework that shaped the workstreams in the development of the SRBS to follow.

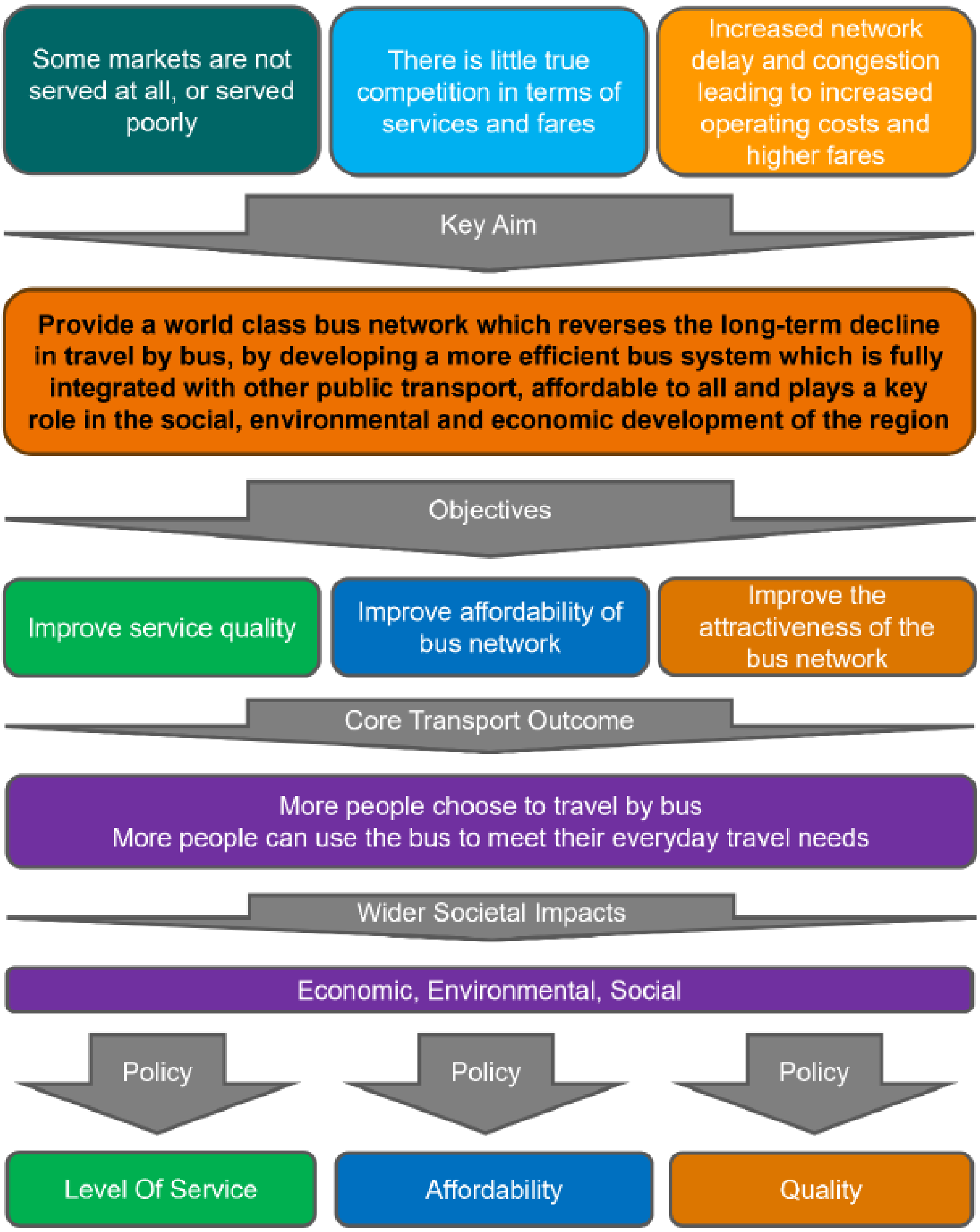


Figure 2 SRBS Case for Change framework

3. DEVELOPMENT OF SRBS POLICIES FOR APPRAISAL

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Case for Change set out the key problems to be tackled, the desired transport outcomes, and the objectives and core policy areas to deliver on these.

3.1.2 The three policy areas developed at Case for Change can be summarised as:

- **Improve Level of Service** – how, where and when the bus network operates.
- **Improve Affordability** – affordability of travel by bus across the region, including factors such as the structure, legibility, and integration of fares.
- **Improve Service Quality** – the service quality factors including quality of interchanges and bus stops, information, ticketing, vehicle and driver standards, and service reliability and punctuality.

3.1.3 Following the Case for Change, these core policy areas were developed further, including the formulation of initial policies, which would be necessary in order to undertake the Options Appraisal workstream to follow. This chapter provides an overview of the initial policy development. Further details are set out in Appendix: B SRBS Policy Development Note, which accompanies this document.

3.2 Improve level of service

3.2.1 The following initial guiding policies were developed under the **improve level of service** policy area:

- **1a.** Improve the **coverage** and **periods of operation** of the bus network, helping to ensure that people have access to bus services when and where they are needed, supporting socially and economically important trips, and reducing the reliance on private modes of transport, such as car.

- **1b.** Improve the **frequency** of bus services, in order to improve the attractiveness of services, support better integration of services and modes, and enhance the resilience of the bus network.

- **1c.** Improve the **operational effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the bus network, delivering an attractive bus network that creates a virtuous cycle of growth and improvement for sustainable travel.

3.2.2 In order to deliver on these policies, a set of initial guiding principles were developed that would serve as a basis for the subsequent Options Appraisal.

3.2.3 The initial principles developed incorporated:

- Frequency and capacity by service category and time period
- Hours of operation by time period
- Level of connectivity (defined by maximum daytime headways) by urban-rural classification of the origin point and destination type

3.2.4 The initial level of service principles for appraisal are set out in more detail in Appendix B: SRBS Policy Development Note.

3.3 Improve affordability

3.3.1 The Case for Change highlighted that the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes and significantly more than the Retail Price Index over a more than 20-year period. This is currently acting as a major barrier to bus use.

3.3.2 The Affordability of Public Transport Report[3] prepared by SYSTRA for SPT highlighted that for people and households in Strathclyde with lower incomes, the cost of public transport represents a very significant proportion of their income, especially when it is recognised that affordable housing is often located in peripheral locations generating a need to travel significant distances to access services and employment. This is compounded by the fact that low-income individuals and households cannot access the cheapest form of transport (car) because they are often unable to meet the upfront purchase costs.

3.3.3 In addition to pricing and fares, there are other considerations around affordability that require consideration, such as flexibility, competitiveness with other modes, complexity, and integration with other modes and services.

3.3.4 Therefore, the following initial guiding policies were developed under the **improve affordability** policy area:

- **2a.** Improve the affordability of fares, especially for those that need it the most.
- **2b.** Improve the competitiveness of bus fares with those of other modes and parking charges.
- **2c.** Ensure that fares are easy to understand, provide flexibility, and help to ensure users can access the best value fare for their journey.

3.3.5 To deliver on these policies, a number of different measures were developed that would inform the Options Appraisal process and enable this policy area to be developed further during the Strategy development phase. These initial measures were:

- Targeted zero or lower fares, e.g. to specific groups of the population and/or areas, and for organisations such as major employers;
- Lower fares for all;
- A simplified fare structure, such as zone expansion/flat fares/reduced single operator products;
- Best-value auto-capping options, e.g. day, week for contactless payments, across the region and operators; [4]
- Multi-operator, multi-mode, multi-area fares options, which do not penalise users on price for flexibility;

[3] www.spt.co.uk/vision

[4] For Brighton and Hove Buses, 'tap and cap' is used for around 85% of bus fare payments and is now enabled across multiple operators.

- Ensure that ticket prices are more competitive with other modes and parking charges in urban centres, e.g. discounts/fare caps at P&R and mobility hubs;
- The limitation of price rises across a time period (e.g. once a year) and to a control metric (e.g. operating costs/inflation).

3.3.6 While there exists the potential for targeted zero or lower fares reductions to form part of an overall affordability policy, the findings of the Affordability of Public Transport Report around policies relating to universal fare free travel found that the evidence of the benefits of these policies is mixed and uncertain, with the added unintended consequences of reduced opportunity for capital investment in the network.

3.4 Improve service quality

3.4.1 The improve service quality policy area encompasses a wide range of aspects related to bus use, and was therefore broken down into a number of initial key quality categories to enable policies to be developed. The rationale for this was developed from the Case for Change, which identified that the quality of the bus network, both in terms of consistency across the region and in terms of making travel bus more attractive in all areas and for more groups people, was limiting its success.

3.4.2 The initial key quality categories are set out in Figure 3.

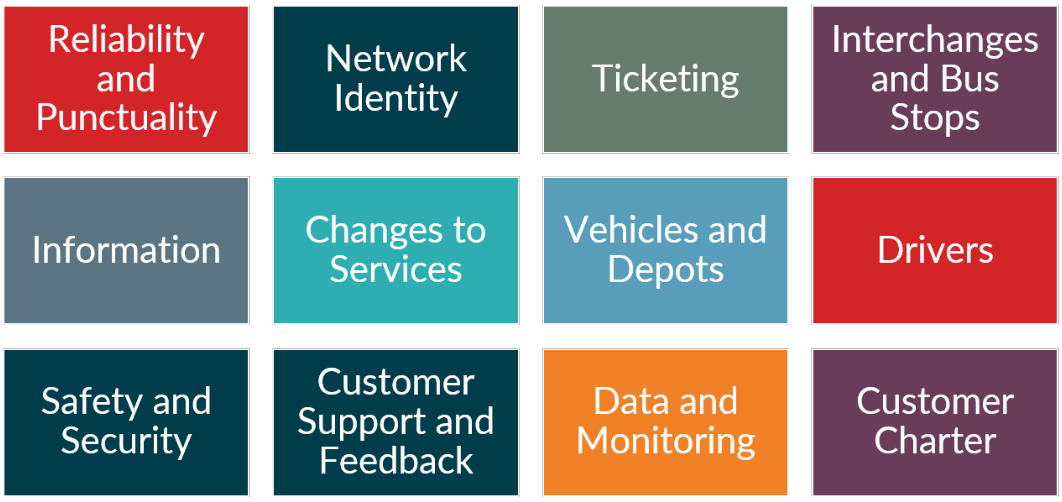


Figure 3 Initial key quality categories

3.4.3 For each of these initial key quality categories, initial guiding policies and some potential measures to support the Options Appraisal process were developed. These would also then be taken forward for further refinement during the Strategy development phase. The guiding policies and potential measures in each key quality category are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Improve service quality – initial guiding policies and potential measures

POLICIES	MEASURES
Reliability and punctuality	
• **3a.** Improve the performance of bus services in meeting standards related to reliability and punctuality in order to improve the quality of travel in terms of attractiveness, safety, security, and equity of service across the populations and areas served. This will be achieved by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle and driver availability, improving the resilience of the bus network, and by prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes. • **3b.** Improve the performance and attractiveness of bus journey times and service reliability compared to car journeys in order to achieve mode shift.	• Traffic reduction and the mitigation of congestion impacts on bus services, through bus priority measures, incident response planning/actions, traffic infringement enforcement, and wider modal shift and demand management measures. • Vehicle maintenance standards and maintenance staffing. • Robust and ambitious fleet renewal plans and reducing the average age of the fleet. • Driver recruitment, retention and level of standby drivers. • Monitoring and mitigation of failures to meet reliability and punctuality targets.
Network identity	

• **3c.** Develop a positive, recognisable and trusted bus network identity across the region, delivering consistency across information, ticketing, interchanges and stops, vehicles, and other key network assets.
• **3d.** Explore opportunities to strengthen this network identity with other sustainable transport modes.
	• Enhance the network identity, including branding and consistency for the following elements:
	  – Information (journey planning, timetabling, website and apps etc)
	  – Ticketing (e.g. enhancing ZoneCard)
	  – Interchanges and stops
	  – Vehicles
	  – Other key network assets
	• Delivery of awareness raising related to wider service quality elements etc, that foster a positive, recognisable and trusted identity.

POLICIES	MEASURES
Ticketing	
• **3e.** Ensure ticketing is easy to understand and use, provides flexibility, and helps to guarantee that users can access the best ticketing product for their needs. • **3f.** *To be consistent with the MaaS policy in the RTS:* Develop and facilitate Mobility as a Service in the region, building upon existing opportunities including ZoneCard where appropriate. Ensure MaaS platforms are inter-operable, incorporate regional bus services as part of a multi-modal offer, with cross-regional and national MaaS solutions where appropriate.	• Enhance smart and cashless ticketing options • Simplified product offer from a user perspective • Multi-operator and multi-mode tickets • Cross-boundary travel in the SPT area • Ticketing solutions that offer auto-fares capping • Increase the availability of off-bus retail outlets [5]
Interchanges and bus stops	
• **3g.** Enhance the quality and consistency of interchanges and bus stop facilities to increase the attractiveness of travel by bus and ensure that bus services are accessible to all. • **3h.** Explore new and improved locations for interchange and mobility hubs alongside bus stop rationalisation, to enhance interchange options while ensuring the delivery of a bus network that is efficient, and easy to understand and use.	• Develop and implement a design hierarchy methodology across the region to enable the targeting of appropriate bus stop facilities and design standards. • Increase the provision of shelters, seating, shelter and stop lighting, and real time information. • Develop an improved interchange and mobility hub offering, including at new locations and with other modes to enhance network integration. • Explore the rationalisation and siting of bus stops to enhance bus network efficiency and improve the legibility of the bus network. [6]

[5] This can also speed up bus boarding, helping punctuality/journey time consistency.
[6] i.e. remove stop confusion

POLICIES	MEASURES
Information	
- **3i.** Deliver consistently high-quality, accurate and accessible information to bus users across the region, before during and after travel. - **3j.** Ensure that all users have access to the information they need to confidently and safely travel on the bus network. - **3k.** Integrate information across region on the bus network, between operators, and with other modes, to provide users with a one-stop-shop experience.	- Develop consistent quality standards for information across the region, operators, and areas. Work with other modes to determine points where information can be shared in particular to make journey by sustainable modes more attractive and safer. - Consider information alongside the network identity quality measures to provide users with clear understanding of service usage, fares, ticketing and payment options etc.
Changes to services	
- **3l.** Improve the stability of the bus network by establishing minimum standards and protocols relating to scale, communication and frequency for any changes to bus services , to reduce impact on users, and to ensure users and key stakeholders are suitably informed.	- Establish set dates for service changes. - Establish protocols for communicating changes to authorities and users, including for planned and emergency roadworks, and other disruptors such as events. - Set caps on the number and scale of changes to the network throughout the year.

POLICIES	MEASURES
Vehicles and depots	
- **3m.** Drive the decarbonisation of the bus fleet, to support ambitions for the region to reduce emissions, improve air quality and minimise climate change impacts. - **3n.** Develop a consistent minimum standard of engine and age of vehicle to deliver decarbonisation, air quality and reliability benefits across the network. - **3o.** Ensure the number and capacity of vehicles capacity is managed across the network, to ensure demand can met for both fixed-route and on-demand forms of passenger transport and that there is resilience to deliver services. This includes to delivery an improved level of service for the network. - **3p.** Ensure consistently high-quality vehicles are operating in the region, to deliver attractive and accessible services for users. - **3q.** Ensure that vehicles are well maintained, to minimise reliability issues for the delivery of services. - **3r.** Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport. - **3s.** Ensure the scale, facilities and management of depots support ambitions for the vehicle fleet in the region, including decarbonisation needs, and the effective and efficient provision of bus services across the network.	- Consider the vehicle and depot requirements for a world-class bus network, including quality, accessibly, decarbonisation and emissions aspects. - Set out ambitious targets to deliver this fleet across the region, along with the depot and staffing requirements to support this. - Consider funding and delivery models to deliver on these targets for a high-quality and low-and zero-carbon bus fleet. - Explore concepts such as total transport, which consider the sharing of vehicles across different purposes for community benefit, e.g. education, health and social care, community transport.
Drivers	
- **3t.** Improve and standardise driver training regimes and the quality standards of existing drivers to ensure a more positive customer interaction experience. - **3u.** Review policies related to wider driver responsibilities, to ensure the bus service and network as a whole is being suitably represented.	- Develop measures to encourage high quality training for bus drivers. - Develop measures to encourage driver recruitment and retention.

POLICIES	MEASURES
Safety and security	
3v. To improve the perceptions of personal safety and security related to using buses: • Ensure that safety by design is promoted at all stages of the development, maintenance or improvement of new and existing bus services, networks and facilities. • Ensure that consultation with equality and welfare groups is made at all stages of the design and operational process and is maintained at regular intervals.	• Training for bus drivers to deal with issues • Physical safety and security measures, such as CCTV, lighting, enclosed driver booths, emergency contact stations, etc • Information and awareness measures • Measures such as a "Safe Places" scheme, where key interchanges, stops and on-board buses operate as places for those feeling vulnerable and are looking for safe place to get help.[7]
Customer support and feedback	
3w. Develop a common customer support and feedback process for users across the region, delivering a consistent, accessible and inclusive level of service to bus users.	• Develop a one-stop-shop for customer support and feedback across the region, from the user perspective. • Consider a region-wide refund dissatisfaction guarantee in the event that bus services do not meet passengers' satisfaction. • Commit to actively engaging with users, setting out performance targets and regularly publishing progress towards these to promote accountability.

[7] An example of this is the Sheffield Safe Places scheme, which includes public transport interchanges across the bus network, with proposals to expand to stops and on-board vehicles.

POLICIES	MEASURES
Data and monitoring	
- **3x.** Work with key stakeholders to identify the key areas of benefit related to data, collection, sharing, analysis, and monitoring, in order to improve the performance of the bus network and the quality of the sustainable transport offering to users in the region.	- Explore data needs and potential benefits related to the bus network, and integration with other modes. - Develop ways to collect, share, analyse, and monitor data to the benefit of the bus network and users, including integration with other modes, where relevant. - Develop a method for actioning improvements based on this information, including considering the potential for making some metrics around performance public.
Customer charter	
- **3y.** Develop a region-wide Customer Charter, outlining the quality that can be expected by users of the bus network.	- A region wide customer charter presenting a consistent offer to users.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Following the Case for Change and development of initial SRBS policies, the Options Appraisal considered options for enhancements to how bus services can be delivered in the west of Scotland using the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

4.1.2 The aim of the appraisal was to identify a recommended operational model for bus services in the region, with the development and refinement of the SRBS building upon that preferred model into a strategy for delivery, including responding to consultation feedback.

4.1.3 This chapter provides an overview of the options appraisal. Further details are set out in Appendix C: SRBS Options Appraisal report, which accompanies this document.

4.2 Options to be appraised

4.2.1 All options that were considered were in the context of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, which provides the ability to develop a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP), a revised Bus Franchising Scheme, and a municipally owned operator that would have the ability to compete for bus service contracts. The 2019 Act represented a potential step change in powers for local transport authorities in how they run bus services, and was the most significant change in the regulatory environment in Scotland since bus services were deregulated in Great Britain in 1986.

4.2.2 The options can be summarised as follows:

- **Business as usual (BAU)** – current bus operations in the SPT region, as evidenced and discussed in the Case for Change. The majority of bus services, and decisions on routes, service levels and fares, are delivered on a commercial basis by privately owned bus companies who recover the cost of operating their services through a mixture of farebox revenues and government payments. A minority of services are considered to be socially necessary and are provided through tendered contracts let by SPT.
- **Voluntary partnership (VP)** – a formal written framework within which bus operators, local transport authorities, local highway authorities and other relevant actors will work together to achieve stated objectives and deliver agreed measures and facilities. A VP is typically entered into to provide a structure for agreeing enhanced operating and highways standards when a major investment in infrastructure or services is secured.
- **Bus service improvement partnership (BSIP)** – a BSIP is a new form of statutory quality partnership enabled by the 2019 Act. It enables partners to come together and agree binding commitments that will be delivered during the term of the partnership. If measures and facilities agreed in the BSIP are not delivered then the relevant partner can be at risk of sanctions. The content of a BSIP would be subject to full consultation and agreement by a majority of operators before the partnership agreement is completed.

- **Franchising** – a bus franchising scheme replaces on-road competition between commercial operators with a competition for operating contracts. The contracts are specified and tendered by the local transport authority, placing a higher degree of control over service specifications and fares in the hands of the local transport authority. The local transport authority would also take on the risk that changes to fares or bus patronage would have an impact on farebox revenue. The precise model for franchise delivery could range from a comprehensive, region-wide form to a more localised form, such as a single or part of a local transport authority, with variations also possible around specifications of bus service operation and risk-sharing between the public and private sectors.
- **Municipal operations** – the 2019 Act permits local transport authorities to establish a municipally owned public bus operator(s) that can compete for contracts and operate registered bus services, reversing the provisions of the Transport Act 1985 that prevented the creation of such an operator. The municipal operator would likely be an arms-length company wholly owned by the local transport authority, providing suitable separation when competing for tendered bus service contracts. The likely paths towards replacing current commercial operators' businesses with a municipal operator would be by either winning contracts in a franchise scheme or by acquisition of bus operator assets and businesses.

4.2.3 To undertake the appraisal, an options matrix was developed to set out how each option would deliver under the three policy areas developed and refined during previous workstreams. This options matrix is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Appraisal options summary

POLICY AREA		OPTIONS				
		BUSINESS AS USUAL	VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIPS	BSIPS	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL BUS OPERATORS
Improve level of service		Status quo *(Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership)*	Status quo	'Minimum' level of service principles (outlined in Appendix B)	'Ambitious' level of service principles (outlined in Appendix B)	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)*
Improve affordability		Status quo *(Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership)*	Status quo *(Glasgow City Region VP)*	Value for money multi-operator tickets	Auto fare and best value capping Lower fares for all with targeted zero fares	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Auto fare and best value capping Lower fares for all with targeted zero fares
Improve service quality	**Reliability and punctuality**	Status quo *(Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership)*	Status quo *(Glasgow City Region VP)*	Reinvestment of reliability benefits into network or service improvements	Targets built into franchising agreement Standards applied across the franchised area Operational decision-making to improve performance	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Targets built into franchising agreement Standards applied across the franchised area Operational decision-making to improve performance
	Network identity		Area-wide network brand/identity, with sub-brands linked to operators or corridors	Area-wide network brand/identity, with sub-brands linked to operators or corridors	Single network identity across all services	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Single identity across all operated services or franchised area Could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand
	Ticketing		Status quo *(Glasgow City Region VP)*	Area-wide ticketing and smart cards	Network-wide tickets Smart cards	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Network-wide tickets Smart cards

POLICY AREA	OPTIONS				
	BUSINESS AS USUAL	VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIPS	BSIPS	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL BUS OPERATORS
Interchanges and bus stops		Area-wide branding of stops and interchanges	Area-wide branding of stops and interchanges	Area-wide branding of stops and interchanges Oversight over bus stop provision and facilities Working with highway authorities to deliver improvements	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Area-wide branding of stops and interchanges Oversight over bus stop provision and facilities Infrastructure responsibility in same organisation as operations
Information		Area-wide app, website and information hub More comprehensive data sharing agreements	Area-wide app, website and information hub More comprehensive data sharing agreements Minimum standards for smaller operators to meet	Area-wide app, website and information hub Control/oversight over data use and publication	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Area-wide app, website and information hub Control/oversight over data use and publication
Changes to services		Voluntary agreement to restrict service changes to a set timetable, frequency and scale with appropriate notice period	Statutory agreement to restrict service changes to a set timetable, frequency and scale with appropriate notice period	Changes to services determined by franchise agreement and made by authority with oversight of both community welfare and operational need	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Changes to services determined by franchise agreement (if in franchise scheme) and made by authority with oversight of both community welfare and operational need
Vehicles and depots		Status quo	Statutory agreement of fleet renewal, maintenance schedules and bringing of smaller operators up to a minimum standard	Development of standards as part of franchise agreement Consistency of approach across the region	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Management of depots and services under one municipal operator
Drivers		Status quo	Delivery of driver training and recruitment standards improvements under statutory agreement	Region-wide consistency of specification over training and standards in franchise agreement	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Improved working conditions/benefits for drivers working for municipal operator

POLICY AREA	OPTIONS				
	BUSINESS AS USUAL	VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIPS	BSIPS	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL BUS OPERATORS
			Uplifting of areas with poor standards		Region-wide consistency of specification over training and standards in franchise agreement
Safety and security		Status quo	Statutory agreement of improved standards for CCTV and other security measures	Specification of standards for CCTV and other security measures under franchise agreement	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Specification of standards under franchise agreement Improved standards for CCTV and other security measures under municipal operator
Customer support and feedback		Status quo	Statutory agreement of improved standards for customer services	Specification of customer service improvements under franchise agreement Single customer service contact	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Specification of customer service improvements under franchise agreement Single customer service contact
Data and monitoring		Transparent data sharing and KPI monitoring process	Transparent data sharing and KPI monitoring process	Ownership of network-wide data to inform improvements and integrate with other modes Sharing of KPIs agreed centrally	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Ownership of network-wide data to inform improvements and integrate with other modes Sharing of KPIs agreed centrally
Customer charter		Development of region-wide customer charter in conjunction with operators	Development of region-wide customer charter in conjunction with operators	Development of region-wide customer charter specified in franchise agreement	*(Dependent on the wider operating context)* Development of region-wide customer charter specified in franchise agreement or as part of municipal operations

4.3 Appraisal methodology

4.3.1 The options appraisal was undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) process, which provides a framework to assess the performance of transport options to address identified problems and present the results in a consistent manner to inform decision makers.

4.3.2 The appraisal was completed on both a quantitative and qualitative basis, and drew upon the quantitative data collected as part of the Case for Change, previous studies where appropriate, relevant strategy and policy documents and design guidance, and knowledge and experience of planning, appraising and delivering transport options similar to those considered here.

4.3.3 The options were appraised against the STAG criteria of Environment; Climate Change; Health, Safety and Wellbeing; Economy; and Equality and Accessibility. They were also appraised against the following Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs), developed as part of the Case for Change:

- **TPO1:** Improve service quality.
- **TPO2:** Increase affordability of the bus network.
- **TPO3:** Increase the attractiveness of the bus network.

4.3.4 Finally, the options were appraised in terms of feasibility, affordability, and public acceptability, as well as an assessment of risk and uncertainty.

4.4 Interim impact assessments

4.4.1 Interim impact assessments in the following areas were undertaken during the Options Appraisal process, informed by scoping exercises carried out during the Case for Change:

- Equality (EqIA)[8]
- Child rights and well-being duties (CRWIA)[9]
- Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD)[10]
- Island communities (ICIA)[11]

4.4.2 The interim impact assessments have been published online by SPT. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 3.

[8] Interim Equality Impact Assessment (SPT)
[9] Interim Child Rights and Well-being Duties Impact Assessment (SPT)
[10] Interim Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment (SPT)
[11] Interim Island Communities Impact Assessment (SPT)

Table 3 Summary of interim impact assessments

	BAU	VP	BSIP	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS
Equality	Minor negative or neutral	No impact	Minor beneficial	Major beneficial	Minor beneficial (dependent on operating context)
Child rights and well-being duties	Neutral/ negligible	Neutral/ negligible	Minor beneficial	Major beneficial	Minor beneficial (dependent on operating context)
Fairer Scotland Duty	Minor adverse	Neutral/ negligible	Minor beneficial	Minor to major beneficial	Minor beneficial (dependent on operating context)
Island communities	Minor adverse	Minor adverse	Neutral/ negligible	Minor beneficial	Uncertain

4.5 Appraisal results and recommendations

4.5.1 A summary of the results of the options appraisal is presented in Table 4. The following seven-point scale of assessment, as recommended in STAG, was used to assess the performance of the options:

- **Major benefit (✓✓✓):** these are benefits or positive impacts which, depending on the scale of benefit or severity of impact, the practitioner feels should be a principal consideration when assessing an option's eligibility for funding;
- **Moderate benefit (✓✓):** the option is anticipated to have only a moderate benefit or positive impact. Moderate benefits and impacts are those which taken in isolation may not determine an option's eligibility for funding, but taken together do so;
- **Minor benefit (✓):** the option is anticipated to have only a small benefit or positive impact. Small benefits or impacts are those which are worth noting, but the practitioner believes are not likely to contribute materially to determining whether an option is funded or otherwise.
- **No benefit or impact (−):** the option is anticipated to have no or negligible benefit or negative impact.
- **Small minor cost or negative impact (×):** the option is anticipated to have only a minor cost or negative impact. Minor costs/negative impacts are those which are worth noting, but the practitioner believes are not likely to contribute materially to determining whether an option is funded or otherwise.
- **Moderate cost or negative impact (××):** the option is anticipated to have only a moderate cost or negative impact. Moderate costs/negative impacts are those which taken in isolation may not determine an option's eligibility for funding, but taken together could do so; and

- **Major cost or negative impact (×××):** these are costs or negative impact which, depending on the scale of cost or severity of impact, the practitioner should take into consideration when assessing an option's eligibility for funding.

4.5.2 The results led to a set of recommendations that were taken forward into the subsequent public consultation. The recommendations in the options appraisal were as follows.

Business as usual

Recommendation: Not taken forward – delivery model will require reform. It was considered unlikely that the existing delivery model would break the cycle of decline seen during the last 20+ years or would contribute to delivering the objectives of the RTS or fulfil the aspirations of current and potential bus passengers.

Voluntary partnerships

Recommendation: Not taken forward – delivery model will require wide-ranging reform. It was considered that without more radical measures not achieved to date through VPs, it is unlikely the option would break the cycle of decline or contribute to delivering the objectives of the RTS or fulfil the aspirations of current and potential bus passengers.

Bus service improvement partnerships

Recommendation: Taken forward for further consideration. The feasibility of BSIPs appears good, with similar delivery models in England used to some success, and are a process that can deliver a more robust arrangement than current structures that may have a positive role in delivering the objectives of the RTS and fulfilling the aspirations of current and potential bus passengers. However, they are heavily dependent on the availability of additional funding and on positive and ambitious engagement, with no absolute certainty of sustained delivery.

Franchising

Recommendation: Taken forward for further consideration. If the franchising authority can afford to fund its initiatives, then a franchise scheme allows the authority to take complete control to direct the outcomes it desires. It was therefore concluded that franchising may also have a positive role to play in delivering the objectives of the RTS and fulfilling the aspirations of current and potential bus passengers if sufficient funding can be identified. However, there were a number of crucial caveats around affordability, feasibility and timescales, challenging processes, and risk sharing and uncertainty that would need careful consideration were a scheme to be progressed.

Municipal operations

Recommendation: Taken forward for further consideration. Any municipal bus company would operate within the restrictions of the ultimate delivery model, and therefore its success would be partly dependent on this model. Notwithstanding, it was considered that there may be some parts of the region where there may be merit in establishing an alternative to existing operators where competition for contracts has become restricted, and could act as an active challenger under a franchise model. Therefore, it was considered that establishing a municipal bus company would be complementary to the other reforms to delivery models rather than a significant driver of a world class bus network.

Table 4 Summary of options appraisal

APPRAISAL CRITERIA			OPTIONS				
			BUSINESS AS USUAL	VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP	BSIP	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL BUS OPERATIONS
TPOs	Improve service quality		×	×	✓✓	✓✓✓	– to ✓✓✓
	Increase affordability of the bus network		×	×	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
	Increase the attractiveness of the bus network	Reliability and punctuality	×	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	× to ✓✓
		Network identity	✓	✓✓	✓✓ to ✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓
		Ticketing	××	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	×× to ✓✓✓
		Interchanges and bus stops	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓
		Information	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
		Customer support and feedback	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓ to ✓✓
		Changes to services	–	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
		Vehicles and depots	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
		Drivers	×	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
		Safety and security	–	–	✓	✓✓	– to ✓✓

APPRAISAL CRITERIA		OPTIONS				
		BUSINESS AS USUAL	VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP	BSIP	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL BUS OPERATIONS
	Customer charter	–	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	– to ✓✓✓
	Data and monitoring	–	✓ to ✓✓	✓ to ✓✓	✓✓✓	– to ✓✓✓
STAG criteria	Environment	–	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓ to ✓✓
	Climate change	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓ to ✓✓
	Health, safety and wellbeing	–	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
	Economy	✗	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
	Equality and accessibility	✗	✗	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓ to ✓✓✓
Feasibility		Minor consideration	Minor consideration	Moderate consideration	Major consideration	Moderate consideration
Affordability		Minor consideration	Moderate consideration	Major consideration	Major consideration	Moderate consideration
Public acceptability		Moderate negative consideration	Moderate negative consideration	Moderate positive consideration	Major positive consideration	Minor positive consideration
Indicative peak vehicle requirements		-	-	+200 vehicles	+300 vehicles	-
Indicative additional annual bus kms		-	-	+8-10m	+20-25m	-

APPRAISAL CRITERIA	OPTIONS				
	BUSINESS AS USUAL	VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP	BSIP	FRANCHISING	MUNICIPAL BUS OPERATIONS
Total fare revenue benefits per annum	-	£0-2m	-£6m to -£4m	£5-7m	-£6m to -£4m
Estimated MEC benefits per annum (2024 prices)	-	£0-2m	£5-7m	£8-10m	£5-7m
Indicative additional annual operating costs[12]		-	+£20-40m	+£50-80m	-
Indicative required subsidy	-	-	+£40-60m	+£45-85m	-
Estimated additional bus journeys per annum	-	0-5m	20-25m	35-40m	N/A
Deliverability and acceptability risks	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
Complexity of operation	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Timescales and program risks	Short-term No program risk	Short to medium-term Some program risk, mitigated by low ambition	Short to medium-term Some program risk, mitigated by modest ambition	Medium to long-term High program risk due to uncertainty of process	Medium to long-term High program risk due to uncertainty of process

[12] The estimated operating costs are based on an indicative level of service and estimated costs of the resources required to run the services. Therefore, to reflect this uncertainty, and the fact that the costs will be subject to refinement in future workstreams, a cost range has been presented here.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Following completion of the Options Appraisal, SPT published a consultation document setting out:

- The SRBS process and timescales.
- A summary of the challenges and goals for the bus network, drawing upon the Case for Change.
- An overview of the features of a better bus network
- The options available to deliver a future network.
- A set of recommendations to guide the development of the SRBS, drawing upon the recommendations of the Options Appraisal.

5.1.2 The consultation document requested feedback on the recommendations ahead of further development of the SRBS.

5.1.3 Following the consultation period, a consultation report was published presenting the results and findings of the process. This chapter provides an overview of the consultation process, findings and outcomes. Further details are set out in Appendix D: SRBS Consultation Document and Appendix E: SRBS Consultation Report (August 2024).

5.2 Consultation process

5.2.1 SPT carried out a consultation exercise between Tuesday 2nd April 2024 and Monday 13th May 2024 to understand levels of support or opposition to the recommendations set out in the consultation document and the reasons why. The consultation was open to individual members of the public and organisations.

5.2.2 Feedback from individuals and organisations was obtained through the following channels:

- Online questionnaire;
- Completing a Word version of the questionnaire and submitting via email;
- Attending a workshop (invited stakeholders only);
- Attending an interview (invited stakeholders only); and
- Submitting a stakeholder letter / document.

5.3 Consultation feedback

5.3.1 A summary of feedback received in support/opposition to each of the recommendations is set out below. The consultation report provides further details of the consultation feedback.

SPT should rule out business as usual as an option to deliver the future bus network:

Questionnaire findings[13]	Individuals		Organisations	
	80% support	17% oppose	72% support	22% oppose

- Both individuals and organisations felt that **change was required** and perceive **business as usual to not be working for users** at present.
- **Issues with current bus services** were reported, such as perceived increases in fares and reliability of services.
- However, a smaller proportion had concerns that ruling out business as usual may lead to the **removal of what they perceive to be successful services**.
- Some stakeholders felt the current provision of services is satisfactory and **does not require change**. Others suggested that other factors need to be addressed first, such as road congestion, and that more evidence on the recommendations is required.

SPT should rule out voluntary partnerships as an option to deliver the future bus network:

Questionnaire findings	Individuals		Organisations	
	70% support	22% oppose	60% support	30% oppose

- The main reason for supporting ruling out voluntary partnerships was due to concern around **enforcement**, specifically that voluntary partnerships may have little to no impact in delivering improvements to services without **clear accountability mechanisms**.
- The previous impact of voluntary partnerships was also mentioned by questionnaire respondents and stakeholders during the interviews, who noted instances where these have been introduced but were deemed to have **not succeeded**.
- There were concerns from stakeholders over **potential costs and additional workload** associated with voluntary partnerships.
- However some opposed voluntary partnerships being ruled out as they felt they could work well with **appropriate collaboration and commitment.**

SPT should commence work on franchising, in line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019:

Questionnaire findings	Individuals		Organisations	
	76% support	18% oppose	71% support	21% oppose

- The potential improvements that local services franchising could offer in the **quality of service** were mentioned by individuals and stakeholders, particularly relating to improvements in the consistency of service quality and in meeting the needs of local communities.

[13] Note, does not include those that responded 'don't know' or 'neither support nor oppose', therefore percentages do not total 100%.

- Stakeholders referred to **other examples** of local services franchising considered to be successful. Some felt franchising would allow for better **integration** of bus with other modes of transport.
- Reasons for opposition were due to concerns around the **perceived limited impact** franchising may have on current services. Some suggested measures need to be in place to ensure that commitments are binding, and operators are held accountable
- Some stakeholders raised concerns regarding the **timescales** for this option, and potential delays in the implementation of the franchise model. There were also concerns around the **cost** of implementing a franchising model.

SPT should progress with Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) arrangements to provide a firm basis for private and public sector commitments to arrest further passenger decline and improve the bus network over the medium term:

Questionnaire findings	Individuals		Organisations	
	43% support	49% oppose	51% support	37% oppose

- Those who were in support of this recommendation felt it could work well as an **interim step** whilst other options are being developed. Some questionnaire respondents commented on the potential benefits this option could have on bus services, and some also mentioned the **perceived success of other bus partnerships** introduced elsewhere.
- The effectiveness of BSIPs was a concern raised consistently by questionnaire respondents and stakeholders, specifically the belief that this option may have **little to no impact** on bus services. Some had concerns that introduction of BSIPs may delay the introduction of other options.

  - There were also concerns around **accountability** and the **flexibility** that this option offers to operators. Stakeholders felt that clear mechanisms for enforcing agreements and holding all parties accountable were required. Stakeholders also raised concerns regarding the potential funding sources for implementing this option, with a similar concern around costs raised in the questionnaire by respondents who perceived this option to be expensive.

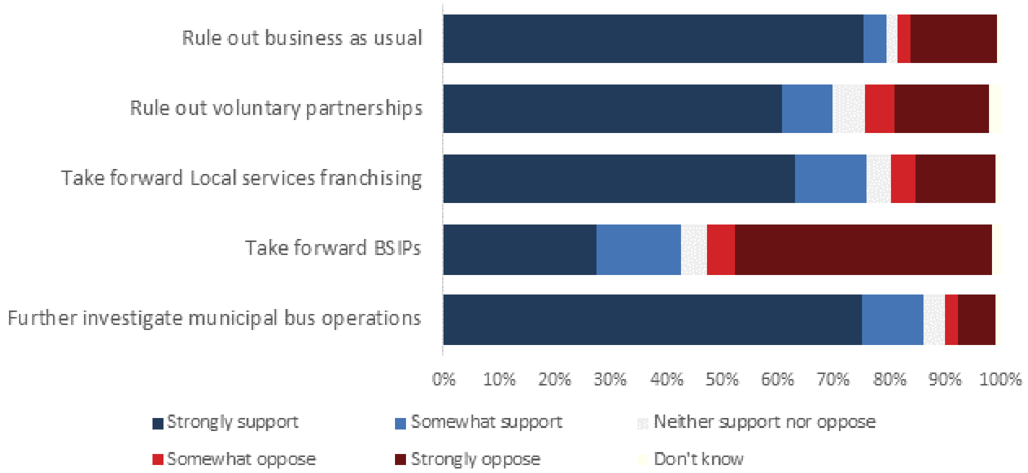
SPT should investigate the opportunity offered by the creation of small-scale municipal bus operations to target provision in areas where there is a lack of commercial services or as an operator of last resort:

Questionnaire findings	Individuals		Organisations	
	86% support	8% oppose	74% support	21% oppose

- Support for this option came from all channels with individuals/organisations considering this option to provide an opportunity for buses to be run as a **public service** which they consider to potentially bring more benefits than a profit-driven model.
- Some felt that other similar options have been **successful elsewhere**. They noted that they believe this option may improve service coverage, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

- Reasons to oppose this option were due to concerns regarding perceived **potential high costs**, with some stakeholders questioning the cost-effectiveness of this option and investment required. Comments were also made in relation to the **scale and ambition** of this option. While questionnaire respondents felt that this option should be larger scale and more ambitious, stakeholders who participated in the workshop suggested that different scales of operation should be explored to determine feasibility.

5.3.2 The following graph provides a summary of the level of support/opposition received within the questionnaire for each of the different options:



5.4 Outcomes of the consultation

5.4.1 The consultation feedback was considered by SPT, leading to updating of the recommendations which were approved by the SPT Strategy and Programme Committee in September 2024[14]. The updated recommendations are set out in Table 5.

[14] https://spt.production.d8.studio/media/termb3fe/sp060924_agenda7.pdf

Table 5 SPT response to consultation including updated recommendations

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION	SPT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION FEEDBACK	PROPOSED ACTIONS
"Business As Usual and Voluntary Partnerships should be ruled out as means to deliver a better bus network as more radical intervention is required."	The consultation feedback was generally supportive of this recommendation. Having considered responses received from individuals and organisations, no points were identified that would require a change to the recommendation at this time.	The recommendation will be retained unchanged for development for the final draft SRBS for consultation. However, SPT will continue to support existing voluntary partnership arrangements in the immediate future.
"SPT should commence work on franchising, in line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019."	The consultation feedback was generally supportive of this recommendation. Having considered responses received from individuals and organisations, no points were identified that would require a change to the recommendation at this time.	The recommendation on franchising will be retained unchanged for development for the final draft SRBS for public consultation. The franchise option will be further developed, particularly the process route map to take forward the franchise assessment in line with emerging statutory guidance. This will include discussions with partners on funding for the franchise development process.
"SPT will consider developing business case(s) for small-scale municipal bus company(ies) aimed at providing socially necessary services in parts of the region where private operators are currently very limited."	The consultation feedback was generally supportive of this recommendation. Having considered responses received from individuals and organisations, no points were identified that would require a change to the recommendation at this time.	The recommendation will be retained unchanged for development for the final draft SRBS for consultation.
"SPT should progress with Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) arrangements to provide a firm basis for private and public sector commitments to arrest further passenger decline and improve the bus network over the medium term."	The consultation feedback on this recommendation was mixed in terms of support for and opposition to it. Acknowledging this, and that it may be challenging to deliver BSIP as an interim measure within a wider framework that aims to develop franchising, SPT believes the recommendation should be amended.	The recommendation will be amended to read: "SPT, and our partners, should progress with the necessary transition arrangements appropriate (e.g. time-limited, voluntary partnerships or other agreements aimed at improving the bus network) to provide a structured basis for private and public sector collaboration in attempting to arrest further passenger decline and stabilise the bus network in the pre-franchising period."

6. DEVELOPMENT OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND MEASURES

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 As set out earlier, the Case for Change developed a framework to support the Options Appraisal process, and the three core policies from the Case for Change framework were then developed into a set of initial guiding policies and measures to inform the Options Appraisal.

6.1.2 For the purpose of the development of the draft SRBS, the outcomes/goals, objectives, policies and measures were refined and consolidated to ensure they were suitable for a strategic document to be consumed by a wide audience and to facilitate further assessment of the measures against the updated objectives.

6.1.3 Figure 4 illustrates the SRBS Strategic Framework. The Goals describe what the strategy needs to deliver in the long term for bus, linking the SRBS to the wider policy framework, whilst the Objectives describe the aims for the bus network itself. The Policies are the principles to be applied in decision making while the Measures describe the activities and outputs that are needed to deliver the policies.

6.1.4 The Delivery Plan outlines how the strategy will be delivered. The development of the Delivery Plan is set out later in this document.

6.1.5 The Monitoring Plan sets out how the strategy will be monitored. The development of the Monitoring Plan is set out later in this document.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Goals</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Goal: More people using buses, and people using buses more often</td><td colspan="3">Goal: More communities have access to bus for everyday travel</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Objectives</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services</td><td colspan="2">Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all</td><td colspan="2">Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Policies and Measures</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Delivery Plan</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Monitoring Plan</th></tr>
</table>

Figure 4 SRBS strategic framework

6.2 Goals and objectives

6.2.1 The Goals are derived from the Case for Change framework outcomes. The Goals link the SRBS to the wider policy framework by establishing the role of bus in providing an alternative to car and providing essential access for communities.

6.2.2 The Objectives were developed from the TPOs established through the Case for Change and applied in the Options Appraisal. SPT determined that, for the SRBS Strategic Framework, the objectives should be more descriptive about the bus network. Table 6 illustrates the link between the TPOs and the SRBS objectives.

Table 6 Development of SRBS objectives from the Appraisal TPOs

APPRAISAL TPO	SRBS OBJECTIVE
Improve service quality	Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services
Increase affordability of the bus network	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all
Increase the attractiveness of the bus network	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network

6.3 Policies and measures

6.3.1 The strategy policies and measures were also refined and consolidated from the initial guiding policies in the Options Appraisal to develop a set of policies and measures suitable for a strategic document that will be consumed by a wide audience and to facilitate an appropriate level of assessment against the updated objectives.

6.3.2 Table 7 sets out the links between the initial policy areas and guiding policies in the Options Appraisal and the policy themes and policies in the draft SRBS. Table 8 sets out the measures under each of the draft SRBS policies.

6.3.3 Table 9 sets out the scoring assessment of the proposed measures, which has informed the development of the Action Plan (to be covered later in this document). The key for the scoring is as follows:

- Objectives and integration:
  - Likely to have major benefits
  - Likely to have moderate benefits
  - Likely to have minor benefits
  - Likely to be neutral
  - Likely to have minor disbenefits
- Deliverability (encompassing financial, governance and stakeholder constraints)
  - **Very challenging** – 2-3 major constraints to delivery
  - **Challenging** – 1-2 major constraints to delivery
  - **Possible** – 0-1 major or 1-2 moderate constraints to delivery, including at least one financial or governance constraint
  - **Achievable** – 1-3 minor constraints to delivery, including at least one financial or governance constraint
  - **Very achievable** – 0-2 minor constraints to delivery

Table 7 Refinement of policies between Options Appraisal and draft SRBS

OPTIONS APPRAISAL POLICY AREA/ QUALITY CATEGORY AND POLICY NUMBER	DRAFT SRBS POLICY THEME AND POLICY NUMBER
Improve level of service	**Buses where they are needed, when they are needed**
1a	P1
1b	P2
1c	P3
Improve affordability	**Affordable and attractive fares**
2a	P6
2b	P7
2c	P8
Improve service quality	
Safety and security	**Accessible and safer bus journeys**
3v	P9
Reliability and punctuality	**Reliable and quicker journeys**
3a	P4
3b	P5
Network identity ***Customer charter*** ***Customer support and feedback*** ***Changes to services*** ***Drivers***	**A trusted and recognisable bus network**
3c	P10
3d	P10
3y	P11
3w	P11

OPTIONS APPRAISAL POLICY AREA/ QUALITY CATEGORY AND POLICY NUMBER	DRAFT SRBS POLICY THEME AND POLICY NUMBER
3l	P12
3t	P13
3u	
Ticketing Interchanges and bus stops Information	**A seamless and integrated network**
3e	P14
3f	
3g	P15
3h	
3i	P16
3j	
3k	
Vehicles and depots	**A more sustainable and efficient bus network**
3m	P17
3n	
3p	P18
3q	
3o	P19
3r	
3s	
Data and monitoring	***Policy sifted out***

OPTIONS APPRAISAL POLICY AREA/ QUALITY CATEGORY AND POLICY NUMBER	DRAFT SRBS POLICY THEME AND POLICY NUMBER
3x	*This policy was sifted out and not taken forward as a specific SRBS policy at this stage as it was felt that the main activities it covered encompassing working with key stakeholders to identify areas of data sharing and performance improvement are activities that apply across the policy themes and would be undertaken as part of the delivery of several of the draft policies above.*

Table 8 SRBS policies and measures

POLICY NUMBER	POLICIES	MEASURE NUMBER	MEASURES
Buses where they are needed, when they are needed			
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required.	M1	A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.
		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.
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required.	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.
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network.	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).
Reliable and quicker journeys			
P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services.	M5	Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways.
		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.
		M7	Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services.

POLICY NUMBER	POLICIES	MEASURE NUMBER	MEASURES
		M8	Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.
		M9	Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations.
		M10	Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement).
		M11	More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys.
		M12	Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre.
P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times.	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.
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	Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all.
P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring.	M15	Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made).

POLICY NUMBER	POLICIES	MEASURE NUMBER	MEASURES
P8	Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible.	M16	Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys.
		M17	Accessible and easy to understand fares information.
		M18	Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases.
Accessible and safer bus journeys			
P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.	M19	Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams.
		M20	Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses.
		M21	Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach.
		M22	Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.
		M23	CCTV on buses and at bus stations.
		M24	High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops.
A trusted and recognisable bus network			
P10	Develop a consistent network identify across the region.	M25	A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services).
P11		M26	A network-wide Customer Charter.

POLICY NUMBER	POLICIES	MEASURE NUMBER	MEASURES
	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region.	M27	Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.
P12	Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers.	M28	Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change.
P13	Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region.	M29	Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g. travel centres, contact centres, customer services).
A seamless and integrated network			
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.	M30	Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer.
		M31	Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro - networks/services/hub, ticketing and information.
P15	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.	M32	High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region.
		M33	Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.
P16	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region.	M34	Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region.
		M35	Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network.
		M36	Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements.

POLICY NUMBER	POLICIES	MEASURE NUMBER	MEASURES
A more environmentally sustainable, efficient and adaptable bus network and fleet			
P17	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.	M37	High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.
P18	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region.	M38	Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.
P19	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.	M39	A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.
		M40	Resilient and skilled-up workforce.
		M41	EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.

Table 9 Draft SRBS measures and scoring assessment

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
Buses where they are needed, when they are needed	**M1.** A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	**Very challenging**
	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.	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	**Very challenging**
	M3. High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services.	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	**Very challenging**
	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).	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	**Challenging**

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
Reliable and quicker bus journeys	**M5.** Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes and routes that are prone to congestion.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	**Very challenging**
	M6. Bus services that better meet performance standards, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data.	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	**Possible**
	M7. Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services.	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	**Possible**
	M8. Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	**Possible**
	M9. Support wider car demand management policies and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations.	✓✓	-	✓	-	**Challenging**

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
	M10. Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking patrol).	✓✓	-	✓	-	**Possible**
	M11. More efficient network planning to provide faster and more reliable journeys.	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	**Challenging**
	M12. Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption.	✓✓	✓✓	✓	-	**Possible**
	M13. Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings and express services.	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	**Challenging**

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing	**M14.** Concessionary/discounted fares targeted at groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all.	-	✓✓✓	✓	-	Possible
	M15. Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made).	-	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	Possible
	M16. Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys.	-	✓✓	✓	✓✓	Possible
	M17. Accessible and easy to understand fares information.	-	✓✓	✓	✓✓	Very achievable
	M18. Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases.	-	✓	✓	-	Achievable

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
Accessible and safer bus journeys	**M19.** Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams	-	✓✓	✓	-	Possible
	M20. Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses.	-	✓✓	✓	✓	Possible
	M21. Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach.	✓	✓✓✓	-	-	Challenging
	M22. Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.	-	✓✓	-	✓	Challenging
	M23. CCTV on buses and at bus stations.	-	✓✓✓	-	-	Possible
	M24. High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops.	-	✓✓✓	-	-	Very achievable

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
A trusted and recognisable bus network	**M25.** A strong network-wide identity across key assets and information.	-	-	✓	✓✓	Challenging
	M26. A network-wide Customer Charter.	-	✓✓	✓	-	Very achievable
	M27. Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.	-	✓✓	✓	-	Very achievable
	M28. Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change.	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	Possible
	M29. Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff.	-	✓✓	✓	-	Very achievable

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
A seamless and integrated network	**M30.** Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer.	-	✓	✓✓	✓✓	**Achievable**
	M31. Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro – networks/services/hub, ticketing and information.	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	**Challenging**
	M32. High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region.	-	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	**Possible**
	M33. Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.	-	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	**Possible**
	M34. Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network.	✓	✗	✓	✓✓	**Possible**

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
	M35. Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region.	-	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	**Possible**
	M36. Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements.	✓✓	-	✓✓	✓✓	**Achievable**

POLICY THEMES	MEASURES	SCORING CRITERIA				
		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MULTI-MODAL INTEGRATION	DELIVERABILITY
		Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network		
A more environmentally sustainable and resilient bus network and fleet	**M37.** High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.	-	-	✓✓	-	**Challenging**
	M38. Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.	✓✓	-	✓✓	-	**Challenging**
	M39. A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.	✓	-	✓✓	-	**Challenging**
	M40. A resilient and skilled-up workforce.	✓✓	✓	✓	-	**Possible**
	M41. EV-enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.	-	-	✓✓	-	**Challenging**

7. ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 A programme of engagement was undertaken with local authorities and bus operators. The purpose of the engagement sessions were as follows:

- To provide an update on the draft strategy development process and technical work underway following the public consultation period.
- To receive feedback from partners regarding any concerns or questions about the process or next steps.
- To engage on specific topics relevant to their roles and responsibilities, as set out below.

7.1.2 The below sections summarise the specific topics discussed with the partners and stakeholders.

7.2 Local authorities

7.2.1 Local authorities in the region were invited to sessions in October and November 2024. The councils invited were:

- Argyll & Bute Council
- Ayrshire Roads Alliance (partnership covering East and South Ayrshire Councils)
- East Dunbartonshire Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Inverclyde Council
- North Ayrshire Council
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Renfrewshire Council
- South Lanarkshire Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council

Indicative regional bus network development

7.2.2 Engagement sessions in October 2024 were focused on indicative bus network redesign. This work was focused on supporting the indicative bus network redesign by gathering more information of local development and connectivity needs.

7.2.3 Council officers were introduced to the proposals for their area and invited to feedback both during the session and in writing. Feedback and discussion was centred around:

- The connectivity needs of key destinations and residential areas
- Areas of future housing and employment growth that are likely to require improved bus connectivity.

7.2.4 Following the sessions, all feedback received was collated and fed back into the indicative bus network redesign.

Indicative regional infrastructure requirements

7.2.5 Engagement sessions in November 2024 were focused on bus infrastructure. Indicative, high-level infrastructure options for each council area were shared with council officers, based on previous infrastructure studies, funding bids and engagement with SPT officers. Council officers were invited to feedback both during the session and in writing. Feedback and discussion was centred around:

- Specific infrastructure constraints that impact bus services and passengers, such as:
  - Congestion pinchpoints requiring priority measures
  - Highway constraints, such as highway widths or low bridges
  - Bus stops and waiting/interchange facilities
  - Passenger and vehicle accessibility, such as paths, surfaces and kerbing
- Latest infrastructure scheme proposals and completions
- Feasibility and appraisal studies not already accounted for
- Any other issues with bus service operation not covered during the regional network plan sessions

7.2.6 Following the sessions, all feedback received was collated and fed back into the development of a long list of infrastructure options. The long list will be used to support the development of a regional bus corridor plan, to be developed through the delivery of the SRBS.

7.3 Bus operators

7.3.1 Bus operators in the region were invited to individual sessions in October and November 2024. The operators who participated included the following:

- Canavan Travel
- Climate Action Strathaven
- Coalfield Community Transport
- Community Transport Glasgow
- Ember Buses
- First Bus
- JMB Travel
- McGill's Buses
- Millport Motors
- Shuttle Buses
- South Ayrshire Community Transport
- Stagecoach West Scotland
- West Coast Motors
- Whitelaw's Coaches

7.3.2 A summary of the topics discussed is presented below. SPT noted all of the comments, and key responses are included in red italics below.

Case for Change and current issues

7.3.3 One or more operators noted:

- Case for Change was different in some areas of the region due to relative differences in the bus network in different operating areas.
- Regardless of the future governance model that is taken forward, it will only be successful if it has a strong network, attractive ticketing and fares and a good passenger experience.
- Driver availability is a significant issue for operators, particularly since the pandemic
- Without action to tackle congestion, no delivery model will be successful. Operating costs will continue to rise and services will not be value for money for passengers, operators or the public sector. Action and buy in from the councils and Transport Scotland is crucial to delivering highway improvements and bus priority infrastructure.
- Current issues are not just about governance.
- The Case for Change has to be supported by data and evidence. *SPT noted that the Case for Change report is built on data and evidence, and has been reported to SPT committee and published on SPT's website.*

2024 Consultation

- There is a concern about the value of responses from different stakeholders and how these have been weighted e.g. member of public vs operator. *SPT noted that the type of responder has been taken into account in valuing the responses, and there is a very detailed consultation report available that analyses the results.*
- Does the response rate from the consultation provide a sufficient sample size of the bus market? Operators could assist with the promotion of consultations to increase response rates. *SPT noted that the response rate received was very large for a consultation of this type.*
- The consultation questions could be considered quite binary and in a closed format, potentially limiting the scope of responses and leading respondents down a certain route. *SPT does not agree the questionnaire was leading and further noted that the survey questionnaire allowed follow-up open responses to the core questions and a final 'open' question that could be used for any remaining comments. Stakeholders were also allowed to provide a separate written response if they wanted to raise points that were not easily contained within the questionnaire.*

Affordability for passengers

- Demand for bus is declining and this is a region-wide issue – affordable fares are critical to addressing this. The example of the £2 fare in England is a measure that has had positive results. Some operators noted that there could be scope for a national approach to fares led by Transport Scotland.

Costs and funding of future delivery models

- Are the costs that have been estimated realistic? Where will the funding be coming from? There are current doubts around these. *SPT noted that the concern regarding future funding sources and affordability of improvements is shared with operators,* *and SPT wants to make the strategic case for bus through the SRBS whilst detailed costed options will need to be developed through subsequent workstreams.*

- Reforming the Network Support Grant may be helpful in delivering more attractive regional express and/or limited stop services.
- Operators could do more than business as usual with more funding, but there are doubts if more funding would be available in a revised governance model.
- Some operators noted that uncertainty regarding future delivery models could paralyse investment in the interim. If a franchise scheme is pursued, the length of time required to implement is too long, and action needs to be taken now. The detail of a future franchise scheme needs to be understood and clarified now so operators can appropriately respond and prepare. *SPT noted that the legislation requires specific processes for franchising that need to be followed.*
- A cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of future delivery models needs to be produced and shared. *SPT noted that a CBA is a requirement of any Franchise Assessment, should that be approved as part of the delivery of the SRBS.*

Impact on SMEs and community transport providers

- There is a concern regarding a change in the governance structure of the regional bus network for a small- or medium-sized enterprise (SME). *SPT noted that they are cognisant of the significant role SMEs and Community Transport plays in the region compared to other areas and that any future proposals need to take this into consideration, where possible.*
- If a franchise scheme is pursued, franchise areas that are too large or too few could limit the ability for SMEs to compete for or win contracts. Any future governance structure should preserve healthy competition and not 'lock up' the network to one or two large operators. The example of Greater Manchester was given, where smaller operators did not get any contracts. *SPT noted they are aware of the experience in Greater Manchester, which may provide lessons learned for other regions.*
- SMEs may not have the resource required to bid for contracts.
- Operators require a suitable notice period before any governance changes are implemented. Uncertainty regarding future operations could limit or delay investment in fleets and services.
- What will future service level agreements look like? Changes could be detrimental to community transport providers. *SPT noted that the detailed level of service agreements are not developed at the strategy stage*
- Franchising may not be needed for community transport – how does community transport fit into the SRBS plans? There is no set model for community transport and its delivery is different in different areas. *SPT clarified that no decisions have been made regarding Community Transport and how this fits into a revised governance structure. Operators will continue to be engaged with in future.*
- A future franchise scheme should recognise the benefit of local hubs to improve the operation of services. The contribution and importance of hubs to community transport and a future network is vital in terms of linking communities, providing shared transport, bringing people together, and accessing larger hubs for wider services. Community transport is good at liaising with communities and can provide that link to larger operations. Local hubs will strengthen the resilience of a franchised network.

Future partnerships/BSIPs

- Clarity is sought regarding the status of BSIPs and whether this is still being considered. *SPT clarified that a short to medium term BSIP was proposed while the longer term ambition for franchising was developed. However, this recommendation was revised following a lack of clear support to the proposal from many stakeholders. SPT acknowledged that a long-term BSIP is not the intention.*
- There is interest from some operators in pursuing a partnership option, even if it is in the short term or an interim/transitionary period. With the necessary will on all sides, much of what can be achieved in franchising could be achieved with a partnership. Some operators feel partnerships have not been given a chance.
- There is a noted difference between BSIPs and Enhanced Partnerships (EPs) in England. EPs have had funding behind them for specific initiatives.
- Operator-only partnerships are constrained by competition rules. Partnerships need input and commitments from SPT and/or councils to succeed.
- There is a concern that the lack of understanding around partnerships influenced responses in the consultation. Some operators felt that partnerships should be given a chance to succeed rather than being discounted.

Role of a municipal operator

- This is not a governance model in itself – it would serve as a disruptor to whichever model is taken forward. *SPT noted that the current recommendation is that any municipal operator would likely be small-scale, in areas or on routes with limited to no competition for contracts.*
- Although this was well-supported in the consultation, this is potentially partly due to it being the easiest option to understand.

Network issues/enforcement/infrastructure

- There are significant issues with cars parking in bus stops, road markings and enforcement on the network generally.
- The management and coordination of roadworks and communication with operators needs to improve. This can be filtered down to passengers and allows operators to plan alternative arrangements. This helps to build trust and reliability.
- Specific infrastructure requirements were raised and added to the infrastructure long list.
- There is a current lack of a formal framework for operators to make financial contributions towards waiting facility infrastructure investment.
- Investment in stops and stations to make them accessible is crucial – this could potentially be led by Transport Scotland at a national level. SPT agreed that more needs to be done, but also noted that substantial investment has been made by SPT and councils in delivering better accessibility at stops and stations, with Kilmarnock Bus Station being the most significant recent example.
- Zero emission bus (ZEB) charging infrastructure is constraining the growth of ZEB fleets – the planning and legal processes around this needs reform or improvement to reduce costs for all.
- It was noted that investment in depots by operators would not be worthwhile if future delivery models would control depots or necessitate operators to vacate them.

- Much of the required investment in an improved bus network – priority measures, waiting facilities, hubs – are outside of the operators' control.

Decarbonisation

- Some operators have made significant investments into ZEB fleets, but the returns in terms of bus priority have not been delivered. The lack of a second-hand market for ZEBs makes the investment riskier for operators.
- The progress in the region with regards to fleet decarbonisation compared to the rest of the country should be recognised.
- The cost of electricity has become a significant constraint in recent years – although it is acknowledge that this is still far less than diesel.
- Investment in ZEB fleets may be delayed in an uncertain interim period pre-franchising.
- It is important to recognise the contribution of ZEBs to addressing air quality as well as climate change.

Rural vs urban challenges

- The challenges in the bus network are different in rural areas compared to urban areas. Some operators feel that rural areas have experienced a greater pattern of decline and service cutback.

Concessionary travel

- Currently, the way concessionary travel is reimbursed creates an incentive for operators to increase single fares for paying passengers.

Other opportunities

- There is an opportunity around data sharing and the use of social media or mobile data – it could help to notify passengers of disruption and identify market share/prospective passengers, non-bus users etc.
- There is interest from operators to set-up and participate in a Regional Network Control Centre. The involvement of all parties is necessary. The successful example of network coordination teams for the 2014 Commonwealth Games was noted.

7.3.4 Bus operator feedback was considered and actioned as appropriate to the current workstreams:

- Specific infrastructure proposals or issues were added to the long list of infrastructure options and broader issues (e.g. enforcement) were considered in relation to the measures and development of the action plan
- Key issues raised over the future bus network including what a franchised network may need to deliver were considered in relation to the franchise option development and 'key issues' emerging from that
- Concerns raised over franchising process were included within the franchising route map risks

8. DEVELOPMENT OF DELIVERY PLAN

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 The SRBS includes a delivery plan to demonstrate how the elements of the strategy will be delivered, including the transition to a franchise model for the bus network. This chapter sets out the technical work underpinning the development of this delivery plan, including the franchise options available, the key considerations around these, the outline process for delivering a franchise model, and the initial actions required to progress the delivery of the strategy.

8.2 Development of franchise model

Overall delivery model, geographic coverage and transition risks

8.2.1 The franchise model has been made possible by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and would allow SPT to take greater control of bus operations by introducing competition for operating contracts.

8.2.2 The precise model for a future franchise delivery model would need to be defined following decisions to proceed at each gateway review and as the business case evolves. However, it is likely that a delivery model such as this would be through Public Services Contract (PSC) with one or more bus operators to deliver the specified services in return for an agreed contract sum.

8.2.3 The 2019 Act does not specify the form of such contracts, however there has been a general presumption towards PSCs being let through a process of competitive tendering (CT); this is the model adopted by Transport for Greater Manchester, and is well-established in London, the only other part of Great Britain in which the deregulated model does not apply.

8.2.4 There is a degree of flexibility regarding the length of franchise contracts. The Public Service Obligations in Transport Regulations 2023 (SI 1369) restricts contracts for bus services to a maximum of 10 years, with the potential to varying lengths of contract to facilitate both the implementation period as contracts come to the market and opportunities for new and existing small and medium-sized operators. Furthermore, there is the option of having performance-based extensions to fixed term franchises (as used in London and Greater Manchester, although not proposed in Liverpool City Region), with extensions unlocked if specified performance targets are met.

8.2.5 Franchising could be developed and implemented on a whole region basis. This would mean franchising delivered across the whole SPT region, but there could be options regarding timescales and phasing for implementation necessitated by the practicalities of delivering franchising on a regional scale; however, the ability to do so under the current legislation is being reviewed by SPT and in discussion with Transport Scotland.

8.2.6 By way of example, Greater Manchester's Bee Network has been delivered in tranches, with the first tranche commencing in September 2023 and the third and final tranche due to start in January 2025. The Greater Manchester approach includes 'Large' and 'Small' franchises across the network, reflecting the make-up of the network and providing an opportunity for smaller operators to compete for and win contract, thereby levelling the playing field with larger or incumbent commercial operators. This approach may require greater administrative resource, and would likely form part of a more ambitious and resource-intensive franchise model.

8.2.7 A whole region franchise may not be possible due to, for example, insufficient funding or differences in political leadership or stakeholder support. In this case, a more localised form could be pursued. However, it is recognised that franchising alongside continuing commercially operated services may adversely affect the latter due to the following:

- The commercial services would potentially economically suffer if competing with newly franchised services.
- Commercial operators would be unable to cross-subsidise between key and supporting services.

8.2.8 During the transition and as franchising commences there is a risk that incumbent operators would cease running some of the current commercial services, resulting in a reduced commercial network during transition to the revised operating model. This could range from a limited withdrawal of services which are either loss making or have marginal profitability, to a significant deregistration and withdrawal of services by one or more operators. SPT could choose to intervene to continue the operation of a withdrawn route as a supported service, however this would have cost implications for SPT.

8.2.9 Therefore, it would be important for SPT to manage an effective and efficient transfer of services from the existing commercial operation to a franchised model with service availability and quality maintained or negative impacts minimised. This may require short term subsidising of additional services to ensure that the overall network is not substantially affected, potentially damaging public support and trust in the bus network.

8.2.10 An operational continuity plan would need to be developed to manage this risk. Continued engagement with operators throughout any transition period would also help to mitigate this risk.

8.2.11 Additionally, fares for franchised services would be introduced as contracts commence alongside existing multi-modal tickets. As services become franchised, operator tickets would be withdrawn and SPT tickets introduced.

8.2.12 During any transitionary or mobilisation period, before franchised services commence, SPT would need to provide customers with sufficient information to help them understand the differences between ticket types and which tickets apply to different services. Any information campaign would need to be managed between the customer services, marketing and network planning teams, in conjunction with relevant operators.

Option development – 'key issues'

8.2.13 Following the decision to progress with the development of franchise, as outlined in section 5.4, further option development was carried out to look at the potential range of options and scenarios around how franchising could develop and operate, where roles and responsibilities would lie, and how these would interact with funding requirements.

8.2.14 The development of the 'key issues' has been informed by the technical and engagement work undertaken for the SRBS and cover the following operational matters:

- **Levels of service –** coverage of the franchise scheme and how it could be tendered and proposed and potential improvements to the network in terms of coverage, frequencies and hours of operation.
- **Fares and ticketing** – management of and improvements to fares and ticketing for bus services.
- **Fleets and depots** – the ownership/control and operation of, and responsibility for, key assets necessary to deliver the region's bus network.
- **Staffing and support services**– the roles (both new and existing) required within an SPT franchise team, and whether any of these would continue to sit with commercial operators.
- **Customer and journey planning information and services** – information and services provided to customers at all touchpoints with the network that improve their experience using the network and help them plan and navigate their journey by bus.
- **Funding environment** – assumed funding environment for buses and devolution of additional funding or revenue raising powers to SPT.

Levels of service

8.2.15 A key benefit of a franchised bus network is enhancing the level of service on the bus network in the SPT region by improving connectivity, expanding coverage, and boosting frequencies. By taking a holistic 'whole of region' approach to network planning offers significant advantages over fragmented competition among commercial bus operators.

8.2.16 Coordinating routes, schedules and services under a unified framework (such as franchising) would ensure efficiency, consistency and equity, whilst improving accessibility and convenience for passengers. For instance, where there is over-provision on competitive corridors, duplication can be eliminated, and the savings could be re-invested to level up provision elsewhere; the competition incentive would become redundant, and cross-subsidy (permitted under a franchise framework) would sustain marginal or loss-making services.

8.2.17 Moreover, and as discussed in other sections, genuine integration with other modes can be achieved, allowing public transport to better compete with private cars in the mission to encourage modal shift. Designing the bus network as 'one', with social and local needs a key driver, and aligning it (in terms of ticketing and transfers) with SPT's Subway, the state-owned ScotRail and the emerging Clyde Metro, would play a crucial role in delivering a truly 'seamless' transit network across Strathclyde.

8.2.18 An indicative network redesign was developed to demonstrate high level benefits and costs of three scenarios and inform future decision making. A note outlining the methodology for the indicative network redesign is provided in Appendix F. The scenarios include:

- **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** – 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.
- **Ambitious** – 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.

8.2.19 The Basic scenario brings up all franchised services to a defined minimum service level, following logical structures and conventions (such as route numbering, service categories, frequencies and hours of operation) that customers can understand, rely on and that can be intuitively built upon in later phases as funding and demand allows.

8.2.20 The Moderate and Ambitious service level improvements are developed further with the aim of growing patronage and revenue for the bus network. Higher levels of service in these options would also open up further the potential for passengers to interchange with other modes.

8.2.21 The scenarios could be considered as phases in the case where funding, demand and/or supply within the market required a phased approach to network enhancement. For example, improvements may begin with a 'basic' scenario at the point franchising is implemented, progressing to the 'moderate' and 'ambitious' scenarios as demand and funding allows.

8.2.22 The benefits of any multi-modal integration, particularly with the emerging Clyde Metro or future changes to heavy rail services or operations, could be dependent on how quickly franchising and resultant service level improvements can be delivered.

8.2.23 Therefore, any integration benefits, particularly better coordination of the bus network with the development of Clyde Metro, could be reduced in the basic or moderate scenarios.

8.2.24 Operators would be required to run services to a given frequency, specification and quality set out in a contract, but practice elsewhere demonstrates the value of a flexible change mechanism that allows the network to flex to meet demand (or reduce with any reduction in demand). This is an approach being taken forward, for example, in Liverpool City Region. Further discussion and advice is being sought regarding the requirements of legislation in Scotland.

8.2.25 A high-level estimation of demand, fleet requirements and operating distance was carried out for the indicative network redesign scenarios, as set out in Table 10. The purpose of this work is to demonstrate indicative relative impacts to inform further work and decision making.

8.2.26 It is important to note that these indicative estimates do not take into account the impacts of other policies and measures, such as fares and ticketing. The estimates also only consider an initial impact of level of service change and do not consider impacts over time (i.e. year-on-year growth).

Table 10 Indicative estimated level of service impacts – demand, fleet requirements and operating distance

	BASE	LEVEL OF SERVICE		
		BASIC	MODERATE	AMBITIOUS
Patronage demand (numbers of trips)	118m	+15-20m	+35-40m	+50-55m
Bus kms (excluding empty running)	81m	+27m	+55m	+99m
Bus kms (including empty running)	89m	+30m	+61m	+108m
Peak vehicle requirement (excluding spares)	1,356	+30	+140	+642
Peak vehicle requirement (including spares)	1,561	+34	+158	+737
Number of people within 400m of a high frequency stop	1.6m	+220,000	+283,000	+345,000
Number of households within 400m of a high frequency stop	825,000	+104,000	+131,000	+160,000

Fares and ticketing

8.2.27 Fares and ticketing are predominantly set by individual operators and SPT has little influence over either. SPT administers the ZoneCard ticketing arrangement, which offers multi-modal/operator ticketing that supplement single operator ticket products sold by commercial operators, journeys using which are generally priced below that of a multi-modal equivalent.

8.2.28 The SRBS Case for Change highlighted that with a large number of operators providing services across the region, the structure of fare products is complex with users needing to select from single and multi-operator products covering a range of different geographical areas as defined by individual operators. This array of ticketing and zoning creates a highly complex structure for the bus user to navigate adding difficulty to determining the best value for money for their trip.

8.2.29 A franchise 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.

8.2.30 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.

8.2.31 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).

8.2.32 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 fares and ticketing integration with other modes would also be more likely, including with the emerging Clyde Metro network

8.2.33 The variances between the options would depend on what proportion of the region's services were included in a future franchise scheme and would therefore apply for an integrated, SPT-operated fares and ticketing regime. However, it is likely that the following would be possible 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.

Fleets and depots

8.2.34 A good onboard experience for passengers is fundamental to the decision to choose the bus as the mode of travel. Uncomfortable, cramped or dirty vehicles will make the journey a less pleasant experience and lead customers to consider other alternatives. It is therefore important that a certain quality standard is maintained and provided consistently across the network.

8.2.35 Similarly, the customer will also consider whether the bus will meet their needs on more practical terms. Being easily accessible for those with impaired mobility, having space for pushchairs or wheelchairs, or having sufficient luggage storage, are all important factors. Being able to guarantee a minimum standard of these factors can encourage customers to choose the bus as their mode of transport and make the quality of their experience more comparable to that on rail and be more competitive with the car.

8.2.36 From an operational perspective, enhanced vehicle fleets and suitable depots are central in the improvement of service levels that a franchise scheme can potentially deliver.

Furthermore, vehicles and depots play a key role in delivering decarbonisation, emissions and air quality benefits, consistent with policies in the Regional Transport Strategy.

8.2.37 The ownership and control of fleets and depots is a critical decision within the development of a franchise scheme. Indicative options could look like the following:

- Operators retain their own vehicle fleets and depot sites, and the responsibility for procurement, maintenance and operation of vehicles. Operators are required to ensure their vehicle fleet and depots meet the specifications of the franchise contract they are operating.
- SPT owns and procures all vehicle fleets, leasing them to operators contracted to run the franchise 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.
- 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. The leasing company remains responsible for the maintenance and renewal of vehicles. Operators retain their 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.

8.2.38 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. Incumbent operators would be at less of an advantage to acquire contracts for the services they already operate, and smaller operators would not be required to undertake significant upfront investment, 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.

8.2.39 Greater control would also allow for greater influence over the deployment of ZEVs to support SPT's decarbonisation and air quality objectives. However, the deployment of ZEVs would be dependent, at least in the short term, on government support. In the longer term, the convergence of costs between ZEVs and diesel vehicles as the cost of new technology reduces would make the wider deployment of ZEVs more affordable and in-line with regular fleet replacement costs.

8.2.40 It may be appropriate for a hybrid of the fleet ownership and control 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 in terms of the following:

- ZEBs, moving the region towards a decarbonised bus network.
- Maintenance schedules, ensuring all vehicles on the network meet a defined high standard in terms of cleanliness, state of repair and general appearance. This would

create improved conditions for passengers as well as reducing potential disruptions due to mechanical failure.

- Boarding arrangements and vehicle capacities, ensuring that franchise contracts ensure that the most appropriate vehicles operate on each route to maximise in-vehicle capacity and speed up boarding, including the option to deploy middle-door boarding and alighting on high volume, high frequency routes.
- A single network brand, with all vehicles, drivers and ancillary services or infrastructure required to display the same livery.
- Location of and facilities at depots – given depots are currently owned and managed by commercial operators, their location and size are partly dictated by the services run by the operators and the areas they operate in. In a reformed delivery model, depending on the outcome of any competitive tendering processes, commercial operators may not continue to run services where they do currently and new operators may enter the market or expand into new areas. Therefore a review and consolidation of depot sites and an investigation into potential new sites, taking into account how to best operate a regional network, could be undertaken were SPT to acquire responsibility for depots. This would potentially allow services to operate more efficiently, with reduced 'dead running' time, and would allow SPT to invest in the necessary infrastructure to enable a zero emission fleet.

Staffing and support services

8.2.41 A franchised bus network in Strathclyde will require additional supporting services and resources within SPT to implement and operate a franchise scheme. Staffing and support services is likely to include:

- **Contract management** – overseeing the whole 'franchising process', responsible for specifying and managing the franchise contracts, maintaining relations with contractors, performance monitoring and reporting, and application of any penalties. Includes monitoring performance of the routes, ensuring KPIs are met, and all breaches are recorded, and penalties applied. Depending on the contract specification and what can be agreed with prospective operators of the franchises, SPT may choose to make performance data publicly available, thereby creating greater transparency between the public and the operation of the bus network and creating an incentive for SPT, operators and partners to deliver the services and associated measures (in infrastructure investment and traffic management, for example) to achieve compliance.
- **Procurement** – overseeing the procurement cycle as new contracts are agreed and renewed.
- **Network planning and development** – development of specifications for existing and future services and routes, and overseeing the whole network from a planning, design and development perspective. This team would likely use working groups with other partners and stakeholders to accommodate local needs and ensure the network is integrated with wider policy objectives. This team would work closely with the contract team to develop any necessary contingency plans to replace a failing franchisee.
- **Commercial and pricing analysis** – regular data-driven monitoring of patronage, pricing policy, routes, frequencies and new areas of development.

- **Customer services** – the customer services team would provide information, assistance and products for customers using the bus network and ticketing products, addressing complaints, comments and feedback. The team would work closely with the operators of the contracts to resolve issues and improve the overall service for users, and work with the network planning/development and marketing teams to manage and promote awareness of planned disruptions.
- **Compliance and monitoring** – inspections of buses and monitoring of data would ensure compliance on schedules, driver behaviour, vehicle presentation and condition, route adherence, safety and security standards, and fraud evasion, ensuring that contract specifications are being met by operators.
- **Stakeholder management** – although potentially managed within individual teams as required, managing partners and stakeholders will be critical to ensuring the success of a franchised network. This is likely to take the form of working groups on various policy areas, including:
  - Network planning and infrastructure, incorporating local authorities and Transport Scotland
  - SPT policy areas e.g. healthcare, housing, education
  - Traffic and network management, including highway maintenance, parking, enforcement, incorporating local authorities
  - Multi-modal integration, incorporating local authorities, Transport Scotland, ScotRail and active travel groups
  - Funding and investment, incorporating local authorities and Transport Scotland
- **Policy analysis and development** – responsible for developing and delivering the strategic aims of the SRBS and integrating bus policy within wider transport policy work for the region.
- **Data and IT** – coordination and analysis of all data and IT requirements of a franchised network, including real-time information, app and website development, management of electronic ticket products, performance monitoring, and billing and payments.
- **Marketing and consultation** – development, specification and implementation of branding and marketing initiatives, and potentially commercialising the network via advertising and data. This team would be responsible for developing and managing the network branding and livery, as well as managing advertising, sales and marketing opportunities, ticketing offers and promotions, and working with the data and IT team to develop and understanding of the customer base. All these responsibilities will contribute towards growing the customer base and maximising revenue to be reinvested into the network and its services.

8.2.42 Dependent on the nature of the franchise 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.

8.2.43 The team that SPT would require to manage franchises would be larger than the team it currently has in providing oversight of services in the region. Some additional skill sets would be required, some of which could be provided through existing staff undertaking relevant training.

Customer and journey planning information and services

8.2.44 A franchise model has the opportunity to integrate, standardise and enhance customer and journey planning information and customer service provision. The provision of key information to existing and potential users is key to delivering an attractive travel option and encourage more people to travel by bus. Consequently, appropriate processes and standards around customer support, feedback and information are vital.

8.2.45 Additionally, delivered through improved and consolidated journey planning information provision for customers would be enhanced interchange opportunities, with multi-modal information and facilities brought closer together for the benefit of customers.

8.2.46 At the most ambitious version of franchising, SPT could 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

8.2.47 Figure 5 provides an example of the typical information needs and touchpoints that a bus user experiences as part of their journey. An ambitious approach to franchising could bring all of this under one banner and standard of information for the region.

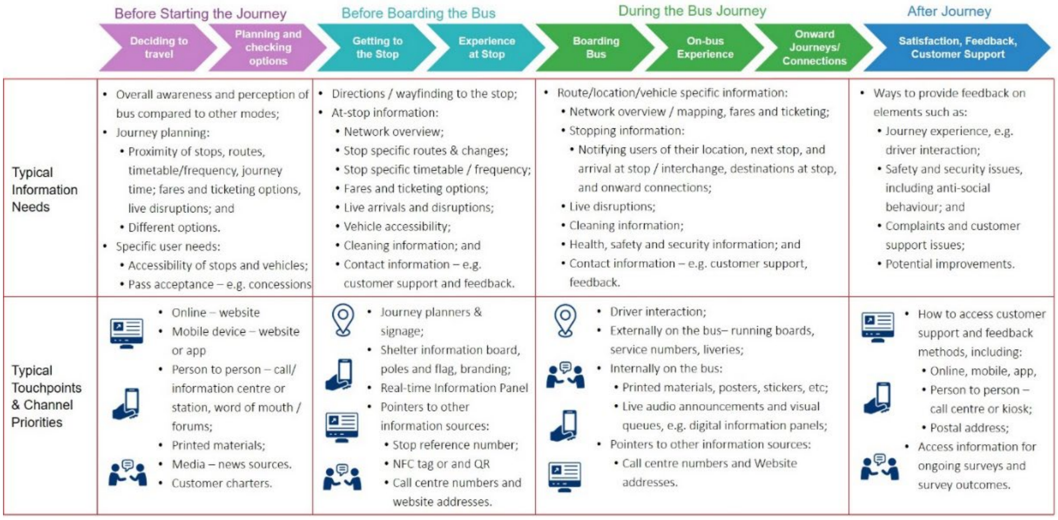


Figure 5 Information needs and touchpoints during the customer journey

8.2.48 A Customer Charter is a way of setting out the benefits of consolidated and integrated information provision and articulating these as a 'customer offer' in a clear and concise way. It allows customers to know what to expect from their use of bus services which fall under the charter. Additionally, and critically, it holds those signed up to the charter, i.e. operators and authorities, accountable to the standard set out to customers in the charter.

8.2.49 A Customer Charter for bus services would set out the quality of service standards a customer can expect in a reformed network and would include the following (some of which are covered in more detail in later sections):

- Purpose of the charter, passenger rights, and who/where the charter covers;
- Commitments to the customers around:
  - Safety and security measures, e.g. CCTV;
  - Information – where, when updated, accuracy, available formats (e.g. accessible, audio-visual), what is covered in terms of timetables, fares, tickets etc;
  - Fare and ticketing;
  - Reliability, punctuality and contingency measures for issues with services and breakdowns, such as a replacement or last bus guarantee;
  - Vehicle, stop and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning;
  - Staff and driver standards – training, appearance and support available for customers, e.g. boarding assistance;
- Conditions of carriage / policies around
  - Passenger conduct;
  - Health, environment, e.g. smoking, alcohol and drugs
  - Bicycle carriage, luggage, carriage of dogs and other animals;
  - Photography and CCTV.
- Complaints, refunds, mediation and appeals channels and procedures;
- Customer support and feedback contact details and commitments, e.g. response times; and
- Lost property contacts and procedures information;
- Performance targets and a commitment to review/publish these; and
- A user guide for travel in the region.

8.2.50 The specifics of the Charter would be developed with the input of stakeholders and partners, including local authorities and key user groups, to ensure it would deliver the necessary standards and services for passengers. It would then be written into future franchise specifications that all parties would need to sign up to.

8.2.51 Consolidating information and services for the whole region's bus network would allow SPT to more easily integrate the bus network and the information and services underpinning it with other modes including the emerging Clyde Metro.

8.2.52 Bringing information and services for the whole region's bus network under one banner and team would allow SPT to more easily integrate the bus network and the information and services underpinning it with other modes, such as active travel, rail, Glasgow Subway and the emerging Clyde Metro. This could take the form of:

- Information on cycle storage facilities and routes in relation to the bus network and interchange points.
- Integration of the bus network with the rail, Subway and emerging Clyde Metro network, such as timetables, services, information, facilities and infrastructure.

Funding environment

8.2.53 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 funding to support the bus network, assume operational control and pay for required investments to deliver improvements.

8.2.54 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 franchise 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 in the Case for Change.

8.2.55 It may possible to deliver a franchise scheme as a self-funded scheme through farebox revenue and existing revenue streams, with an assumption that SPT would be reimbursed from concessionary fares. Were the franchise scheme to be successful in generating patronage growth, as well as potentially reduced profit margins compared to other operators, this may generate revenue streams greater than currently available (noting, however, that any such assumption would be required to be fully investigated through a franchise assessment). However, this is unlikely to deliver significantly more frequent services, affordable and attractive fares and other features of a better bus network. Therefore, it is likely that the funding environment will require at a minimum:

- Reinstatement of the Bus Partnership Fund or a revised replacement long-term capital investment fund, allowing local authorities in partnership with SPT to deliver bus priority infrastructure where it is required to support any service enhancements required to drive passenger growth.
- It is assumed that SPT would be eligible to claim the Network Support Grant currently claimed by commercial operators in order to support services. This would need agreement with and action by Transport Scotland, and would provide SPT with greater funding to operate the network and keep fares as low as possible. It is estimated that over a five-year period from April 2024, the NSG will contribute approximately £50m per year to services in Scotland[15].
- Access for SPT to apply for any future bus decarbonisation funding.

8.2.56 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.

[15] Competition and Markets Authority, February 2024. https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/referral-of-the-proposed-network-support-grant-by-transport-scotland

This funding would support service enhancements, infrastructure, keeping fares low, and network expansion, particularly in areas that have historically not been commercially profitable.

- Devolution of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (NCTS) funding to ensure subsidised fares for concessionary travels can continue to be provided in a reformed bus network. The benefits of devolving of NCTS funding would be that SPT could then direct the funding more appropriately towards local priorities and using local knowledge, potentially delivering better outcomes for passengers and the network than the existing more centralised control of the revenue.
- 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 and Transport Scotland. From experience elsewhere in the UK, this might include:

  - **A regional precept** – devolution deals in England allow Combined Authority mayors to raise a 'Mayoral precept' from households in their region to fund activities for mayoral functions, such as transport. This has been used in Greater Manchester and London, with the Greater Manchester mayor using the precept funding to support the region's bus franchising scheme. Whilst unexplored in Scotland, which has no regional mayors, it is an established source of funding to support devolved transport activities in the UK and may become more widely used as devolution deals are expanded upon.
  - **Municipal borrowing** – all combined authorities in England have transport borrowing powers via the Local Government Act 2003. The ability to borrow requires certainty over future revenue streams in order to finance repayments, but is potentially a powerful tool to deliver transformative transport projects.

8.2.57 The overall aim of the reform of the network and governance arrangements would be for the network to become more financially sustainable by increasing patronage and overall revenue growth.

8.2.58 However, given the existing constrained funding environment, all funding routes set out above carry with them varying elements of risk and uncertainty, particularly those revenue raising routes that are currently untested by or unavailable to regional transport partnerships in Scotland.

Franchise route map

8.2.59 There are clear but lengthy legal processes laid down in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 which need to be robustly followed before a franchising framework can be enacted and the associated franchise agreements entered into with bus operators to provide the services specified by SPT in the specified franchise area(s).

8.2.60 The powers in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 have not been tested – in fact, regulations and guidance are still emerging from Scottish Government/Transport Scotland to explain how to comply with the requirements set out in the Act. At this time, it is unlikely that another transport authority in Scotland will make use of the franchising provisions in the Act ahead of any work carried out by SPT to develop franchising.

Therefore, it is unlikely that SPT will be able to draw upon any other Scottish experience in the development of plans.

8.2.61 In order to provide an indication of the likely timescales of the process and the steps required, an indicative route map for franchising has been developed. It should be noted that the franchise guidance has not yet been published by Transport Scotland. Therefore, some adjustments to this indicative process may be required after the guidance has been published.

Prepare a framework for bus franchising

8.2.62 SPT, as the proposed franchising authority, would prepare the franchising framework. The framework would make the case for a proposed scheme and specify the make-up of the scheme, including services, assets and infrastructure. The framework would be developed with engagement with partners, and would identify roles and responsibilities for all partners under the proposed franchise scheme. It is assumed that a 6-month mobilisation period would be required to assemble an SPT franchise framework team, including any necessary procurement of external resource.

Prepare an assessment of the framework

8.2.63 The assessment process is set out in statutory guidance and would broadly follow the typical five-case transport business case model.

Commission an independent audit of the framework assessment

8.2.64 The franchise assessment must be assured by an independent auditor, which would scrutinise the assessment material and engage with the assessment team. This could be undertaken in an iterative process as the assessment is completed, but the auditors would require a finalised draft assessment to reach a final opinion.

Undertake a consultation on the proposed framework and its assessment

8.2.65 Once a final opinion from the auditors is reached, and assuming no significant adjustments to the assessment are required, a statutory consultation on the framework and its assessment would be held. Following the end of the consultation period and analysis of feedback, SPT would decide whether, and if so how, the franchising proposals need to be adjusted.

Place the proposed framework and its assessment in front of an Independent Panel

8.2.66 Following consultation (and amendment to the framework if necessary), SPT would request the Scottish Traffic Commissioner to convene a Panel to consider the case for franchising and determine whether it can approve the creation of a scheme. Legislation, regulations and guidance would guide the proceedings of the Panel, which may decide to approve the making of the proposed franchising framework, to approve the making of the proposed framework subject to SPT making such modifications to the proposed framework as the panel may specify, or not to approve the making of the proposed framework. It is assumed that all stages of the process up to the Panel decision would take approximately three years.

Make the bus franchising framework

8.2.67 If the Panel decision is positive, SPT would the enter a transition and implementation period to make the franchising framework and enact the scheme on the ground. It is estimated that this process could take between 12 and 30 months, depending on the scale and complexity of the franchise model to be implemented.

8.2.68 It is anticipated that SPT would fund and resource the development of franchising, including undertaking the franchise assessment. However, SPT would seek to source contributions from appropriate sources, including the Scottish Government/Transport Scotland, local authorities and others.

Key risks for the route map

8.2.69 Key risks for the indicative franchising route map can be broadly categorised in the following areas and are set out below.

Political and partnership support and leadership

8.2.70 Development of a franchise 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. Furthermore, the demands placed on funds available for both investment and network support may be challenging to deliver.

8.2.71 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 to lobby for any key requirements to deliver the SRBS. The franchise route map will need to reflect the requirements of the election cycle.

Governance

8.2.72 Whilst the need for change is broadly agreed, the specific outcomes and measures required will need to be agreed between SPT and constituent local authorities. It may prove challenging to draft a single Franchise Framework which adequately captures the needs of the whole region.

8.2.73 Furthermore, the multiple interdependencies between several different workstreams may cause delay during the transitionary period.

8.2.74 To mitigate, a strong governance framework will be required, providing for transparency and equity across partners. SPT will also be required to appoint a programme management team to ensure all interdependencies are identified and managed appropriately.

Funding

8.2.75 It is likely that successful delivery of a franchise may require devolution of sufficient and sustained funding for concessionary travel, Network Support Grant and capital funding. SPT will be exposed to the full force of market fluctuations if it takes on a franchised network. It will need to manage its available budget within uncertain market conditions, which may adversely impact future demand and revenue, triggering the need for additional funding or reduced services.

8.2.76 To mitigate, SPT will need to engage with Transport Scotland as an early priority to negotiate a suitably fair agreement and how bus funding for the rest of Scotland will be replicated in Strathclyde, to give a robust starting point for financial and commercial planning. SPT will also need to prepare a sufficiently detailed budget for contracts, including suitable contingencies.

Resourcing

8.2.77 Franchising will bring considerable change to internal structures and resourcing within SPT, which may also impact on the delivery of existing services, particularly during the transitionary period.

8.2.78 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.

Market uncertainty

8.2.79 Transition in the bus delivery model and uncertainty around funding will undermine confidence amongst existing operators, many of whom are SMEs and/or have not had direct experience with franchise, and may lead to short-term decision making, profit maximisation and limited investment, or even market exiting. Bus operators have told SPT that providing certainty as soon as practicable is essential, and to 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.

8.2.80 SPT will need to provide a clear road map for change 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.

Untested legislation

8.2.81 The franchising powers within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 are entirely untested, with key elements differing significantly compared to English legislation. Guidance from Transport Scotland is also incomplete and may be subject to change.

8.2.82 The franchise framework 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 franchise framework assessment process.

8.2.83 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 the franchise in terms of area or specification or both.

8.2.84 SPT will continue to liaise with Transport Scotland regarding these challenges with the existing legislation.

Consultation

8.2.85 A period of statutory consultation is required, and SPT will need to consider all feedback received and whether adjustments are required to the franchise framework assessment and associated proposals. If the adjustments deemed necessary are significant, there may be a need to independently audit the changes.

8.2.86 SPT will ensure that the franchise proposals are well trailed in advance to avoid unforeseen feedback, and will reserve the potential to rescope the transitionary period to allow for time to adjust the assessment.

Assets and infrastructure

8.2.87 Although no decision has been made as to the ownership and control of fleets and depots, a franchise arrangement where SPT acquires greater control, which would ensure a level playing field in competition for contracts under franchise agreements, generates significant risk in terms of the availability, affordability, location or suitability of assets.

8.2.88 Were SPT to pursue this a model of greater control, advisors of property and asset valuation and acquisition would be appointed, with parallel investigations into suitable alternatives to ensure necessary resilience for SPT.

Tender process

8.2.89 Inadequately specified tenders will impact the quality of bids received and may result in franchised bus services which do not fulfil the original aspirations set out in the SRBS and associated budget.

8.2.90 Furthermore, if tender requirements are too complex, prospective bidders are unfamiliar with the process, or local operators have exited the market, there may be a low response rate to tenders and inadequate competitive pressure on prices tendered.

8.3 Action plan

8.3.1 To enable the franchise route map to be taken forward, an Action Plan has been developed that defines initial actions necessary to deliver on the route map process. These initial actions are set out in Table 11 – Franchising Route Map.

8.3.2 Due to the length of time required to develop and implement bus franchising, a further set of actions were developed to support the management of the 'pre-franchising period'. These are set out in Table 12 – Management of pre-franchising period.

8.3.3 The franchise development process will consider the relevancy of all of the SRBS policies and measures to a future franchise model. However, a number of policies and measures can be progressed alongside the development of franchising. In particular, this includes the policies and measures related to reliable and quicker journeys. These have been set out in Table 13 – Bus Infrastructure and Traffic Management and Table 14 – Bus friendly environment, with linkages to corresponding measures shown.

Table 11 SRBS Action Plan – Franchising Route Map

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS
1	Report an outline programme for franchise development to an appropriate SPT committee within 3 months following approval of the final SRBS.
2	Develop and agree governance plan for franchise development programme.
3	Develop a bus operator forum to support the transition to franchise and to address concerns and issues throughout the process.
4	Liaise with Transport Scotland on the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 legislation and regulations.
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 franchise 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 franchising and bus.
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.

Table 12 SRBS Action Plan – Management of pre-franchising period

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS
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	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.

Table 13 SRBS Action Plan – Bus infrastructure and traffic management

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	CORRESPONDING SUPPORTING MEASURES
Bus infrastructure and traffic management		
1	Deliver bus priority and other enhancements on the five 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	M5, M13
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.	M9, M10, M13
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.	M5, M13, M34
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.	M32, M33
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.	M20, M22, M23, M24, M32, M33, M34, M35
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).	M20, M22, M23, M32, M33, M34, M35

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	CORRESPONDING SUPPORTING MEASURES
	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.	M24
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.	M12
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.	M39

Table 14 SRBS Action Plan – Bus friendly environment

ACTION NUMBER	ACTIONS	CORRESPONDING SUPPORTING MEASURES
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.	M9, M10
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.	M20, M31, M33
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.	M31

9. MONITORING PLAN

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 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. Many individual schemes and measures that are developed will have their own monitoring and evaluation plans, specific to the expected outputs and outcomes of each scheme. Therefore, the monitoring plan for the SRBS will be linked specifically to the desired outcomes and objectives of the SRBS, which are set at a regional level, as opposed to more focused local targets and objectives that will be addressed through scheme-specific monitoring.

9.2 The SRBS strategic framework

9.2.1 The SRBS strategic framework, of which the monitoring plan is a key part, is discussed in more detail in section 6 and is reproduced here in Figure 6.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Goals</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Goal: More people using buses, and people using buses more often</td><td colspan="3">Goal: More communities have access to bus for everyday travel</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Objectives</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services</td><td colspan="2">Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all</td><td colspan="2">Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Policies and Measures</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Delivery Plan</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Monitoring Plan</th></tr>
</table>

Figure 6 SRBS strategic framework

9.3 Monitoring indicators

9.3.1 To monitor progress against the goals and objectives of the SRBS, a set of monitoring indicators have been defined. The indicators have been developed based on:

- The goals and objectives of the SRBS
- The Regional Transport Strategy

9.3.2 Data would be taken from a variety of sources, including SPT internal data and surveys, Department for Transport, Transport Scotland/Scottish Government and local authorities. All data sources are currently available and can be used immediately.

9.3.3 Each indicator has been linked to an SRBS goal or objective to demonstrate how the strategic framework will be monitored. The indicators and links to the goals and objectives are set out in Table 15. More detail on the indicators, their purpose in monitoring the SRBS and the data source that will be used is set out in Table 16.

9.3.4 A set of future monitoring indicators have also been identified for development. These are indicators that are not currently able to be monitored, due to available data and/or data collection methods that are not currently used. However, it is the intention of the SRBS that these will be collected in the future and will be used to track the success of the future franchising model. These future indicators for development are set out in Table 17.

Table 15 Proposed monitoring indicators for SRBS goals and objectives

SRBS GOALS		SRBS OBJECTIVES			
More people using buses, and people using buses more often	More communities have access to bus for everyday travel	Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network	MONITORING INDICATOR
✓					Number of bus passenger journeys
✓					Modal share of journeys
✓					Modal share of journeys to work
✓					Modal share of journeys to school
✓					Proportion of adults who use local bus services at least two 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

SRBS GOALS		SRBS OBJECTIVES			MONITORING INDICATOR
More people using buses, and people using buses more often	**More communities have access to bus for everyday travel**	**Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services**	**Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all**	**Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network**	
			✓		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
				✓	CO_2 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 they need on local bus services

Table 16 Monitoring indicators details

MONITORING INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	SOURCE
Number of bus passenger journeys	Passengers by journeys by region for local bus services (South West and Strathclyde)	To track changes in bus use	[DfT Bus Statistics (via Chapter 2, Scottish Transport Statistics)]
Modal share of journeys	Main mode of travel. Where a journey involves more than one mode of transport (e.g. a bus, then a train), the main mode is defined as the one used for the longest stage (in distance). Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in bus use and modal shift	[Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA16)]
Modal share of journeys to work	Employed adults (aged 16+) not working from home – usual method of travel to work. Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in bus use and modal shift	[Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA1)]
Modal share of journeys to school	Pupils in full time (school) education – usual main method of travel to school. Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in bus use and modal shift	[Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA3)]
Proportion of adults who use local bus services at least 2 times per week	Adults (16+) use of local bus services, and train services in the previous month. Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in bus use and frequency of bus use	[Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA11)]
Proportion of households by public transport journey time (categories/ranges) to hospital, town centre, etc	Set of bespoke analysis which aims to ascertain how 'connected' an area is to local and strategic land use destinations. Inspired by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), it provides a comparative dataset which inform users if an area is relative less connected than another, but not how much less connected. Information provided at Datazone (2022) level, so can be upscaled to Locality, Local Authority and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in community accessibility to key destinations	Bespoke SPT Data Source
Proportion of households within 400m of a bus stop, by service frequency	Set of bespoke analysis which aims to ascertain walking distances to the region's bus stops. Bus stops are grouped into service level categories to provide greater insight. Information provided at Datazone (2022) level. Information provided at Datazone (2022) level, so can be upscaled to Locality, Local Authority and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in access to the bus network	Bespoke SPT Data Source
Proportion of adults who feel that local bus services are stable and are not regularly changing	Percentage of adults (16+) who used a local bus service in the past month that agreed with the statement *"The service is stable and isn't regularly changing"*. Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	[Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA14a)]
Bus vehicle kilometres	Vehicle kilometres by region for local bus services (South West and Strathclyde).	To track changes in the overall level of provision of the bus network	[DfT Bus Statistics (via Chapter 2, Scottish Transport Statistics)]

MONITORING INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	SOURCE
Transport components of retail prices index	Comparative increase/decrease of motoring expenditure against rail fares and bus and coach fares. Data is provided at national UK level.	To track changes in bus fares compared to inflation	Office for National Statistics (via Chapter 10 Scottish Transport Statistics)
Concessionary Card Take up	Number of distributed concessionary cards (under 22s and 60+) against relevant population age bands. Information provided at the Local Authority Level[2], so data can be upscaled to represent Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track the concessionary travel card take up rates for different groups	Improvement Service & National Records Scotland / Scotland's Census
Proportion of adults who feel personally safe and secure on the bus (day and evening)	Percentage of adults (16+) who used a local bus service in the past month that agreed with the statement "*I feel personally safe and secure on the bus during the day*" and / or "*I feel personally safe and secure on the bus during the evening*". Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA14a)
Proportion of bus stops with a high access kerb	Percentage of bus stops within the SPT area with high access kerbs.	To track changes in provision of accessible infrastructure	SPT Data Source
CO2 emissions estimates from road transport	Local Authority territorial greenhouse gas emissions estimates from Road Transport. Information provided at the Local Authority Level, so data can be upscaled to represent Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track changes in emissions	UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions statistics, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
Proportion of adults who are satisfied with local public transport	Adults' views on satisfaction with public transport. Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA13)
Proportion of adults who feel that local bus fares are good value	Percentage of adults (16+) who used a local bus service in the past month that agreed with the statement "*the fares are good value*". Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA14a)
Proportion of adults who feel that local bus services are on time	Percentage of adults (16+) who used a local bus service in the past month that agreed with the statement "*buses are on time*". Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA14a)
Proportion of adults who feel that it is easy to change from local bus services to other forms of transport	Percentage of adults (16+) who used a local bus service in the past month that agreed with the statement "*it's easy changing to other forms of transport*". Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA14a)

MONITORING INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	SOURCE
Proportion of adults who feel that it is simple deciding the type of ticket I need on local bus services	Percentage of adults (16+) who used a local bus service in the past month that agreed with the statement "*it is simple deciding the type of ticket I need*". Information provided at the Local Authority Level and Regional Transport Partnership Level.	To track passenger perceptions of bus	Transport and Travel in Scotland – Local Authority Tables (LA14a)

Table 17 Future monitoring indicators

OBJECTIVE 1	OBJECTIVE 2	OBJECTIVE 3	FUTURE MONITORING INDICATOR	PURPOSE
	✓		Average fares	To track change in the affordability of bus use.
	✓		Provision of accessible travel information	To track changes in availability of accessible information.
	✓		Percentage of drivers trained in disability awareness and inclusion	To track changes in the number of bus drivers provided with training.
		✓	Bus and car average journey times by key routes	To track changes in the average bus journey times, and to make changes in comparison to car journey times.
		✓	Service performance (% running late or cancelled) by service	To track changes in the reliability of bus services.
		✓	Fleet reliability	To track the change in service reliability and maintenance/operating costs.
		✓	Fleet composition	To track the change in zero emission vehicles in the overall fleet.

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