



### Update on Bus Information Standards

**Committee** Operations

**Date of meeting** 5 November 2021

**Date of report** 20 October 2021

#### Report by Acting Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

To provide the committee with an update on the consultation on revisions to the Bus Information Standards.

#### 2. Background

Members will recall the update to the Partnership on the Transport Data Project in June 2021, which highlighted SPT's role in setting bus information standards as per the 2001 Transport (Scotland) Act, works underway to modernise SPT's corporate database of local bus services, and on-going engagement with local operators to improve information provision at bus stops across Strathclyde. A revised draft of the Bus Information Standards, included in Appendix 1, was shared with the Partnership ahead of the formal consultation which forms part of the legislative requirements.

SPT's Bus Information Standards set the framework for roadside bus stop information provision for over 560 registered local bus services, delivered by 44 operators across Strathclyde. There are c11,500 bus stops and c14,000 bus information display cabinets across the region. It is estimated that there are typically over 40,000 changes to bus service information held in these cabinets in a typical year. Compliance with the standards is monitored by SPT. Noncompliance may be reported to the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland for consideration, enforcement and punitive action, should that be required.

#### 3. Outline of proposals

##### Bus Information Standards

Following a review of the Bus Information Standards a number of changes were proposed, principally the sections pertaining to Production of Bus Service Printed Panel Information. The main proposed changes to the standards can be summarised as follows:

- Any entries (i.e. access to update bus information publicity to cabinets within Strathclyde) going forward from 2021, will be limited to Novus FX (or identical equivalent, subject to SPT approval) output standards only.
- This adoption of Novus FX, alongside the phasing out of older SPT and also Operator productions, unifies the information and publicity standards across the SPT

area to the prescribed standard, as well as ensure provision of consistent and accurate travel information for the travelling public.

- Operators or designated contractors concerned in the supply and/or Installation must not cover, obscure or disturb information provided by SPT or other operators in the information panel concerned. The “patching” over of SPT’s Novus FX panels would be strictly prohibited under all circumstances.
- Revised pricing introduced for both electronic file/panel production by SPT (i.e. partial service with physical panel production and installation undertaken by the operator(s)) and full panel production and install at any/all stops on route undertaken by SPT (i.e. full service), with SPT offering a bureau service to operators in Strathclyde at the rates detailed.

Under the terms of the 2001 Transport (Scotland) Act, SPT are required to consult on any changes to our Bus Information Standards with local bus operators, the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland and other interested parties. The consultation was launched on 27 July 2021 with a closing date for representations of 31st August 2021. A full list of organisations contacted as part of the consultation is included in Appendix 2 for reference. A total of 8 organisations responded to the consultation (3 Bus Operators (Carrs Loch Lomond, First Glasgow & West Coast Motors), 3 Local Authorities (East Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde Council & Renfrewshire Council), Transport Scotland and the Royal National Institute of Blind People):

- In general, the responses received were broadly Positive / Neutral to the proposed revised standards.
- A number of respondents suggested further enhancements to the standards, including the addition of route maps, and further RTPI displays.
- RNIB highlighted their support for the use of additional audio announcements and REACT boards within RTPI displays. SPT will take this forward in discussion with our partner Local Authorities in respect of new display installs and replacements, including at SPT Bus Stations.
- One operator, First Bus, stated their intention to utilise a different system to produce their timetable panels. SPT have highlighted to the operator that this would have to meet the revised bus information standards, subject to approval, and be inclusive of other operators’ services where they share a common bus stop.
- A potential environmental concern was raised over the volume of paper that would likely be required to populate all of the 13,500 information cabinets across Strathclyde, and to keep up with service changes. SPT would highlight that significant opportunity exists for operators to align service changes, where possible, and to cooperate on updates to roadside information to minimise any waste. At a wider level the current practice of timetable ‘patching’ onto backing boards is unattractive, confusing, often inconsistent and not conducive to supporting a high quality bus network, supporting modal shift and delivering wider environmental benefits.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) was undertaken in respect of the revisions to the Bus Information Standards taking cognisance of feedback received during the consultation.

In terms of next steps, SPT Officers have scheduled further discussions with the main local bus operators (i.e. First, Stagecoach Western, McGill’s and Glasgow CityBus / West Coast Motors) on the proposed Bus Information Standards and to develop a draft timeline for rollout. It should however be noted that bus services, and hence printed bus information,

remain significantly impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic, and more recently by bus driver shortages. Therefore, SPT intends to continue to work closely with local bus operators and Transport Scotland to agree a suitable timing for the roll out of revised roadside bus information panels across Strathclyde.

#### 4. Conclusions

Good quality, accurate and timely public transport information is an essential prerequisite to encouraging public transport use (particularly as we emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic). It is essential that the Bus Information Standards set an appropriate framework for the delivery of bus information across Strathclyde to promote high quality, consistent and easy to understand information on all local bus services, to the benefit of the traveling public.

#### 5. Committee action

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the consultation on revisions to the Bus Information Standards has been successfully undertaken.
- Note that SPT intends to continue to work closely with local bus operators and to develop a suitable programme for the roll out of revised roadside bus information standards, taking into consideration the impact of Covid 19 on service provision.

#### 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the Regional Transport Strategy.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>No financial consequences at this stage.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None directly.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Positive impact in terms of age, disability and gender.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None directly.</i>

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