

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Minute of Operations Committee

22 August 2025

held in person at 131 St Vincent Street and via Video Conference*

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Minute of the meeting of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's Operations Committee held at 131 St Vincent Street and via Video Conference* on 22 August 2025

Present Councillors David Wilson (Chair), Alex Allison, Ken Andrew, Maureen Devlin*, Stephen Dornan, Helen Loughran* (from Agenda Item 4), Alan Moir, Roza Salih*, Adam Smith*, Andy Steel* and appointed members Moray Macdonald*, Scott Prentice* and Pam Turton*

Attending Valerie Davidson, Chief Executive; Lesley Aird, Director of Finance & Corporate Support; Richard Robinson, Director of Transport Operations; Bruce Kiloh, Head of Policy & Planning, Gordon Dickson, Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery; Karen O'Donnell, Schools Agency Services & Compliance Manager; Andrea Thompson, Head of Corporate Communications; Amy Bryceland, Solicitor (Clerk) and Ewan Tait of ScotRail (for Agenda Item 4)

The Partnership agreed at its meeting of 12 March 2021, following consideration of Standing Order No 14, for the recording of Committee and Partnership meetings, and that such recordings would be made available together with the minute of meetings.

The Chair welcomed Ewan Tait of Scotrail to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were submitted from Councillor Donald Reid and appointed member Jenna Dickson.

2. Declaration of interest in terms of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000

Cllr Moir declared an interest in Agenda Item 4, citing his employment with Scotrail and as a member of ASLEF, the trade union.

3. Minute of previous meeting

The minute of the meeting of 25 April 2025, having been considered and agreed at the Partnership meeting of 27 June 2025 as a correct record, was duly noted.

4. Monitoring Report on public transport services and facilities in the SPT area

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 28 July 2025 by the Director of Transport Operations reporting on the operational performance of public transport services and facilities which are delivered directly by the Partnership or others on behalf of the Partnership and the provision of public transport services and facilities in the Partnership area more generally.

After extensive discussion and hearing from Mr Robinson and Mr Dickson in response to members' questions, specifically relating to:

- i) the reduced percentage in Service Availability at paragraph 3.2 of the report for one period (24 May) which covered a period of transition from the old to new signalling system;
 - ii) disruption to bus routes in Glasgow city centre, and coming to and from Buchanan Bus Station; and
 - iii) paragraph 7.1 of the report where it was agreed that a year on year comparison and a more detailed analysis of the data being presented would be helpful in future reports,
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Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Operations Committee

22 August 2025

and having heard from Mr Tait in relation to ScotRail services, specifically highlighting:

- a) that ScotRail will permanently remove peak fares starting 1 September 2025 allowing passengers to pay the same fare regardless of the time or day of travel;
- b) the increased patronage arising from travel to large events such as the Fringe Festival and Oasis Concerts at Murrayfield; and
- c) reduced performance with particular periods having an increased percentage of cancellations in comparison to the previous year, with particular note given to 17 July 2025 which saw 330 cancellations across the network due to Network Rail infrastructure matters.

Thereafter, the Committee noted the contents of the report and the Operations Chair thanked Mr Tait for attending.

5. Subsidised bus service contract recommendations: financial implications

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 4 August 2025 by the Director of Finance & Corporate Support, advising the Committee of the financial implications of the subsidised bus contract recommendations being considered at the meeting.

After extensive discussion and hearing from Mrs Aird and Mr Dickson in response to members' questions, specifically relating to:

- i) the social value of the subsidised services and how this is quantified and reported by SPT and other bodies such as the Urban Transport Group. Mrs Davidson also noted a Transport Scotland report which included some information relevant to this topic and confirming this would be shared with the Board;
- ii) how patronage figures are captured and reported by the Operators to SPT; and
- iii) comments around the availability of funding and whether if this was increased would it result in improved reliability and frequency of bus services;

the Committee noted:

- (i) the financial implications of the recommendations relating to the subsidised bus services budget in the following papers and to give due consideration to this in the course of the decision making, noting the impact of individual decisions was reported in each paper for consideration;
- (ii) the projected positive variance reported which provided limited scope to support the regional and local network in the remainder of the financial year; and
- (iii) the impact of the current financial pressures on the subsidised bus budget in the short to medium term, including in the current and future financial years and noting as a result of this, an assessment of the current supported bus service provision will continue in 2025/2026 with a view to reducing overall costs in future financial years.

6. Arran Bus Service(s) - Update

[Click here to view the report](#)

22 August 2025

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12 August 2025 by the Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery to provide an update to the Committee on matters relating to local bus services on the island of Arran.

After hearing from Mr Dickson and in response to members' questions, specifically relating to the disappointment felt with the engagement and responses from Transport Scotland on the issue thus far and possible next steps in terms of escalating further, the Committee noted the contents of this report and the steps taken by SPT and NAC to seek additional funding support for local bus services on the island of Arran, particularly given challenges faced linked to the operation of ferry services and the importance of local bus services to residents, visitors, school pupils and local businesses.

7. The Future of Home to School Transport - update

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 13 August 2025 by the Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery updating the Committee on SPT's review of Home to School Transport (HTS) being conducted in partnership with constituent councils.

After hearing from Mr Dickson and Mrs O'Donnell in response to members' questions, specifically regarding:

- i) particular challenges with the significant rising cost of HTS contracts in the region;
- ii) SPT's continuous efforts to encourage operators to bid;
- iii) the impact of designated walking distance parameters to the statistics being reported; and
- iv) difficulties with regard to the recruitment and retention of drivers and other staff across a range of operators in this sector, and what steps could be undertaken to address these.

Thereafter the Committee noted the findings of the recent HTS engagement exercise undertaken with SPT's local authority partners, noting that further updates will be provided to future Committees.

8. Update on Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (GCRBP)

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12 August 2025 by the Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery updating Members on the progress and activities relating to the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (GCRBP), including governance developments, delivery priorities and funding activity.

After hearing from Mr Dickson the Committee noted the Committee noted this report.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair extended congratulations to former SPT appointed member George Hazel in his appointment to the role of Independent Chair of the GCRBP.

9. Amendments to subsidised local bus service contracts

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 30 July 2025 by the Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery advising the Committee of amendments to subsidised local bus service contracts since the last Operations Committee meeting on 25 April 2025.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Operations Committee

22 August 2025

After hearing from Mr Dickson in response to members' questions, specifically regarding concerns raised about a loss of direct services to Glasgow from areas in North Lanarkshire, the Committee noted the amendments to subsidised local bus service contracts in accordance with established corporate governance, financial regulation and contract standing orders.

10. Contracts awarded under delegated powers

[Click here to view the report](#)

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25 July 2025 by the Head of Bus Strategy & Delivery notifying the Committee of subsidised local bus service contracts awarded utilising delegated Powers in Inverclyde, North and South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire council areas.

After hearing from Mr Dickson, the Committee noted the subsidised local bus service contracts awarded utilising delegated powers, in accordance with established corporate governance, financial regulation and contract standing orders.