Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

# Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

Draft for consultation


# Contents

# 1 Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

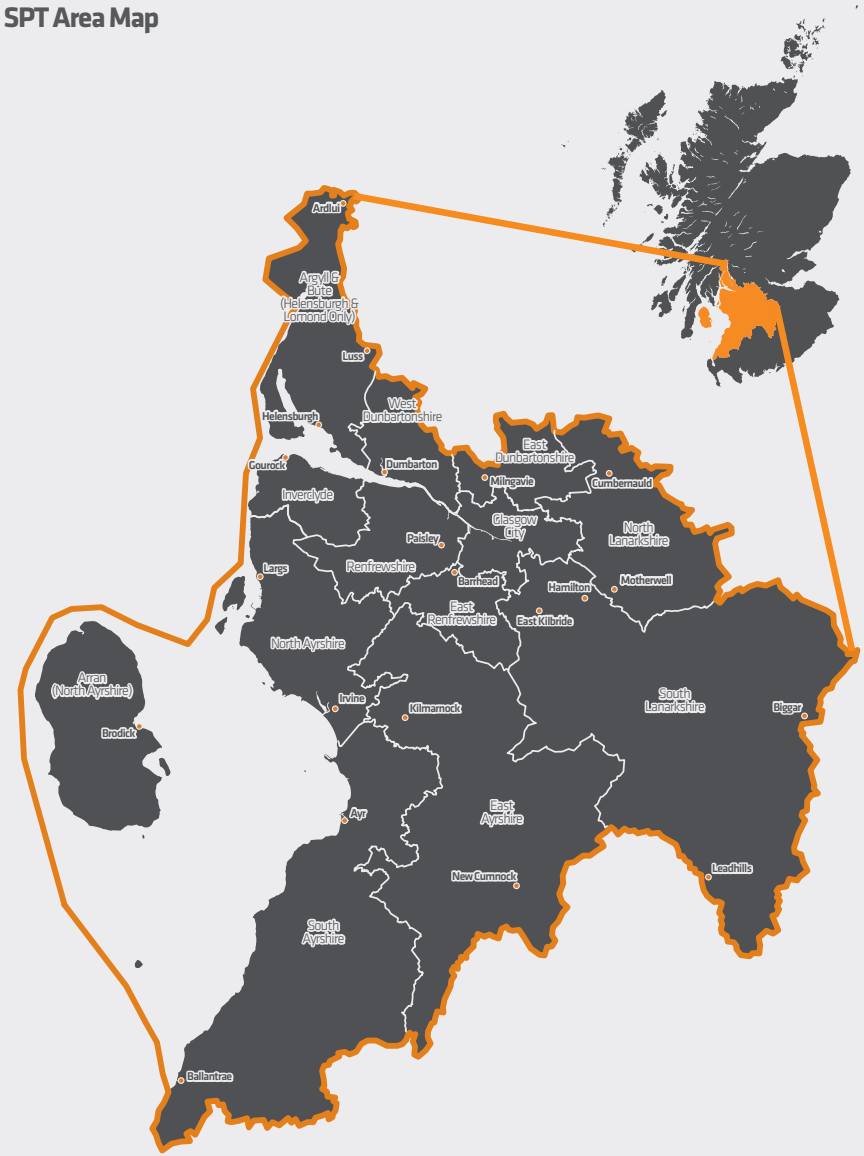
As a core part of the strategy delivery, SPT proposes to progress with developing a bus franchising model for local services across the region. SPT believes that a bus franchising model will better align incentives across all bus stakeholders, drawing upon the expertise in the private sector to deliver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

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

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

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

**SPT Area Map**



# "About SPT"

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

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has a statutory duty under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to produce a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). SPT also provides a range of transport services including:

- Managing, owning and operating the Subway and six regional bus stations;
- Managing socially necessary bus services, including the demand responsive transport services MyBus/MyBus Rural;
- Managing and maintaining bus stop and shelter infrastructure and arranging school transport on behalf of councils;
- Providing travel information, including the bus Real-Time Passenger Information system;
- Providing the secretariat for the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme on behalf of our councils and administering the multi-modal ZoneCard ticket on behalf of participating transport operators; and
- Smartcard ticketing.

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

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

# 2 About the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

This section explains the background to the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS), how it was developed, the structure of the strategy, how you can respond to this consultation, and SPT's next steps.

## The need for the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

The need for the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) was identified by SPT during the development of "A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland 2023-2038" (RTS).

The RTS development process identified the critical role of bus in the region and established a policy to enhance and integrate the bus network, provide reliable, attractive bus services and offer good value for money to passengers. The RTS also established that the powers in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019[2] should be further investigated and implemented, where appropriate.

SPT determined that developing a strategy specifically for bus would be a pragmatic first step towards improving the bus network.

# Development of the SRBS

The development of the SRBS follows on from several significant milestones in the development of national and regional transport policy. This includes the new National Transport Strategy[3] and the new Regional Transport Strategy[4], and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, which established new powers for local transport authorities to improve bus services in their area.

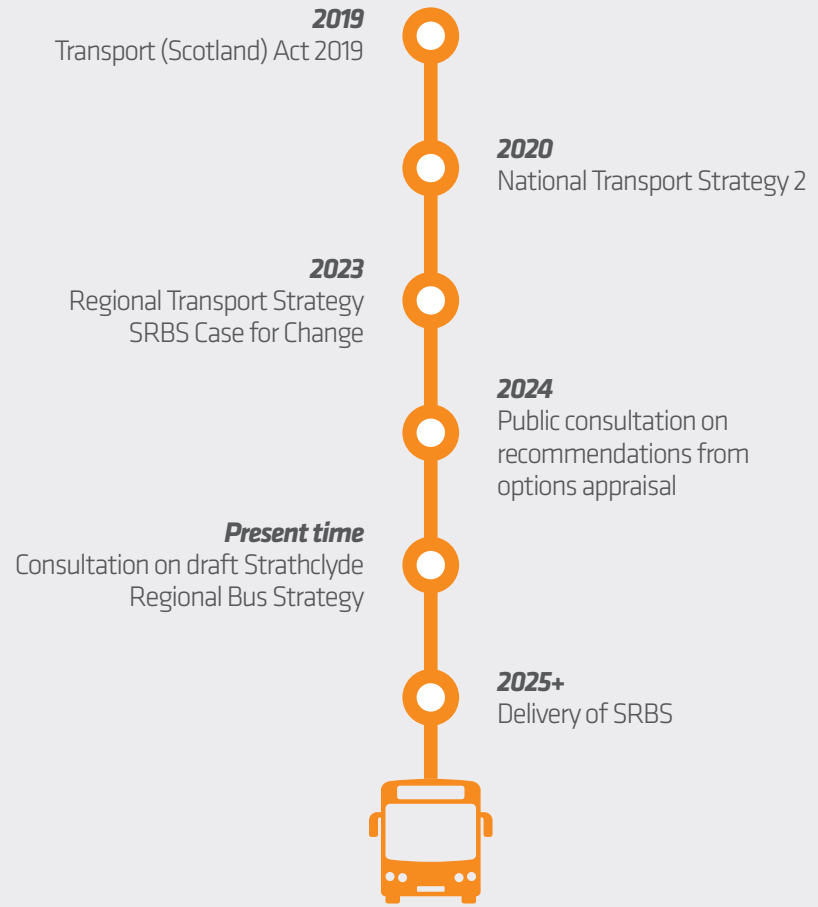
The SRBS process commenced in 2023 by establishing a Case for Change[5] followed by an options appraisal[6]. SPT held a public consultation on the recommendations from the options appraisal in April - May 2024[7,8]. The draft strategy was then developed in the latter half of 2024, guided by the consultation outcomes and the direction of the SPT Partnership Board[9].

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

Figure 1 illustrates a timeline of key events and milestones in the development of the SRBS.

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

**Figure 1:** SRBS development – timeline of key events



# Structure of this document

This document is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 3:**

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

- **Chapter 4:**

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

- **Chapter 5:**

  The Delivery Plan – This chapter sets out the rationale for taking forward a bus franchising model in the region, the key issues and risks to be considered in the development and implementation of franchising, and the process to develop and implement franchising. This chapter also sets out an action plan including initial actions for the development of franchising, actions to support the management of the pre-franchising period and actions to deliver bus infrastructure and traffic management and a more 'bus friendly' environment.

- **Chapter 6:**

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

# About this consultation and how to respond

It is important that the SRBS is the right strategy for the people, businesses and organisations of the west of Scotland and we welcome your feedback on this draft strategy. You will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the strategy as well as the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

A consultation questionnaire is available for you to complete. This can be accessed from the SRBS webpage at: www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy.

Please contact SPT at rts@spt.co.uk if you need support in responding to the consultation.

# Next steps

Following the close of the consultation, feedback received will be considered and inform the final version of the strategy. SPT aims to present a report on the consultation results and the final SRBS to SPT's Partnership Board in September 2025. Once approved, SPT, in discussion with partners and stakeholders, will begin delivery of the SRBS.


# 3 The Case for Change

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

# The opportunity of bus

## *Bus can support better public policy outcomes*

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

There are two key aspects to this role, though, that widen and increase the value of bus to public policy. First, bus can be a viable alternative to car travel, offering, on a per passenger basis, lower carbon emissions, less air pollution and more efficient use of energy, road space and land than private cars. This is about maximising the opportunity of bus as an alternative to car when people can make that choice.

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

Bus is therefore strongly linked to the three priorities of the Regional Transport Strategy:

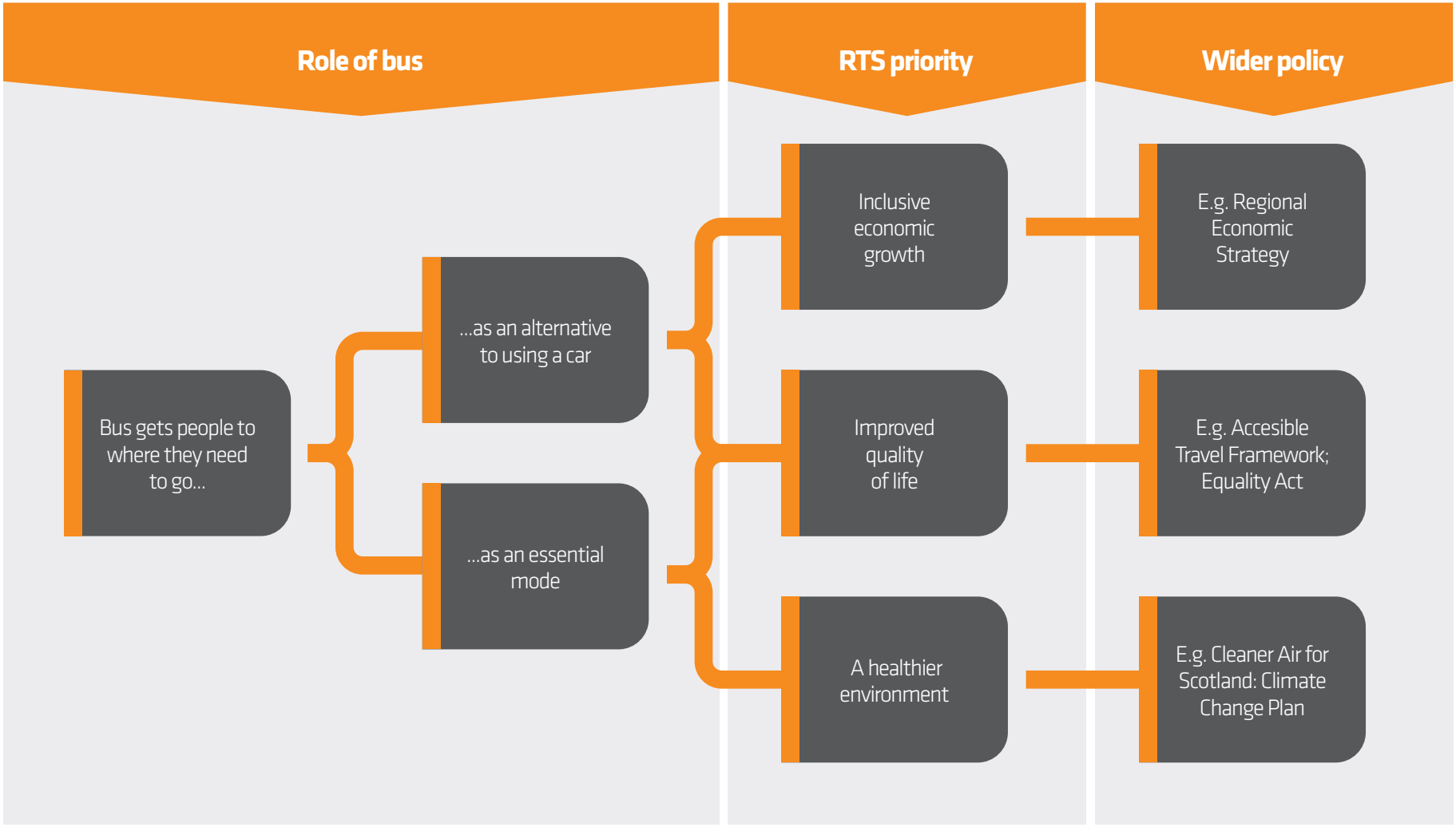
**RTS Priority:**
Inclusive economic growth, underpinned by a transport system that supports regional economic development and growth, with better opportunities and fairer outcomes for all.

**RTS Priority:**
Improved quality of life, supported by a transport system that helps everyone to have better health and wellbeing and lead active, fulfilling lives.

**RTS Priority:**
A healthier environment, supported by a transport system that helps our region become a low carbon place with healthier natural and built environments for the benefit of all.

This is illustrated by Figure 2 and further detailed in the rest of this chapter.

**Figure 2:** The role of bus in delivering public policy



## *Inclusive economic growth*

### *Bus supports the regional economy*

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

### *Bus can ease traffic congestion*

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

### *Bus investment delivers good value for money*

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

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

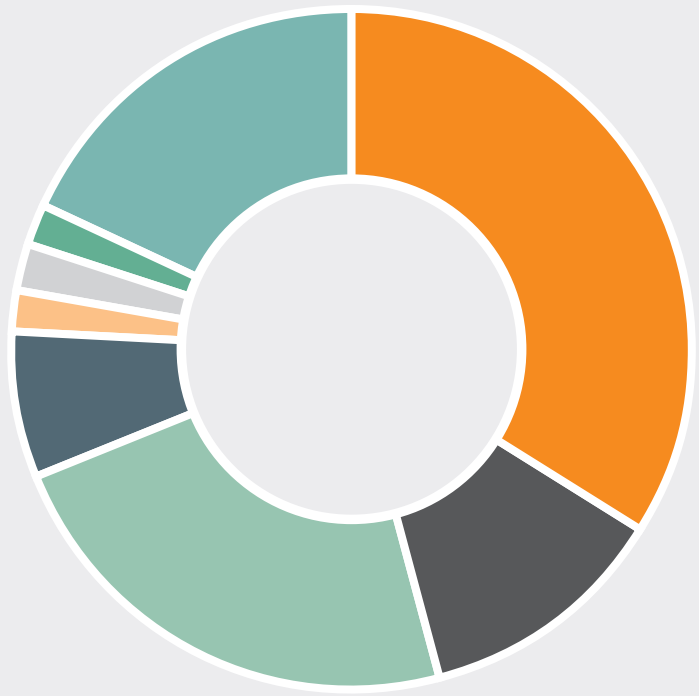
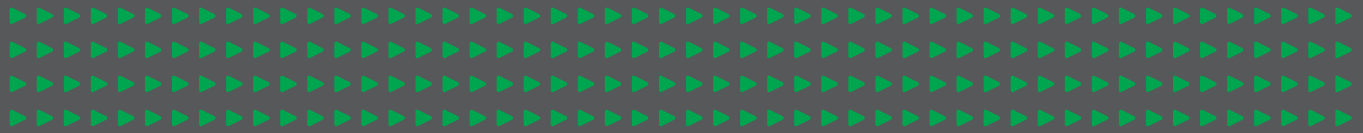


**Figure 4:** Moving 200 people through a junction - road space and time requirements by mode

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

**200 cyclists**. Take **1 minute 59 seconds** to pass through a junction.



**5 trams with average of 40 people**. Take **32 seconds** to pass through a junction.

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

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

## *Bus is flexible to the region's changing needs*

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

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

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

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

## *Bus can support an improved quality of life for all*

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

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

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

**Figure 5:** Strategic economic development & investment spatial priorities

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

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

**Key centres & hubs**

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

**Boundaries, roads and rail lines**

- Council boundary
- SPT boundary
- Rail line
- A road
- Motorway

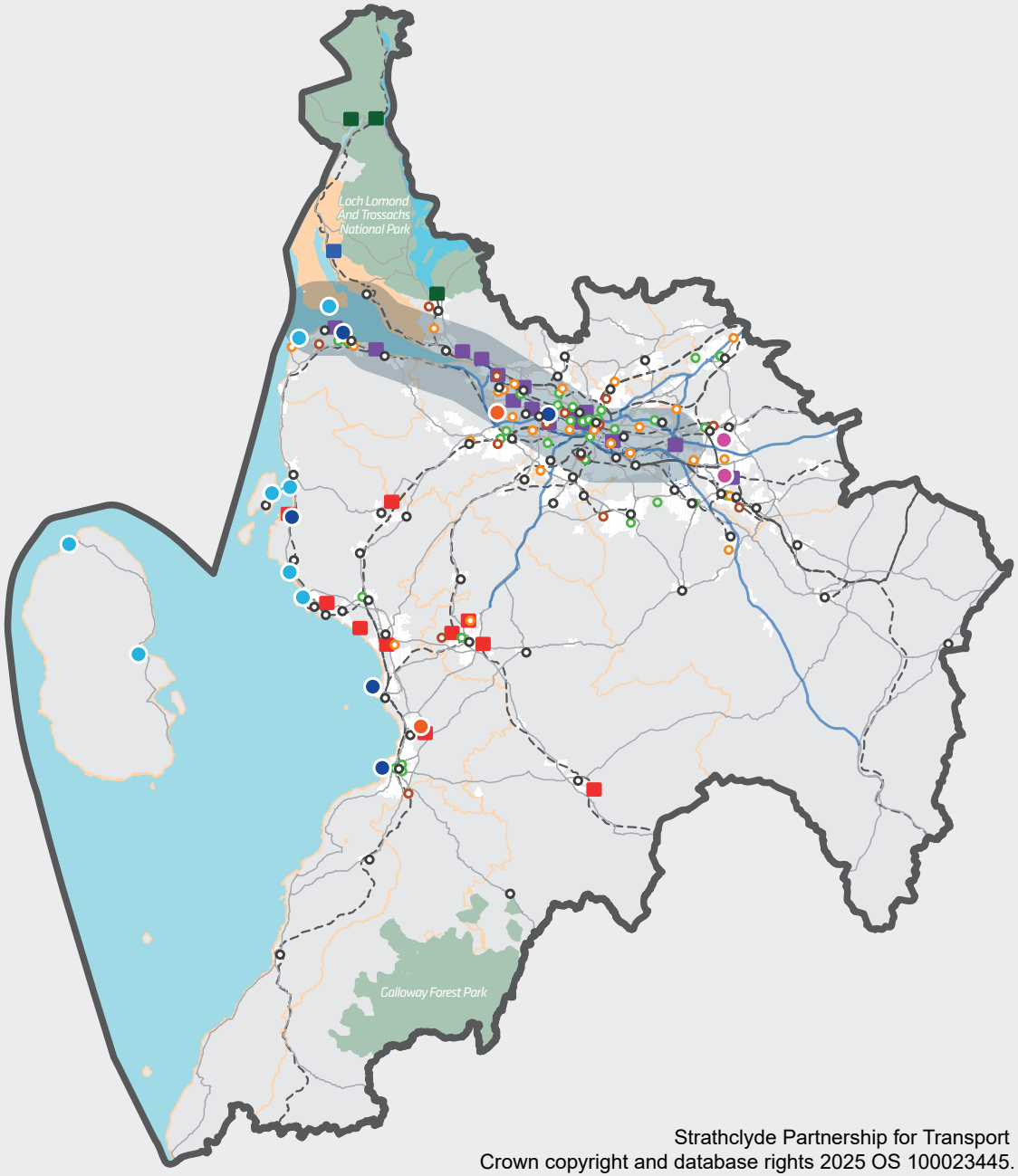
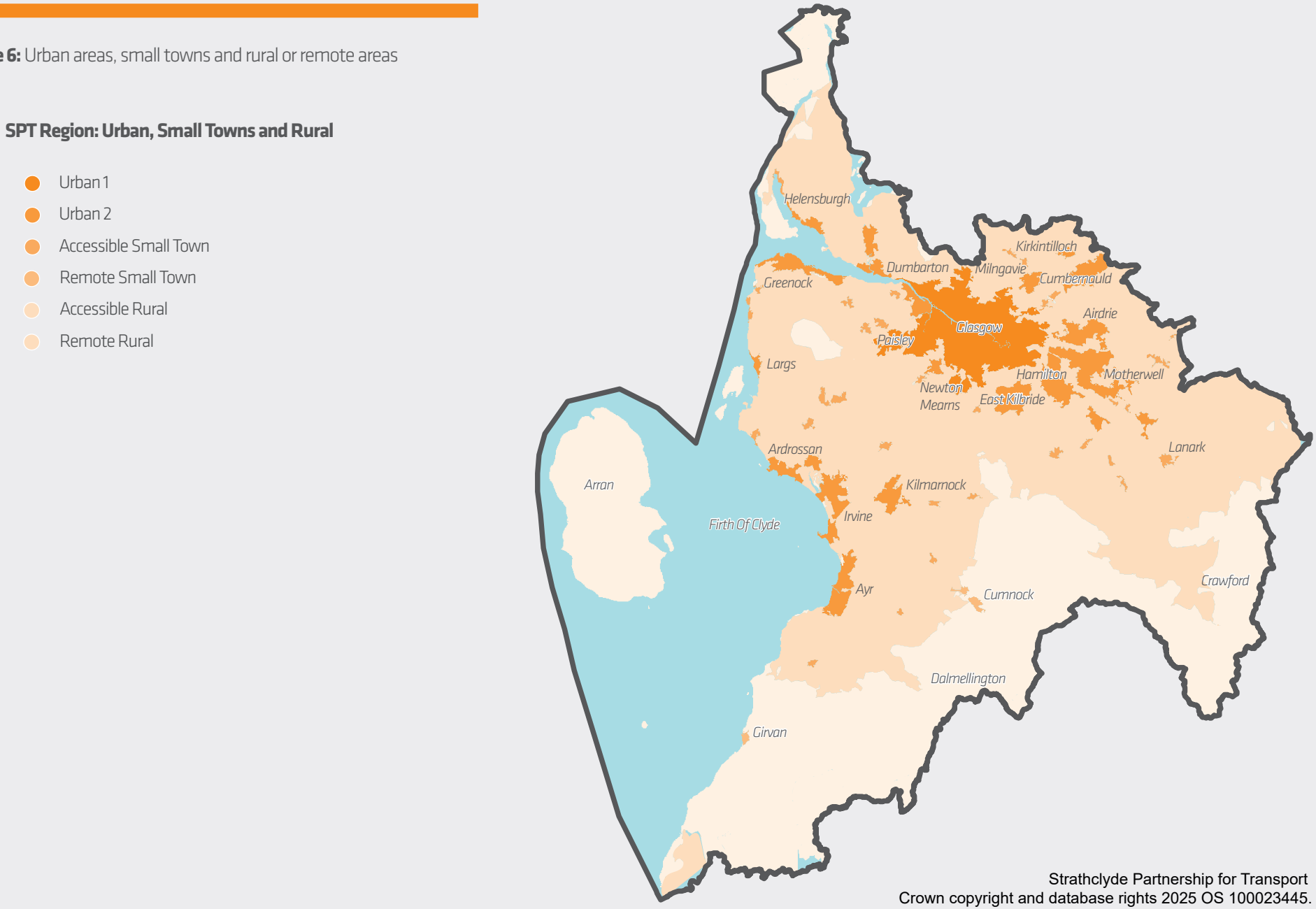


**Figure 6:** Urban areas, small towns and rural or remote areas

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## *Bus can support a healthier environment*

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

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

**Figure 7:** Percentage of bus users by household income

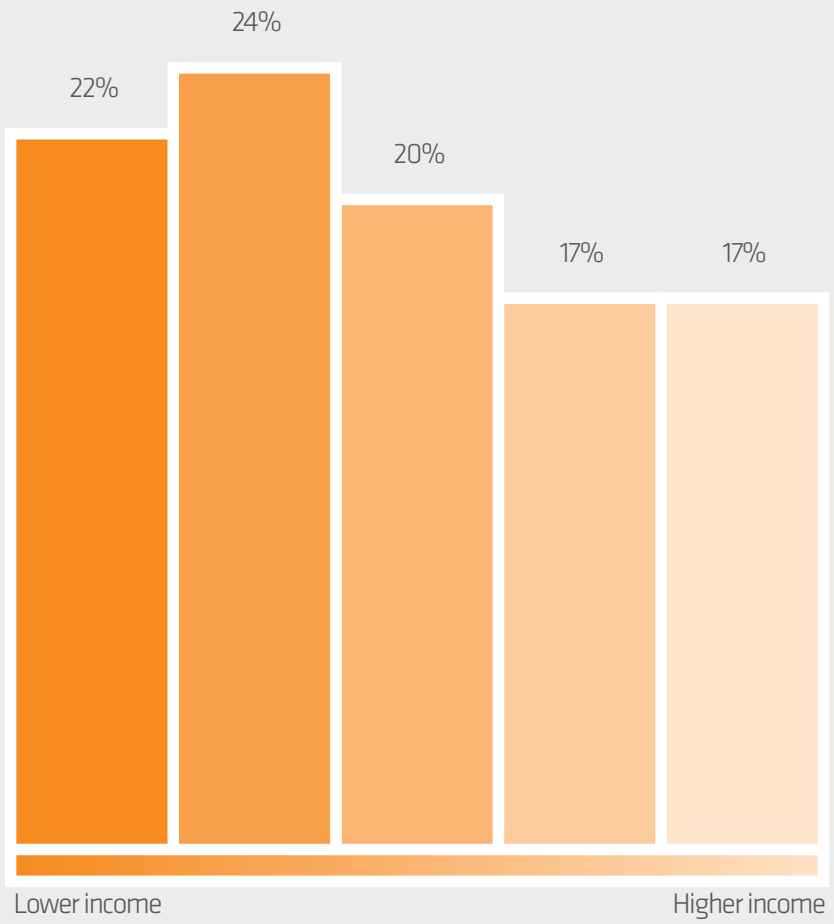


**Figure 8:** Percentage of households with no access to a private car

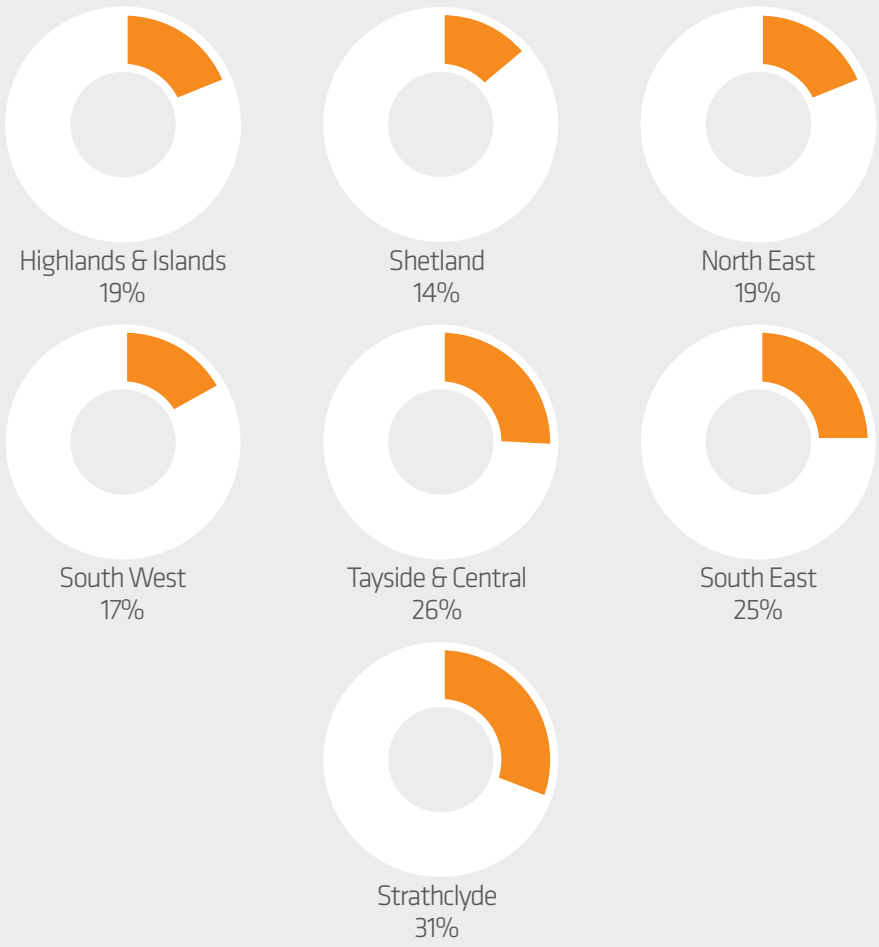



**Figure 9:** Carbon emissions per passenger km (UK-wide)

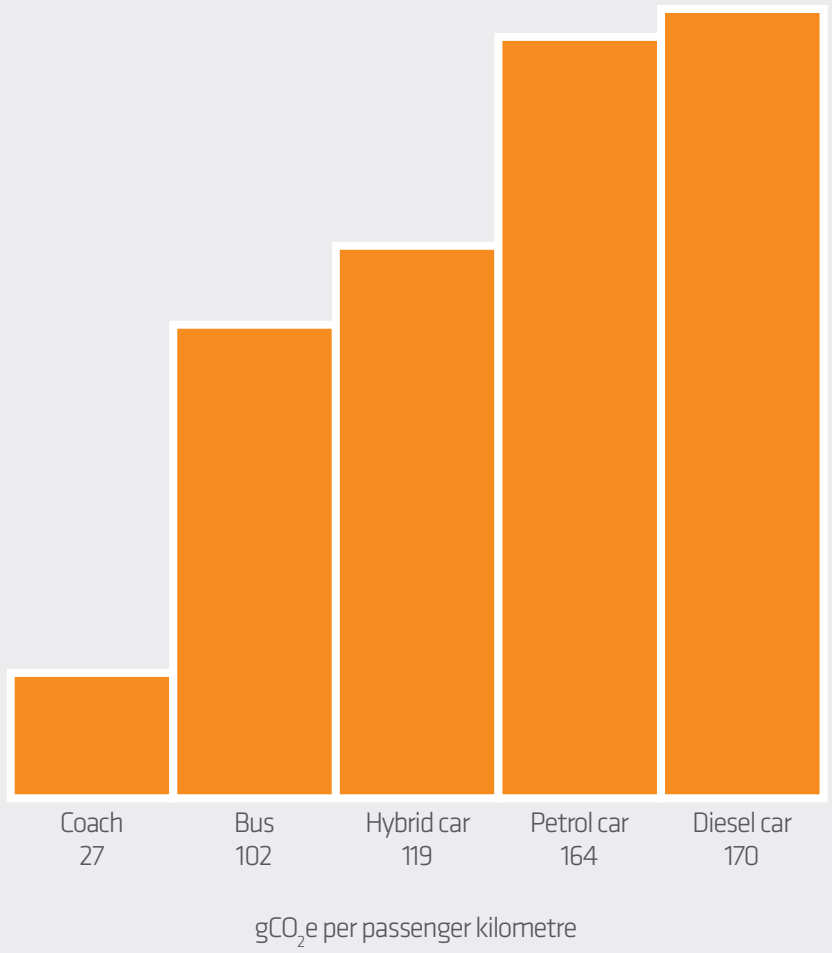
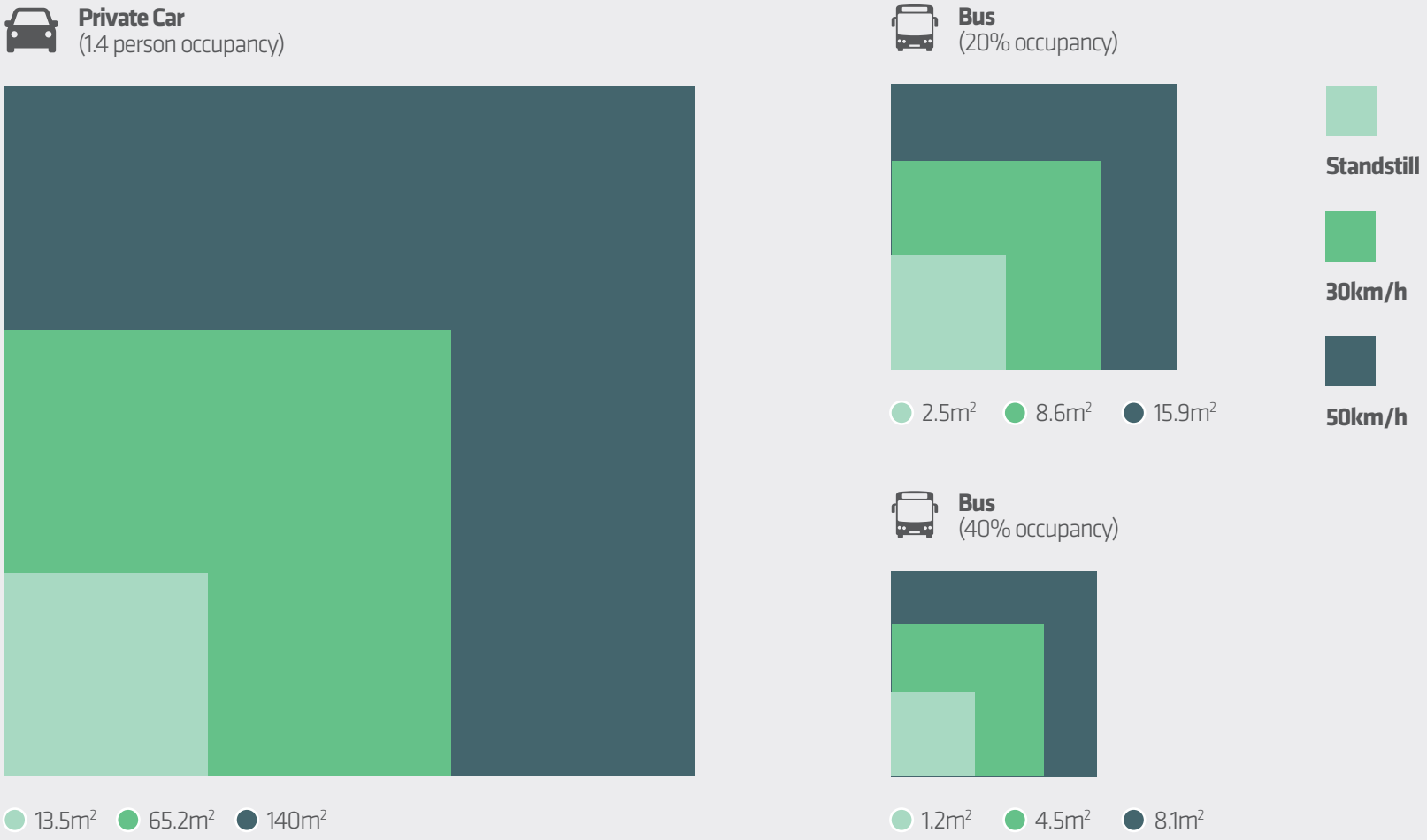


**Figure 10:** Road space requirements for car and bus



# The challenges for bus

## *The cycle of decline*

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

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

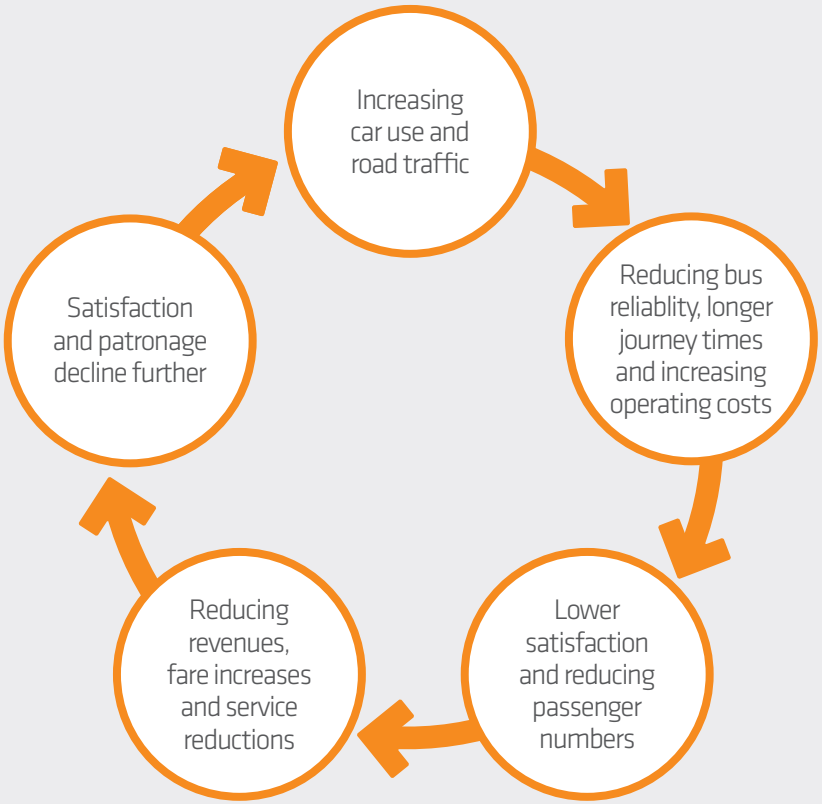
It isn't working for operators who are experiencing rising costs, driver shortages and increasing requirements to support essential environmental policies set against a backdrop of growing car use and falling use of bus.

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

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

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

**Figure 11:** Bus – The 'cycle of decline'



## *Use of buses is down, car use is up*

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Figure 12:** Annual bus patronage (in millions)

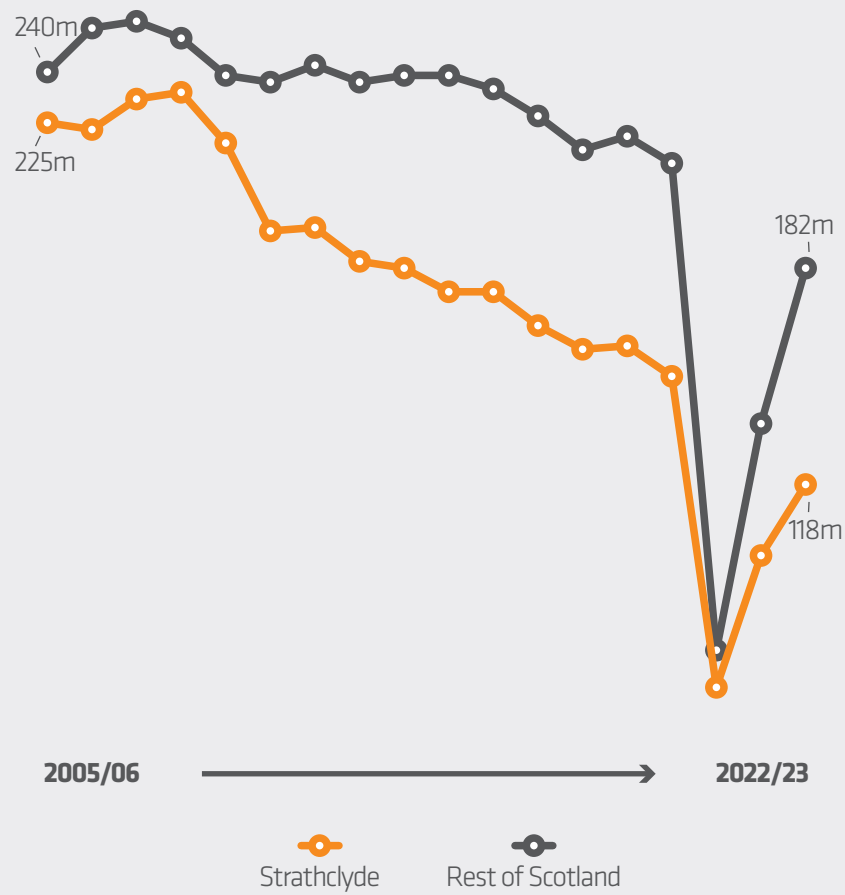


**Figure 13:** Use of local bus services in the past month, Strathclyde

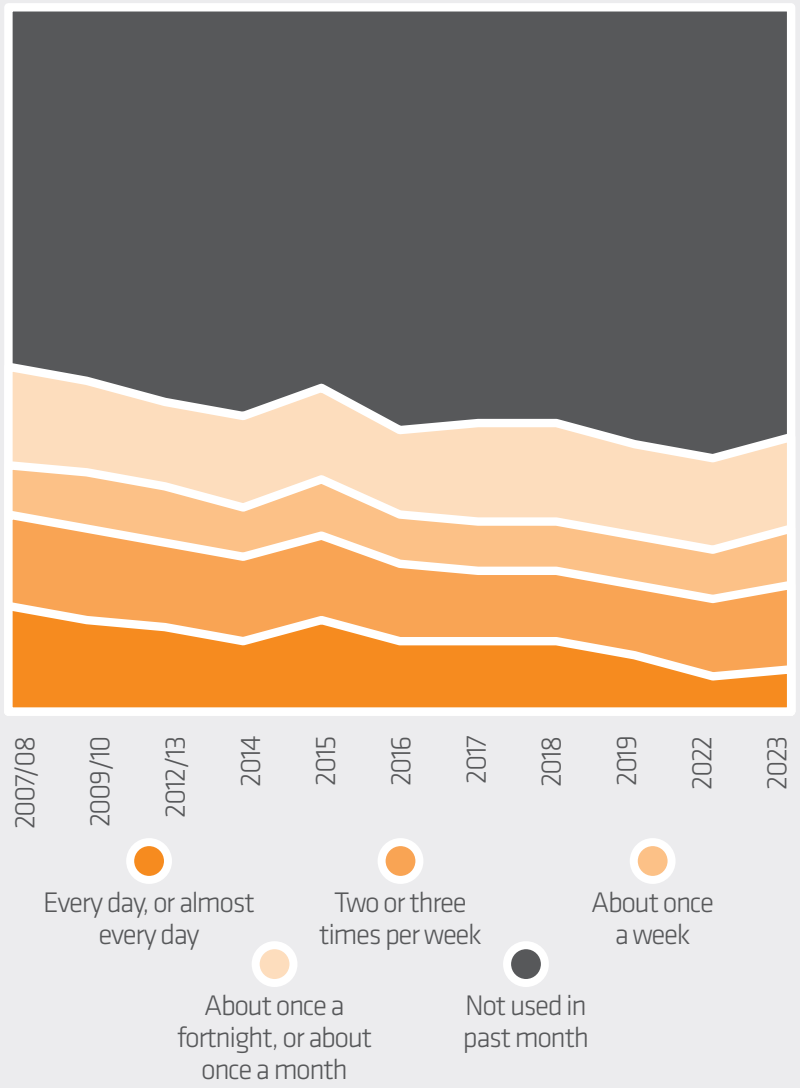
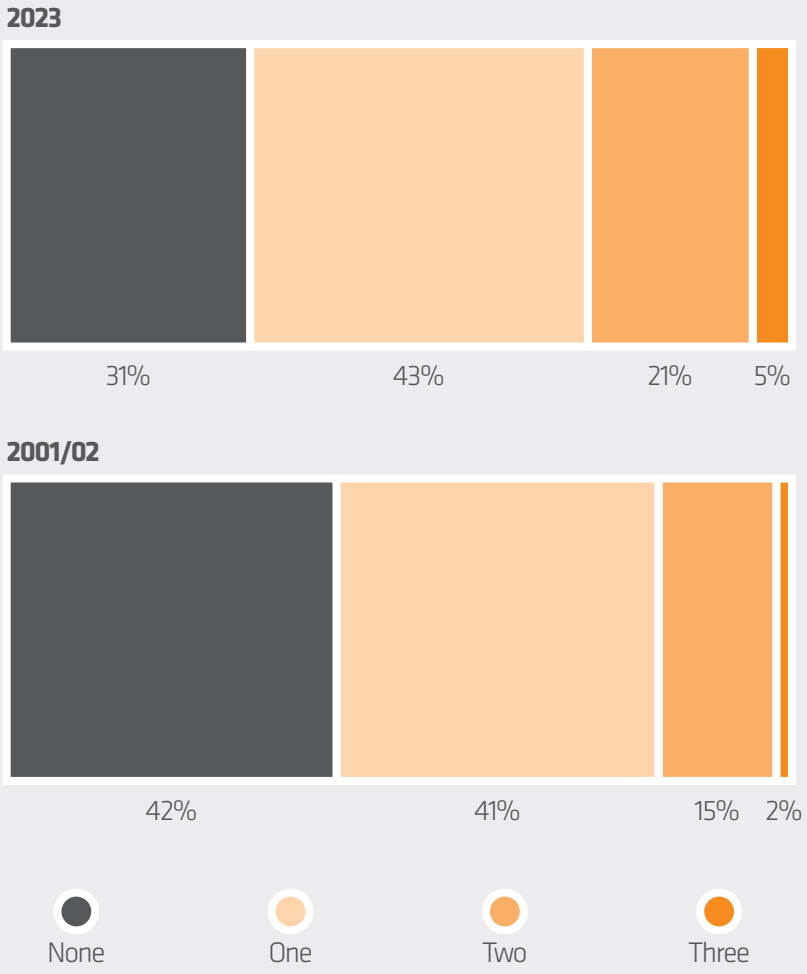



**Figure 14:** Number of cars available to households for private use (% of households), Strathclyde



## *Poor bus service reliability and increasing journey times*

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

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

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

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

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

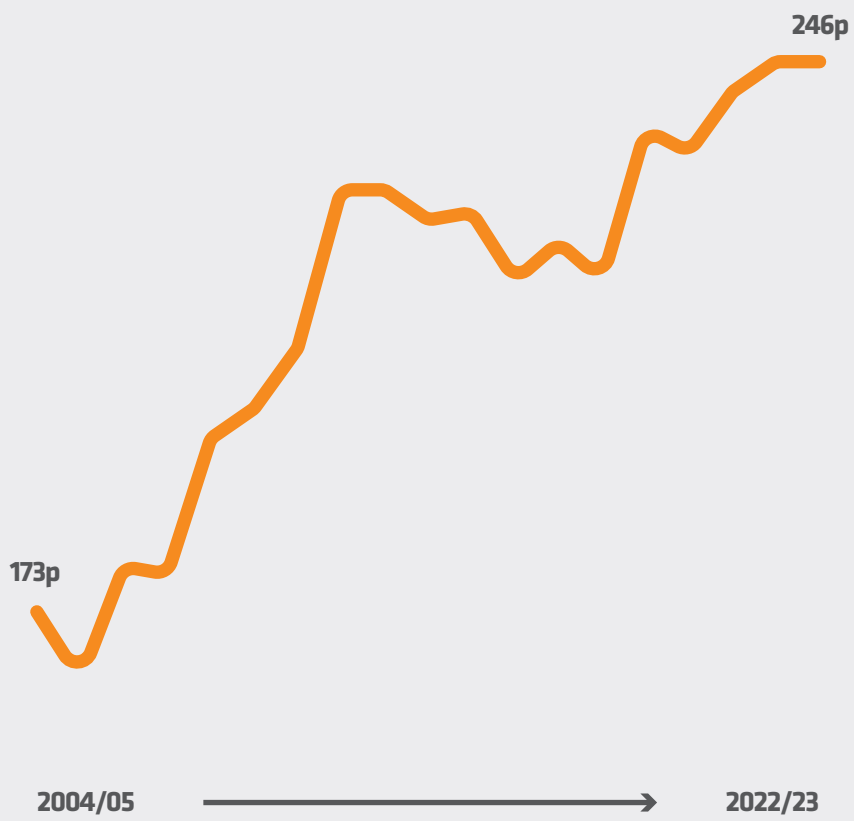
The availability of vehicles and drivers also impacts on reliability when there is an insufficient number of drivers or buses available to operate a service according to its timetable. Driver shortages is a long-standing challenge across the road transport industry but has been particularly critical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

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


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

***– RTS Public Survey:***

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




## *Bus service levels are reducing*

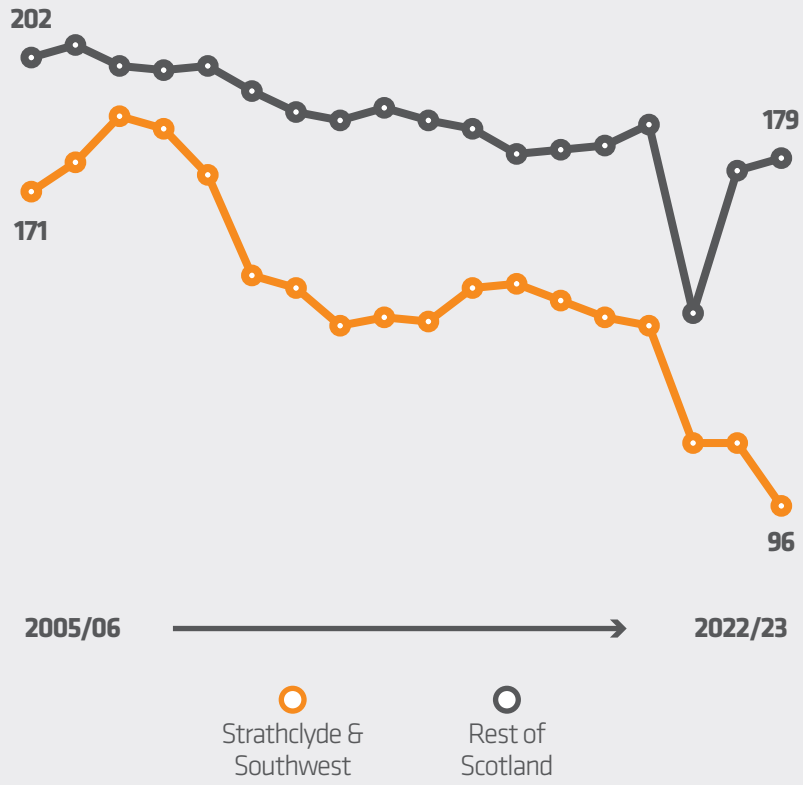
The frequency of bus services is a key driver of demand for bus travel[39,40]. Higher frequencies provide convenience for passengers, reduce waiting times, make it easier to make connections and increase the chance of getting a seat on the bus at peak travel times.

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

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

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

**Figure 16:** Annual local bus kilometres (in millions)



## *The increasing cost of travelling by bus*

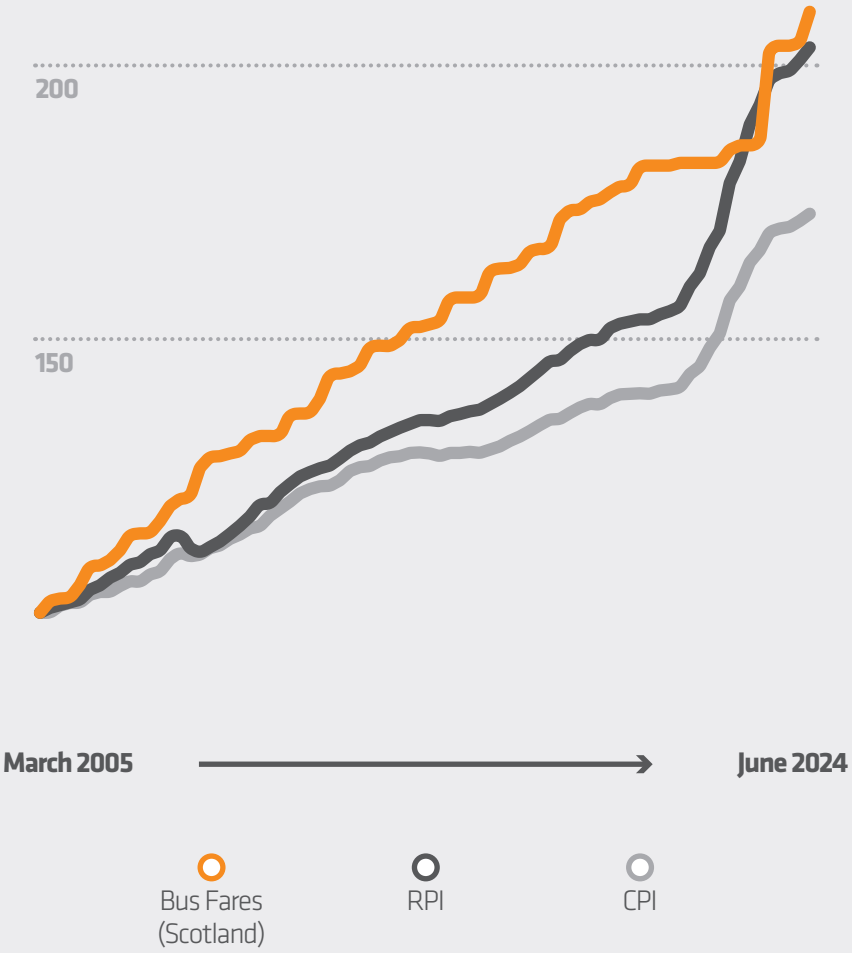
The increasing cost of bus travel is a problem for people living on lower incomes as fares may represent a substantial proportion of their monthly expenditure[44]. This may make it difficult to access better work or essential services and limit opportunities to get on with everyday activities like shopping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

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

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

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

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



## *Limited integration with other services and complex ticketing*

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

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

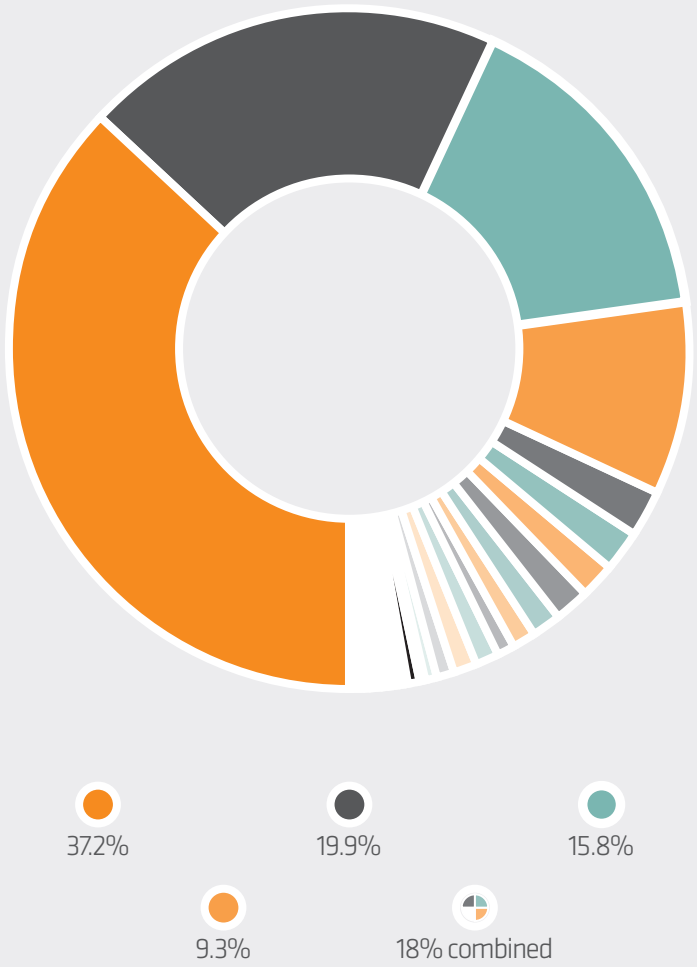
Limited integration makes it more difficult to make some types of journeys and may suppress demand for bus if it is perceived to be too difficult or time consuming to make a journey by bus. In rural areas, with lower service frequencies, limited integration can be problematic as changing buses may be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

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

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

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

**Figure 18:** Proportion of bus mileage by operator




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

***– RTS Public Survey:***

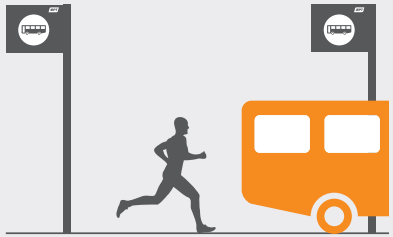
## *Barriers to using bus*


### Complex ticketing

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

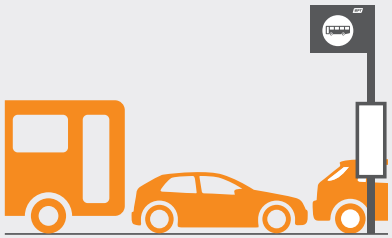
### Fares

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



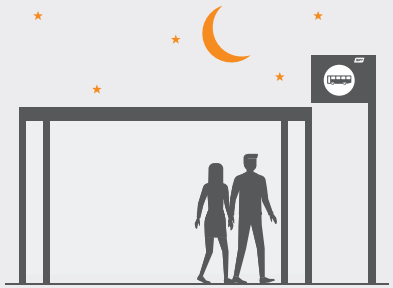
### Lack of integration

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



### Delays and journey times

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



### Lack of services

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

## *Public and passenger views*

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

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

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

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

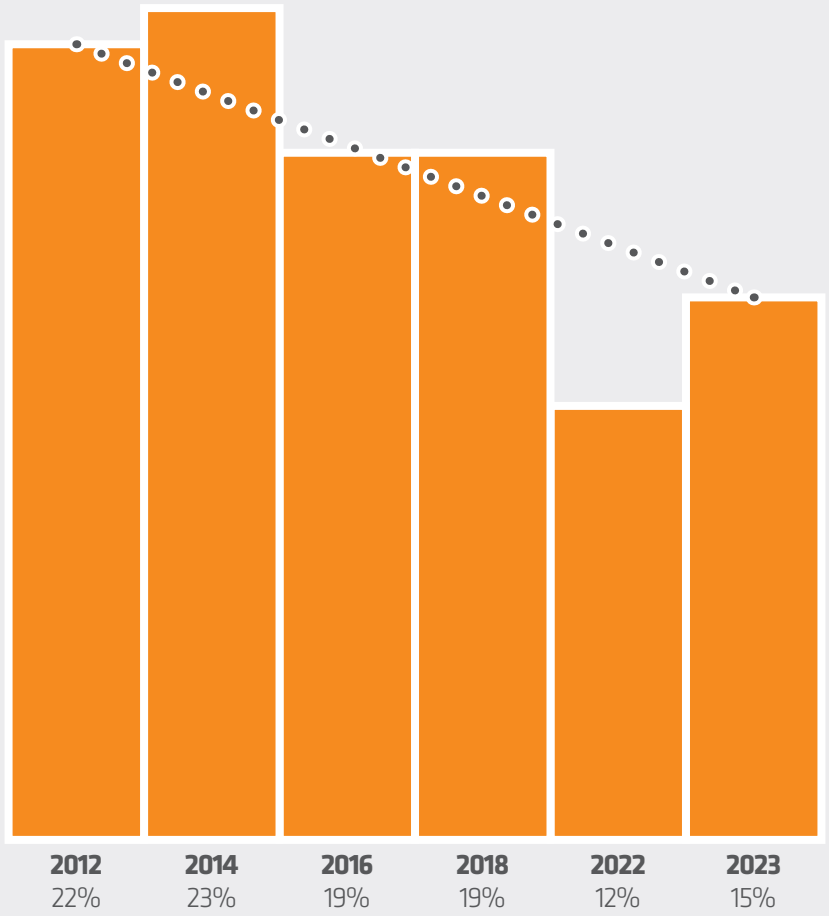
- quality, reliability and connectivity issues with public transport (particularly buses
- high cost of public transport (particularly buses)
- lack of integration in the public transport system including ticketing

Furthermore, it was noted that:

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

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

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




## *Access for all*

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

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

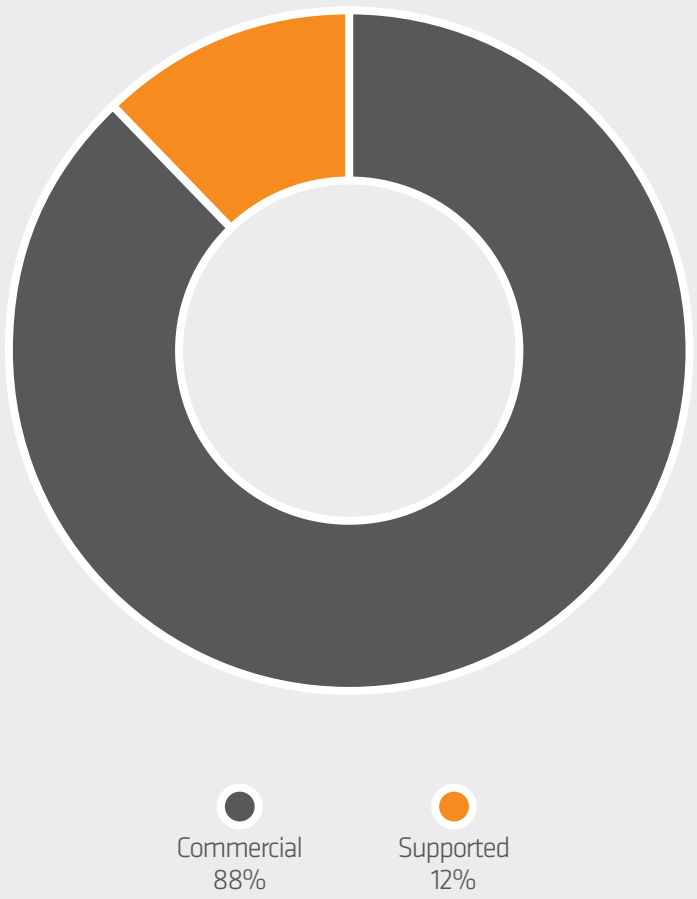
SPT provides 'socially necessary bus services' under contract to private bus operators to plug gaps in the commercial bus network. These services may be provided on a whole route basis or to extend the range or hours of operation of an otherwise commercially provided service. However, in the region,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

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

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

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

**Figure 20:** Proportion of bus mileage by commercial or supported




## *The challenge of decarbonisation*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


## *Funding the bus network*

The case for public funding of bus is well established, linking directly to the opportunity of bus set out earlier in this document. Bus can deliver better social, economic and environmental outcomes and is the most widely used public transport mode. However, subsidy per passenger is far lower for bus than other forms of public transport and transport funding more generally continues to be allocated heavily to carbon intensive transport.

### Sources of operator revenue

Passenger revenue (i.e. ticket sales) has been decreasing over a long period of time, reflecting the loss of passengers across the network and the increasing proportion of passengers carried under concessionary travel schemes.

The Scottish Government's budget allocation for concessionary travel is £370 million in 2024/25, which includes the scheme for older and disabled persons and the scheme for young persons under 22 years of age. CPT highlighted in 2023 that the reimbursement rate for carrying concessionary passengers had changed from 73.6% at the time of the launch of the older and disabled persons scheme to the current rate of 56.8%.

The Network Support Grant (NSG) is a discretionary grant to operators to help maintain the bus network by subsiding operating costs. The Scottish Government budget allocation for NSG is £49.5 million in 2024/25. The Consideration of Public Transport (CPT) highlighted in 2023 that the NSG rate of 14.4p/km had not changed in 10 years and amounted to a real terms reduction of 20% due to rising operating costs.

Another source of bus operator revenue is delivery of socially necessary services under contract to SPT. Funding for socially necessary services in the SPT region is by budget requisition from SPT's partner councils, with a budget of £12.3 million in 2024/25. The cost of providing socially necessary services has been increasing in line with increasing operating costs – increasing by more than £2.3 million between 2019/20 and 2023/24, as shown in Figure 22.

## Capital funding

The rising cost of capital projects and lack of long-term funding sources makes it more challenging to deliver crucial infrastructure to support the bus network. The Scottish Government's £500m Bus Partnership Fund (BPF), launched in 2020, was to be allocated to bus priority measures in cities and towns. The BPF was highlighted in the Strategic Transport Projects Review recommendation for bus priority as a key funding source for delivery of this intervention. However, the BPF was paused in 2023/24 and has now been replaced by a general bus infrastructure fund.

Despite lack of long-term funding, though, SPT and councils have worked together to deliver a large number of bus projects over the past 15 years though the SPT capital programme including:

- Traffic light priority for buses and new or upgraded urban traffic control systems;
- Redevelopment and upgrading to regional bus stations including key projects at Kilmarnock, Partick, Govan, and Hamilton
- Improvements to bus stops and shelters, routes to bus stops and high access kerbs
- Real time passenger information at bus stops and interchanges.

## Roads

Well maintained roads are also critical to the performance of the bus network. In 2024, the estimated cost of fixing local roads across Scotland was more than £2.6 billion.

**Figure 21:** Proportion of revenue on local bus services by source, Scotland 2022/23

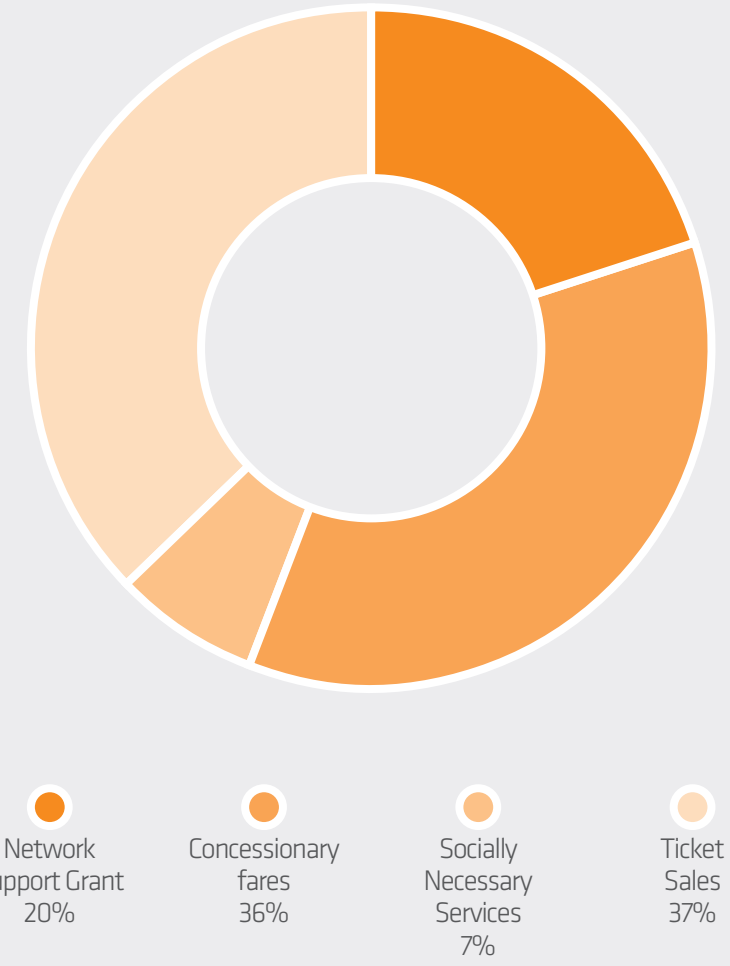
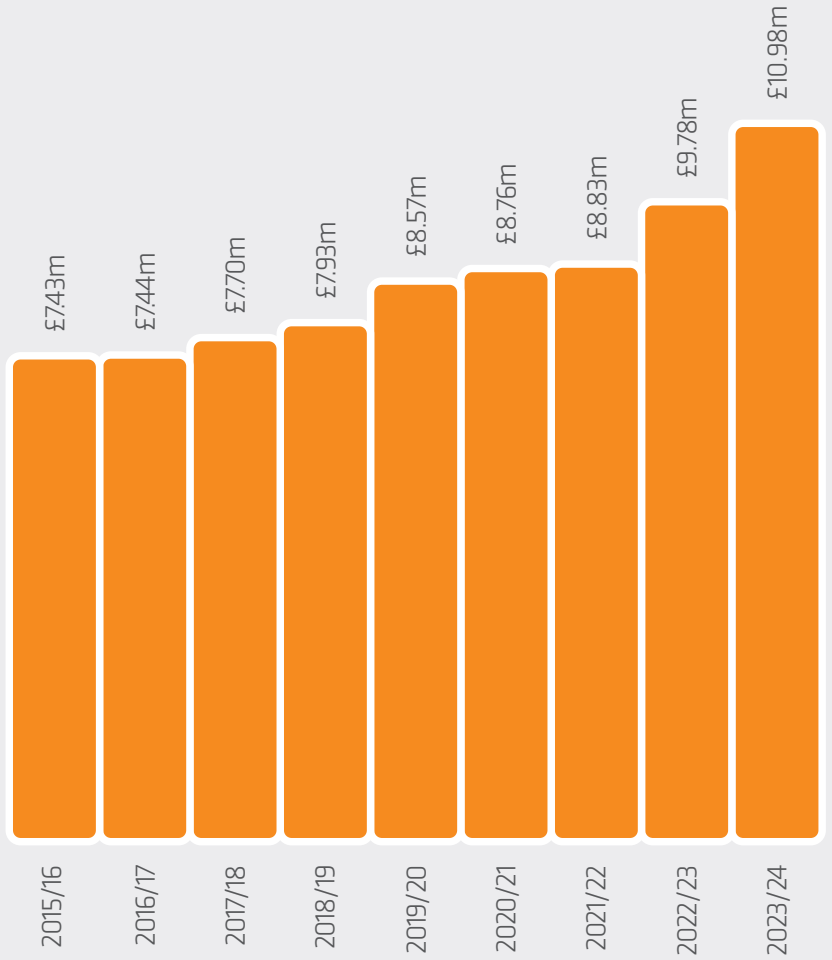



**Figure 22:** Cost of socially necessary services in the SPT region




# The need for change, and making change happen

For too long, bus in the west of Scotland has found itself on the periphery of any serious dialogue regarding its role in the delivery of wider public policy aspirations at national, regional and local level.

When actions of scale on bus have been considered, they have tended to towards an oversimplified approach e.g. 'one-off' investments in infrastructure, apparently not fully appreciating the wide-ranging scope, nature and nuance of our region's bus network, and the need for a more sophisticated, holistic solution to deliver effective change.

The preceding section of this document, building on work undertaken for the SRBS Case for Change and as part of the development of the Regional Transport Strategy, has set out a clear picture of the opportunities and challenges for bus, both being of significant scale.

In addressing this, there is a choice: to continue to facilitate circumstances in which the 'cycle of decline' is allowed to prevail, or to take action to create conditions for a new 'cycle of growth' for bus in Strathclyde.

As the previous sections have highlighted, bus in our region is too important to allow the former to continue, and therefore bold, clear and direct action is required. It is imperative to stop the 'cycle of decline' and build a 'cycle of growth' that fully realises the opportunity of bus.

The next chapter of this document sets out the Bus Network We Need in Strathclyde for passengers and communities and to attract more people to bus. Following this, the Delivery Plan is set out in chapter 5. The Delivery Plan covers the approach to bus franchising and an action plan to take this strategy forward and make it a reality.

# 4 The Bus Network We Need

This chapter sets out the strategic framework of the strategy and outlines the strategy goals, objective, policies and measures.

## The SRBS Strategic Framework

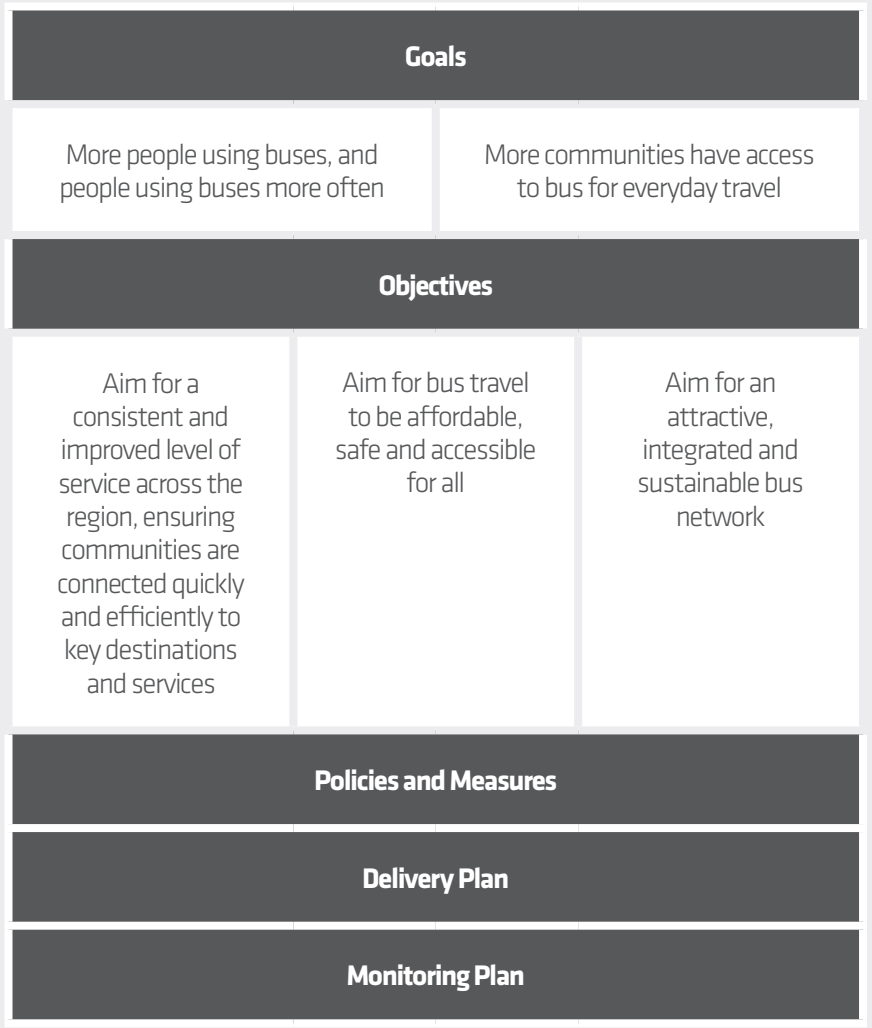
The SRBS Strategic Framework is shown in Figure 23, outlining the constituent parts of the strategy and what it aims to achieve.

The **Goals** describe what the strategy needs to deliver in the long term for bus 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. In the following chapter, the policies and measures have been described under seven theme to make them easier to understand before the detailed set of policies and measures are set out at the end of the chapter.

The Delivery Plan, set out in chapter 5, outlines how the strategy will be delivered. The Monitoring Plan, set out in chapter 6, sets out how the strategy will be monitored.

**Figure 23:** SRBS Strategic Framework



# The cycle of growth, goals and objectives

The SRBS aims to change the story of bus from the 'cycle of decline' to a 'cycle of growth' that better meets existing passenger needs, attracts new passengers and maximises the role of bus in delivering public policy outcomes.

This cycle of growth means a bus network that is more attractive for existing and new users, to get more people using buses, and using them more often. This can lead to a 'shift' from car use to bus use, helping to realise a range of wider outcomes including reduced transport emissions, more efficient use of road space and energy, and more sustainable economic growth and development.

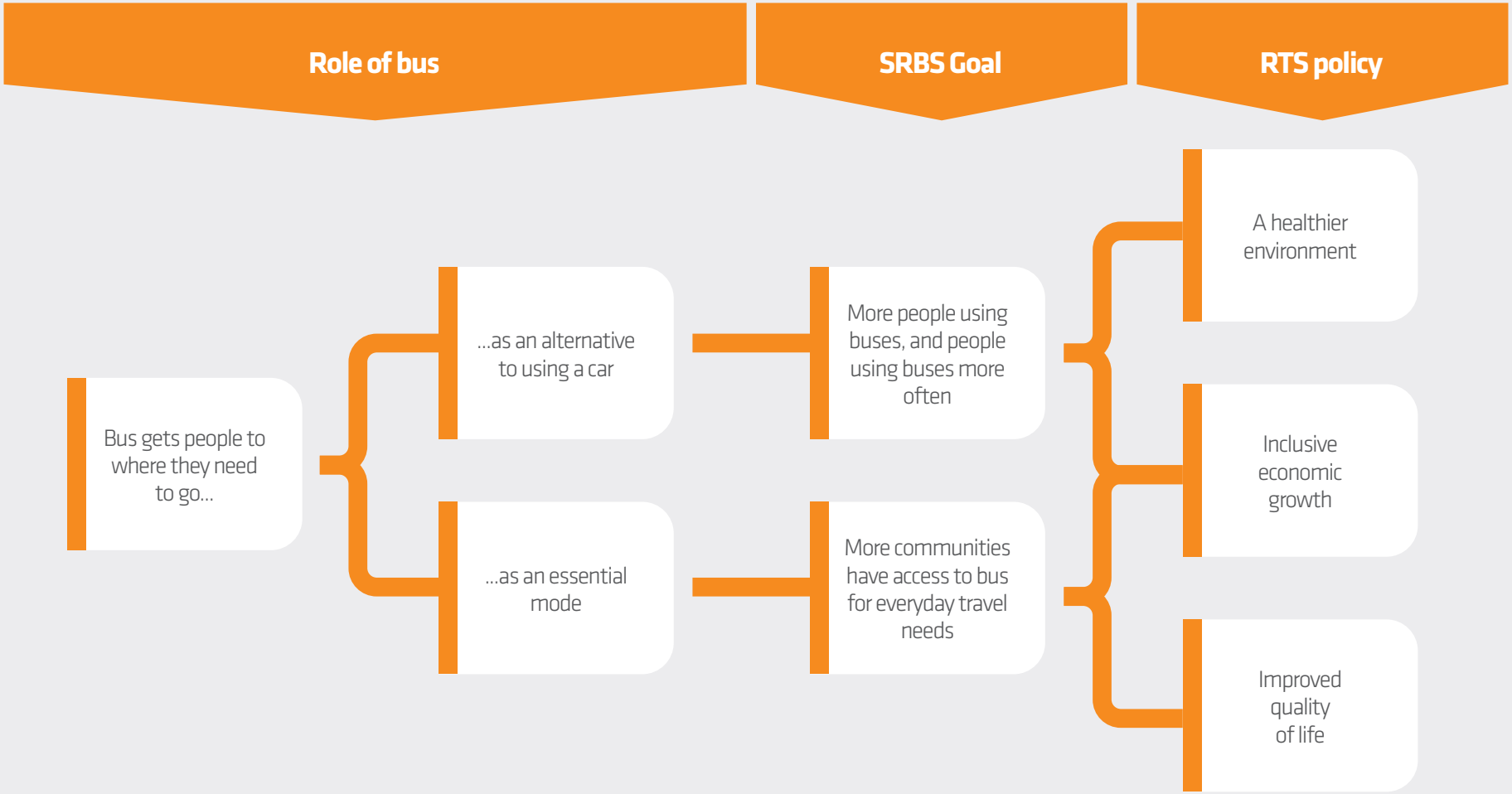
This cycle of growth also means bus services are available for all communities who need bus for everyday travel, particularly for people who do not have alternative transport. This places bus at the heart of communities, ensuring we all have good connections to our everyday travel destinations and helping tackle inequalities of access across the region.

Driving up bus use will improve the financial sustainability of the bus network, which, in turn, helps ensure that bus services are available for those who need them most.

Embedded in the cycle of growth diagram are the two strategy **Goals**, derived from the strategic roles of bus set out earlier in the Case for Change.

**Figure 24:** The bus 'cycle of growth'

**Figure 25:** SRBS Goals



To deliver on the goals, bus needs to provide:

A consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected to key destinations and services

Bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all

An attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network

These are the strategy objectives for the bus network.

# SRBS Policies and Measures

This section sets out the SRBS Policies and Measures. The Policies are the principles that should be applied by SPT and partners in decision-making processes affecting bus in the region, while the Measures describe the activities and outputs that are needed to support the Policies.

To aid understanding, the Policies and Measures are grouped and described under seven themes in the following section. The themes include:

- Buses where they are needed, when they are needed
- Reliable and quicker bus journeys
- Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing
- Accessible and safer bus journeys
- A trusted and recognisable bus network
- A seamless and integrated bus network
- A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet.

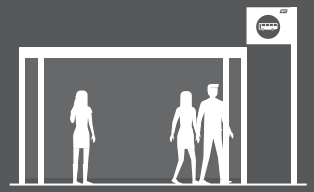
Good practice examples from elsewhere are used throughout the section to illustrate how other cities and regions are delivering improvements for bus. The detailed Policies and Measures are then set out in Table 1 at the end of the chapter.

# The bus network we need

Buses where they are needed, when they are needed

Reliable and quicker bus journeys

Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing



Accessible and safer bus journeys

A trusted and recognisable bus network

A seamless and integrated bus network


A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network fleet

**Theme 1:**

## *Buses where they are needed, when they are needed*

To maximise the opportunity of bus, we need more high frequency services on busier routes, aiming for turn up and go services over time – meaning a service at least every 10 minutes. This should be supported by a well-defined 'feeder' network that is co-ordinated effectively with higher frequency routes, helping to extend the 'reach' of the high frequency network.

The network also needs to be more comprehensive to ensure access for all. This means aiming for more consistent levels of service across the region, and at different times and days with better coverage during early morning hours, evenings, and Sundays. The network also needs to be co-ordinately efficiently across the region to avoid over- or under-provision and inequalities of access by place.

Provision of services at times not covered currently or served at low frequencies is important not only for ensuring access for communities, but also as a driver of passenger growth. This is because passengers are usually making 'return' journeys or more complex 'trip chains', which means the ability to make the return leg of a journey in the evening will affect daytime patronage as well[63].

The bus network provides mass transit on busier corridors and acts as a cross-regional and inter-town connector supporting the regional labour market and access to major destinations such as general hospitals and colleges and universities. These are also roles provided by the rail network and future Clyde Metro proposals, so the bus network needs to be better integrated with these to ensure the overall public transport offer on a corridor is providing an efficient and appropriate level of service and collectively aiming for passenger growth and modal shift from car.

The bus network should also be planned to effectively integrate with Community Transport (CT) where CT can provide a more efficient and locally tailored service. This is particularly effective where CT services can link remote areas to towns for onward travel on the local bus network.

### *Indicative network redesign*

An indicative network redesign exercise was carried out as part of the SRBS development, with the purpose of informing the strategic direction for the strategy. It is noted that any future proposal for a major network redesign and enhancement would require significant additional work including engagement with stakeholders and communities and sharing of key data. It also needs to be developed alongside the emerging Clyde Metro.

The key principles applied to the indicative network redesign were based upon Regional Transport Strategy spatial policies and relevant proposed policies for the SRBS, as follows:

- Enhancing connectivity to destinations including town centres, hospitals and tertiary education (as per appropriate RTS connecting places policies);
- Standardising frequencies and extending hours of operation;
- Simplifying the network; and
- Uprating level of service across the region by:
  - Applying minimum frequency standards on 'radial' routes to/from Glasgow and on 'local' routes in towns outside Glasgow;
  - Improving direct connectivity between town/city centres and other major destinations; and
  - Improving interchange, where required, by feeding connecting services into designated interchanges.

Proposals were developed within three indicative 'scenarios', which can also be potentially seen as indicative implementation 'phases'

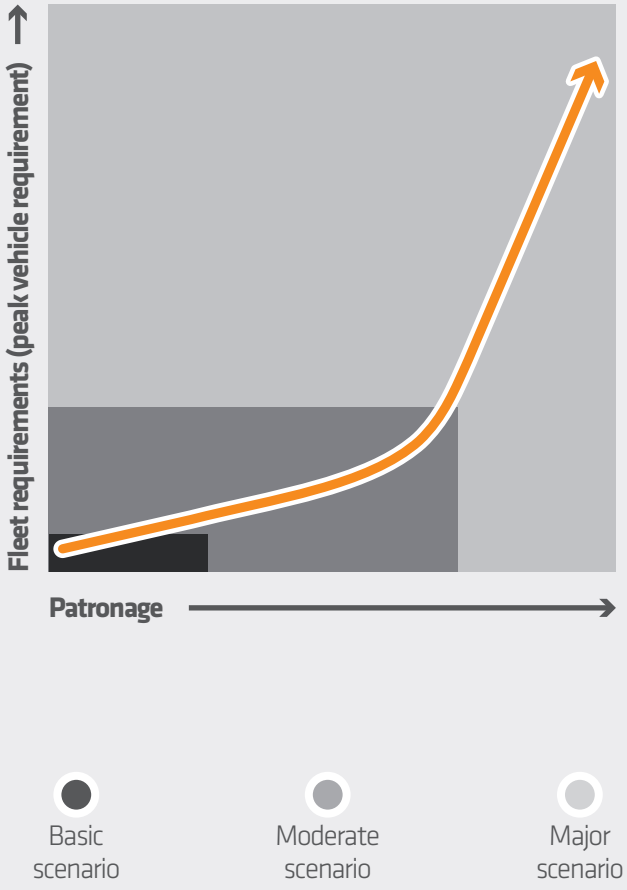
- 'Basic': embedding a new structure for the network by introducing route changes (and some new routes, where replacements or amalgamations are required) with minimal frequency adjustments
- 'Moderate': increasing frequencies to intermediate levels to grow capacity
- 'Major': increasing frequencies to maximum levels and introducing new routes for areas that are currently unserved.

Indicative assessment of these scenarios demonstrate that increasing frequencies, even at 'Moderate' levels, is likely to have a large positive impact on patronage. However, fleet requirements rise substantially in a 'Major' scenario. This is shown in Figure 26, as a highly indicative summary.

Critically, accessibility benefits increase more substantially in a 'Major' scenario, as the bus network would provide more comprehensive coverage for communities. This means any future bus network planning will need to achieve the right balance between more frequent and faster journeys and increased network coverage. Examples of recent practice in bus network planning in Dublin and rural Ireland are outlined on the following pages.

It is noted that a nearly 50% increase in patronage on the 'pre-COVID' 2019/20 levels would be required to return patronage to the levels seen 10 years earlier (i.e. 2009/10).

**Figure 26:** : Indicative increases in fleet requirements and patronage by network redesign scenario (% change from base)




## *Bus developments in other cities and regions*

### Dublin BusConnects Network Redesign:

In Dublin, the BusConnects Network Redesign represents a major investment in enhanced bus services, delivering a 35% increase in annual "in-service" kilometres, a significant increase in overall capacity and frequency for customers, as well as more evening and weekend services.

The purpose of the redesign was to create a large increase in patronage by reducing complexity of the existing network and creating a high frequency 'grid effect' network through the creation of high frequency orbital routes that criss-crossed with high frequency radial routes. The strategy employed for the redesign was based on 4 principles:

- Organise most radial services into super-frequent spines
- Redistribute service to create frequent orbital (cross-town) routes
- Increase frequency in outer areas by using feeders into suburban centers.
- Define a high-frequency service brand.

This new bus network plan also considered issues raised by over 72,000 submissions at the various stages of public consultation.

The benefits of the Network Redesign include an overall increase in bus services of 23%, increased peak hour capacity, increased evening and weekend services, 24-hour operations on some routes, a 16% increase in the number of residents located within 400m of a frequent bus service to the city centre, new connections to schools, hospitals and other essential services and increased access to jobs and education.

The implementation of the new network is being delivered in phases over a number of years, starting in 2021. Passenger boardings have increased 26% between 2019 to 2023 on the network that has been redesigned and implemented compared to 0.6% increase on parts of the network that have not been redesigned.

## Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan

The Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major public transport initiative developed by the Irish National Transport Authority (NTA), aiming to improve mobility in rural areas and reduce car dependency by addressing gaps in the network, enhancing existing services and taking an innovative approach to serving remote areas. Proposals are developed in collaboration with local communities. It is estimated that implementation of the Plan will result in:

- Over 70% of those living outside of cities in the Republic of Ireland will have access to a public transport service that provides at least three return trips each weekday to a nearby town
- Improved mobility options for those in remote areas with the provision of Demand Responsive and other innovative transport services
- Over 100 new Local Centre connections from rural settlements in the hinterland
- Over 100 new County Town connections from all types of settlements around County Towns; and
- Over 60 new Regional Centre/City connections, from all types of settlements around these Centres/Cities.

## Theme 2: *Reliable and quicker bus journeys*

The bus network needs to deliver reliable services that people know they can depend upon to encourage growth and encourage people out of cars. This means buses turn up on when scheduled and arrive at destinations on time. Buses also need to be quicker, with journey times that are attractive compared to using a car.

Bus priority is needed in places where there is too much traffic or too little capacity for traffic to flow freely. This places the emphasis to maximising the movement of people rather than the number of vehicles due to bus's greater efficiency in the use of road space. Bus priority also helps ensure buses run to time and makes bus journeys quicker and more consistent. Bus priority may also lead to reduced operating costs if the journey time savings are sufficiently high to reduce the number of buses required to operate a service to its timetable.

Bus priority is most successful as part of whole corridor approach and includes measures such as:

- Bus lanes;
- Traffic light priority;
- Bus gates / bus only roads; and
- Bus stop build outs.

Bus priority needs to be delivered on busier, congested routes where bus services are frequent. Bus lanes should be provided where buses encounter significant delay, if necessary by removal of parking and imposing loading restrictions. Enforcement is critical to prevent parked vehicles from creating delays, thus reducing the benefit of bus priority investment. Enforcement measures should be provided on a consistent basis to be a sufficient deterrent.

Well-designed bus priority schemes can be part of a wider upgrade of an area that aims to improve conditions for people who are walking, wheeling or cycling, reorganise parking and loading areas, and revitalise local places and town centres. Bus priority can also support a more efficient road network for all users, by moving more people quickly on congested roads and encouraging more people onto bus.

Bus priority is key, but other measures can support more reliable and quicker bus journeys including faster boarding times enabled through technology, information and capacity enhancement. More express services, where appropriate, and improved co-ordination of rural or 'feeder' bus services with higher frequency services can improve the overall journey time experienced by passengers.

An improved and more co-ordinated approach to communication and monitoring of the bus network, particularly in relation to 'real time' events and incidents such as emergency road works and road accidents, could help improve the daily management of the bus network as well as improve communication to passengers about any unavoidable delays or changes to services.

Open and transparent reporting of network and route performance is also required, allowing for appropriate accountability and better evidence to identify the best solutions.

## *Bus developments in other cities and regions*

### West Midlands Regional Transport Coordination Centre

The Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) provides a single hub for the West Midlands transport authorities and agencies, emergency services and bus, rail and tram, allowing a co-ordinated approach to managing congestion and disruptions on the transport network and managing travel for major events.

The RTCC brings together real time information across all modes of transport in one place working with existing control centres around the West Midlands to provide up to the minute journey information for operators, residents, businesses and visitors.

The centre stores the data it gathers, which can be used by all its partners to plan future transport projects that support regional goals to create a reliable, affordable, accessible and integrated transport system.

The centre was delivered as part of a £28 million package of measures to manage congestion, funded by the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund.

### The Dublin Bus Corridors project

The Dublin Bus Corridors project involves the development of on-going bus priority infrastructure, as well as improved pedestrian and cycling facilities on key corridors across the Dublin region. Its objectives are (1) to increase the capacity of the public bus system by improving the speeds, reliability and punctuality of buses through bus lanes and other measures that prioritise the movement of buses over general traffic movements and (2) to increase cycling capacity through the provision of safe cycle infrastructure, where feasible separated from general traffic.

The project includes the provision of approximately 230km of designated bus lanes and 200km of cycle tracks in 12 separate schemes across five local authority areas. The project aims to deliver journey time savings of up to 40% - 50%.


## Theme 3: *Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing*

Fares and ticketing need to be simple and easy to understand to attract people to bus and improve passenger perceptions of value for money[64] by ensuring passengers are confident that they've selected the best available fare for their journey.

Simple fares structures and daily price capping should be available, aiming for 'tap on, tap off' to be available across the bus network to make bus travel as easy and convenient as possible for the greatest number of people.

Bus journeys also need to be affordable, particularly for those who face cost-related travel barriers to accessing their everyday needs. Ways to achieve this include best value season products with flexible payment options to be made available across the network. Additional targeted support on fares should also be considered for people most in need of this to ensure the bus network is available to all.

Any fare increases should be also consistently and effectively communicated and, as far as practicable, aligned to established time periods to help passengers plan for any changes that may affect them.

## *Bus developments in other cities and regions:*

### Transport for Greater Manchester ticketing and fares

Transport for Greater Manchester is partnering with Greater Manchester Credit Unions to make it easier for people to purchase annual season tickets for bus travel across the Bee Network.

Passengers will be able to spread payment, at no extra cost, throughout the year with a Credit Union loan – offering substantial saving compared with purchasing multiples of seven- or 28-day Bee Network bus tickets. The initiative comes on the back of a recent survey in Greater Manchester showing that more than half of respondents (55%) say that their cost of living has increased over the last month, while 52% report their mental health has been negatively impacted in the last month by a cost-of-living pressure. TfGM will also be introducing a 'hopper fare', allowing passengers to board as many Bee Network buses as they like within one hour for a single £2 fare.

### Transport for West Midlands Workwise

The aim of Transport for West Midlands Workwise scheme is to remove a key barrier for those starting a new job – paying for transport before they have received their first pay packet. Workwise offers travel support for new job starters to get to their place of work in the form of two 4-week travel passes free and a third pass at half price. A survey of previous users found that 81% of respondents were still in employment six months after getting Workwise support with 52% saying they would have been unable to accept the work without that support.

## ***Theme 4:*** *Accessible and safer bus journeys*

Bus travel should be convenient and accessible to all passengers, as a core component of achieving a fully accessible door-to-door journey experience in the region. This means well-maintained and accessible routes to bus stops, and more accessible vehicles, stops and stations. Travel information needs to be easily available in accessible formats, covering pre-journey planning, waiting at bus stops and on-board the bus. Customer service also needs to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for all passengers, informed by training in disability and equality matters.

People should also feel safe when travelling by bus. This starts at the bus stop. Well-lit, maintained spaces with 'live' departure information can help people feel safer[65], especially in the evening. Increasing awareness of CCTV provision and ensuring passengers know what to do if they are having a problem on the bus are important, whilst drivers need to be supported with appropriate training to handle passenger issues.

## *Bus developments in other cities and regions:*

### TfGM Disability Design Reference Group

Transport for Greater Manchester's Disability Design Reference Group (DDRG) involves working closely with disabled people to support the design and delivery of transport services focusing on an inclusive, integrated transport network. DDRG has been fundamental in the development of the Greater Manchester Bee Network, having influenced projects such as:

- expansion and enhancement of the Metrolink tram system,
- bus fleet design,
- junction design,
- customer travel information including signage, audio visual information and the Bee Network App.

### Tackling sexual harassment on London's public transport network

Transport for London has a comprehensive approach to tackling sexual harassment on the public transport network. This includes an extensive CCTV network and staff training on how to deal with these behaviours, with TfL committed to training all frontline and enforcement staff. Other measures include partnership working with police and community support officers, with police carrying out targeted policing and investigation activity to identify and apprehend sexual offenders and harassers, and deployment of TfL enforcement officers across the network. Awareness raising campaigns are also a core component to the overall approach, with TfL Project Guardian providing a free one-off session for Year 9 students to raise awareness of sexual harassment on public transport and Active Bystander campaign aims to empower the public to intervene safely to disrupt hate crime and harassment.

## Theme 5: *A trusted and recognisable bus network*

The bus network should be a valued regional asset that people trust to deliver a consistent, high-quality service no matter where one lives in the region or how often one travels by bus. The bus network should provide a recognisable 'offer' for both regular and infrequent users.

This means branding that is more focused on building passenger awareness and understanding of the network and less focused on who is operating the bus. This means aiming for a network that is not regularly changing and, when changes are made, ensuring that this is done in a consistent and well-communicated manner.

Passengers should also expect a consistently, high quality customer experience, backed by a customer charter setting out what passengers can expect from the bus network and who is accountable for the service provided. The bus driver has a critical role in the overall passenger experience, with friendly and helpful drivers being particularly key to delivering 'great' bus journeys[66].

This will require providing consistent mechanisms for passenger feedback and monitoring passenger satisfaction across the network.

### *Bus developments in other cities and regions:*

#### Dublin Bus's Customer Charter

Dublin Bus's Customer Charter is the company's policy on quality of service. It details Dublin Bus's commitment to customer service aligned to agreed objectives and targets that are incorporated into their contract with the National Transport Authority.

The Customer Charter includes targets for meeting customers' service needs based on what passengers have reported during customer research.

The Charter includes company policy on:

- Customer Service
- Offering a fully accessible service
- Service reliability
- Vehicle cleanliness
- Lost property
- Investigating customer comments and complaints

The charter is reviewed and updated, where appropriate, on a regular basis.


## Theme 6: *A seamless and integrated bus network*

Reducing the 'interchange penalty' is important to growing patronage and providing a bus network for everyone. Passengers perceive unproductive interchange time as far longer than the actual waiting time. Interchanging also increases concerns over missing connections, the quality of the waiting environment and ticket choice and selection.

The bus network should provide a 'seamless' journey with integration across key features – services/timetables, interchange locations/facilities, ticketing, and information[67,68] - making it easy and convenient for people to use the bus network. The bus network also needs to be more integrated with active travel, rail and other public transport including future Clyde Metro proposals to make it easy to make whole journeys by public transport and active travel.

The bus network should be perceived as a single system that is easy, attractive and efficient for people to transfer between buses and to other modes. The location and access arrangements at bus stops should allow for convenient and attractive interchanging between services or modes, particularly in town centres and at rail stations. This can be facilitated by the development of a 'mobility hub' network, which are spaces for integrating public, active and shared transport. Integrating bus with placemaking schemes can also help mitigate the 'interchange penalty' by ensuring the waiting environment is pleasant.

The region benefits from multi-modal integrated ticketing, but future developments should aim to provide even more convenience and flexibility such as tap-and-go multi-modal ticketing with daily and weekly price capping based upon actual number of journeys made. Travel information that is integrated, accessible, high quality and 'real time' for all passengers is also important to the seamless experience.

### *Bus developments in other cities and regions:*

#### Transport for West Midlands Swift Card

Transport for West Midlands Swift card is a smart ticketing scheme to pay for public transport in the West Midlands. Swift provides a range of options for passengers including:

- Season tickets with a choice of travel modes on bus, rail and tram
- 'Tap on, tap off' with daily and weekly price capping for travel on bus and tram
- Pay-as-you-go top up for less frequent travellers or for people who want to share their card or do not have access to a bank account.

## Theme 7:

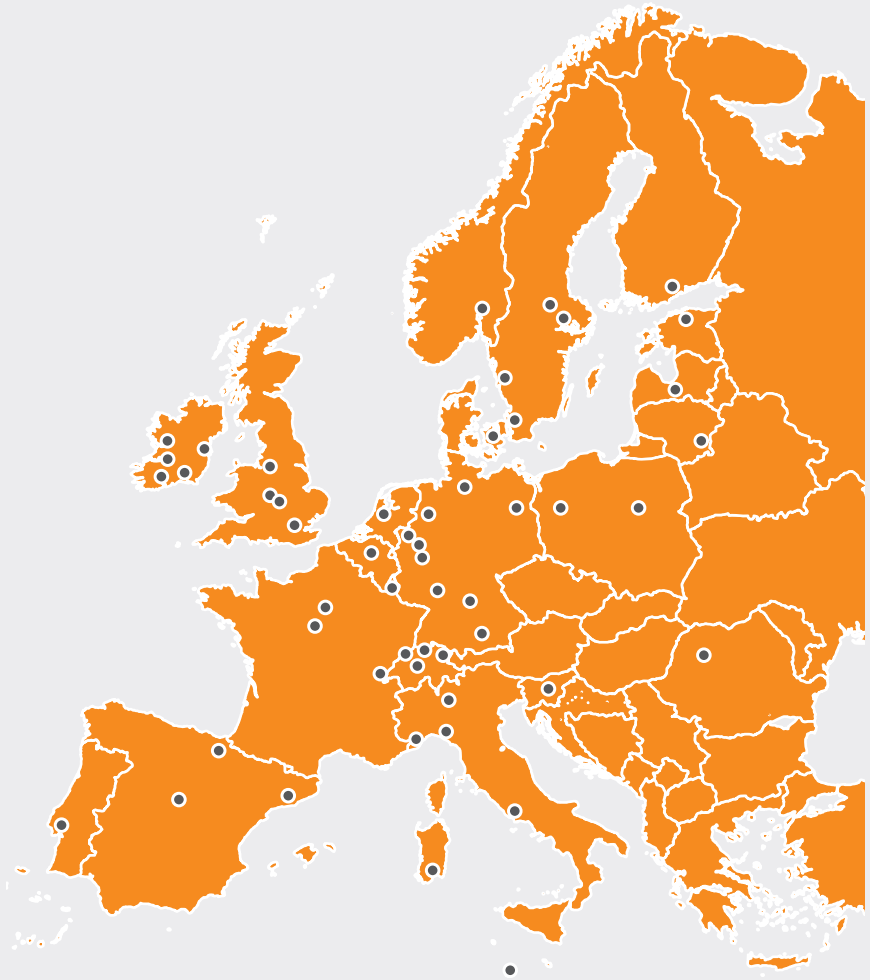
## *A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet*

The bus network should be operated in an environmentally sustainable and resilient way and support goals for net zero carbon and better air quality. Transitioning the fleet to zero emission vehicles, and delivering the supporting infrastructure and upskilled workforce, is a huge challenge for government and industry, but one which is already well underway in Scotland and in the region as described earlier in this document.

The challenge will be even greater if service frequencies and network coverage are to increase to deliver passenger growth and better access for communities, as this will increase the number of vehicles required to deliver the bus network. It is likely that most of the regional bus fleet will need to be zero emission vehicles in about 10 years to align well with the Scottish Government's target to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Although challenging, this is in line with developments across Europe where 50 cities have already set zero-emission bus fleet targets by 2035 or earlier, as shown in Figure 27.

Alongside this, the bus network needs to be supported by a road network that is managed and adapted, where necessary, to mitigate effects of climate change. Mitigating surface flooding problems is important to avoiding disruption to bus services and passengers.

**Figure 27:** Cities with targets for zero emission bus fleets by 2035 or earlier



# Detailed policies and measures

The detailed Policies and Measures are set out in Table 1 (overleaf), grouped by each theme set out previously in this chapter. The Policies set out the principles to be applied in decision-making about bus, while the Measures describe the activities and outputs that are needed to deliver the Policies. The table also includes a summary of the high-level assessment of the relationship between the measures and the objectives, as illustrated in the key.

| **Key:** Table 1 SRBS Policies and Measures |
|---|
| Likely to have major benefits |
| Likely to have moderate benefits |
| Likely to have minor benefits |
| Likely to be neutral for the relevant objective |
| Likely to have minor disbenefits |

**Table 1:** SRBS Policies and Measures

| Reference | SRBS Policy | Reference | SRBS Measure | SRBS Objectives | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed** | | | | | | |
| P1 | Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required | M1 | 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) | ■ | | ■ |

| Reference | SRBS Policy | Reference | SRBS Measure | SRBS Objectives | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Theme 2: 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 | | | |
| | | 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 | | | |

| Reference | SRBS Policy | Reference | SRBS Measure | SRBS Objectives | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing** | | | | | | |
| P6 | Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities | M14 | 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) | | | |
| 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 | | | |
| **Theme 4: 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 | | | |

| Reference | SRBS Policy | Reference | SRBS Measure | SRBS Objectives | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| **Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network** | | | | | | |
| P10 | Develop a consistent network identity 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 | Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region | M26 | A network-wide Customer Charter | | | |
| | | 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) | | | |
| **Theme 6: 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 | | | |

| Reference | SRBS Policy | Reference | SRBS Measure | SRBS Objectives | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 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 | | | |
| | | M34 | Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network. | | | |
| P16 | Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region | M35 | Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region | | | |
| | | M36 | Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements. | | | |
| **Theme 7: 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 Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions | | | |

# 5 The SRBS Delivery Plan

This chapter of the strategy sets out how the strategy will be delivered. A core element of the delivery plan is the development and implementation of a franchising model for the bus network. The first section of this chapter, therefore, summarises the rationale for franchising, the key issues to be considered in the development of franchising, and the process to initiate franchising development described in the 'Franchising Route Map'.

The chapter also sets out an Action Plan covering the initial actions for the Franchising Route Map, actions to support the management of the 'pre-franchising' period, actions for bus infrastructure and traffic management, and actions to support a 'bus friendly' environment integrated with other key programmes and policies. The section concludes looking at key 'asks' of partners and operators to support the delivery of the SRBS.

# Bus Franchising: Breaking the Cycle of Decline, Building the Cycle of Growth

## *Overview of bus franchising*

Bus franchising replaces on-road competition between commercial operators with a competition for operating contracts. The contracts are specified and tendered by a transport authority, which places a higher degree of control over service specifications and fares in the hands of the transport authority. The franchising contracts specify the levels of service the transport authority considers to be required to meet the needs of communities, to integrate with other transport modes and services, and to be affordable within the finances available to it. The transport authority usually also sets fares, which means the authority takes on the risk that changes to fares or bus patronage numbers have on farebox revenue.

A franchising scheme would therefore represent a significant step-change in how bus services are delivered in Strathclyde. Currently, bus services that are no longer commercially viable are at the risk of service level reductions, at relatively short notice, or fare rises to ensure the operator can continue to run them without making a loss (notwithstanding any funding support that may be available). Under franchising, major decisions regarding service level changes, fares and routes would fall to a local transport authority, who also have a responsibility to the communities they serve and the wider transport network that they operate or are partly responsible for.

Under franchising, SPT would determine, with appropriate engagement and consultation, for example: what bus services are to be provided, when and where; fares that are charged; and the standards those services should meet. Franchising also provides a means to achieve fully integrated bus services and fares across the network and closer integration with other public transport modes.


## *Rationale for pursuing a franchising model*

SPT believes that franchising is the best model to deliver an improved bus network in Strathclyde. Franchising can build on the expertise and innovation of the private sector whilst ensuring stronger public accountability and better alignment of funding and investment to local and regional needs and priorities. Franchising is an established model for providing bus services in many cities and regions across Europe and provides the greatest certainty around delivering an integrated bus network for Strathclyde.

The work that SPT has carried out to date on investigating different bus delivery models finds that franchising provides the greatest opportunity to deliver transformational change to the bus network in the form of more frequent and co-ordinated services, more affordable fares and improved and consistent service quality. It also can effectively support the nationally significant Clyde Metro proposal and closer integration with the wider public transport and active travel networks.

Franchising allows SPT to take a strategic approach to planning the bus network rather than patching up gaps in the commercial network. Franchising means networks can be planned as a whole to serve communities and ensure that the bus network supports local and regional priorities and ambitions, striking the right balance of investment for both passenger growth (including modal shift from car) and access for communities and integration with the other transport provision and plans. As a local transport authority, SPT can reinvest any surpluses generated back into the network in support these goals.

Franchising can also facilitate a stronger linkage between commitments by councils to deliver bus infrastructure (e.g. bus priority) and other 'bus friendly' local policies and commitments by SPT to deliver specified levels of service.

Franchising also can deliver a consistent and integrated network for passengers, helping to 'de-mystify' bus as a mode and making it easier and a more natural choice for all types of journeys. It also provides an opportunity to improve the transparency of bus operations for passengers by improving monitoring, the 'feedback loop' and more streamlined accountability.

Franchising also allows SPT to build on the progress already made on the decarbonisation of the bus network, through strategic, region-wide decisions on infrastructure and fleets.

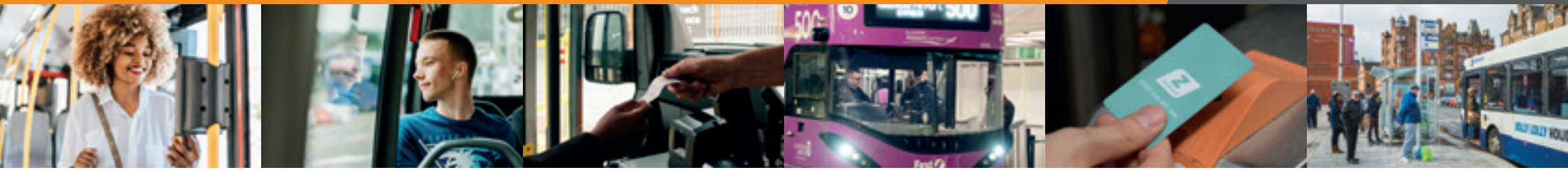
## *Key issues in the development of franchising*

### Scale and pace of change across the region

This strategy describes the features of a better bus network and makes it clear that the network will need to be enhanced to deliver growth and improved access. The scale of service level improvement has not been specified in the strategy as it will be necessary to reach agreement with local authority partners on this through the process to develop franchising and in accordance with funding availability. However, the broad scenarios that may be considered by SPT and partners are likely to include:

- A basic scenario would bring all services up to a defined minimum service level, following logical structures and conventions (such as route numbering, service categories, frequencies and hours of operation) that passengers can more easily follow, rely on and that can be intuitively built upon in later phases as funding and demand allows.
- A moderate scenario would embed a new structure for the network by introducing route changes and some new routes, where replacements or amalgamations are required, with minimal frequency adjustments.
- A major scenario would embed a new structure for the network by introducing route changes (and some new routes, where replacements or amalgamations are required) with enhanced frequencies.

In practice, it is likely that a phased approach to service level improvements may be required as funding, demand and supply within the market allows. Phasing by area may also be required for several reasons including procedural matters related to the legislation covering franchising and the potential for differing funding commitments across the region. A lack of operators may also affect the scale and pace of change by area. In such a case, the development of a small-scale municipal bus operation(s) may be an appropriate consideration for these areas.



## Fares and ticketing

The strategy highlights the complexity of ticketing in the region and the challenges for some passengers regarding affordability of fares.

A franchising model provides the opportunity for SPT to have greater control and oversight of fares and ticketing in the region, simplifying ticket structures and available products, lowering fares (subject to funding or subsidy) and introducing measures and systems to improve the customer experience in purchasing and using tickets.

A franchising model would likely mean the following for fares and ticketing within the franchised area:

- SPT introducing and managing fares and ticket products for franchised services, sitting alongside a reviewed suite of multi-modal tickets.
- SPT operates gross cost contracts with operators whereby SPT retains all fare revenue and assumes the revenue risk.
- Operators on service contracts required to accept and issue specified tickets and charge specified fares.
- New ticketing systems allowing the introduction of, for example:
  - best value fare capping
  - flat single fares
  - 'hopper' fares, allowing multiple journeys within a specified time limit.

In a franchised network, it is likely that SPT would operate gross cost contracts with operators, whereby SPT will be responsible for collecting all passenger fare revenue and implementing a common fare and ticketing policy across all franchised services. SPT would also take ownership of the risk for any decreases in fare revenue (due to falls in patronage for example) and will be required to fund any resulting shortfalls. However, this model would allow SPT to reinvest fare revenue back into the network and its services.

SPT would also need to enhance its capabilities for managing revenue protection, such as operating a ticket inspections team, particularly if revised vehicle boarding and ticket checking arrangements were put in place. However, a first line of defence will remain with the private sector (through compliance checking for example, as part of the franchise contract).

Responsibility for setting fares and managing ticketing would allow SPT, as funding allowed, to set simpler fare structures and lower fares. There would also be the opportunity to simplify zonal fare structures and standardising fares across local areas and service types. Deeper fare and ticketing integration with other modes, including with the future Clyde Metro proposals, would also be more feasible.

## Information and customer service

A franchising model provides opportunity to integrate, standardise and enhance customer and journey planning information and customer service provision across the region. At the most ambitious level, SPT would be responsible for, and operate all, customer information and services related to the franchised network, providing a consistent, accurate and accessible service and standard of information for all bus users across the region. All information and services would be provided as part of a single brand identity through a "one-stop shop" of customer information and services operated by SPT, with services including:

- App and website (ticketing and services)
- Real-time data
- Timetables and maps
- Customer services
- Passenger Charter
- Ticketing products
- Social media

Consolidating information and services for the whole regional bus network would allow SPT to more easily integrate the bus network and the information and services underpinning it with other modes, including the future Clyde Metro proposals.

## Funding environment

It is likely that a future franchised network, at least in the short term while the market and revenue returns are stabilised and returned to growth, will rely on the availability of sizeable public funding to support the bus network, assume operational control and pay for required investments to deliver improvements.

Given the challenging current situation regarding public sector finances, and specifically support for local bus initiatives, it is uncertain that funding will be maintained at current levels in real terms. Thus, the affordability of delivering on franchising commitments is also uncertain, and the level of risk transferred to the public sector will require securing a contingency to allow for fluctuations in the marketplace (e.g. unforeseen reductions in passenger volumes). Reduced funding for the bus sector will inevitably continue the cycle of decline identified earlier in this document.

A franchising scheme could be delivered as a self-funded scheme through farebox revenue and existing revenue streams. However, this is unlikely to deliver more frequent services, affordable and attractive fares and other features of a better bus network. Therefore, it is likely that funding environment will require, at minimum:

- Reinstatement of the Bus Partnership Fund or a revised replacement long-term capital investment fund to support bus priority infrastructure
- Network Support Grant reformed to give SPT eligibility to claim to support services.
- Access to bus decarbonisation funding
- Reimbursement of concessionary fares

Pursuing a more ambitious level of change will likely require additional funding sources, likely to include a mix of the following:

- A long-term, multi-year funding commitment from the Scottish Government to support the operation and enhancement of bus services in the west of Scotland.
- Devolution of NCTS funding
- Revenue from new funding streams, such as workplace parking licensing, to be invested into the bus network.
- Additional funding streams explored in consultation with Scottish Government and Transport Scotland. From experience elsewhere in the UK, this might include regional precept, municipal borrowing, or financial support

The funding environment will be further explored with partners and stakeholders as the level of ambition is further detailed and agreed in the process to develop franchising.

It is noted that the options appraisal carried out for the SRBS identified an indicative high-level estimate of £45m - £85m per annum additional revenue subsidy to deliver a regional franchise of a transformational nature. These figures provide stakeholders with a likely 'highest cost' scenario for subsidy, but final costs will not be known until the scale of ambition is agreed with partners through the process to develop franchising. It is important to highlight that these costs do not include fleet and depot scenarios, which are described in the following section.

## Fleets and Depots

The ownership and control of fleets and depots is a critical decision within the development of a franchising scheme. No decision has been made on the intended approach as this will be developed through the process to develop franchising, as detailed later in this chapter, which includes liaison with the Competition and Marketing Authority. However, indicative options could look like the following:

- Operators retain own vehicle fleets and depot sites, and responsibility for procurement, maintenance and operation of vehicles. Operators are required to ensure their vehicle fleet and depots meet the specifications of the franchising contract they are operating; or
- SPT owns and procures all vehicle fleets, leasing them to operators contracted to run the franchising contracts to maintain and operate the vehicles during the length of the contract. SPT acquires or leases some or all bus depots, undertaking a consolidation of depot infrastructure in the medium to long-term. Depots are provided to operators for the term of the service contract; or
- SPT leases all vehicle fleets from a private bus vehicle rolling stock leasing company (similar to ROSCOs in the rail industry), providing them to operators contracted to run the franchise contracts. Leasing company remains responsible for maintenance and renewal of vehicles. Operators retain depot sites and incorporate the cost of providing the depot into their contract price. Operators are required to ensure their sites meet the requirements of the fleet provided by the leasing company and the specifications of the franchise contract they are operating.

Options where SPT acquires greater control (and greater risk) of the fleet and depot infrastructure have the effect of levelling the playing field when it comes to procuring any future franchise contracts, potentially broadening the market, avoiding market distortion and encouraging greater competition, innovation and value for money. However, these options will require far more upfront financing and funding.

It may be appropriate for a hybrid of the options to be deployed, depending on the size and location of franchise contracts, the availability of assets that could be acquired, and the location of existing depots, allowing SPT to spread the financial and operational risks between itself, the leasing company, and the operators, whilst retaining control over the specification of the vehicle for each route and how it meets regional priorities such as Zero Emission Buses (ZEB), branding, maintenance schedules and vehicle capacities.

## Staffing, support services and stakeholders

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

- Contract management
- Procurement
- Network planning and development
- Commercial and pricing analysis
- Customer services
- Compliance and monitoring
- Stakeholder management and consultation
- Policy analysis and development
- Data and IT
- Marketing and passenger engagement.

The team that SPT would require to manage franchising would potentially be significantly larger than the team it currently has in providing oversight of services in the region. Dependent on the nature of the franchising model, network planning and scheduling could remain the responsibility of the operator of franchise contracts. This could reduce the resource and administrative burden on SPT as the franchising authority, however it would also reduce SPT's oversight and level of control over the structure of the network and services.

## Bus priority and an integrated transport policy

The delivery of the SRBS and bus franchising also requires investment in bus infrastructure and traffic management measures, particularly commitment to deliver bus priority on key corridors to facilitate more reliable and quicker bus journeys. It will also require delivery of integrated transport policies including car demand management and behaviour change to encourage modal shift away from car use and better integration of bus with the emerging Clyde Metro.

# The "Franchising Route Map"

The work that SPT has carried out to date on franchising has set a strategic direction of travel in support of franchising and understanding the range of key issues that need to be considered in the development of franchising. Substantial work is still required to make the business case for a franchising scheme in Strathclyde, aligned to the processes set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. This section sets out the outline process that SPT will take to further develop franchising, and, if approved, to implement those proposals. SPT notes that the franchising guidance has not yet been published by Transport Scotland. This means that some adjustments may be required to this process after the guidance is published, which is likely to be in first half of 2025.

## *Indicative programme and timescales*

The process for creating a Bus Franchising Scheme is based on statutory requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 legislation, as follows:

- Prepare a framework for bus franchising, outlining the case for a proposed scheme.
- Prepare an assessment of the framework, following a typical five-case transport business case model and assessing against other bus reform options
- Commission an independent audit of the framework assessment
- Undertake a consultation on the proposed framework and its assessment.
- Place the proposed framework and assessment in front of an Independent Panel convened by the Traffic Commissioners, which will consider the case for franchising and determine whether it can approve the creation of a Bus Franchising Scheme.
- Make the bus franchising framework and enact it on the ground.

SPT estimates that the process, up to the point of a panel decision and including a preliminary 6-month mobilisation period, will take around 3 years. The transition and implementation period following the panel decision could take between 12 months and 30 months dependent upon the scale and complexity of the franchising model to be implemented.

## *Resourcing and funding the "Franchising Route Map"*

At this stage, SPT has identified some funding to commence the development of franchising. SPT has also sought contributions from the Scottish Government, with discussions on-going.

## *Key Risks for the "Franchising Route Map"*

The most significant risks involved in the development and implementation of franchising have been outlined in this section.

### Political and partnership support and leadership

Development of franchising requires consistent, long term political support and leadership across 12 local authorities and continued alignment with national policy. Elections and changes in national or local priorities may be disruptive to the process. Any local funding requirements may be challenging to deliver.

To mitigate, SPT will need to ensure elected members, council leaders and chief officers, MSPs, senior transport officers and other influential stakeholders are regularly briefed and are prepared to promote and support the delivery of the bus strategy. The "Franchising Route Map" will need to reflect the requirements of the election cycle.

### Governance

Whilst the need for change is broadly agreed, the specific outcomes to be delivered by franchising and the allocation of risk will require detailed consideration through the process to develop franchising. Similarly, the geographic scope and phasing of franchising requires detailed discussion and agreement across partners.

To mitigate, a strong governance framework will be required, providing for transparency and equity across partners.

### Funding

In addition to development funding, it is likely that successful implementation of franchising may require devolution of sufficient and sustained funding for concessionary travel, Network Support Grant and capital funding.

To mitigate, SPT will need to engage with Transport Scotland as an early priority to negotiate a suitably fair agreement, to give a robust starting point for financial and commercial planning.

### Resourcing

Franchising will bring considerable change to internal structures and resourcing within SPT, which may also impact on delivery of existing services.

To mitigate this risk, SPT will continue to engage with English Combined Authorities to learn from their experiences, and continue to develop our plans for organisational change and recruitment linked with the planning for Clyde Metro.

### Market uncertainty

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 franchising, 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 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.

SPT will need to set out more detailed plans as these develop and engage in regular dialogue with operators to avoid unintended consequences. SPT will also need to develop contingency plans if any operators exit the market ahead of franchising. SPT will develop a bus operator forum to support this, ensuring that all operators have opportunity to stay informed of, and feed into, detailed plans at appropriate stages.

### Untested legislation

The franchising powers within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 are entirely untested, with key elements differing significantly compared to English legislation.

The franchising framework and its assessment, following audit and consultation, must be referred to a panel appointed by the Traffic Commissioner. This is an untried procedure and there is no guarantee that the Panel will approve the franchising proposal. The Panel may reject or require changes, which will cause significant delay with the latter triggering a renewed cycle of the franchising framework and assessment process.

The provisions of the Scottish legislation place tight and onerous timescales for utilising the franchising powers, which may place excessive burden on SPT to deliver transition or may require a less ambitious definition of franchising in terms of area or specification or both.

To mitigate this, SPT will liaise with Transport Scotland and the Competition and Marketing Authority regarding the application of the existing legislation. SPT will continue to engage with other bodies including English transport authorities, Urban Transport Group and the Department for Transport to consider the applicability of emerging legislation for England and Wales in Scotland, and will make the case for changes to Scottish legislation if deemed necessary.

## SRBS Action Plan

### *Taking forward the "Franchising Route Map"*

SPT will progress the "Franchising Route Map", subject to the outcomes of this consultation and approval by SPT committee, through the initial actions set out in the SRBS Action Plan (Table 2 below).

### *Management of pre-franchising period and delivery of bus infrastructure*

The work that SPT has carried out to date on investigating different bus delivery models found that partnership models had merit and that Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) offer potential to deliver greater information provision, a more consistent standard of service across the region and improved ticketing. SPT found that an ambitious BSIP, if achievable, also has the potential to deliver moderate improvements in service levels. However, BSIP is unlikely to deliver major improvements to service levels across the network or major beneficial impacts on fares. BSIPs also do not provide any certainty that service improvements will continue after the BSIP agreements expire, even if the public sector infrastructure investment has been delivered.

Therefore, SPT initially proposed a 'dual approach' to tackling the bus cycle of decline. This would have seen a Bus Service Improvement Partnership formed in the short term to deliver key activities, particularly bus infrastructure and bus priority measures, aimed at arresting further decline. This would be progressed whilst the lengthy franchising development and implementation process is carried out. However, the results of consultation with stakeholders and elected officials demonstrated that there was limited support for this approach, particularly due to the resources required to carry out the formal statutory processes for a BSIP and the challenges for stakeholders to make legally binding commitments in a pre-franchising period.

Therefore, SPT proposes instead to work within the existing voluntary Glasgow Bus Partnership and directly with local authority partners and Transport Scotland, as required, to deliver actions to manage the transition period ahead of implementation of franchising and to deliver actions on bus infrastructure (including bus priority) and traffic management. The proposed actions are also set out in Table 2.

### *Bus friendly environment*

SPT will also continue to develop, support and advocate for wider transport policies and interventions that help achieve a 'bus friendly environment' that supports the delivery of the SRBS as well as wider transport strategies including the RTS and Local Transport Strategies. Key actions are set out in Table 2.

**Table 2:** SRBS Action Plan

| No | Actions | Key partners and stakeholders |
|---|---|---|
| **"Franchising Route Map"** | | |
| 1 | Report an outline programme for bus franchising development to SPT Partnership within c. 3 months following approval of the final SRBS. | SPT Partnership |
| 2 | Develop and agree governance plan for bus franchising development programme | Local Authorities |
| 3 | Develop a bus operator forum to facilitate transition to franchising and to address concerns and issues throughout the process | Operators; CPT |
| 4 | Liaise with Transport Scotland and Competition and Marketing Authority regarding application of existing legislation for bus franchising | Transport Scotland; CMA |
| 5 | Hold regular briefing sessions and funding discussions with Transport Scotland, Councils and elected officials | Transport Scotland; Council Leaders and Council Senior Officers; MSPs; MPs |
| 6 | Develop a bus passenger forum to support the planning and engagement on bus franchising and other specific matters e.g. accessibility and inclusive design | Transport Focus; Bus Users Scotland; Passengers |
| 7 | Continue to engage with transport authorities across the UK to learn emerging best practice in relation to bus franchising | Urban Transport Group; other UK Transport Authorities |
| 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 | Transport Scotland; Urban Transport Group; DfT |

| No | Actions | Key partners and stakeholders |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-franchising period** | | |
| 1 | SPT will continue its core activities in bus, including supporting socially necessary services subject to budgetary availability, managing bus stations, delivery of bus improvement capital projects with councils and others, provision of bus stops and shelters, information, school transport on agency basis | Councils |
| 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 | Councils; Operators; Bus Partnership |
| 3 | SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland on funding, legislative issues, and bus policy | Transport Scotland |
| 4 | SPT will continue to work with bus operators to ensure service continuity in the interim period | Operators |
| 5 | Continue to work with Transport Scotland on the delivery of the Fair Fares review action plan | Councils; Operators |
| 6 | Support the outcomes of the Bus Decarbonisation Task Force | Operators; Councils |
| 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 | Councils |

| No | Actions | Key partners and stakeholders |
|---|---|---|
| **Bus infrastructure and traffic management** | | |
| 1 | **Deliver bus priority and other enhancements on the 5 bus corridors already appraised though the Bus Partnership Fund.**<br>As part of this, carry out a rapid review of the appraisal outcomes for the 5 bus corridors, ensuring that the level of ambition is sufficiently high across relevant local authorities, and identify funding and delivery plans. The 5 routes include:<br>• Dumbarton Road<br>• Great Western Road<br>• Maryhill Road<br>• Paisley Road West<br>• Pollokshaws Road. | Councils; Bus Partnership; Transport Scotland |
| 2 | **Enforcement of existing measures and 'quick wins'**<br>Work with operators and local authorities to develop targeted enforcement plans for priority locations. Work with local authorities to identify 'quick win' actions at priority locations e.g. renew road linings and signage. | Councils; Bus Partnership |
| 3 | **Regional bus corridor plan**<br>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<br>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.<br>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 to be developed in the development of bus franchising. | Councils; Transport Scotland; Bus Partnership |
| 4 | **Regional hospitals, Colleges/Universities and town centres**<br>Review arrangements for bus at key sites including vehicle access/circulation, passenger waiting facilities, and RTPI. Develop and deliver solutions, as required. Ensure appropriate bus arrangements are developed for new Monklands Hospital. | SPT; Councils; Health Boards; Other Stakeholders; Bus Partnership |

| No | Actions | Key partners and stakeholders |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | **Bus stops quality and access**<br>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.<br>In tandem with local and regional active travel strategies, develop programme of assessing and upgrading walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops. | SPT; Councils; Bus Partnership |
| 6 | **Interchanges and Mobility Hubs**<br>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).<br>These locations would entail bus stations and local bus stops within both urban and rural areas, ensuring that the region's population have appropriate solutions which reflect their specific needs. | SPT; Councils; Bus Partnership |
| 7 | **Bus termini / driver welfare**<br>Review conditions for drivers at bus termini locations and develop proposals for improvements as required. | SPT; Bus Partnership |
| 8 | **Regional network communication and transport co-ordination centre**<br>Develop and assess options for improving co-ordination of transport network communications, monitoring and management, including consideration of a regional transport co-ordination centre. Develop business case as required. | Councils; Transport Scotland; Emergency Services; Operators |
| 9 | **Road network resilience**<br>Work with roads authorities to identify and develop mitigations for surface flooding affecting bus network. Continue to chair the Climate Ready Clyde Transport Resilience Working Group. Lobby for increased resources for local authority road maintenance. | Councils; Climate Ready Clyde |

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

# ‘Asks’ of key partners and stakeholders

This section sets out SPT’s ‘asks’ of key partners and stakeholders – specifically Transport Scotland, Councils and Operators – to support the delivery of the SRBS. These are noted below and will form the basis of future discussions as the SRBS is taken forward for delivery.

SPT asks councils to work with SPT:

- to support delivery of the SRBS action plan
- to support development and implementation of franchising, including the funding requirements.

SPT asks Transport Scotland to work with SPT:

- to support delivery of the SRBS action plan
- to support development and implementation of franchising, including the funding requirements
- to provide capital funding for bus infrastructure

SPT asks operators to work with SPT in voluntary partnership to deliver relevant aspects of the SRBS action plan and to participate in an operator forum as part of process to develop franchising.

# 6 Monitoring Plan

Progress towards the SRBS Goals and Objectives will be monitored on an ongoing basis to understand what is working well and what may need additional focus. A set of proposed monitoring indicators are set out in Table 3. Additional indicators will be developed as plans develop and more data sources become available to support monitoring.

**Table 3:** SRBS Policies and Measures

| Indicator | Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Obj 1 | Obj 2 | Obj 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of bus passenger journeys | ✖ | | | | |
| Modal share of all journeys | ✖ | | | | |
| Modal share of all journey to work | ✖ | | | | |
| Modal share of journeys to school | ✖ | | | | |
| Proportion of adults who use local bus services at least 2 times per week | ✖ | | | | |
| Proportion of households by public transport journey time (categories/ranges) to hospital, town centre, etc | | ✖ | | | |
| Proportion of households within 400m of a bus stop, by service frequency | | | ✖ | | |
| Proportion of adults who feel that local bus services are stable and are not regularly changing | | | ✖ | | |
| Bus vehicle kilometres | | | ✖ | | |
| Transport components of retail prices index | | | | ✖ | |
| Concessionary Card Take up | | | | ✖ | |
| Proportion of adults who feel personally safe and secure on the bus (day and evening) | | | | ✖ | |
| Proportion of bus stops with a high access kerb | | | | ✖ | |
| CO2 emissions estimates from road transport | | | | | ✖ |
| Proportion of adults who are satisfied with local public transport | | | | | ✖ |
| Proportion of adults who feel that local bus fares are good value | | | | | ✖ |
| Proportion of adults who feel that local bus services are on time | | | | | ✖ |
| Proportion of adults who feel that it is easy to change from local bus services to other forms of transport | | | | | ✖ |
| Proportion of adults who feel that it is simple deciding the type of ticket I need on local bus services | | | | | ✖ |


# 7 Reference and Notes

[1] Based upon Transport and Travel in Scotland Local Authority Table LA11: Adults (16+) – use of local bus services in the previous month, 2023. Results for Strathclyde region.

[2] www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/17/contents

[3] www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-2/

[4] www.spt.co.uk/media/nr2c0jjt/spt_regional-transport-strategy-2023-2038.pdf

[5] www.spt.co.uk/media/2wrkfd2o/srbs-case-for-change.pdf

[6] www.spt.co.uk/media/2pkj4pjr/strathclyde-regional-bus-strategy-options-appraisal-final.pdf

[7] www.spt.co.uk/media/3xcngdsj/spt_srbs-consultation-document-april-2024-final.pdf

[8] www.spt.co.uk/media/ub5jxlpj/srbs-consultation-report-final.pdf

[9] www.spt.co.uk/media/termb3fe/sp060924_agenda7.pdf

[10] Using data from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Table 2.10

[11] https://blog.ptvgroup.com/en/city-and-mobility/simulation-road-space-cars/

[12] https://blog.ptvgroup.com/en/city-and-mobility/simulation-road-space-cars/

[13] Value for Money Assessment for Major Bus-Related Schemes. Department for Transport, 2016. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a81b125ed915d74e6233a2d/Value_for_Money_Assessment_for_Major_Bus-Related_Schemes.pdf

[14] The Case for the Urban Bus. Passenger Transport Executive Group (pteg), 2013. www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/pteg%20Case%20for%20bus%20report%20FINAL.pdf

[15] Figure is from The new Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland: Draft Case for Change report www.spt.co.uk/media/afccz0gi/spt-regional-transport-strategy-case-for-change-report-for-consultation-april-2021.pdf

[16] Figure is from The new Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland: Draft Case for Change report www.spt.co.uk/media/afccz0gi/spt-regional-transport-strategy-case-for-change-report-for-consultation-april-2021.pdf

[17] Based upon data from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Table 2.10

[18] Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020, as set out in the RTS Case for Change.

[19] Transport and Travel in Scotland 2023, Table LA4.

[20] Transport and Travel in Scotland 2022, Table LA4.

[21] Using figures from Scottish Transport Statistics Table 13.5 UK Carbon Dioxide equivalent emissions 2023

[22] www.zukunft-mobilitaet.net/78246/analyse/flaechenbedarf-pkw-fahrrad-bus-strassenbahn-stadtbahn-fussgaenger-metro-bremsverzoegerung-vergleich/

[23] www.racfoundation.org/media-centre/cars-parked-23-hours-a-day

[24] SRBS Case for Change, page 12

[25] Based upon figures in Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 Table 2.2b

[26] IBID

[27] IBID

[28] Using figures from Scottish Household Survey Transport: Local Area Analysis 2007/08 Table 13. Results for Strathclyde.

[29] Using figures from 2023 Transport and Travel in Scotland Table LA11. Results for Strathclyde.

[30] Using figures from Scottish Household Survey Local Area Analysis 2001/02 and 2023 Transport and Travel in Scotland Table LA4.

[31] For example: www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/making-great-bus-journeys-2/

[32] For example: Hu, Xiaojian & Zhao, Linna & Wang, Wei. (2015). Impact of perceptions of bus service performance on mode choice preference. Advances in Mechanical Engineering. 7. 10.1177/1687814015573826. And What's Driving Bus Patronage Change?, Urban Transport Group (2019).

[33] RTS Case for Change page 41

[34] SRBS Case for Change, pages 27 and 29.

[35] www.transport.gov.scot/publication/bus-taskforce-summary-report/driver-shortages-sub-group/#:~:text=Operators%20in%20Scotland%20report%20an,mileage%20due%20to%20driver%20shortage.

[36] SRBS Case for Change, page 24.

[37] Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 Table 2.6 Operating costs per vehicle kilometre for local bus services (Scotland-wide).

[38] SRBS Case for Change, page 24.

[39] SRBS Case for Change, page 24.

[40] Factors affecting local bus demand and potential for increase. The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. 2021. Available at: https://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Policy_AK/BCPG_LocalDemand_FINAL.pdf?ver=2021-04-13-114655-943&timestamp=1618310835837

[41] Using figures from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023 Chapter 2 Table 2.3c Vehicle kilometres by region for local bus services. Figures for Strathclyde and Southwest Scotland (i.e. Dumfries and Galloway).

[42] IBID

[43] SRBS Case for Change, page 2 and page 18.

[44] SRBS Case for Change, page 30.

[45] Department for Transport Quarterly bus fares statistics: April to June 2024

[46] SRBS Case for Change, page 30

[47] Report on affordability of public transport, 2022. Produced by SYSTRA Ltd on behalf of SPT. Available at: www.spt.co.uk/vision

[48] Includes 'The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons Young Persons' and 'The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons'

[49] 980,800 concessionary travel passes were issued to people eligible for the national The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Older and Disabled Persons Young Persons' and 'The National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons, as of November 2023. Using information from Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Table 2.14, including the whole of Argyll and Bute.

[50] Such as those for monthly periods (or longer)

[51] RTS Case for Change, page 36.

[52] Report on affordability of public transport, 2022. Produced by SYSTRA Ltd on behalf of SPT. Available at: www.spt.co.uk/vision

[53] SRBS Case for Change

[54] SPT local bus registration data

[55] SRBS Case for Change, page 31

[56] The ZoneCard is a flexible season ticket for travel by ScotRail, Subway and most buses in the Strathclyde region. The ZoneCard commercial ticketing arrangement has been in existence since the late 1980s, and SPT administers the ZoneCard on behalf of the ZoneCard Forum. The ZoneCard Forum is a collection of transport operators of which SPT is a member but not the Chair. The ZoneCard Forum, not SPT, agrees the ticketing prices and Zones. An updated smart ZoneCard was launched in 2024, introducing a simplified zone structure and more flexible ticket options including a one-day ticket and flexi tickets (e.g. 3 days in 7).

[57] The Glasgow Tripper is a multi-operator bus ticket arranged and managed by First Glasgow, McGill's, West Coast Motors, Stagecoach West and Whitelaws. The ticket provides travel in Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and a portion of Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire.

[58] Transport and Travel in Scotland 2012-2013 and 2023 Table LA13.

[59] SRBS Case for Change, page 16.

[60] SRBS Case for Change, pages 22 – 23.

[61] SPT local bus registration data

[62] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-accessible-information-onboard-local-bus-and-coach-services/providing-accessible-information-onboard-local-bus-and-coach-services#introduction

[63] https://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Policy_AK/BCPG_LocalDemand_FINAL.pdf?ver=2021-04-13-114655-943&timestamp=1618310835837

[64] Factors affecting local bus demand and potential for increase. The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. 2021. Available at: https://ciltuk.org.uk/Portals/0/Policy_AK/BCPG_LocalDemand_FINAL.pdf?ver=2021-04-13-114655-943&timestamp=1618310835837

[65] Transport for London research identified a third of passengers who use real time information felt somewhat or much safer.

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[67] For example: The Benefits of Simplified and Integrated Ticketing in Public Transport (2009). PTEG

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