SPT | Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy: A Consultation on the Recommended Options for Improving our Future Bus Network

Contents

1   Foreword

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Our bus network is critical to the working of our economy and sustaining the social fabric of our region. Buses transport us to school and work, to friends and family, and to healthcare and other services. Buses support our town centres and provide essential access for people who cannot, or do not want to, use cars. With more than 11,000 bus stops across our region, buses are truly at the heart of our communities.

For many years, though, and time after time, we have heard from our constituents, from our council colleagues across the region, and from SPT's wider stakeholders that the bus network is just not working as it should. Fewer and less frequent services, increasing fares, buses not turning up or running late, two or more tickets to make one journey. This is not good enough for people who rely on buses every day in both our urban and rural communities. And this is not good enough to break the cycle of bus decline to get people out of their private cars and onto public transport.

We need a lot more from our bus network and to harness the skills of those employed in the bus sector across the west of Scotland. We need it to deliver more as a lifeline public service for anyone who needs it, to ensure our transport network helps make our region a more equitable, healthier and inclusive place. We also need it to be a change agent, to help deliver on the transformational behaviour change required to meet our climate change goals.

To do this, we need buses where we need them, when we need them. We need more affordable fares. We need an accessible, safe and integrated network that is easy to use. We need more reliable and quicker buses. We believe, to achieve this, the public sector needs to give buses greater priority and have greater control of the bus network to deliver true integration of public transport services. Crucially, it will also require additional investment by the public sector.

That is why we are recommending that SPT takes forward a dual approach to changing the way the bus network is organised in our region. We want to deliver statutory, legally-based partnerships between SPT, local authorities and bus operators – to lock in commitments and investments from private and public sector parties. We believe this has the potential to arrest further decline in the medium term. Crucially, we also want to move forward with developing a bus franchise model for the region, similar to London or Manchester. This will take longer to develop and implement, but we believe this model gives the most certainty in the long term to delivering a better bus network that works for everyone.

We now want to gather your views on our recommendations. Your input and feedback will help us shape our bus strategy and future plans. I hope you will take time to read this consultation document and respond to our questionnaire. We look forward to hearing from you.

2   Background to this consultation

Bus services in the UK outside London were deregulated in 1986. Since then, bus operators have been free to run any service, set their own fares and choose their own vehicles, subject to meeting safety and operating standards and applicable government policies such as Low Emission Zones. Following deregulation, publicly owned bus companies in the Strathclyde region were sold off and privatised.

In 2019, in response to the continuing decline in bus use and in recognition of the important role of bus in delivering public policy, new provisions to improve bus services were introduced in Scotland under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019[1]. The new provisions allow Local Transport Authorities, in accordance with relevant guidance and regulations, to develop Bus Service Improvement Partnerships in partnership with bus operators, to develop and manage a bus franchise, and establish a new municipal bus company to directly operate bus services.

In 2023, SPT's new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) was approved by SPT's Partnership Board and the Scottish Transport Minister. The RTS sets out policies for a high quality, integrated public transport system and for SPT to further investigate the use of the provisions in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 within the SPT area.

In 2023, SPT commenced work on the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS). The SRBS is SPT's process to investigate the use of the provisions and to determine a preferred strategy to improving the bus network in the region. The key stages and timescales are set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy process and timescales	
Case for Change	• Understanding the problems in the regional bus network • Setting goals for the future bus network • Completed Autumn 2023
Appraisal	• Developing our goals for the future bus network • Assessing the best way to deliver the future bus network • Developing our recommened approach to delivering the future bus network • Completed March 2024
Consult	• Consulting partners and stakeholders on our recommended approach • Publishing the outcomes of the consultation and any changes made to the recommended approach to delivering the future bus network • Underway now through 2024
Develop strategy	• Developing the strategy to deliver the future bus network • Consulting partners and stakeholders on our strategy • 2024 – 2025
Deliver strategy	• Report our strategy to SPT Committee • Communicate our strategy to partners and stakeholders • Commence delivery of our strategy • 2025

3 The opportunity

Buses are central to our public transport network. Last year, about 100 million bus journeys were made in the region – about two-thirds of all public transport journeys.

Bus is vital to our quality of life

Bus provides essential mobility for people who cannot drive or do not have access to a car, helping to tackle social and economic inequalities and prevent social isolation.

Bus offers a more sustainable way to travel compared to private car use, helping to reduce harmful emissions and congestion in our towns and cities.

Bus gets us to work, school and shops, connects us with friends and family, and underpins access to services such as healthcare appointments - all of which are important to the functioning of our regional economy and our social welfare.

Investment in bus offers 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[2]. 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"[3].

A good bus network can benefit everyone, not just those who travel by bus.

Bus is adaptable

Bus has been the workhorse of our regional public transport network for decades, but it continues to be a mode well-suited to our future needs. This is because bus services can be redesigned and improved relatively quickly and cheaply, compared to rail, to meet changing travel patterns and serve new development.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

4   Our goals

We want more people on buses, and using them more often, in place of private car use. We equally want good quality bus services to be available for all communities who need bus for everyday travel.

Increasing bus ridership and bus mode share can support the financial viability of the bus network overall to ensure that bus services are available for those who need them most. This supports a healthy cycle of growth and investment that can increase the long term social, economic and environmental benefits of bus for passengers and society as a whole.

Our Goals

- More people using buses, more often

- More communities have access to bus for everyday travel

5   The challenge

Despite the huge opportunity presented by bus, our current system isn't working as well as it should to deliver a wide range of benefits for communities and society at large. In recent years, we've seen the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on public transport ridership, but, in the case of bus, ridership decline was already a well-established trend. In the region, there were 70 million fewer bus journeys made in 2019/20 compared to 10 years prior.

One major reason for this decline in bus passengers is the growing ownership and use of cars. This leads to fewer people choosing bus, and, in some places, increasing road congestion. Congestion also lengthens bus journey times, increasing operating costs and adversely impacting on bus journey reliability, further reducing the attractiveness of bus and making the car appear more attractive in comparison.

Fewer people using bus also means less money going into the bus network via the farebox. In the current market – nearly 40 years after deregulation – operators have few real efficiencies within their control to counter the effects of reducing revenue. This means operators have limited choices in reacting to falling passenger numbers and, generally, has resulted in higher fares or reduced services. Bus fares, nationally, have increased in real terms by 25% in the past 10 years whilst the cost of motoring fell by 5% in real terms. This makes conditions more difficult for people who are dependent upon bus travel and makes bus even less attractive for anyone who can use alternative transport.

Prior to bus deregulation, cross-subsidy of routes was common practice, meaning that revenues from busier services could be used to maintain the whole network, thus ensuring communities had a stable level of accessibility and achieving a more equitable distribution of resources.

In the current system, operators are under increasing pressure to concentrate on more profitable routes (and less on more marginal but essential services) whilst SPT and local authorities are left to pay operators to run journeys and routes that are essential but not commercially viable. This means substantial public funding is required to ensure basic accessibility is maintained. This is particularly true for rural and remote areas with low population density and in urban areas during quieter travel times including early mornings, evenings and on Sundays. Bus services may be infrequent, which makes bus travel less convenient for everyone and less unattractive to people who have alternative transport

The current system is not designed to deliver an integrated network for passengers and the wider public transport network. This means fare structures, ticketing products, travel information and customer services, including accessibility and passenger assistance services, differ between individual operator networks, although there are good examples of partnership to improve integration such as the ZoneCard and Glasgow Tripper. Timetables and routes are not integrated between bus operator networks as operators are not allowed, under competition rules, to co-ordinate in this way. Bus services also may not be integrated with rail or ferry services except where bus operators have been paid to deliver an integrated service or where bus operators have made a commercial decision to integrate with rail, ferry or other transport services.
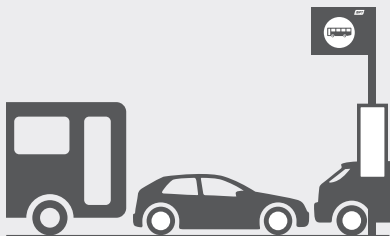
All of this means there is a significant challenge to achieve our goals and deliver a bus network that is attractive and easy to use for everyone.
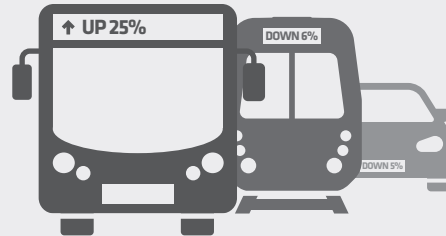
Barriers to using bus

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.
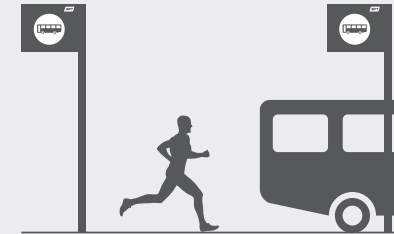
Fares

Bus fares have been increasing in real terms, making bus less attractive compared to other modes and less able to help tackle societal inequalities. Between 2012 and 2022, adjusted for inflation, bus fares increased by 25% while the cost of motoring fell by 5% and rail fares fell by 6%.

Lack of integration

There are 40 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.

ⓘ Information

More detailed information on the challenges facing our bus network is found in the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy: Case for Change

6　A better bus network

Bus should be **available, accessible and affordable** for everyone who wants to use it. Bus also needs to be a far more attractive **alternative to the car** to encourage new users onto bus. In this section, we've set out some of the key features of a better bus network that we want to deliver through the bus strategy.

Affordable and attractive fares

A bus journey should be affordable, particularly for those of us who face cost-related barriers to travel, which may limit our opportunities for a fuller life. Fares should also be easy to understand, convenient and set at levels that help grow bus use by encouraging people to switch to bus from car.

Key features of an affordable bus network
• Simpler and more affordable fares • Automatic fare capping • Additional discounts for people most in need

Buses where we need them, when we need them

Buses should transport people and communities to work, education, shops, leisure activities and other everyday destinations at the times we most need to travel and with a convenient level of provision. On busier routes, buses should provide us with a turn-up-and-go service as an attractive and easy alternative to using cars.

Key features of an available bus network
• High frequency services on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services • 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 • An integrated bus network with better co-ordination between services particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural to regional express)

ⓘ Information

What is fare capping?

Fare capping limits how much you pay for travel over a period of time, ensuring access to the best value ticket according to each passenger's actual travel. Fare capping eliminates the socially inequitable cost barrier associated with larger upfront payments to access discounted tickets such as a monthly 'pass'. Fare capping also removes the need to work out which ticket to purchase and is beneficial for passengers who have uncertain travel plans such as people who work changeable shifts. Fare capping's convenience and ease of use may also help attract new or infrequent users back to bus travel.

Reliable and quicker journeys

Buses should be a reliable means of travel with bus journey times that are attractive relative to using our cars. This means buses start on time and bus journeys are not delayed enroute to our destinations due to regularly occurring road congestion at peak times or busy passenger boardings.

Key features of a reliable and quicker bus network

• Bus services that better meet performance standards, supported by more performance monitoring

• Accurate and reliable real time travel information

• Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings and express services

• Better co-ordination of rural services with regional /express services

A trusted and recognisable network

The bus network should be a valued regional asset that people trust to deliver a consistent, high-quality service no matter where you live or how often you travel. The bus network should provide a highly recognisable 'offer' that everyone, even less frequent users, are aware of and understand. All public transport modes should be recognisably part of the overall system.

Key features of an affordable bus network

• A strong network-wide identity

• A stable network with service changes restricted to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change

• A network-wide Customer Charter

• Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction

ⓘ Information

What are service performance standards?

The current service performance standards in Scotland are, principally, that a majority of buses should not be running more than 1 minute early or more than 5 minutes late. Bus operators are not currently required to report their service performance to their passengers, SPT or local authorities.

What is a Customer Charter?

A Customer Charter tells you the standards and experience you should expect when travelling on the bus network, when any changes may happen, and who you can contact to give your feedback or set out any concerns.

Accessible and safer buses

Bus travel should be convenient and accessible to all passengers, as a core component of achieving fully accessible door-to-door journey experiences in the region. Bus passengers should also feel safe when travelling by bus no matter one's personal characteristics, and people should feel confident that bus is a safe way to travel.

Key features of an accessible and safer bus network

- Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams

- Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses

- Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach

- Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations

- CCTV on buses and at bus stations

- High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops

Sustainable and seamless network

Bus should be an environmentally friendly travel option that integrates well with other forms of public transport to support more sustainable door-to-door journeys and avoid duplication of provision. This means zero emission buses and better integration with the key features of ferry, rail, Subway and active travel networks and with any new public transport modes.

Key features of an efficient and integrated bus network

- High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets

- Better integration with ferry, rail and Subway to deliver a more seamless travel experience across the public transport network

- Strategic integration with development plans, regeneration areas, and future transport investment including Clyde Metro

(i) Information

What is a passenger assistance service?

This is a service provided by a public transport company to help passengers who may need assistance when travelling such as when boarding / alighting buses.

What is Clyde Metro?

Clyde Metro brings together SPT, Glasgow City Region, and Transport Scotland to look at a long-term integrated approach to public transport infrastructure and services for the region. It will also look at urban development regeneration as part of plans to deliver wider transformation benefits to housing, place-making, sustainability, economy, environment, health and social strategies.

Details on the policies and measures underlying the 'better bus network' can be found in our **Options Appraisal Report**.

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7   Delivering the better bus network

The options

SPT has considered a number of ways, or options, that the bus network could be delivered. These options include continuing with the current approach, partnership models on a voluntary or statutory basis, local services franchising, and municipal bus operations. This section describes the main features of each option and the rationale for considering the option at this stage.

Business as usual

Business as usual describes the existing bus network. Operators are free to run any service, set their own fares and choose their own vehicles, subject to meeting safety and operating standards and applicable government policies such as Low Emission Zones. This option has been included in the appraisal to understand the change in costs and benefits if the bus market were to be organised differently.

Voluntary partnership

Voluntary partnerships are when bus operators and Local Transport Authority (LTA) come together to improve the bus network through agreeing, on a voluntary basis, to provide or deliver improvements to services and infrastructure or other local policies to support bus services. There is no legal basis or enforcement mechanism for voluntary partnerships and parties can leave the partnership at any time. This option has been included in the appraisal as it is currently available to local transport authorities and bus operators and it has not been discounted through previous work carried out by SPT.

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) are a partnership between a LTA and one or more bus operators. In this model, the LTA is responsible for making a Partnership Plan and Scheme (or Schemes), which are developed and agreed with bus operators and other relevant partners. The Plan sets out policies and objectives to be achieved through the BSIP and the Scheme (or Schemes) imposes service standards on operators and specifies the facilities to be provided or measures to be taken by the LTA to support the bus network. This model differs from a voluntary partnership in that there is a legal basis for the Plan and Scheme(s) and, therefore, elements of the Plan and Scheme(s) can be enforced. This option has been included in the appraisal as it is available to LTAs under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and has not been discounted through any previous work by SPT.

Local services franchising

Local services franchising is a system that allows a LTA to award exclusive rights to an operator to run certain bus services for a set period of time. In Scotland, the LTA must first put in place a franchise framework setting out what local services are to be provided, the standards to which the services are to be provided, and any additional facilities or services that are to be provided. Under this franchise framework, the LTA then enters into franchise agreements with bus operators, generally awarded through competitive processes, to deliver the specified services and standards. This option has been included in the appraisal as it is available to LTAs under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and has not been discounted through any previous work by SPT.

Municipal bus company

A municipal bus company is an operator of bus services owned by a LTA. A municipal bus company can be formed from the purchase of an existing bus or coach company or the creation of a new company. Municipal bus companies compete for the market in the same way as privately owned bus companies. Currently, all bus services in Strathclyde are delivered by private sector operators. This option has been included in the appraisal as it is available to LTAs under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and has not been discounted through any previous work by SPT.

The option appraisal

The options set out in the previous section were appraised to understand how well each one could deliver a better bus network. A transport appraisal is a process that helps us understand the anticipated benefits, indicative costs and implementation issues associated with each option. In turn, this helps us make decisions about the best way to deliver the bus network.

We've considered how well the options can deliver the better bus network including better levels of service, more affordable fares and improved quality.

We've also considered how well the options perform against established appraisal criteria in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance including: accessibility and equality; environment; economy; health, safety and wellbeing; and climate change.

Finally, we've considered the deliverability of the options. This part of the appraisal tries to answer questions such as: is there democratic support for the option?; how much will the option cost?; and what are the risks for the public sector?

Key appraisal findings for each option are summarised in the rest of this section. You can read about the full appraisal process by accessing the Options Appraisal Report.

Business as usual

'Business as usual' presents the least risk and lowest cost to the public sector, compared to the other options that we've looked at in our appraisal. However, continuing with the existing approach is unlikely to lead to improvements in service levels or fares and there is no evidence from the appraisal that this model will break the cycle of bus decline. We also anticipate that continuing with business as usual is unacceptable to most stakeholders and communities. This approach is also likely to require growing levels of financial support from SPT and councils via SPT's socially necessary bus services budget to plug network gaps.

Voluntary partnerships

Voluntary partnerships offer low risk to the public sector and short timescales to deliver a partnership agreement. This option also has some potential to deliver greater information provision and a more consistent standard of service, but it is unlikely to deliver improved service levels or fares. We found that this option has potential to deliver some incremental passenger growth, but there is no evidence in the region that suggests voluntary partnerships alone are likely to break the cycle of bus decline.

Achieving even the minor benefits noted above with this model is likely to require ambitious agreements between bus operators and LTA. The voluntary partnership model, though, provides no mechanism for statutory enforcement of these agreements and, therefore, does not provide certainty that all parties will deliver agreed investments. This option is also unlikely to be deliverable on a region-wide basis with consistent agreements secured with all bus operators in the region.

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) offer potential to deliver greater information provision, a more consistent standard of service across the region and improved ticketing. We found that an ambitious BSIP also has the potential to deliver moderate improvements in service levels. This option, though, is unlikely to deliver major improvements to service levels across the network or major beneficial impacts on fares.

BSIPs are defined by statute (in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019) and offer a contract-based governance structure, whereby commitments made by partners are carefully matched, and in certain circumstances, can be imposed on those whose services or responsibilities may be affected. This ensures fairness and certainty for all partners to commit to the agreed investments and improvements. BSIPs also could be arranged relatively quickly – we estimate around 12 months from initiation to implementation.

An ambitious BSIP, though, is heavily dependent on funding availability and is likely to require substantial new investment for operating and infrastructure improvements. A key long-term challenge with BSIPs is that they 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.

Local services franchising

This option allows a LTA, if it can fund its proposals, to control and direct the outcomes it desires by specifying what the bus network should look like to meet the needs of passengers and communities. We found that local services franchising is likely to have major beneficial effects for enhanced service levels, more affordable fares and quality. This option can deliver a regional network identity and an integrated network that truly supports both multi-modal journeys and future public transport investment including Clyde Metro.

This option, though, has the highest costs for, and transfers the most risk to the public sector. It is likely to take a long time to work through a complex and, as yet, untested franchise development process as defined in legislation – we estimate between 5 and 7 years – and may cost upwards of £15m or more just to arrive at the point of implementation. Thereafter, we estimate the network will require substantial additional annual subsidy to deliver an enhanced network across the region. It is clear that transitioning to a franchise model would not be quick, would require significant expansion to the roles and capabilities of SPT, and would require identification of new funding sources.

Municipal Bus Company

A municipal bus operator is constrained by the prevailing operating model and commercial environment, and subsidy control regulations restrict the public sector financial support that can be provided to a municipal operator. Under the current system, a new municipal operator would need to compete 'on the road' with existing commercial bus operators to carve out a market share, or compete with existing bus operators to win contracts to provide socially necessary services.

With that in mind, we've found that establishing a municipal bus company (or companies) has the potential to improve service levels and fares as the company would be free to set its own fares and network. A high-quality municipal operator also could help drive up standards and quality in the wider bus market as other operators would need to compete with it for market share. It may also be able to invest profits back into the network, thus further improving quality. We believe, though, that only a larger scale municipal operation could have noticeable beneficial impacts on the quality of the overall bus network.

We identified that the route to establishing a new, large scale municipal operation is challenging and uncertain. Establishing an entirely new company at scale presents high financial and deliverability risk whilst a strategy based upon acquisition of existing operators to achieve market prominence could be a lengthy and costly process. Acquiring an existing larger operator with existing market share could be a faster route, but currently there are no opportunities to do so in the region.

This means there is a lot of uncertainty about the level of beneficial impact that a new municipal operator could have on the quality of the bus network in our region. However, we found that there may be merit, in the shorter term, in establishing a municipal operation to provide services in some areas where bus services are already provided under contract to SPT. A larger-scale municipal bus company is unlikely to be a viable proposition at this time.

Our recommended approach

SPT, after reviewing the evidence and appraisal findings, has developed a set of recommendations to guide the development of the bus strategy and its implementation.

We now want to know if you think these are the right recommendations, and why. Your feedback is important so that we can understand the extent of support for our recommendations and if we should consider amending our approach before moving into the next stage of the bus strategy process.

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The need for radical intervention

The appraisal results, summarised in the previous section, demonstrate that "Business as Usual" and voluntary partnership initiatives are unlikely to deliver a better bus network for all, achieve growth in passengers and support wider social, environmental and economic goals. Instead, more radical intervention in the bus market is required.

Recommendation: SPT should rule out business as usual and voluntary partnerships as options to deliver the future bus network.

Delivering bus reform – a dual approach

SPT believes it should commit to developing the franchise model for the region. Franchising provides the greatest certainty over delivering the features of a better bus network. It allows SPT to take control over designing a suitable network, applying quality standards, and offering affordable fares – no other option offers this certainty. It also provides greater certainty in achieving long term benefits from public investment in bus priority and other complementary 'bus friendly' transport policies. It is the only model that can deliver a truly integrated regional bus network that can be adapted to complement future investment in Clyde Metro, support wider development and regeneration plans and direct public resources to communities most in need.

Alongside the development of a franchise model, SPT believes it should also work with partners to agree BSIPs for the region as a medium-term solution to improving the bus network. This is because franchising, whilst offering the greatest potential benefits for passengers and wider public policy outcomes, is a longer-term and higher risk strategy that cannot deliver improvements to the bus network in the next 5 years or more. BSIPs offer the opportunity to arrest further decline in the medium term, particularly through investing in bus priority infrastructure, helping us build towards our longer-term goals of passenger growth.

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

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

Municipal bus company

SPT believes it should further investigate the opportunity offered by the creation of a small-scale municipal operation to target provision in areas where there is a lack of commercial services. SPT also believes that a larger scale operation should not be considered further during the development of the bus strategy.

Recommendation: SPT will consider developing business case(s) for small-scale municipal bus company(ies) aimed at providing socially necessary services in parts of the region where private operators are currently very limited.

8 Consultation and next steps

SPT wants to know what you think about our recommendations for the delivery of the future bus network. We want to understand if you agree or disagree with the recommendations and why. This consultation is not statutory. However, it will provide SPT with valuable feedback that will be considered before we develop the full bus strategy. You can access the consultation survey via our bus strategy webpage.

Following completion of this consultation period, SPT will work with our consultants to analyse the consultation feedback and consider if any changes should be made to our recommended approach. We will report the outcomes of this work to the SPT Partnership Board later in 2024.

Thereafter, we will develop the full bus strategy, working closely with our local authority partners.

We will consult with you again on a 'draft' bus strategy prior to reporting a 'final' strategy to the SPT Partnership Board in 2025.

Once the 'final' strategy is approved by the SPT Partnership Board, we will commence delivering the bus strategy in line with any relevant guidance and regulations.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

9 Glossary

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)	SPT is the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the west of Scotland. SPT was constituted under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and is one of seven RTPs covering the whole of Scotland.
Local Transport Authority	Local Transport Authority is defined in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 as a Local Authority or the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority.
Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)	Under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, Regional Transport Partnerships, including SPT, are required to prepare a Regional Transport Strategy and keep it up to date.
Bus Operator	'Bus operator' in the context of this report, refers to a holder of a Standard National Public Service Vehicle's Licence who runs or may wish to run local bus services.
Local Bus Service	A "local service" is defined in the Transport Act 1985, as amended, as one that uses one or more public service vehicles for the carriage of passengers by road at separate fares.
Traffic Commissioner for Scotland	The Traffic Commissioner for Scotland is responsible for, among others, regulatory matters relating to the operation of local bus services including the licensing of the operators of buses and coaches (public service vehicles or PSVs), the registration of local bus services and granting vocational licences and taking action against drivers of PSVs.
Transport (Scotland) Act 2019	The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 provides Local Transport Authorities with a range of powers to improve the operation of local bus services in their areas. The 2019 Act allows local transport authorities to run their own bus services; franchise bus services in their areas; or enter into Bus Services Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) with bus operators within their areas. The Act also introduces new regulations covering the way in which bus operators must provide information to local authorities when they plan to reduce or withdraw the services they provide.

10 References

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