

Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

Equalities Impact Assessment Final Report



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[Equalities Impact Assessment – Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy]

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Equalities Impact Assessment – Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

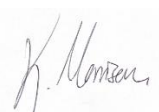
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Executive Summary

This report evaluates the draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy in relation to the three requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty states that public sector authorities consider the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; promote equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without.

The purpose of this report is to assist the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport in fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty by reviewing the equality implications of the Regional Bus Strategy and associated measures. The assessment process has involved consultations to inform the impact evaluation. This report presents an analysis of the potential impacts concerning the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This assessment has taken into account feedback from consultation, particularly with those with ‘lived experience’ of protected characteristics.

Overall, this report identifies minor positive to major positive impacts concerning protected characteristic groups across the objectives, policies and measures outlined in the Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy. Alongside this, there are a number of impacts assessed as having a neutral or negligible impact or concluded as having ‘no clear relationship’ where there is not enough evidence to provide an assessment. No negative impacts have been identified in respect of this duty.



Acronyms / Abbreviations

SPT	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
SRBS	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy
PSED	The Public Sector Equality Duty
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning



Glossary

Transport poverty	A lack of available, reliable, affordable, accessible or safe transport options that allow people to meet their daily needs and achieve a reasonable quality of life
Trip-chaining	A travel pattern that involves linking multiple trips together to complete a daily routine.



1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out a 'Public Sector Equality Duty' (PSED). This requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without.
- 1.1.2 The duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The public sector equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, with regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination in employment.
- 1.1.3 The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require listed authorities to undertake an impact assessment in relation to the needs outlined in section 149(1) of the Act and take account of the results of the assessment in development of the policy. The approach to the assessment has been informed by reference to the Scottish Government's general guidance on the PSED (Scottish Government, 2016) and relevant guidance on application of the duty in Scotland (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016).
- 1.1.4 This Report sets out the background to the Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (Draft SRBS) and presents the evidence base and Public Sector Equality Impact Assessment of the Strategy.

Table 1-1. Report Structure

Section	Description
Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy project background
Section 3	Assessment framework and guide questions
Section 4	Baseline conditions
Section 5	Equality Impact Assessment
Section 6	Summary of impact assessment

2 Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) is developing a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) for the Strathclyde region.
- 2.1.2 SPT is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the West of Scotland region, as designated under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005. Schedule 1 of this Order defines the extent of the West of Scotland region (hereafter 'the SPT region') by reference to local authority and council ward boundaries. The region encompasses 11 entire local authorities from South Ayrshire in the southwest to North Lanarkshire in the northeast, and also includes two wards within the Argyll and Bute Council area (Helensburgh and Lomond).
- 2.1.3 The development of a SRBS has its foundations embedded in SPT's A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland (2023 – 2038) (or 'RTS') and its vision, priorities and objectives, and clear policy statement setting out the aim for a world class passenger focused public transport system. The RTS was published in 2023, and reinforces national policy ambitions, setting out the following Vision for transport in the region:
- “The west of Scotland will be an attractive, resilient and well-connected place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by high quality, sustainable and low carbon transport shaped by the needs of all.”
- 2.1.4 The RTS recognises the need to invest in transformative public transport ensuring a sufficiently attractive 'offer' to move more people by more sustainable transport modes rather than by car. Therefore, a key theme within the strategy encompasses enhancing the quality and integration of public transport with a specific objective to make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone.
- 2.1.5 The RTS is clear that its strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of the SRBS was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 requiring consideration in its development.
- 2.1.6 The first stage of SRBS development was the development of the Case for Change, which was commenced in June 2023.
- 2.1.7 The Case for Change set out the key problems to be tackled, the desired transport outcomes, and the objectives, and core policy areas to deliver on these. The Case for Change report has been published by SPT on its website.
- 2.1.8 Following the Case for Change, the core policy areas were developed further, including the formulation of initial policies, which would be necessary in order to undertake the Options Appraisal workstream to follow.
- 2.1.9 The Options Appraisal considered options for enhancements to how bus services can be delivered in the west of Scotland using the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 2.1.10 The aim of the appraisal was to identify a recommended operational model for bus services in the region, with the development and refinement of the SRBS building upon that preferred model into a strategy for delivery, including responding to consultation feedback.
- 2.1.11 The Options Appraisal was undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) process, which provides a framework to assess the performance of transport options to address identified problems and present the results in a consistent manner to inform decision makers. A proportionate approach was taken, appropriate in the context of strategy development.

- 2.1.12 The appraisal was completed on both a quantitative and qualitative basis, and drew upon the quantitative data collected as part of the Case for Change, previous studies where appropriate, relevant strategy and policy documents and design guidance, and knowledge and experience of planning, appraising and delivering transport options similar to those considered here.
- 2.1.13 The options were appraised against the STAG criteria of Environment; Climate Change; Health, Safety and Wellbeing; Economy; and Equality and Accessibility. They were also appraised against Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) developed as part of the Case for Change.
- 2.1.14 Finally, the options were appraised in terms of feasibility, affordability, and public acceptability, as well as an assessment of risk and uncertainty.
- 2.1.15 The Options Appraisal report has been published by SPT on its website.
- 2.1.16 The Options Appraisal process was informed by an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) interim assessment, a Fairer Scotland Duty interim assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment interim assessment and a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment interim assessment.
- 2.1.17 Following completion of the Options Appraisal, SPT published a consultation document setting out:
- The SRBS process and timescales.
 - A summary of the challenges and goals for the bus network, drawing upon the Case for Change.
 - An overview of the features of a better bus network
 - The options available to deliver a future network.
 - A set of recommendations to guide the development of the SRBS, drawing upon the recommendations of the Options Appraisal.
- 2.1.18 The consultation document requested feedback on the recommendations ahead of further development of the SRBS.
- 2.1.19 Following the consultation period, a consultation report was prepared presenting the results and findings of the process.
- 2.1.20 The consultation feedback was considered by SPT, leading to updating of the recommendations which were approved by the SPT Strategy and Programme Committee in September 2024.
- 2.1.21 SPT has published the consultation document and consultation report on its website. SPT Committee agendas and minutes are also available on SPT's website.
- 2.1.22 Following consultation, for the purpose of the development of the draft SRBS, the outcomes/goals, objectives, policies and measures were refined and consolidated to ensure they were suitable for a strategic document to be consumed by a wide audience and to facilitate further assessment of the measures against the updated objectives.
- 2.1.23 A delivery plan was also developed to demonstrate how the elements of the strategy will be delivered, including the transition to a franchise model for the bus network and an initial action plan.
- 2.1.24 A monitoring plan was also developed to demonstrate how the strategy goals and objectives will be monitored.
- 2.1.25 The draft SRBS is being assessed through Strategic Environmental Assessment, EqIA, a Fairer Scotland Duty assessment, an Island Communities Impact Assessment, and a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

- 2.1.26 A public consultation will be held on the Draft SRBS in March – May 2025. The consultation will also cover the draft Environmental Report, EqIA, a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment, an Island Communities Impact Assessment and a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.¹
- 2.1.27 The draft SRBS is published on SPT’s website at: <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>

3 Assessment Framework

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The following guide framing questions and assessment criteria matrix will be applied to testing the performance of the final Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) franchising option in relation to implementing the PSED. This provides a transparent framework to assess the extent to which emerging SRBS components promote equality of opportunity, including the removal of physical and cultural barriers to accessing and benefiting from the transport system.
- 3.1.2 During the options appraisal for the strategy, an interim assessment was undertaken on the five options that were being developed and appraised toward the development of the Draft SRBS. The interim assessment was also undertaken using the Guide questions and assessment criteria matrix as set out below. The assessment supported the options appraisal process and the outcomes of that process. The assessment within this report is the assessment of the Draft SRBS being taken forward.
- 3.1.3 This assessment of the Draft SRBS has been informed through engagement activities with relevant groups of interest and impact (as discussed below in **Section 4**).

3.2 Guide Questions

- 3.2.1 The framing questions, as set out below, have been designed to allow for testing the implementation of the PSED.
- 3.2.2 The framing questions have been applied in relation to the three key aims of the Duty:
- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advancing equality of opportunity; and
 - Fostering good relations.
- 3.2.3 The second of these aims involves:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages affecting people due to their protected characteristics;
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people; and
 - Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Guide Questions: Public Sector Equality Duty

Will the SRBS....

- *Result in any likely different or disproportionate effects on persons with protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010, namely age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation?*

How might the SRBS support SPT to fulfil the General Duty, specifically:

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct,*
- *Advance equality of opportunity, and*
- *Foster good relations?*

3.3 Baseline Data Sources

3.3.1 A range of data sources were used to inform the baseline, including:

- 2022 Census – Scotland.
- ScotPHO Profiles.

3.3.2 The data sources listed above are fully referenced in **Chapter 7** and in **Appendix A**.

3.4 Assessment Criteria Matrix

3.4.1 The following matrix will be used to assess any disproportionate impact of the Draft SRBS on protected characteristics.

Table 3-1: Assessment Criteria Matrix

Impact Score	Description	Symbol
Major Beneficial Effect	The objective or policy contributes significantly to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	++
Minor Beneficial Effect	The objective or policy contributes to the requirements of the PSED, particularly to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics, economic and social issues, but not significantly	+
Neutral / Negligible Effect	The objective or policy has neutral or negligible effect on the requirements of the PSED.	0
Minor Adverse Effect	The objective or policy adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	-
Major Adverse Effect	The objective or policy significantly adversely affects the requirements of the PSED particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics	--
Uncertain Effect	The objective or policy has an uncertain relationship to the PSED requirements or insufficient detail, or information may be available to enable an assessment to be made.	?
No Clear Relationship	There is no clear relationship between the proposed objective or policy the achievement of the PSED	~

3.4.2 The assessment criteria provide an objective means of undertaking and reporting the EQIA assessment. The colour coding also allows for rapid identification of the impacts most likely to be significant, generally those assessed as having a major positive or negative effect. Commentary will be provided on any identified impacts in relation to the policy options and protected characteristics. Where any major negative impacts are identified mitigations and recommendations are provided.

4 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The information in this section is taken from the SRBS Consultant Report (SYSTRA, 2024).

4.1.2 Engagement to inform the assessment has been conducted at several points:

- Engagement with local authorities and bus operators in the Strathclyde region was carried out during the Case for Change, Options Appraisal and strategy development stages.
- As part of a wider consultation exercise planned at the end of the options appraisal process, where engagement would be undertaken and targeted towards a range of key stakeholders pertinent to the duty as well as more generally through the planned public engagement exercise.
- Engagement with disabled bus passengers was carried out in October 2024 to help inform the draft SRBS policies and measures

4.1.3 SPT carried out a consultation exercise between 2nd April – 13th May 2024 to understand levels of support or opposition to a set of recommendations to guide the development and implementation of the bus strategy. Feedback from the general public and stakeholders was gathered, with 3,072 responses received in total across the following channels:

- Online questionnaire;
- Workshops;
- Interviews; and
- Stakeholder letters / documents.

4.2 Summary of Consultation Findings¹

Rule out Business as Usual

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

¹ Further details on the consultation process and findings are available in the consultation report available at: <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>

Rule out Voluntary Partnerships

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

Take Forward Local Services Franchising

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

Take Forward Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)

- This was the least supported of all of the options, but those who were in support felt that this option could be an **interim step** whilst other options are being developed. Some questionnaire respondents commented on the potential benefits this option could have on bus services, and some also mentioned the **perceived success of other bus partnerships** introduced elsewhere.
- The effectiveness of BSIPs was a concern raised consistently by questionnaire respondents and stakeholders, specifically the belief that this option would have **little to no impact** on bus services. Some had concerns that introduction of BSIPs may delay the introduction of other options.
- There were also concerns around **accountability** and the **flexibility** that this option offers to operators. Stakeholders felt that clear mechanisms for enforcing agreements and holding all parties accountable were required. Stakeholders also raised concerns regarding the potential funding sources for implementing this option, with a similar concern around costs raised in the questionnaire by respondents who perceived this option to be expensive.

Further Investigate Small-Scale Municipal Bus Operations

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

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

Outcomes of the consultation

4.2.1 The consultation feedback was considered by SPT, leading to updating of the recommendations which were approved by the SPT Strategy and Programme Committee in September 2024. The updated recommendations were as follows:

- Business As Usual and Voluntary Partnerships should be ruled out as means to deliver a better bus network as more radical intervention is required.
- SPT should commence work on franchising, in line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
- 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.
- SPT, and our partners, should progress with the necessary transition arrangements appropriate (e.g. time-limited, voluntary partnerships or other agreements aimed at improving the bus network) to provide a structured basis for private and public sector collaboration in attempting to arrest further passenger decline and stabilise the bus network in the pre-franchising period.

4.3 Accessibility engagement

4.3.1 A series of interviews with disabled bus passengers were conducted in October 2024 to better understand lived experiences of bus travel. These findings were categorised into four categories, including; before the journey, before boarding the bus, during the journey and after the journey. The findings fed into the development of the draft SRBS policies and measures. A summary of findings are outlined below.

Before the journey

- Respondents were mostly satisfied with the provision of information on the journey planning apps they use, but some noted they require additional support from family or friends.
- Some respondents described challenges they faced with app and website accessibility. Respondents with a visual impairment stated that information online was not accessible for some users, and suggested the large print offline materials are made available.
- Several respondents stated that it would be beneficial to know the type of bus and to have information on wheelchair space on board and the availability on the next bus.
- Finally, one of the most frequently raised issues was a perception that real-time information on apps is not accurate.

Before boarding the bus

- The importance of seating at bus stops was raised by several respondents, noting that passengers with a physical disability need to sit down as standing can worsen pain.

- Respondents with a visual impairment noted they do not always know the exact point to wait for the bus and it was suggested tactile paving could be installed to indicate this.
- Several respondents emphasised the importance of audio information at bus stops, stating that they cannot always read information at bus stops and on buses.

During the journey

- Some respondents reported negative experiences with drivers, noting that some drivers do not always lower the bus for them or put out a ramp. Users also noted that drivers pull the bus away before everyone is seated, causing issues for people with limited mobility.
- Wheelchair users noted that a lack of space on board is an issue as this means they have to wait for the next bus, causing anxiety of not knowing if they can board.
- Respondents with a visual impairment noted that they do not always know where to place their concessionary pass for scanning and suggested tactile element to scanners be introduced. These respondents also noted difficulty knowing which stop the bus is at and request stop information as audio announcements.
- Respondents noted that drivers do not stop unless they see passengers move towards the front of the bus. For respondents with a disability this could be problematic as they reported feeling unsteady while the bus is still moving.

After the journey

- All respondents expressed a desire for disabled people to be involved in improving bus accessibility through continued engagement.
- Some respondents called for greater disability training for bus drivers.

5 Baseline Conditions

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 Different people use the bus network at different times, more or less frequently, and for different purposes. People with protected characteristics are more likely to use and rely on public transport, particularly bus services. Therefore, a lack of public transport services and options disproportionately impacts on disabled people, women and younger and older people in particular. Some groups of people, such as people from ethnic minority groups, disabled people, young carers, young mothers, and care leavers, are typically less mobile and more reliant on public transport (Scottish Government, 2017). Changes to service provision at specific times of day or along certain routes may have a different impact on people with various protected characteristics. Policies or measures around service provision, information, price and scheduling in the emerging SRBS are therefore likely to impact groups related to protected characteristics in different ways.
- 5.1.2 It is also important to acknowledge the links between socio-economic disadvantage (which is expressly considered as part of the Fairer Scotland Duty²) and many of the groups with protected characteristics. Women, people with disabilities and people in some ethnic groups are more likely to have lower incomes or live in areas of deprivation therefore they are typically also affected by issues around affordability of transport, and dependency on public transport to access employment, health facilities and other services.
- 5.1.3 SPT identify that people can be deterred from using public transport over real or perceived safety fears (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). This can be related to experiences of racism or harassment or relate to the physical environment around transport hubs. Key evidence identified by SPT includes:
- Only three in five people (62%) feel safe and secure on bus services in the evening – one of the lowest levels among Scottish regions – and three in four people (74%) feel safe and secure on rail services in the evening.
 - Safety and security problems are more likely to affect women, older people, younger people, LGBT+ people and black and ethnic minority people.
 - Experience of racism or harassment and/or having been the victim of hate crimes in the past prevents some people from using public transport.
 - A perceived lack of safety also deters people from using public transport.
 - Other safety identified problems related to public transport usage include travelling to and waiting for services at transport stops or stations particularly in the evening, at unstaffed or isolated locations and where there are low levels of lighting.
 - Quality and maintenance of pavements and footpaths including routes to public transport is a problem especially for older and disabled people and for people travelling with children in prams and buggies.
- 5.1.4 Impacts are likely to be compounded in rural areas where current levels of public transport provision and connectivity can act as barriers giving rise to a range of socio-economic impacts and equalities issues. Retention of bus services is essential in rural areas as a lifeline service for many people who do not have any alternative transport options. Bus services in rural and island communities are also experiencing a sharp decline in use.

² See separate Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Report

- 5.1.5 Key problems with bus services identified from the SPT’s public survey in 2019 related to service reliability, cost of fares and frequency of services with a lack of direct services being reported as the most common response as to why public transport was not used more frequently (Stantec UK, 2021). Data presented to support the RTS Case for Change identified a 31% reduction in passenger bus journeys made in the SPT region between 2007 and 2019 (Stantec, 2021). These are particular challenges in the wake of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on declining public transport use particularly in rural areas where bus service provision is a complex balance between commercial and supported services.
- 5.1.6 Analysis undertaken as part of the Case for Change for the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (Stantec, 2023) highlights that 22% of households across the SPT area do not have access to a bus stop (within a suitable walking catchment defined (for this analysis) as within 400m in large urban and urban areas, within 600m within accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas); 40% of households (defined as having access to a bus stop) have a bus less often than every 30 minutes, with this rising to 65% for stops located outside of Glasgow; 43% of households outside of Glasgow have no direct bus to Glasgow in the afternoon, increasing to 46% in the evening; nearly a quarter of households (23%) have no access to a service after 1900 (rising to 36% outside of Glasgow); and nearly 1 in 3 households (31%) are not served by a Sunday service. This limits the use of the bus network by many including for employment, education, leisure and social activities, especially in more rural areas.
- 5.1.7 Review of key information sources and recent literature has suggested several trends and issues relating to a number of the protected characteristics which should be considered in the EqIA process. These are highlighted below.
- 5.1.8 Baseline demographic data for each protected characteristic is presented in **Appendix A** for each of the council areas in the SPT region. Where possible the most up to date data has been used, however, for some protected characteristics the 2011 Census is the most recent source.

5.2 Age

- 5.2.1 The increase in the population of older age groups has been much higher than younger age groups over the last 20 years (National Records of Scotland, 2020). Figure 1 demonstrates that those over 50 account for 40% of the SPT region population, whilst those 34 and under account for 42%.

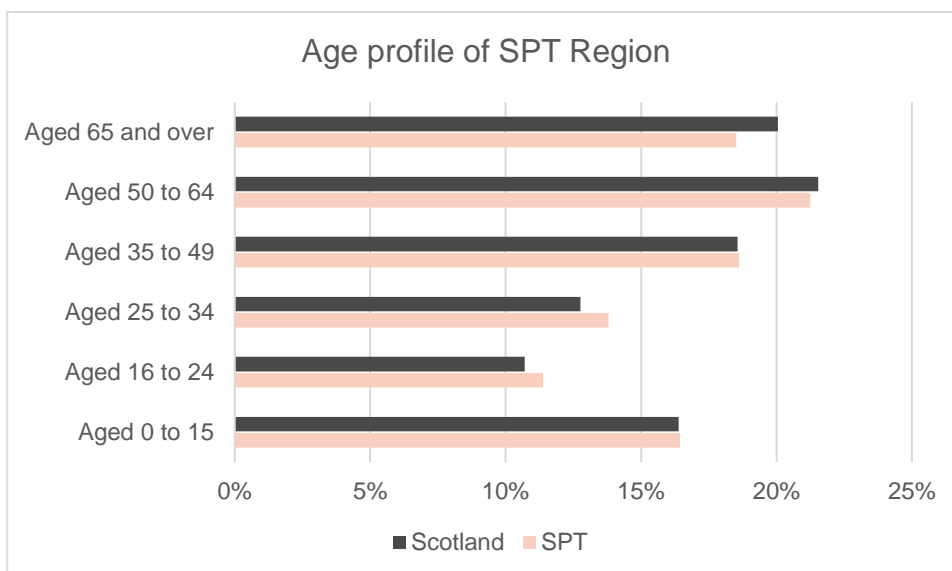


Figure 1: Age profile of SPT region

Older People

- 5.2.2 Older people tend to travel relatively less often and for shorter distances than other adults (Fatima, Moridpour, De Gruyter, & Saghapour, 2020) although they are more likely to use public transport for

journeys in comparison with other age groups. They are also less likely to drive every day or hold a driving licence. For those older people who are no longer working, many are more likely to travel between the hours of 9:00 and 15:00, with most trips for shopping (mostly undertaken by older women) (Su & Bell, 2012).

- 5.2.3 Accessibility issues are more likely to affect older people than other age groups with some older people having more limited mobility, hearing or vision impairments and difficulties in alighting to and from transport services, using station facilities or standing for long periods of time (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022). Older people experiencing difficulties of access to public transport may be hampered in accessing key services such as healthcare.
- 5.2.4 Issues facing older people in accessing public transport include inaccessible vehicles, journey comfort, frequency of bus services and poor integration between different transport services (as well as cross cutting issues shared with other protected groups such as hearing and visual problems and reduced personal mobility) (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Older people also face real and perceived problems with safety and security and accessibility of walking routes, bus stops, travel information, vehicles and services. They are less likely to find public transport safe and secure in the evening compared to young adults.
- 5.2.5 Digital technology in the form of apps and online travel planning has accelerated across transport systems in recent years, which has been made possible through the progression of smartphones. However, the digitisation of transport is not limited to smartphones; it also relies on user interaction. An unwillingness or inability to engage with digital platforms, known as digital disadvantage, may result in transport disadvantage (Durand, 2022). Digitally disadvantaged groups can be excluded from accessing information provided in digital formats due to a lack of access to or the skills and confidence to use digital technology. Digitally disadvantaged people are often more likely to be older (London Travel Watch, 2023). This can result in older people not having access to reliable and accurate information when trying to make travel plans.
- 5.2.6 The SPT region is experiencing population ageing. The changing age structure has wide-ranging implications for public policy, demand and provision of public services, labour market characteristics and tax revenues. Population ageing also has substantial transport impacts due to changes in connectivity and accessibility needs (Stantec UK, 2021)

Children and young people

- 5.2.7 In the last 15 years, the youngest adults (16–24-year-olds) have been consistently more likely to be in relative poverty compared to older adults (Scottish Government, 2023). According to Davis (2014), younger people may have a more local focus than the population as a whole. This suggests that younger people from disadvantaged communities may look for jobs and training opportunities only in their local area and those easily accessible via public transport.
- 5.2.8 People on low incomes are more likely to be in temporary, part-time jobs and in services such as retail, catering and residential care that require working unsocial hours or doing shift work. They are also less likely to have access to private vehicles (Public Health Scotland, 2023). Young people (16-24 years) were least likely to be in contractually secure employment. Part-time employment is also more common for those in employment ages 16 to 24 years, where 46.5% were working part time (the majority being students), and for those ages 65 years and over where 57.3 per cent were working part-time (Scottish Government, 2021). This suggests that younger people and older people will be disproportionately impacted by the reduced level of service across public transport.
- 5.2.9 Equalities issues relevant to children and young people who form part of this protected characteristic group are addressed in more detail in the evidence base presented in support of the CRW duty assessment report.

5.3 Disability

- 5.3.1 Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework (SATF) supports implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Scotland and is a key framework for the RTS. In each of the Council

areas in the SPT region, between one fifth and one third of the adult population has a limiting long term physical or mental health problem (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a). Yet, SPT identify that there is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey, and a lack of consistent provision of audio/visual travel information on board transport services. For example, NHS websites tend to signpost to Traveline Scotland or Google maps, neither of which can specifically identify accessible transport options needed for planning a journey. These websites also have poor accessibility features for people with visual impairments (MACS, 2019).

- 5.3.2 Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving licence than those who are not disabled (51% compared to 75%) (Transport Scotland, 2021b). Those who have driving licences are less likely to drive everyday than those who are not disabled (25% compared to 47%). Permanently sick or disabled adults in Scotland are significantly more likely to travel by bus (19% travelling 2 or 3 times per week compared to 9% of all adults in 2019) and they are less likely to travel by train compared to all adults (Transport Scotland, 2019b). These groups often experience higher levels of inequality and accessible transport is an important aspect of helping disabled people enjoy a better quality of life.
- 5.3.3 Poverty rates remain higher for households in which somebody is disabled compared to those where no-one is disabled (Scottish Government, 2023). People who have a long-term illness or disability that limits their daily activities are more likely to live in households that do not have access to a private car. About one in every two individuals whose daily activities are limited a lot by long-term health problems or disability live in a household without access to a private car, compared with just one in five people whose daily activities are not limited by health problems or disability (National Records of Scotland, 2011).
- 5.3.4 An individual will generally use public transport less frequently if they experience a greater number of difficulties completing daily tasks or where lack of accessible infrastructure and services presents a barrier (Yarde, Clery, Tipping, & Kiss, 2020). This may include:
- A lack of cycle infrastructure for adapted bicycles and costs associated with non-standard cycles; and
 - Safety and security concerns when using public transport, especially at night. 58% of disabled people agreed that they 'Feel safe and secure on the bus at night' compared to 73% of non-disabled people (Transport Scotland, 2021b).
- 5.3.5 Evidence reviewed by SPT has identified that many disabled people are not able to or are not confident about leaving home on their own due to uncertainty about the physical environment and of the realities of making journeys on transport services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Key accessibility issues in the SPT area are identified as:
- Journey planning: There is a lack of integrated and comprehensive accessible journey planning information essential to disabled people being able to plan a whole journey.
 - Journey assistance: Journey assistance services are not provided in a consistent way across public transport operators, there is a lack of co-ordination between operators and modes and a need for improved approaches to assist people who encounter problems when a journey is already in progress.
 - Accessible infrastructure: Many bus, subway and rail stations and stops in the region are not fully accessible for disabled people to be able to board and alight services. Many bus and taxi vehicles are not yet fully wheelchair accessible, and the Subway is only partly accessible.
 - Physical environment: Pavements and streets including routes to public transport and interchange connections are not always fully accessible or well-maintained whilst navigation aids can be inconsistent or not working.
- 5.3.6 People with disabilities tend to avoid travelling during peak hours. On weekdays a greater proportion of disabled people's journeys are in the middle of the day, and fewer before 9:30am and after 4:30pm. For

those whose disability limits activities a lot, there is an even greater proportion of travel between 9:30 and 4:30 (Transport Scotland, 2021b).

- 5.3.7 A lack of accessible travel information including timetables, journey planning information and audio / visual announcements can create barriers for those with sight or hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, mental health conditions or neuro-diverse conditions (Jarvis, 2020). However, travel behaviour among groups of people with disabilities varies widely as the behaviour of people with specific types of disabilities is often markedly different to each other (Clery, Kiss, Taylor, & Gill, 2017). Whilst many disabled travellers in Scotland rely on public transport, many experience difficulties when travelling. Problems include poor service frequency, inadequate infrastructure between home and stop or station, lack of suitable facilities while travelling (e.g. toilets) and difficulties physically accessing the transport (Disability Equality Scotland, 2017). Other access difficulties encountered by disabled travellers include steps or multi-layered stations, lack of trained support staff and lack of accessible connectivity between modes (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).
- 5.3.8 Women and disabled people may also face safety issues when using public transport, particularly where bus stops are situated in isolated or unsafe places (Duchene, 2011). Overall, the journeys that can be made as a disabled person may be less convenient, potentially more costly and a lower quality experience compared to other people (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a).
- 5.3.9 A 2018 survey (Disability Equality Scotland, 2018) found that access to hospitals by transport for disabled people was most difficult in rural areas, evidencing a clear link between lack of transport and an ability for people to achieve the highest standard of physical and mental health. In rural and island areas, journey times by public transport are often long and may involve at least one interchange. This can exacerbate problems of access to health and other key services and facilities for non-car users and impact upon health outcomes and contributing to higher NHS costs.
- 5.3.10 Increasing physical activity for all groups is identified as a priority by SPT. Safe, secure, obstruction-free walking routes with well-maintained surfaces are key to facilitating more walking and wheeling by a range of disability groups (and for older people, women, teenage girls and black and minority ethnic people who are less likely to be physically active). The SPT RTS public survey also identified key factors to enable more walking for people who are blind or with visual impairment include safe, obstruction free walking routes with good surface quality and places to rest.

5.4 Gender Reassignment

- 5.4.1 Transgender people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services (Scottish Trans Alliance, 2016).
- 5.4.2 Transgender people are likely to have lower incomes and experience structural disadvantages in accessing employment and training and therefore they are at a higher risk of transport poverty. They may have concerns about using public transport or public transport facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against (Valentine, 2016) which could affect their use of the public transport network. Reddy-Best and Olson (2020) describe public transport as a site where trans people cannot be sure who is watching so are consequently 'on alert', conducting self-surveillance and controlling their behaviour to avoid harm. A survey in 2017 (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017) identified that 51% of transgender young people felt safe when using public transportation; meaning that 49% of transgender young people felt unsafe.
- 5.4.3 Limited information and data are available on the transgender population including the lived experiences of this group with regards to transport (Transport Scotland, 2021).

5.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

- 5.5.1 Mothers often have complex journey patterns e.g. making journeys between home, work, nursery, the school run and groups/clubs. Affordability and suitability of ticket types can be an issue for mothers returning to work after maternity leave (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Pregnant women and people travelling on public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties in

accessing and using services associated with accessing vehicles/infrastructure and also difficulties on-board vehicles due to restrictions in their mobility levels.

- 5.5.2 Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of day. They may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours (Transport Scotland, 2021).

5.6 Race

- 5.6.1 Recent research suggests that people from black and other non-white ethnic minority groups take relatively few active leisure trips such as walking or cycling (Colley & Irvine, 2018). Potential explanations can include socio-economic disadvantage, fear of discrimination, and language barriers. (Transport Scotland, 2020)
- 5.6.2 Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination and this could create barriers to using public transport services and facilities for these groups (Transport Scotland, 2021). Those from black and other minority ethnic groups were more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination compared to those from white ethnic groups (25% and 17% respectively) (Transport Scotland, 2022). SPT also report that the attitude of other passengers due to race or ethnicity (and religion) can limit travel choices (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.
- 5.6.3 People from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared to those from the 'White – British' and 'White – Other' groups. (Scottish Government, 2023)
- 5.6.4 As noted, people in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty, and rely on public transport more than other groups and are potentially more vulnerable to disadvantage where transport services are changed, reduced or become more expensive. Issues of transport cost and safety may therefore disproportionately affect these groups and affect their health and socio-economic outcomes.

5.7 Religion or Belief

- 5.7.1 There is a limited evidence base detailing how this protected characteristic relates to inequalities on the transport system. Discrimination, assault or harassment (or fear of these) on the basis of religious identity may affect people of certain religious groups more than others, and this may affect their choice to use public transport and public transport facilities.

5.8 Sex

- 5.8.1 Women and disabled people are less likely to drive and more likely to use buses, yet they have particular needs that are often not taken into account by transport systems which tend to be designed around the needs of some travellers and not others (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Women are much more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households. In the SPT region fewer than half (49%) of single parent households with dependent children have a car available for private use (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021a).
- 5.8.2 In general, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments and are more likely to travel with young people and older people (Duchene, 2011) (Sanchez de Madariaga, 2013) and make multi-purpose trips. This influences travel behaviour and women tend to travel shorter distances within a more restricted geographical area, make more multi-stop trips, and rely more on public transport. Women are also more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night.
- 5.8.3 SPT report a range of other key evidence relating to women and transport:

- Women are more likely to be the head of single parent households, which have lower rates of personal car ownership than two parent households and at greater risk of poverty than married or co-habiting households with children.
- Women are less likely than men to have a driving licence and those who do have a licence drive less frequently.
- Women tend to take on a disproportionate level of care and domestic tasks, compared to men, in addition to full or part-time work, consequently, they are more likely to make multi-stop and multi-purpose trips, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes.
- Trip purposes and patterns differ for women compared to men e.g. working part-time or shifts, or in relation to caring responsibilities.
- Safety and feelings of safety have a significant impact on women's travel choices. In the UK, 72% of women were worried about experiencing sexual harassment on public transport, compared to 40% of men. This has led to a higher proportion of women (62% compared to 35% of men) who would change their behaviour to in relation to public transport to avoid sexual harassment (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020); and
- Women feel less safe than men when travelling at night. Survey data from 2022 shows that females and those who identified as either trans, non-binary or in another way were less likely to indicate that they felt safe using the bus at night either always or often and were more likely to state that they never felt safe using the bus at night compared to males (Transport Scotland 2022).

5.9 Sexual Orientation

- 5.9.1 People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGBO) are more likely to live in the most disadvantaged communities (27% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults (Scottish Government, 2017b). People in the LGBO group may be concerned about being able to access public transport and public transport facilities, especially at night when these may be poorly lit, for fear of harassment or discrimination (Transport Scotland, 2021). In the UK, of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, 28% had experienced this on public transport (UK Government Equalities Office, 2020).
- 5.9.2 SPT report that one in four LGBO people in Scotland have faced prejudice or discrimination and have suffered discriminatory treatment when accessing services. This has led to reluctance amongst some people in this protected characteristic group to engage in aspects of public life including accessing services (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b).
- 5.9.3 A survey in 2017 (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2017) identified there has been a decline in the percentage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people overall who say they feel safe on public transport, from 70% in 2012 to 67% in 2017. A more recent survey shows that those (aged 16+) who identified their sexual orientation as either gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or in another way were considerably more likely to indicate that they had experienced bullying or discrimination while travelling on buses – 43% compared to 18% of those who identified as straight/heterosexual (Transport Scotland, 2022).
- 5.9.4 Limited information and data are available on the lived experiences of this group with regards to transport.

5.10 Marriage and Civil Partnership

- 5.10.1 This protected characteristic has not been assessed against the SBRS. This is because this protected characteristic is only relevant within an employment context.

5.11 SPT Region Employment & Demographic Profile

- 5.11.1 Please see **Appendix A** for an overview of demographic profile and protected characteristics by geographic areas within the Strathclyde region.

6 Equality Impact Assessment – Draft SRBS Objectives

6.1.1 The following section contains the full EQIA . The assessment below evaluates the impact of each SRBS objective on the protected characteristic groups, using insights from the baseline report above. Following this, the policies and associated measures under each SRBS theme will be assessed to determine their effects on each group. The overall aim of the assessment is to provide a comprehensive overview of how the SRBS affects each protected characteristic group in relation to fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). To avoid repetition and duplication where protected characteristics share similar issues, barriers or potential impacts these have been grouped in the commentary.

6.1.2 In Appendix B a breakdown of each of the seven policy themes, policies and measures can be found for reference.

6.2 Draft SRBS Objectives

6.2.1 Three SRBS Objectives have been developed:

- **Objective 1:** Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services.
- **Objective 2:** Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all.
- **Objective 3:** Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network.

6.2.2 Table 66 summarises the determined impact of each objective, on each protected characteristic group.

Table 6.1: SRBS Objectives Impact Assessment

EQIA Criteria								
Objectives	Age	Disability	Pregnancy and maternity	Sex	Race	Religion and belief	Sexual orientation	Gender reassignment
Objective 1: Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	++	++	++	++	+	~	+	+
Objective 2: Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible	++	++	++	+	+	+	+	+
Objective 3: Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network	++	++	++	+	+	~	+	+

Objective 1: Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations

- 6.2.3 Objective 1 is expected to have a major to minor beneficial effect on all protected characteristic groups, excluding religion and belief where this is no clear relationship, and fulfil the PSED. A consistent and improved level of service across the region will benefit these groups, as they are often more reliant on bus travel. From the baseline analysis, it can be assumed that a consistent and improved level of service will provide equality of opportunity by connecting those more reliant on bus travel to key destinations and services such as employment, education, or training sites.
- 6.2.4 A consistent and improved level of service will positively impact young people entitled to national concessionary bus passes. Increasing the reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support younger people who need to access employment, training, and education opportunities. Often, the level of service or consistency of regional services can act as a barrier for young people when accessing employment, educational, and training opportunities. This would increase the catchment area of opportunities for young people in the region.
- 6.2.5 Furthermore, protected characteristic groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, and members of the LGBTQ community, are identified as being more likely to live in low-income households. Many low-income individuals depend on inconsistent and irregular public transport, which can limit their available opportunities and reinforce the barriers and challenges they face, the negative implications of this regarding equality of opportunity could be addressed through fulfilling this SRBS objective. The intersectionality between these protected characteristic groups and low income is examined in greater detail in the Fairer Duty Scotland impact assessment.
- 6.2.6 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** could result in a **Major Beneficial Effect** on all groups. However, due to a lack of linking evidence, it was determined there is **No Clear Relationship** between **Objective 1** and religion and belief.

Table 66.2: Objective 1 Assessment Table

Protected Characteristic	O1 Scoring	Commentary
Age	++	<p>Older and younger people are more likely to use public transport than other age groups.</p> <p>Mobility, well-being, and independence are intrinsically linked, particularly in later life. Mobility and independence allow people to engage in social and everyday activities that enhance well-being. As older people are more reliant on public transport, the network needs to support them in being mobile and independent. Age-related health problems are more likely than age alone to lead to giving up driving, reinforcing the reliance on public transport.</p> <p>Younger people are also more likely to rely on bus travel, but infrequent services can reduce mobility for young people. A child-friendly environment is one where they have both high levels of independent mobility and many potential experiences on offer. Limited public transport services and disconnected and/or unsafe walking or cycling options result in a more local focus for children or young people, also limiting the catchment area of opportunities such as education, part-time employment or training.</p> <p>Younger and older people often face varied challenges when accessing public transport. These include the frequency of bus services and poor integration between transport services. The frequency of services is directly correlated with the risk of experiencing transport poverty for older and younger people, who are typically more reliant on public transport. Public Health Scotland (2024) expands on the analysis of transport poverty by exploring the consequences on individual health, as it can limit access to building blocks of good health, reduce access to health care and services, and reduce community engagement.</p> <p>A consistent and improved level of service would benefit both older and younger people. Older people would be better connected to key services that enhance health and well-being, such as health care, shops, cafes, libraries, community centres, and places of worship. Similarly, younger people would be better connected to employment, training, education, and leisure opportunities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 1 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on age, in particular older and younger people who are generally more reliant on public transport. It would work towards proving this protected characteristic group with more independent mobility.</p>
Disability	++	<p>Disabled people are less likely to possess a driving license than those who are not disabled, and those who do have a driving license are less likely to drive every day than those who are not disabled. Additionally, permanently sick or disabled adults in Scotland are significantly more likely to travel by bus. Despite this reliance on public transport and buses in particular, disabled people face several challenges when accessing public transport that can result in higher levels of inequality between those with and without protected characteristics. These include the availability of services and the level of service.</p> <p>A consistent and improved level of service would improve connectivity to key destinations and services for this group and enhance their customer service experiences when travelling on the bus network.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 1 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on disability.</p>

Pregnancy and maternity	++	<p>Households with young children face several spatial and time constraints in meeting their travel needs. Accommodating childcare, employment, and household responsibilities can restrict the time available to meet travel demands. Mothers display distinct travel patterns as they make multi-stop and multi-purpose journeys. A consistent and improved level of service would provide a more regular service for this user group that they could better rely on. An improved level of service would quickly and efficiently connect this user group to key destinations and services such as education and health care services.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 1 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Sex	++	<p>A consistent and improved level of service would benefit women as they display distinct travel patterns compared to men. Generally, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments and are more likely to travel with young people and older people. They are also more likely than men to travel in off-peak hours when services are further reduced. The role of women often requires 'trip chaining' in which they make multiple trips relating to different purposes within one travel journey. A consistent and improved level of service would better connect women to key destinations and services, easing the challenges associated with trip-chaining, such as interchanges and service frequency.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 1 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on sex.</p>
Race	+	<p>Some ethnic minority groups are more likely to rely on public transport and walking as a mode of travel. In Scotland, someone from a Black and minority ethnic (BME) background is more likely to experience poverty than someone from a white Scottish/British background, and those in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to walk or catch the bus to travel to work or school. A reliance on bus travel due to ethnic minority and socio-economic status may hinder the ability of users to access key destinations and services such as training, education and employment. A consistent and improved level of service would increase the frequency of service, better connecting them to key opportunities that could advance equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 1 could result in a Minor Beneficial Effect on race.</p>
Religion and belief	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that Objective 1 would positively impact religion or belief in reducing inequalities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that there is No Clear Relationship between Objective 1 and Religion and belief.</p>
Sexual orientation	+	<p>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) individuals often face intersectional issues and vulnerabilities that contribute to lower incomes and structural disadvantages in employment, education, and training. As a result, this user group is at a higher risk of experiencing poverty. They also tend to encounter greater challenges related to transport poverty, which affects their access to essential services and locations. Providing a consistent and high level of service can improve access to resources, thereby reducing transport poverty and overall poverty.</p>
Gender reassignment		<p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 1 could result in a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual Orientation and gender reassignment.</p>

Objective 2: Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all

- 6.2.7 The affordability of public transport, and particularly bus travel can determine if user groups are more likely to experience transport poverty. Protected characteristic groups, including disabled people, women, age, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ people, are more likely to experience poverty and are, therefore, more susceptible to transport poverty due to unaffordable transport options. Additionally, individuals may experience multiple protected characteristics simultaneously, compounding the risk of transport poverty and subsequent poverty. Transport poverty can reduce accessibility to employment, training and education options to user groups, perpetuating socio-economic challenges. These challenges are explored further in the Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment.
- 6.2.8 Safe and accessible bus travel for all would positively impact all users. In particular, older people with age-associated mobility and sensory limitations, disabled people, pregnant women, or users travelling with young children would benefit from more physically accessible bus travel. These user groups report challenges when boarding and alighting buses, travelling through interchanges, and accessing travel information online and onboard. More accessible bus travel could alleviate some of the stress and anxiety associated with public transport for this user group, presenting bus travel as a more feasible travel option.
- 6.2.9 Accessible bus travel is not limited to physical accessibility as digital technology in the form of apps and online travel planning continues to become commonplace. This form of travel planning can rely on user interaction. An unwillingness or inability to engage with digital platforms, known as digital disadvantage, may also result in transport disadvantage. Some of the key characteristics that are closely linked to having low digital skills are also key risks of vulnerability, which are more broadly related to age, education, impairment, and personal income. More accessibility across digital platforms and travel planning facilities would benefit all user groups.
- 6.2.10 Women, in particular, are more likely to be the victim of, and have concerns about, sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night. Also, ethnic minorities, religions or beliefs, and LGBTQ people are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination, which can create barriers to using public transport services and facilities. Safer bus travel could improve perceptions of personal safety for these user groups, reducing barriers to public transport.
- 6.2.11 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Major Beneficial Effect** on all groups.
- 6.2.12 The assessment of Objective 2 is summarised in Table 6.3 below.

Table 66.3: Objective 2 Assessment Table

Protected Characteristic	O2 Scoring	Commentary
Age	++	<p>Young people aged 22 years and under, older people aged 60 years and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2023). However, Objective 2 would positively impact these user groups for varied reasons. Whilst Older people, children, younger people and disabled people are eligible for concessionary travel, those who travel with them as a carer, parent, or guardian may not be. Unaffordable bus travel may disproportionately impact user groups who are reliant on assistance or support when travelling. Families with a disabled member are more likely to be in poverty than those without (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2024) and improved affordability could provide more opportunity for travel for this user group, as families and support networks would be better supported. Similarly for young children who rely on a parent or guardian to travel longer distances, this objective would support them in accessing key destinations and services.</p>
Disability	++	
Pregnancy and maternity	+	<p>Disabled people, older people with age associated mobility or sensory impairments, and pregnant women or those travelling with young children are more likely to experience physical barriers to accessing public transport. These include boarding and alighting from vehicles, accessible infrastructure at interchanges, and standing for long periods of time. Accessible transport delivered through objective would improve physical access to bus travel, improving access to key services and destinations for this user group.</p> <p>In Scotland, disabled people are less likely to say they feel safe and secure on a bus at night than people who are not disabled. Disabled people also highlight concerns about discriminatory encounters with staff and other passengers, unsafe transport infrastructure and pedestrian spaces, and fear of falling or colliding with other passengers (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Improved safety and accessibility would particularly benefit disabled people, who are disproportionately impacted by barriers surrounding physical accessibility and perceptions of personal safety. The delivery of objective 2 would improve overall accessibility to bus travel, enhancing access to key destinations and services.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 2 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on age, disability, and Minor Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Sex		<p>Women, ethnic minorities, people of religion or belief, and LGBTQ people are more likely to experience harassment or discrimination, which can create barriers to using public transport. Safer bus travel could improve perceptions of personal safety for these user groups, reducing barriers to public transport and improving accessibility.</p>
Race		<p>Women are more likely to work part-time and are much more likely to be the head of a single-parent household, which is more likely to be in poverty than any other type of household. People from non-white minority ethnic groups are also more likely to be in relative</p>

Religion and belief	++	<p>poverty after housing costs (Scottish Government, 2024). Additionally, LGBO and Transgender people are also likely to face inter-sectional issues and vulnerability relating to lower incomes (Scottish Government , 2017). These groups are also more reliant on bus travel and experience low levels of car ownership due to their socio-economic status. More affordable bus travel, delivered through Objective 2, would positively impact women, ethnic minorities and LGBTQ people by improving their access to services and opportunities for training, education and employment.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 2 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on sex, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.</p>
Sexual orientation		
Gender reassignment		

Objective 3: Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network

- 6.2.13 An attractive, integrated, and sustainable network would support all users travelling on it. However, better integration will be particularly beneficial for protected characteristic groups more reliant on bus travel.
- 6.2.14 An integrated network would provide more consistent travel planning information and timetabling. This may include a smarter ticketing system and better integration between different modes. Women would particularly benefit as they display distinct travel patterns, making multi-stop and multi-purpose journeys and combining travel to work with trips for other purposes, such as taking children to school or looking after family members. A smart and integrated ticketing system would positively impact women as it can improve boarding times and flexibility for most users. Disabled people would also benefit from a more integrated system as they typically rely more on travel planning.
- 6.2.15 As mentioned, physical accessibility is more likely to impact older people, disabled people, pregnant women or users travelling with pushchairs. This is particularly evident when transitioning between modes or travelling through interchanges. An integrated and sustainable bus network would improve interchanges, bus stops, and stations, positively impacting user groups who note challenges with physical accessibility when transitioning between modes.
- 6.2.16 An attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network would also enhance interaction with other modes of travel, such as rail and active travel. All user groups would benefit as this would allow travel of a greater distance, presenting more opportunities in the form of training, education and employment to protected characteristic groups more susceptible to low incomes, such as age, disability, sex, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ people.
- 6.2.17 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 3** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on all groups. However, due to a lack of linking evidence, it was determined there is No Clear Relationship between Objective 3 and religion and belief.

Table 6.3: Objective 3 Assessment Table

Protected Characteristic	O3 Scoring	Commentary
Age	++	<p>Older and younger people, disabled people, pregnant women or those travelling with a pushchair would be supported by an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network as consistency in travel planning platforms would benefit those who are digitally disadvantaged, whilst better integration with multiple modes would increase accessible opportunities in the form of training, education and employment.</p> <p>Additionally, better integration between modes and vehicle may reduce some of the anxiety surrounding transition between modes that typically older people, disabled people, pregnant women or those travelling with a pushchair or young children might experience.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 2 could result in a Major Beneficial Effect on age, disability, and pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Disability		
Pregnancy and maternity		
Sex	+	<p>Women would particularly benefit from an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network as they display distinct travel patterns that involve trip-chaining and multi-purpose travel. An integrated network would positively impact women as it can improve flexibility, integration with other modes, and increase the travel options to this group.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 2 could result in a Minor Beneficial Effect on Sex</p>
Race	+	<p>Ethnic minorities and LGBTQ people are more likely to be from a low-income background. An integrated network would support these user groups to access a wider catchment of opportunity in terms of employment, training and education, reducing the transport poverty that this group is likely to face.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Objective 2 could result in a Minor Beneficial Effect on Race, Sexual orientation and Gender reassignment.</p>
Sexual orientation		
Gender reassignment		
Religion and belief	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that Objective 1 would positively impact religion or belief in reducing inequalities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that there is No Clear Relationship between Objective 1 and Religion and belief.</p>

7 Equality Impact Assessment – Draft SRBS Policies

7.1 Policy Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed

7.1.1 Implementing Policies 1, 2, and 3 would positively impact all scoped in protected characteristic groups, apart from religion and belief where there is no clear relationship. From the baseline analysis, the policies outlined under this theme will provide equality of opportunity by connecting those more reliant on bus travel to key destinations and services such as employment, education or training sites. It would also work to foster good relations by improving accessibility to shared space, such as key destinations and services. The key policies under this theme include:

- **Policy 1:** Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required.
- **Policy 2:** Improve the frequency of the bus services, where required.
- **Policy 3:** Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network.

7.1.2 An assessment of each policy on protected characteristic groups is detailed below.

Table 7.1 Theme 1: Buses Where They Are Needed, When They Are Needed EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies			Commentary
	P1	P2	P3	
Age	++	++	++	<p>Policy 1, 2 and 3 and the associated measures would positively impact younger and older people, who are often more reliant on bus travel. Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage through the implementation of minimum levels of service for towns, key destinations and off-peak time services would support older and young people, in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities. The measures (particularly M1,M2 and M3) will ensure confidence in being able to access a frequent service.</p> <p>Additionally, the level of regional services can act as a barrier for young people when accessing employment, educational and training opportunities. High-frequency routes and a more integrated network between services and modes would increase the catchment area of opportunities for young people in the region and reduce social isolation for older people, enhancing wellbeing.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 under could have a Major Beneficial Effect on age.</p>

Disability	++	++	++	<p>Disabled people are also more reliant on public transport and are less likely to possess a driving licence. However, disabled people may often feel less confident about making a journey by public transport if there is uncertainty about the reliability or interchanges in transport services. Some accessibility issues relate to journey planning and access to clear information, accessible infrastructure, including full wheelchair accessibility in stations and vehicles, and the physical environment relating to pavements, streets and routes to public transport or interchange connections.</p> <p>Policy 1, 2 and 3 would positively impact disabled people as improved periods of operation and geographic coverage through the implementation of minimum levels of service for towns, key destinations and off-peak time services would support disabled people, in particular with accessing key destinations such as healthcare services and facilities, local retail hubs and travel interchanges (M2). The improved frequency will reduce the reliance on journey planning, and ambitions to work towards a 'turn-up-and-go' service level will reduce waiting times for users at bus stops who may experience physical access barriers due to surrounding infrastructure (M3).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on disability.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	++	++	++	<p>Suitability of public transport timetabling and a bus network based on defined principles for frequency, may positively impact parents who may manage childcare alongside full-time work (M1). Additionally, pregnant women may require more flexibility in their working days and frequent services to key healthcare destinations (M2)</p> <p>Policy 1, 2, and 3 would positively impact pregnant women and those with young children. Minimal levels of service for key destinations and off-peak time periods, as well as increased frequency of services, would allow for more flexibility for bus users (M3). Additionally, improved efficiencies through a more integrated network would increase the catchment of opportunities for those returning to work.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 under could have a Major Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Sex	++	++	++	<p>Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men. Gendered roles mean that, in general, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments. They are more likely to travel with young people and older people and make multi-purpose trips, combining work with dropping children at school, for example. Often, public transport makes it less feasible to make multi-purpose trips due to infrequent and inconsistent service levels. Women are also more likely than men to travel in off-peak hours when services can be reduced.</p> <p>Policy 1, 2 and 3 will positively impact women as improved periods of operation and geographic coverage through the implementation of minimum levels of service for towns, key destinations and off-peak time services would support women, in particular with accessing key destinations such as travel interchanges, schools, childcare, and employment. This is particular supported by M4, which highlights better coordination between services and modes Improved frequency will increase flexibility in travel for this user group, and ambitions to work towards a 'turn-up-and-go' service level will reduce waiting times for users.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on women.</p>

Race	+	+	+	<p>People in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car and, like other groups, are more likely to rely on public transport. This user group is also more likely to experience higher rates of poverty.</p> <p>Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage through the implementation of minimum levels of service through Policy 1, and specifically M2, for towns, key destinations and off-peak time services would support ethnic minorities, in particular with accessing key destinations such as transport interchanges, as well as employment, education and training opportunities, positively impacting this user group by advancing equality of opportunity. It is determined all three policies and associated measures would positively impact this group through increasing access to key destinations.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race.</p>
Religion and belief	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to determine if Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 and associated measures would positively impact users of religion or belief specifically, but it is determined that the policies and associated measures will positively impact all users, regardless of religion or belief.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that these Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 under would result in No Clear Relationship on Religion and Belief</p>
Sexual orientation	+	+	+	<p>LGBO adults are more likely to live in deprived areas (25% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults), meaning they are also more likely to face higher rates of transport poverty and challenges in terms of access to key services. LGBO adults also have higher levels of unemployment and are less likely to report good health.</p> <p>Policy 1, 2, and 3 and the associated measures would positively impact LGBO users. Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage through the implementation of minimum levels of service (M2) for towns, key destinations, and off-peak time services would support LGBO, particularly with accessing key destinations such as health services, training and education, travel interchanges, and employment.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 under could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual orientation.</p>
Gender reassignment	+	+	+	<p>Transgender people are also likely to face inter-sectional issues and vulnerability relating to lower incomes and structural disadvantages related to employment, education and training, putting this group at higher risk of poverty. Additionally, research indicates that transgender and gender-diverse populations have a greater need for health services and face unique barriers when accessing services.</p> <p>Policy 1, 2 and 3 and all associated measures would positively impact this user group as improved periods of operation and geographic coverage through the implementation of minimum levels of service for towns, key destinations and off-peak time services would support transgender people, in particular with accessing key destinations such as health services, training and education, travel interchanges, and employment. This would contribute to the elimination of discrimination and advancement of equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on gender reassignment.</p>

Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination?	Policy 1, 2 and 3 would contribute towards the elimination of discrimination against protected characteristic groups and advance equality of opportunity by improving access to key services and destination. The policies will also work towards fostering good relations between protected characteristic groups by improving access to spaces, not typically occupied by protected characteristic groups due to discrimination.
Advance equality of opportunity?	
Foster good relations?	

7.2 Policy Theme 2: Reliable and Quicker Journeys

7.2.1 Implementing Policy 4 and 5 would positively impact all protected characteristic groups. A more dependable bus network and service would positively impact protected characteristic groups that are more reliant on bus travel. From the baseline analysis, it is apparent reliability and efficiency of public transport impacts groups in various ways. The measures associated with policies 4 and 5 would provide equality of opportunity by working to make bus travel more reliable and efficient for most, if not all, users. The impacts of more reliable and quicker journeys safety are explored below. The key policy under this theme includes:

- **Policy 4:** Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services
- **Policy 5:** Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times.

Table 7.2 Theme 2: Reliable and Quicker Journeys EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies		Commentary
	P4	P5	
Age	++	++	<p>Younger adults and those aged 65 and over are more likely to work part-time, resulting in travelling hours outside of typical commuting patterns. They are also generally more reliant on bus travel.</p> <p>Policies 4 and 5 and the associated measures (M5, M13) including bus priority measures and faster bus journey times on busier routes could support younger people and working age adults who require access to employment, training and education opportunities. M11 and M12 would support bus use for commuting and those particularly affected by disruptions, which may include working-age adults regarding working patterns, as well as the elderly regarding appointments and social isolation,. It would also support people travelling outside of typical commuting hours, such as older adults in meeting their daily needs, as well better linkages with rural services (M7). These measures would make bus travel a more attractive alternative to private vehicles and increase the opportunities available to this user group, particularly younger people.</p> <p>Additionally, age-related health problems are likely to lead to giving up driving, resulting in further reliance on sustainable transport. Physical accessibility issues are more likely to affect older people than other ages, with some older people experiencing difficulties alighting to and from transport services, using station facilities, or standing for long periods. Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and servicing could support older people who experience barriers to physical access due to age-associated limited mobility.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policies 4 and 5, and associated measures highlighted could have a Major Beneficial Effect on age.</p>

Disability	++	++	<p>Disabled adults can be deterred from using public transport if they encounter challenges to journey planning and inconsistent services. Engagement with accessibility groups during the draft strategy consultation revealed that respondents had experience of drivers not stopping at bus stops due to congestion or not stopping close enough to the kerb.</p> <p>Additionally, several respondents reported that there can be a lack of appropriate space on board buses for wheelchair users. Some respondents reported having to wait for the next bus if the space was in use. This caused anxiety around not knowing if they could board, difficulties in travelling with another passenger in a wheelchair, and, in some cases, having to wait a long time for the next bus due to infrequent services. Bus priority measures (M5, M8,M12), combined with the coordination of an appropriate fleet (M6, M7), could support this user group, who often rely more on bus travel when accessing public transport.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policies 4 and 5, and associated measures highlighted could have a Major Beneficial Effect on disability.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	+	+	<p>Pregnant women and those travelling with young children may also face physical accessibility barriers when boarding and alighting vehicles due to limited mobility during pregnancy or travelling with pushchairs and young children. Associated measures under Policy 8 and 9 to improve the coordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes (M7, M13) and services would positively impact this user group, as they would be afforded appropriate space, and boarding and alighting would be simplified.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policies 4 and 5, and associated measures highlighted could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Sex	+	+	<p>Women are significantly more likely to be bus passengers than men. Gendered roles mean, in general, women engage in travel linked to caring responsibilities and domestic commitments and are more likely to travel with young people and older people and make multi-purpose trips; combining work with dropping children at school for example. Often, multi-purpose trips are less feasible by public transport due to infrequent and inconsistent levels of service. Women are also more likely than men to travel in off-peak hours, when services are often reduced. Bus priority measures under Policy 4 and 5 would support women who are more likely to trip-chain and better coordination of appropriate fleet would support women who are more likely to travel with children and older people (M7,M5,M8, M13).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policies 4 and 5, and associated measures highlighted could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sex.</p>
Race	+	+	<p>The baseline reporting shows that this protected characteristic group relies more on bus travel and is more likely to experience low income. The policies and measures outlined will benefit these groups by delivering more reliable and faster public transport services (M5, M13) and increasing access to essential services and destinations, thereby advancing equality of opportunity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 4 and 5 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race.</p>

Religion and belief	~	~	There is a lack of evidence to determine if Policy 4 Policy 5 and associated measures would positively impact users with certain religion or belief, but it is determined that the policies and associated measures will positively impact all users, regardless of religion or belief. Overall, it is assessed that Policy4 and 5 would result in No Clear Relationship on religion or belief.
Sexual orientation	+	+	The baseline reporting demonstrates that these protected characteristic groups rely more on bus travel and are more likely to experience low income. The policies and measures outlined will benefit these groups by delivering more reliable and faster public transport services (M5) and increasing access to essential services and destinations, thereby advancing equality of opportunity (M13).
Gender reassignment	+	+	Overall, it is assessed that Policy 4 and 5 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual orientation and gender reassignment.
Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination?	The policy and associated measures will work towards advancing equality of opportunity by improving reliability.		
Advance equality of opportunity?			
Foster good relations?			

7.3 Policy Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing

7.3.1 The implementation of Policy 6, 7 and 8 would positively impact all users of buses and strengthen opportunities for users. From the baseline analysis, it can be assumed that the policies outlined under this theme will contribute to promoting equality of opportunity by working to make bus travel more affordable, connecting those more reliant on bus travel to key destinations and services such as employment, education or training sites. The impacts of increased affordability are explored in more detail in the Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment. It is also worth noting that the challenges identified below are often exacerbated for those living in remote or rural communities. The key policies under this theme include:

- **Policy 6:** Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities
- **Policy 7:** Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring
- **Policy 8:** Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible

7.3.2 An assessment of each policy on protected characteristic groups is detailed below.

Table 7.3: Theme 3 5: Affordable and Attractive Fares EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies			Commentary
	P5	P7	P8	
Age	+	+	+	<p>Young people aged 22 years and under, older people aged 60 years and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2023).</p> <p>However, working age adults, including young professionals, part-time workers and those on low income are likely to benefit from increased fare affordability measures under Policies 6, 7 and 8. Measures such as fare capping (M15), a simplified fare structure (M16), accessible fare information (M17) and consistent approaches to fare increases (M18) would have positive impacts on working age groups.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on age.</p>
Disability	+	+	+	<p>Young people aged 22 and under, older people aged 60 and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland (Transport Scotland, 2023). However, the measures associated with policies 6 and 8 would still positively impact disabled people.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft Bus Strategy with accessibility groups revealed that some respondents considered bus fares expensive but were unaware if they were eligible for a concessionary pass or how to access one. Additionally, difficulty accessing journey planning apps and websites was noted, resulting in a lack of clarity over pricing. Measures to prioritise concessionary and discounted fares for those who need them most will positively impact this user group, as will the provision of clear pricing information (M14,M17).</p> <p>Additionally, while disabled users are eligible for concessionary travel, this may not apply to the entire household, which could be at risk of higher levels of relative poverty compared with non-disabled households. Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members of households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes linked with disability (M16, M18).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on disability.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	++	++	++	<p>Policy 4, 5, and 6 would positively impact those travelling with young children or pregnant women, as concessionary or discounted fares, fare capping for single and multi-journey travel, and simplified fare structures (M16) that provide customers with the best value for money would improve access to public transport options. This user group may experience poverty or low income due to increased costs related to childcare.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Sex	+	+	+	<p>Levels of mobility vary among social groups, and women are more likely than men to experience limited mobility. This can be attributed to several factors, but it can be attributed to the fact that women are more likely to work part-time and are much more likely to be the head of a single-parent household, which have lower rates of</p>

				<p>personal car ownership than two-parent households. In the SPT region, in particular, fewer than half of single-parent households with dependent children have a car available for private use.</p> <p>Policy 6, 7, and 8 and their associated measures would positively impact women. In particular, concessionary and discounted fares (M14), automatic fare capping (M15), and value-for-money ticketing (M16) would benefit women most in need. Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, 7 and 8 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sex.</p>
Race	+	+	+	<p>As mentioned, people in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car and are more likely to experience higher rates of poverty. This can put them at a disadvantage when transport services increase in price. Therefore, policies 6, 7, and 8 and associated measures, particularly concessionary fares (M14) and fare capping (M15) would positively impact this user group.</p> <p>Overall it is assessed that Policy 6, 7 and 8 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race.</p>
Religion and belief	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to determine if Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 and associated measures would positively impact users of religion or belief specifically, but it is determined that the policies and associated measures will positively impact all users, regardless of religion or belief.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 would result in No Clear Relationship on religion or belief.</p>
Sexual orientation	+	+	+	<p>LGBO adults are more likely to live in deprived areas (25% compared with 19% of heterosexual adults), meaning they are also more likely to face higher rates of transport poverty and challenges in terms of access to key services. LGBO adults also have higher levels of unemployment. Therefore, policies 4, 5 and 6 and associated measures, particularly concessionary fares (M14) and fare capping (M15), would positively impact this user group.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual orientation.</p>
.Gender reassignment	+	+	+	<p>Transgender people are also likely to face inter-sectional issues and vulnerability relating to lower incomes and structural disadvantages related to employment, education and training, putting this group at higher risk of poverty. Therefore, policies 6, 7, and 8 and associated measures, particularly concessionary fares (M14) and fare capping (M15) would positively impact this user group.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on gender reassignment.</p>
Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination?	<p>The policy and associated measures will work towards eliminating discrimination by reducing the barrier of cost for some protected character groups. Subsequently, this will advance equality of opportunity, also fostering good relations between groups.</p>			
Advance equality of opportunity?				
Foster good relations?				

7.4 Policy Theme 4: Accessible and Safer Bus Journeys

7.4.1 The implementation of Policy 9 will positively impact all protected characteristic groups. From the baseline analysis, it is clear that the accessibility and safety of public transport impact groups in various ways. The measures associated with policy 9 would provide an equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster relations by working to make bus travel more accessible for most, if not all, users. The impacts of improved safety and accessibility on the bus network are explored in more detail in below. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region, so improvement may only be a marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The key policy under this theme includes:

- **Policy 9:** Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.

Table 7.4 Theme 4 Accessible and Safer Bus Journeys EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies	Commentary
	P9	
Age	++	<p>Mobility, wellbeing and independence are intrinsically linked, particularly in later life. Mobility and independence can enable people to engage in social and everyday activities that enhance wellbeing. Age-related health problems are more likely than age alone to lead to giving up driving, resulting in further reliance on sustainable transport. Physical accessibility issues are more likely to affect older people than other ages, with some older people having more limited mobility, hearing or vision impairments, and difficulties alighting to and from transport services, using station facilities, or standing for long periods.</p> <p>Policy 9 associated measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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 ▪ High-quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops <p>These would benefit older people with age-associated mobility or sensory impairments. A bus network characterised by accessibility would positively impact older people who are more likely to experience mobility issues that create anxiety around multi-modal travel.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 9 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on age, particularly older people.</p>
Disability	++	<p>Despite a reliance on public transport and particularly bus travel, disabled people face several challenges when accessing public transport that result in higher levels of inequality between those with and without protected characteristics. Disabled people report that available public transport options do not meet their needs for several reasons. These include accessibility, infrastructure, interchanges and safety. Evidence reviewed by SPT has identified that many disabled people are not able or are</p>

		<p>not confident about leaving home on their own due to uncertainty about the physical environment and the realities of making journeys on transport services.</p> <p>Engagement conducted during the SPT Bus Strategy consultation with accessibility groups revealed some respondents had had negative experiences with bus drivers, suggesting further driver training may be required. Additionally, those with a visual impairment and wheelchair users recorded accessibility issues with regard to information and suggested audio announcements are provided as well as visual announcements.</p> <p>Accessibility barriers for disabled people are not limited to physical access, and often, journey-planning facilities are not integrated or accessible.</p> <p>Policy 9 includes several measures aimed at improving accessibility for all users. These measures consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff, and bus planning teams. ▪ Offering inclusive and accessible travel information, which includes audio-visual aids on buses. ▪ Establishing passenger assistance services on buses, with the goal of implementing a consistent, network-wide approach. ▪ Ensuring that vehicles, bus stops, and bus stations are accessible, along with the routes to these locations. ▪ Maintaining high-quality, well-lit, and well-maintained bus stops, which will greatly enhance accessibility for disabled users. <p>By improving these aspects, public transport will become more inclusive for all users, positively impacting disabled users.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 9 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on disability.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	++	<p>Pregnant women travelling by public transport with pushchairs and children may experience difficulties accessing and using services that require boarding and alighting from vehicles and public transport infrastructure due to restrictions in their mobility levels. This generally reduces their level of access to public transport services. Similarly to older and disabled people, accessing public transport services for pregnant women and those with pushchairs may be restricted due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure, such as low-floor vehicles, raised kerbs at bus stops, and sufficient space when boarding and alighting public transport can impede accessibility for this user group.</p> <p>Pregnant women may also have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of the day. Due to congested spaces, they may also find it difficult to travel safely during peak hours.</p> <p>Ensuring that vehicles, bus stops, and bus stations are accessible and that the routes to these locations are accessible will positively impact the journeys made by pregnant women or those travelling with young children. Additionally, the introduction of CCTV on buses (M23) and at bus stations and high-quality, well-lit, and maintained bus stops (M24) could work to positively impact this user group by improving their perceptions of safety when using the public transport network.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 9 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity.</p>
Sex	+	<p>Women are more likely to be the victim of and have concerns about sexual assault or harassment on public transport, particularly at night. Improvements such as CCTV on buses (M23) and at bus stations, as well as high-quality, well-lit, and maintained bus stops (M24), would positively benefit women using public transport who may feel less safe travelling at certain times of the day. Additionally, depending on the content of accessibility and equality training under M19 there may be positive impacts on reducing victimisation and harassment through safe reporting mechanisms.</p>

		Overall, it is assessed that Policy 9 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sex.
Race		Some ethnic minorities and different religions or belief groups are more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination. This could create barriers to these groups' using public transport services and facilities. Additionally, black and minority ethnic people, therefore, may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security.
Religion and belief		Policy 9 and associated measures, such as CCTV (M23) on buses and at bus stations and high-quality, well-lit, and maintained bus stops (M24), could positively impact this user group by improving their perceptions of safety when using the public transport network. Additionally, depending on the content of accessibility and equality training under M19 there may be positive impacts on reducing victimisation and harassment through safe reporting mechanisms.
		Overall, it is assessed that Policy 9 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race and religion or belief.
Sexual orientation		Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups, and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services. They may have concerns about using public transport or public toilet facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against, which could negatively affect their use of the public transport network. Policy 9 and associated measures such as CCTV on buses and at bus stations (M23), as well as high-quality, well-lit, and maintained bus stops (M24), could work to positively impact this user group by improving their perceptions of safety when using the public transport network. Additionally, depending on the content of accessibility and equality training under M19 there may be positive impacts on reducing victimisation and harassment through safe reporting mechanisms.
Gender reassignment	+	
		Overall, it is assessed that Policy 9 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual orientation and gender reassignment.
Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination?		The policy and associated measures will work towards eliminating discrimination by reducing the barrier of safety and accessibility for protected character groups. Subsequently, this will advance equality of opportunity, also fostering good relations between groups.
Advance equality of opportunity?		
Foster good relations?		

7.5 Policy Theme 5: A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Service

7.5.1 The bus network should provide a recognisable 'offer' for both regular and infrequent users. Branding should be focused on building passenger awareness and understanding of the network and less focused on who is operating the bus. The implementation of Policies 10, 11 and 12 would work to

advance equality of opportunity by creating a more accessible bus network and eliminate unlawful discrimination by improving customer service standards. The key policies under this theme include:

- **Policy 10:** Develop a consistent network identity across the region
- **Policy 11:** Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region
- **Policy 12:** Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers
- **Policy 13:** Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region.

Table 7.5 Theme 5 A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Service EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies				Commentary
	P10	P11	P12	P13	
Age	++	++	+	++	<p>Policy 10 and the associated measures to develop a strong, network-wide identity across key assets, services, and information would positively impact all user groups. However, older people and disabled people specifically could be better supported in accessing public transport through these measures.</p> <p>The digitisation of travel planning information can exclude digitally disadvantaged user groups due to a lack of access to or the skills and confidence required to use digital technology. Additionally, several apps and online information across operators can create a barrier. Often, digitally disadvantaged people are more likely to be older. A strong network-wide identity across information could establish a brand, enhancing the inclusivity of the network to a range of users, including older people (M25).</p> <p>Older people and disabled people face various challenges in accessing public transport. These include difficulty purchasing tickets, infrastructure, vehicle design, stops and stations, travel information and signage, transitioning between modes, interaction with staff, and facilities, including toilets. Policy 11 and measures including establishing a customer charter (M26) would specify service standards, improving services. Additionally, incorporating network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring passenger satisfaction would provide a monitoring and evaluation framework and an opportunity for continuous improvement. During engagement with accessibility groups on the bus strategy, respondents expressed a desire for disabled people to be more involved in improving bus accessibility for disabled people. This is supported by M27 under Policy 11, which requires network wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction,</p>
Disability					<p>Policy 12 aims to minimise disruption to passengers. A lack of accessible travel information, including timetables, journey planning information, and audio and visual announcements, can create barriers for those with sight or</p>

					<p>hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, mental health conditions, or neuro-diverse conditions. Often, disabled people cannot travel spontaneously and must plan, resulting in a required interaction with journey-planning facilities. A consistent approach through network-wide branding could ensure journey planning facilities were in an accessible format for all users. This is supported by M28.</p> <p>Disabled people have reported particular concerns about discriminatory encounters with public transport staff and other passengers. Engagement with accessibility groups revealed one of the most frequently raised challenges was interacting with drivers when boarding and alighting buses. Respondents noted experiences of drivers not lowering the bus for them or putting out the ramp for them to board, and when alighting from the bus, respondents stated that some drivers do not stop unless they see a passenger move to the front of the bus, which presents a challenge for some user groups whilst the bus is still in motion. By developing and ensuring high quality and consistent driver standards across the region under Policy 13, a more positive customer experience can be achieved for this user group (M29).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 10, 11, and 13 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on age and disability whilst Policy 12 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	++	+	+	++	<p>Pregnant women and those travelling with young children may also face physical accessibility barriers when using public transport due to limited mobility during pregnancy or travelling with pushchairs and young children. Developing and ensuring high-quality and consistent driver standards across the region might improve accessibility for pregnant women or those travelling with a pushchair by creating a more positive customer service interaction experience (M29, M26).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 10 and 13 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity whilst Policy 11 and 12 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect.</p>
Sex	++	+	+	+	<p>Gendered roles mean that women are generally more likely to make multi-purpose trips, such as combining work with dropping children at school. However, multi-purpose trips are often less feasible by public transport due to infrequent and inconsistent service levels and inaccessible travel planning information. A consistent approach through network-wide branding and identity could ensure journey planning facilities were more accessible and straightforward, easing the challenge of multi-purpose trips for this user group (M25, M26).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 10 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on sex whilst Policy 11, 12 and 13 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect.</p>
Race	+	+	+		<p>People in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, and like the other groups, are more likely to rely on public transport. A consistent network identify, high-quality standards, minimal disruption and consistent driver standards across the region would positively impact these user groups due to their reliance on bus travel (M25, M26).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 10, 11, 12 and 13 under could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race.</p>

Religion and belief	~	~	~	~	There is a lack of evidence to determine if Policy 10, 11, 12 and 13 and associated measures would positively impact users of religion or belief specifically, but it is determined that the policies and associated measures will positively impact all users, regardless of religion or belief. Overall, it is assessed that these Policy 10, 11, 12 and 13 would result in No Clear Relationship on religion and belief.
Sexual orientation	+	+	+	+	A consistent network identify (M25), high-quality standards (M26), minimal disruption and consistent driver standards (M29) across the region would positively impact these user groups due to their reliance on bus travel. The baseline reporting demonstrates that these protected characteristic groups rely more on bus travel and are more likely to experience low income. A consistent network identify, high-quality standards, minimal disruption and consistent driver standards across the region would positively impact this user groups.
Gender reassignment	+	+	+	+	Overall, it is assessed that Policy 10, 11, 12 and 13 under could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual orientation and gender reassignment.
Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination?	A recognisable network could work towards elimination of discrimination by establishing a consistent approach across the network. Improvements in branding and consistent messaging and information could work towards a more accessible bus network, advancing equality of opportunity.				
Advance equality of opportunity?					
Foster good relations?					

7.6 Policy Theme 6: A Seamless and Integrated Network

7.6.1 A common challenge when accessing public transport includes transitioning between vehicles and modes. Addressing this challenge and reducing the ‘interchange penalty’ is important to growing patronage and providing a bus network for everyone. The policies under this theme could create a more accessible network for all users. The key policies and associated measures to be delivered under this theme include:

- Policy 14: 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
- Policy 15: Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region
- Policy 16: Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region

Table 7.6: Theme 6 A Seamless and Integrated Network EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies			Commentary
	P14	P15	P16	
Age				The digitisation of travel planning information can exclude digitally disadvantaged user groups due to a lack of access to or the skills and confidence required to use digital technology. Older people are more likely to be digitally disadvantaged. Often, disabled people cannot travel spontaneously and must plan, resulting in a required interaction with journey planning facilities. The measures included under Policy 14 (M30 and M31), introducing a smart and integrated ticketing system would positively impact younger and older and disabled users as it can improve boarding times and flexibility for most users. Young people aged 22 years and under, older people aged 60 years and over, and disabled people who meet eligibility criteria can apply for free bus travel in Scotland so improved ticketing and information integration with other modes would positively impact this user group, who are more reliant on sustainable travel modes.
Disability	+	++	+	<p>High quality and conveniently located bus stops and interchanges would positively all users under Policy 15. However, physical accessibility issues are more likely to affect disabled people and older people than other ages, as difficulties alighting to and from transport services, using station facilities, or standing for long periods, can create anxiety around multi-modal travel. Additionally, most public transport journeys involve a journey by foot or wheelchair, but aspects of streetscape such as uneven surfaces, kerb parking, and street clutter can be barriers to use for older people or disabled people with limited mobility or sensory impairments. More conveniently placed bus stops and interchanges could support older or disabled people in their use of public transport and improve accessibility (M32,M33 and M34).</p> <p>The provision of consistently high-quality and accurate travel information under Policy 16 will positively impact all user, but particularly those more reliant on bus travel. This could better support these user groups in accessing key destinations and services required to advance equality of opportunity (M35).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 15 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on all user groups but particularly age and disability whilst Policy 14 and 16 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on age and disability.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity				<p>Women and mothers display distinct travel patterns as they make multi-stop and multi-purpose, combining travel to work with trips for other purposes such as taking children to school, or looking after family members. They are also more likely to walk, be a passenger in a car, or take the bus than men. A smart and integrated ticketing system under Policy 14 would positively impact women and pregnant women as it can improve boarding times and flexibility for most users. Accurate and real time information may also positively impact those who are more likely to conduct multi-purpose journeys (M36).</p> <p>Pregnant women also display distinct travel patterns in that public transport trips can be a significant cause of stress and anxiety and can exacerbate physical symptoms associated with pregnancy. This generally reduces their level of access to public transport services. Accessing public transport services for pregnant women, those</p>
	++	++	++	

Sex				<p>with pushchairs, or women travelling with older people may be restricted due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure, such as appropriate sheltered, waiting facilities and services.</p> <p>Similarly to older or disabled people, aspects of streetscape such as uneven surfaces, kerb parking, and street clutter can be barriers to use for those travelling with pushchairs or limited mobility associated with pregnancy. More conveniently placed bus stops and interchanges could pregnant women and those travelling with young children in their use of public transport and improve accessibility (M32).</p> <p>Women and pregnant women may have safety concerns about travelling at night or during isolated times of the day. Conveniently located bus stops and interchanges integrated with placemaking facilities may increase natural surveillance, improving perceptions of safety and security for this user group (M32,M35).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 14, 15 and 16 could have a Major Beneficial Effect on pregnancy and maternity and sex.</p>
Race	+	+	+	<p>People in ethnic minority groups are less likely to have access to a car, and like the other groups, are more likely to rely on public transport. A smart, integrated ticking system that supports wider multi-modal integration, combined with accurate real time information would positively impact these user groups due to their reliance on bus travel (M35).</p> <p>Some ethnic minority and different religion or belief groups are also more likely to be subject to hate crimes and discrimination. This could create barriers to using public transport services facilities for these groups. Additionally, black and minority ethnic people therefore may have more limited travel choices due to past experiences and problems with personal safety and security. Conveniently located bus stops and interchanges integrated with placemaking facilities may increase natural surveillance, improving perceptions of safety and security for these user groups (M32,M36).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 14, 15 and 16 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race, religion and belief.</p>
Religion and belief				<p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 14, 15 and 16 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on race, religion and belief.</p>
Sexual orientation			+	<p>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) people are, like the other groups, more likely to rely on public transport. A smart, integrated ticketing system that supports wider multi-modal integration and accurate real-time information would positively impact these user groups due to their reliance on bus travel.</p>
Gender reassignment	+	+		<p>Also, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) people typically experience hate crimes more regularly than other groups, and fear of harassment can prevent them from accessing public transport and other services. They may have concerns about using public transport or public toilet facilities, such as toilets, for fear of being harassed or discriminated against, which could negatively affect their use of the public transport network. Conveniently located bus stops and interchanges integrated with placemaking facilities may increase natural surveillance, improving perceptions of safety and security for these user groups (M32,M36).</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that Policy 14, 15 and 16 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on sexual orientation and gender reassignment.</p>

Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination?	A seamless and integrated network could work towards advancing equality of opportunity by increase the travel options available to groups who are more reliant on public transport.
Advance equality of opportunity?	
Foster good relations?	

7.7 Policy Theme 7: A More Sustainable, Efficient and Adaptable Bus Network

7.7.1 The bus network should be operated in an environmentally sustainable and resilient way and support goals for net zero carbon and better air quality. The key policies and associated measures to be delivered under this theme include:

- Policy 17: Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.
- Policy 18: Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region
- Policy 19: Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.

Table 7.7 Theme 7 A More Sustainable, Efficient and Adaptable Bus Network EQIA

Protected Characteristic	Policies			Commentary
	P17	P18	P19	
Age	+	~	~	Children, those with long-term conditions that affect the lungs and airways, and pregnant women are more susceptible to the negative impacts of emissions. A high-quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets would positively impact this user group by improving health outcomes.
Disability				
Pregnancy and maternity				
Overall, it is assessed that Policy 17 could have a Minor Beneficial Effect on age, disability and pregnancy and maternity.				

Sex	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to determine if Policy 17, 18, or 19 and associated measures would impact these protected characteristic groups specifically, but it is determined that the policies and associated measures will positively impact all users, regardless of protected characteristics.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that these Policy 17, 18 and 19 would result in No Clear Relationship.</p>
Race				
Religion and belief				
Sexual orientation				
Gender reassignment				
Contribute towards the elimination of discrimination? Advance equality of opportunity? Foster good relations?	<p>It is likely that a more environmentally sustainable bus services would have long-term positive impacts on all bus users, and specifically for more vulnerable groups including children, those with long-term conditions and those who are pregnant and the elderly due to increased likelihood of being affected by emissions. Additionally, measures such as M40 can positively impact the working age population through increased work opportunities. However, no clear relationship has been selected as these impacts are likely to affect all bus users.</p>			

8 Summary

- 8.1.1 Overall, the SRBS objectives, policies and measures are assessed to provide a minor positive to major positive impact regarding the EQIA. Alongside this, 2 objectives and 8 policies have been assessed as 'having no clear relationship' to a specific protected characteristic within this assessment. Religion and belief was most commonly assessed as 'having no clear relationship'. This is because further detail regarding the implementation of the objectives and policies would be needed to make a robust impact assessment.
- 8.1.2 Overall, the following impacts have been found against the protected characteristics and PSED:

Objectives

- 8.1.3 All three objectives will have a major or minor beneficial effect on all protected characteristic groups.
- 8.1.4 A more consistent and improved level of service across the region, as outlined in Objective 1, would provide protected characteristic groups that rely heavily on bus travel with better access to key services and destinations, thereby advancing equality of opportunity. Both older and younger people would benefit from improved connections to education, employment, training, healthcare services, and leisure amenities. Additionally, women, ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, and LGBTQ people are more likely to live in low-income households. Enhancing service levels would further advance equality of opportunity for these groups, improving their access to training, education, and employment. There is no evidence to suggest that individuals with specific Religious or Belief backgrounds are more reliant on bus travel, so no relationship was assigned to this category regarding this objective.
- 8.1.5 Objective 2 aims to create a more affordable, safe, and accessible service for all, which would help reduce the experience of transport poverty for some protected characteristic groups, thus advancing equality of opportunity. A lack of affordable, accessible, and safe travel options negatively impacts all user groups. A more affordable service would particularly benefit those susceptible to low income, while improved access would greatly support disabled individuals, pregnant women, and those traveling with young children. Furthermore, a safer service would also address perceptions of personal safety for groups more likely to experience harassment or discrimination while using public transport, such as women, disabled people, ethnic minorities, people of various religions or beliefs, and LGBTQ individuals.
- 8.1.6 A more attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network under Objective 3 would improve the experience of protected characteristic groups who are more reliant on bus travel and could encourage increased patronage. Children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of emissions, while disabled individuals disproportionately face the impacts of climate change compared to their able-bodied counterparts. A more sustainable network would benefit all users, particularly those mentioned above. Additionally, a more integrated network would improve flexibility and enhance connections with other modes of transport for all groups reliant on bus travel.

Policies

- 8.1.7 Generally, the 19 policies and associated measures under the seven themes will have a Minor to Major Beneficial Effect on protected characteristic groups, in relation to achieving the duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty. These include the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without.
- 8.1.8 The most beneficial policies include **Policy 1, Policy 2, Policy 3, Policy 9, Policy 4, Policy 5, Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 13, and Policy 18**. These policies aim to enhance the bus network by increasing coverage and frequency, reducing journey times, and improving reliability. Importantly, for those experiencing transport poverty, these policies could enhance both physical and digital accessibility, as well as safety, and promote better integration between different modes of transportation. Additionally, creating a strong network identity through these policies would raise standards for staff training, fleet

management, and infrastructure development. The compound effect of delivering these policies would aid the achievement of the PSED and deliver the most benefit.

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Appendix A Baseline Data

Table A.1: Age profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Ages 0-15	14.6	16.9	17.6	20	15.4	15.3	15.9	17.6	16.1	15.2	16.9	16.9	16.4	16.3
Aged 16-24 years	7.5	9	8.3	9.2	14.5	9.2	9.1	10.3	9.8	8.4	9.3	9.4	10.7	10.7
Aged 25-34	9.3	11.5	9.1	8.6	18.2	11.3	10.6	12.3	13.3	9.7	11.9	12.2	13.2	12.7
Aged 35-49	16.7	17.9	18.5	19.3	19	17.2	16.9	19.4	18.7	16.5	18.9	18.1	18.5	18.5
Aged 50-64	25.1	13	22.2	21.1	18.7	24.4	23.5	22.2	22.3	23.5	22.6	23.1	21.7	21.5
Aged 65 and over	27.2	21.4	24.1	21.6	14	22.3	23.7	17.8	19.5	26.5	20.2	20.04	19.2	20

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.2: Disability profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Day-to-day activities limited a lot	10.6	12.8	9.3	8.6	13	14.5	13.9	13.2	11.7	12.1	11.8	13.7	12.1	10.7



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Day-to-day activities limited a little	14.6	14.2	12.1	11	13	14.2	14.6	13.2	13	14.3	13.2	13.9	13.5	13.3
Day-to-day activities not limited	74.7	72.9	78.5	80.2	73.9	70.7	71.4	73.5	75.2	73.4	74.8	72.3	74.3	75.9

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.3: Pregnancy and maternity profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Healthy birth weight (%)	84.8	83.7	85.1	83.3	86.5	87.7	80.9	84.7	85.9	83.2	No data	86.8		84.1
Live birth rate (per 1,000 population)	6.9	9.2	8.2	8.1	9.3	7.8	7.9	9.6	9.1	6.8	No data	8.7	8.3	8.7
Teenage pregnancies (crude rate per 1,000 females aged 15-19)	15.7	25.9	13.9	12.2	31.5	22.5	27.7	25.1	22	23	No data	35.3	23.2	24.9

Source: [ScotPHO profiles \(shinyapps.io\)](#)

Table A.4: Race and ethnicity profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
White: White Scottish	74	89.7	83.4	78.2	67.1	90.9	89	88.7	85.5	86.2	87.3	89.4	81.2	77.7
White: Other White British	19.3	6.2	6.8	5.7	5.6	4.4	6.8	3.6	4.8	8.9	5.4	4.4	6	9.3
White: Other White	4.3	1.8	3.1	3.5	7.9	1.8	2	3.5	4.1	2.6	2.9	2.9	4.4	5.7



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Mixed or multiple ethnic group	0.77	0.59	1.1	1.2	1.7	0.68	0.57	0.62	0.86	0.57	0.75	0.73	1	1.1
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	0.8	1	4.3	9.4	11	1.1	0.8	2.4	2.7	1.1	2.4	1.3	4.8	3.9
African: African, African Scottish or African British	0.18	0.19	0.37	0.47	3.5	0.24	0.16	0.54	1.1	0.12	0.55	0.58	1.3	1
Other ethnic group	0.35	0.27	0.70	1.3	2.6	0.50	0.40	0.36	0.62	0.35	0.40	0.47	1	0.19
Caribbean or Black	0.10	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.24	0.10	0.07	0.07	0.10	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.12	0.12

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.5: Religion or belief profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
No religion	48.4	54.8	43.2	38.0	43.2	32.2	49.9	38.2	47.2	50.3	45.3	41.8	44.0	51.1
Church of Scotland	26.9	26.6	23.3	21.0	13.3	23.6	26.7	20.5	20.8	29.1	22.9	19.5	20.5	20.3
Roman Catholic	9.1	8.1	18.8	20.6	20.7	33.4	12.2	29.9	19.1	8.5	19.3	28.1	20.2	13.3
Other Christian	6.6	3.3	4.3	3.8	4.6	3.5	3.5	3.2	4.0	4.1	3.9	2.7	4.0	5.1
Buddhist	0.28	0.13	0.19	0.26	0.46	0.12	0.19	0.12	0.16	0.19	0.14	0.17	0.24	0.28
Hindu	0.10	0.04	0.83	1.29	1.32	0.13	0.05	0.11	0.34	0.23	0.27	0.11	0.56	0.55
Jewish	0.08	0.06	0.05	1.5	0.16	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.14	0.11
Muslim	0.38	0.59	1.3	5.4	7.8	0.64	0.45	1.6	1.4	0.39	1.4	0.77	3.1	2.2
Sikh	0.06	0.10	0.80	0.64	0.56	0.08	0.21	0.20	0.45	0.15	0.19	0.11	0.34	0.20



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Pagan	0.60	0.35	0.19	0.15	0.32	0.21	0.36	0.23	0.26	0.34	0.25	0.30	0.29	0.35
Other religion	0.22	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.29	0.14	0.23	0.14	0.19	0.21	0.17	0.14	0.21	0.23
Not stated	7	5.5	6.5	6.8	7.1	5.7	6	5.7	5.9	6.2	5.9	6	6.3	6.16

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.6: Sex profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Sex														
Male	48.9	48.6	48.1	48.0	48.9	48.1	47.8	48.6	48.3	47.9	48.4	48.0	48.5	48.5
Female	51.1	51.4	51.9	52.0	51.1	51.9	52.2	51.4	51.7	52.1	51.6	52.0	51.5	51.4

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.7: Sexual orientation profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Sexual orientation														
Heterosexual /Straight	88	89.8	89	88.8	84	89.5	89	89.7	88.8	89	89.4	89.4	88.7	87.8
Gay or Lesbian	1.1	1.4	1	0.92	3	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.7
Bisexual	1.1	1	0.79	0.76	3	1	1	1	1.4	1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.7



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Other sexual orientation	0.32	0.28	0.31	0.23	0.95	0.28	0.30	0.29	0.41	0.29	0.28	0.34	0.36	0.52
Not answered	9.4	7.4	8.8	9.2	8.8	7.7	8.3	7.5	7.5	8.4	7.7	7.5	8.2	8.15

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.8: Gender reassignment profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
No: Not trans and does not have a trans history	92.8	94.2	92.9	92.6	92.8	93.8	93.6	94.1	93.8	93.2	93.8	93.8	93.5	93.6
Yes: Trans or has a trans history	0.32	0.26	0.20	0.22	0.77	0.29	0.30	0.29	0.38	0.30	0.27	0.31	0.33	0.44
Not answered	6.8	5.5	6.9	7	6.4	5.8	6	5.5	5.7	6.4	5.8	5.8	6.1	5.9

Source: Scotland's Census 2022: [Scotland's Census](#)

Table A.9: Marriage and civil partnership profile by local authority

Protected Characteristic	Local authority (%)													
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Not applicable (aged less than 16)	14.6	16.9	17.6	20	15.4	15.3	15.9	17.6	16.1	15.2	16.9	16.9	16.4	N/A



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Never married and never registered in a civil partnership	25.8	28.8	23.8	22.3	45	31.7	29.2	31.2	32.2	26	29	32.8	33.3	38.1
Married	41.6	37.8	44.4	44.5	26	35.9	36.9	35.8	35.9	41	38.8	33.1	34.9	44
In a registered civil partnership	0.31	0.26	0.18	0.12	0.27	0.22	0.24	0.23	0.20	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.23	
Separated, but still legally married	2.1	2.1	1.6	1.5	2.2	1.8	2.3	2.2	2.1	2	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.45
Separated, but still legally in a civil partnership	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.09	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.06	
Divorced	8	7.3	5.4	4.9	6.2	7.4	8	6.6	6.9	7.8	6.7	7.8	6.7	8.3
Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.07	
Widowed	7.3	6.4	6.7	6.4	4.6	7.3	7	5.8	6.2	7.3	6	6.4	5.9	7
Surviving partner from a civil partnership	0.09	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.11	0.06	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.06	0.07	0.08	



Table A.10: Economic activity profile by local authority

Local authority (%)														
Economic activity	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	East Dunbartonshire	East Renfrewshire	Glasgow City	Inverclyde	North Ayrshire	North Lanarkshire	Renfrewshire	South Ayrshire	South Lanarkshire	West Dunbartonshire	Combined SPT Region Average	National
Not applicable (aged less than 16)	14.6	16.9	17.6	20	15.4	15.3	15.9	17.7	16.1	15.2	16.9	17	16.6	16.3
Economically active - Employee	38.2	40.5	40.4	40	41.8	41.3	38.9	44.2	45.2	37.8	43.6	43.4	41.3	42.3
Economically active - Self-employed	9.5	5.9	6.4	6.7	5.6	4.3	5.3	5	5.1	6.3	5.9	4.4	5.9	6.3
Economically active – Unemployed	1.6	2.4	1.5	1.5	3.3	2.2	2.6	2.3	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.2
Economically inactive	36.1	34.3	34.1	31.8	33.9	36.9	37.2	30.8	31.5	38.6	31.7	32.8	34.1	32.7



Appendix B Themes, Policies and Measures

Policy Ref	Draft SRBS Policy	Measure Ref	Draft SRBS Measure
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).
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	M13	Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop

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	compared to car journey times.		rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services.
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.
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	M30	Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer.
		M31	Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the

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	across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.		emerging Clyde Metro - networks/services/hub, ticketing and information.
P15	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.	M32	High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region.
		M33	Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.
		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 conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.



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