



# Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

## Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment Interim Report



On behalf of

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Overview .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Project Background .....	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Assessment Framework .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	5
3.2	Guide Questions .....	5
3.3	Assessment Criteria Matrix.....	6
3.4	Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation .....	6
<b>4</b>	<b>Baseline Conditions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1	Overview .....	8
4.2	Access to Transport.....	8
4.3	Affordability of Transport .....	9
4.4	Transport and Poverty .....	11
4.5	Communities of Interest.....	12
4.6	SPT Region Employment & Demographic Profile .....	13
<b>5</b>	<b>Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment .....</b>	<b>14</b>
5.1	Business as Usual .....	14
5.2	Voluntary Partnerships .....	22
5.3	Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs).....	29
5.4	Franchising .....	38
5.5	Municipal Bus Operators .....	50
<b>6</b>	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>66</b>

## Tables

Table 1.1: Report Structure .....	2
Table 3.1: Assessment Criteria Matrix.....	6
Table 5.1: Option 1 – Business as Usual: Fairer Scotland Duty .....	14
Table 5.2: Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships: Fairer Scotland Duty .....	22
Table 5.3: Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships: Fairer Scotland Duty .....	30
Table 5.4: Option 4 – Franchising: Fairer Scotland Duty .....	38
Table 5.5: Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operator: Fairer Scotland Duty .....	50
Table 6.1: Options Overview .....	64
Table 6.2: FSD Assessment of Options - Summary.....	64

## Appendices

Appendix A	Baseline Data
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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 The Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD) places a legal responsibility on certain public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions or developing policy. This differs from the Public Sector Equality Duty which considers only reducing inequalities of opportunity. The Duty seeks to tackle socio-economic disadvantage and reduce the inequalities associated with being disadvantaged. It is closely related to issues of poverty which may affect outcomes across health, housing, education and training and employment prospects.
- 1.1.2 The FSD identifies a need to consider both 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest' in terms of people who share an experience and are particularly impacted by socio-economic disadvantage (Scottish Government, 2021a). Demographic groups who share one or more of the protected characteristics listed in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 can be considered 'communities of interest', meaning there is a direct link between the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 1.1.3 This Interim Report sets out the background to the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy study and presents the evidence base and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment process to be undertaken at an interim impact assessment stage during the options appraisal stage of the study.

Table 1.1: Report Structure

Section	Description
<b>Section 1</b>	Introduction
<b>Section 2</b>	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy project background
<b>Section 3</b>	Assessment framework and guide questions
<b>Section 4</b>	Baseline conditions
<b>Section 5</b>	Fairer Scotland Duty assessment
<b>Section 6</b>	Summary of impact assessment

## 2 Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

### 2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 The development of a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy 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.

2.1.2 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.”*

2.1.3 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.

2.1.4 The RTS concluded that the **“strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network and set out a policy aiming for a world class passenger focused public transport system”**. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 requiring consideration in the development of the SRBS.

2.1.5 In this regard, a previous scoping study to consider the new powers and bus improvement options available to local transport authorities under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, concluded that a truly 'fit for purpose' network would achieve the RTS objective to *'make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone with a regional public transport network that guarantees access to work, health, education and recreation – without breaking the bank or planet – and builds the foundation of a dynamic, integrated and efficient 21st century transport system , with the ultimate outcome of more people using buses'*.

2.1.6 The development of the world class system is guided by the RTS Connecting Places Policy theme which focuses on the spatial context for the RTS and future RTS Delivery Plans, setting out the strategic gateways, corridors and locations that will be a focus for future transport appraisal and investment to support regional development priorities, economic strategies and the regional Growth Deals.

2.1.7 The Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy is being developed through the consideration of:

- the role of bus in delivery the RTS
- the spatial context of the bus network
- the attributes and components of a world class bus network for the region

2.1.8 The option development and appraisal process will consider the operating and funding model (from the range of bus reform options available to SPT) and during the option appraisal process will be informed by this Fairer Duties Scotland Impact Assessment. Options will include, and may be a combination of the following:

- Option 1 – Business as usual

- Option 2 – Voluntary partnerships
- Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIP)
- Option 4 – Local Franchising
- Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operations

2.1.9 The appraisal will identify the most appropriate operating and funding model(s) for the region, taking into account the powers available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

2.1.10 An overview of each option is provided in **Section 2.2 – 2.6** of the **Options Appraisal Report**.

## 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 emerging Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) options in relation to implementing the FSD. This provides a transparent framework to assess the extent to which emerging SRBS components reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from low income, low wealth and multiple deprivation.
- 3.1.2 The assessment will be informed through engagement activities with relevant groups of interest and impact (as discussed below).

### 3.2 Guide Questions

- 3.2.1 The framing questions, as set out below, will be applied in relation to the two key parts of the Duty, with relevant criteria identified from the statutory guidance including:
- Socio-economic disadvantage, which is influenced by low income, low/no wealth, material and area deprivation and socio-economic background; and
  - Inequality of outcome, including education, skills, employment, crime, health and wellbeing, life expectancy, living standards, poverty and connectivity.
- 3.2.2 These criteria will be considered with respect to communities of place and communities of interest where evidence and data available has supported this examination.

#### **Guide Framing Questions: Fairer Scotland Duty**

*Will the emerging SRBS and its associated delivery mechanisms...*

- *Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?*
- *Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?*
- *Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth?*
- *Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access basic goods and services?*
- *Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?*
- *Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?*
- *Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?*
- *Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?*
- *Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?*
- *Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?*
- *Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland's key economic sectors?*
- *Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?*
- *Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage*
- *Contribute to the achievement of the Duty's aims and desired outcomes?*

### 3.3 Assessment Criteria Matrix

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

Table 3.1: Assessment Criteria Matrix

Impact Score	Description	Symbol
Major Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes significantly to the requirements of the FSD, particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people experiencing economic, geographical or social disadvantage	++
Minor Beneficial Effect	The policy contributes to the requirements of the FSD particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people experiencing economic, geographical or social disadvantage, but not significantly	+
Neutral / Negligible Effect	The policy a neutral effect on the requirements of the FSD or the relationship is negligible	0
Minor Adverse Effect	The policy adversely affects the requirements of the FSD particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people experiencing economic, geographical or social disadvantage	-
Major Adverse Effect	The policy significantly adversely affects the requirements of the FSD particularly with respect to advancing equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of people experiencing economic, geographical or social disadvantage	--
Uncertain Effect	The policy has an uncertain relationship to the FSD 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 policy and the achievement of the FSD	~

3.3.2 The assessment criteria provide an objective means of undertaking and reporting the equalities assessments of the transport policies on a consistent basis. 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.

3.3.3 During the appraisal of options for the strategy, an interim assessment is to be undertaken on the options being developed and appraised toward the development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy. This assessment will support the options appraisal process. A final assessment would also be undertaken as the Strategy itself is developed.

3.3.4 The interim assessment will be undertaken using the Guide questions and assessment criteria matrix as set out above, and informed through an engagement exercise, as discussed below. The outcome of the assessment and engagement will be clearly stated in the appraisal outcomes, with options adapted if required, given the assessment findings.

### 3.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

3.4.1 Engagement to inform the assessment has been conducted in two stages:

- During the Option Appraisal, engagement has been undertaken with local authorities and bus operators in the Strathclyde region.
- 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.

## 4 Baseline Conditions

### 4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The SPT region is demographically and spatially diverse with a large number of disadvantaged and access-deprived communities. It has many challenges associated with poverty, deprivation and inequalities of outcome from socio-economic disadvantage. Overall, 15% of the region's population is income deprived compared to 10% in Scotland overall. The rate of child poverty is also higher in the SPT region than in Scotland as a whole and there are other inequalities in key labour market indicators including rates of unemployment and underemployment (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021).
- 4.1.2 People who live in the most deprived areas are most likely to experience conditions which limit their opportunities in life and poverty is a key driver of poor health and educational and economic attainment outcomes. The impacts of COVID-19 on employment and income are considered by SPT to be likely to exacerbate existing poverty and societal inequalities in the region, raising further the importance of transport to facilitate fairer outcomes through reducing inequalities of access to activities essential to a more inclusive economy. There are also strong overlaps between people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (communities of place) with groups who have protected characteristics such as women, disabled people, older people and ethnic minorities (communities of interest).
- 4.1.3 This section summarises some of the key equalities issues and evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage as it relates to transport issues.
- 4.1.4 Baseline data of economic indicators such as, employment rates and claimant count, are 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.

### 4.2 Access to Transport

- 4.2.1 Transport has an underpinning role in tackling poverty, socio-economic and health inequalities and supporting inclusive economic growth. It helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities.
- 4.2.2 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 with 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.
- 4.2.3 Access to transport can reinforce or lessen the impact of poverty. Being unable to access or afford transport can prevent people accessing services, reduce quality of life and lead to social isolation (Titheridge, Christie, Mackett, Hernandez, & Ye, 2014). This can increase inequalities linked to income, such as health inequalities (Lucas, 2019) and generally contribute to and intensify the experience of poverty and social inequalities that persist. Transport can also act as a key barrier to (or enabler of) employment and to better employment. The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel (Stantec UK, 2021).

- 4.2.4 In Scotland, people on lower incomes are more likely to use bus than those on higher incomes, with 51% of those with household incomes up to £10,000 per annum having used the bus in the past week, compared with 27% of those with household incomes over £50,000 per annum (Transport Scotland, 2022a). Those on the lowest incomes often reported longer journey times across most journey purposes.
- 4.2.5 In SPT's RTS public survey in 2019, many people looking for employment felt that transport was a factor in their decision not to take up opportunities. This often related to the timing of services, or the additional cost and time involved in making multi-operator journeys. Challenges were identified when accessing work by public transport using more limited early morning or evening bus services, particularly where changes between bus services were required. These issues underline analysis of relative job accessibility in the region which showed that 25% of the working age population could access c 20,000 jobs within 20 minutes when travelling by public transport compared with 100% of the population could reach the same number of jobs if they had access to a car (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). Similar disparities exist in the relative accessibility of health facilities by car and public transport with key problems cited in the survey around lack of direct public transport services, frequency of services and availability of parking at hospitals.
- 4.2.6 There are also large inequalities in access to private cars in the SPT region, with car ownership strongly linked with employment and household income. For example, people who are employed are much more likely to have access to a private car, and disabled people are less likely to live in a household with a car available for private use (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021).
- 4.2.7 People living in rural areas are likely to have reduced access to employment and essential services. Public transport travel often involves long journeys, sparse timetables and expensive ticketing in comparison with urban areas. Many people who have a National Entitlement Card (bus pass) cannot use their bus pass, as there are poor bus services (or no accessible buses) in their areas as many of these routes are not commercially viable and services have been withdrawn (MACS, 2019). Evidence also indicates limited integration between public transport services and modes, particularly in rural areas (Jacobs and AECOM, 2021a). Whilst owning a car can improve access, car ownership may push low income households into poverty (see below on 'forced car ownership'). Reduced access to opportunities for employment, training and education may inhibit deprived households from improving their situation (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).

### 4.3 Affordability of Transport

- 4.3.1 The affordability, availability and integration of transport to people facing socio-economic disadvantage through low incomes and wealth is a key equalities issue. This characteristic influences how people use and experience the transport network. Further, the transport network itself influences inequalities of opportunity and outcome related to income and socio-economic status (for example through the extent to which it facilitates access to employment and through the costs of using it). People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Those living in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to walk or catch the bus to travel to work or school (Transport Scotland, 2020). Being able to access education, employment and training is critical for low income households as a means of escaping poverty, as well as for general wellbeing (Transport Scotland, 2021).
- 4.3.2 Cost is an obstacle to using transport and it is an important mechanism by which transport can cause social and health inequality (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Approximately 14% of an average UK household budget is spent on transport – second only to housing costs (17%) (ONS, 2023). Transport is a key concern for people on lower incomes with some reporting that balancing budgets relies on selecting alternative transport modes such as walking long distances, travelling off peak or relying on their wider social network for lifts. In some cases, people will avoid travelling.
- 4.3.3 How a person interacts with the transport network is influenced by their income. National statistics (Transport Scotland, 2019 & Transport Scotland, 2020) have shown that people in lower income households are significantly more dependent on public transport and they are more likely to travel by bus, while people in higher income households are more likely to drive. Parents who are unable to afford transport, have to take long walks for shopping, get isolated from support groups and reduce

household spending including food (Transport Scotland, 2021). As household income reduces, the proportion that is spent on children's travel tends to increase, with those on lower income likely to spend more than 51% of household spending on children's travel (Transport Scotland, 2022b). There is also a spatial relationship between transport connectivity and material wealth with deprived areas tending to have poorer public transport links than areas with high material wealth, in terms of both service quality and the range of options available (Lucas, 2011; Titheridge, 2014).

4.3.4 SPT identify that the cost of transport is a significant barrier in people's ability to use the transport network (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Key affordability issues are:

- Inequalities of access to private cars: Levels of access to cars for private use vary considerably by demographic and socio-economic characteristic. Disabled people and unemployed people are less likely to live in a household with a car available for private use. Fewer than half (49%) of single parent households with dependent children have a car available for private use.
- Forced car ownership: lack of suitable transport alternatives and/or barriers to using available services results in household budgets being stretched for some.
- Public transport fares: Cost of public transport fares is one of the top transport-related challenges in the SPT area. Lower income households are also less likely to be able to access the 'best value' tickets given the upfront outlay required. 'Best value' tickets (weekly or monthly 'passes') are often unsuitable for people who are working part-time or who have insecure work that makes it difficult to forecast future travel needs.
- Despite poor service coverage, people in low income households are more likely to travel by bus due to the affordability barriers to the private car. 41% of people living in a household with income less than £10,000 in Scotland use a bus at least once per week, compared to 15% for those with an income greater than £50,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). Cuts to bus services therefore have a disproportionate impact on people in low-income households facing other forms of socio-economic disadvantage. Difficulty accessing public transport is only one issue with connectivity. There are also links between poverty and access to cycles. Household access to bikes increases with household income. 62% of households with an income of £50,000 or more have access to one or more bikes, compared to 20% of households with an income up to £10,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). Bicycle access is higher in rural areas than urban areas.

4.3.5 The key issues experienced by low income families in accessing essential services by public transport have been identified (McHardy & Robertson, 2021) as:

- Cost – the cost of journeys is particularly crucial when travelling with young children as high fares can make short journeys expensive<sup>1</sup>;
- Scheduling – inflexible timings often cause problems for shift workers, those with caring responsibilities or connecting between different forms of transport; and
- Infrastructure and services – significant wait times between services where these are operated by different bus companies with extended travel times.

4.3.6 Public transport costs can be significant for those on low incomes and particularly for people in rural areas who travel longer distances and face higher costs (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Cost increases of fares disproportionately impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups which increases inequalities of opportunity and outcomes (Stantec UK, 2021). The affordability of bus services varies across Scotland with costs of travel to essential services generally much higher in remote rural areas (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2016). Evidence indicates that people in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. The single most important factor cited by those on low incomes as the greatest transport-related barrier is cost (Transport Scotland, 2020) and transport fares represents a significant cost for groups including low paid, low-skilled, people working irregular shifts/hours and people experiencing in-work poverty (Scottish

<sup>1</sup> The introduction of new concessionary fare schemes on buses for children and young people across Scotland in 2022 will have reduced this effect

Government, 2019). It is also relevant to note that the cost of public transport relative to the cost of motoring has increased in the past decade (Stantec, 2021). Analysis undertaken to inform the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy Case for Change highlighted that, in Scotland, between 2004-05 and 2021-22, whilst bus fares have increased by 88%, this has largely reflected increasing operating costs per bus-kilometre which have increased by 98% (both in current prices) - similarly, and reflecting the reduction in passenger numbers, the operating cost per passenger has increased by 215% over this period (all figures in current prices).<sup>2</sup>

## 4.4 Transport and Poverty

- 4.4.1 'Transport poverty' where a lack of affordable travel options prohibits access to employment and essential services has been estimated to impact more than one million people across Scotland (Sustrans Scotland, 2016). Unaffordable and unreliable public transport limits access to job opportunities for residents of low-income neighbourhoods in the Glasgow City Region (Jacobs and AECOM, 2021b). This can lead to higher transport costs for people living in areas of high multiple deprivation, compounding inequalities of income. Research published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation identified that poor service coverage, reliability and or affordability of public transport discourages people with low incomes to commute to employment sites, reinforcing socio-economic disparities (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2018).
- 4.4.2 A 'poverty premium' effect also occurs for people on low incomes who may be forced to pay more for food and other services where lack of access to transport prevents them from making journeys to cheaper shops/supermarkets etc. (Davies, 2016). Young people in lowest income groups tend to report longer journey times across most journey purposes (Transport Scotland, 2022b). Transport cost increases can also disproportionately affect socio-economically disadvantaged groups particularly where real-terms increases exceed the general cost of living measured by the retail prices index. This has been the case between 2010 and 2020 where bus fares in Scotland increased by 34% above inflation. Many low-income families may therefore be less able to maintain social relationships or access health, work or training possibilities that could improve their standard of living (Jacobs and AECOM, 2022).
- 4.4.3 'Forced car ownership' occurs in urban and suburban areas, but it is particularly a concern for low-income households in rural areas (Crisp, Gore, & McCarthy, 2017). Low public transport accessibility can make car ownership a necessity for people to commute to work or access basic services (Curl, Clark, & Kearns, 2017). In the SPT region this is highlighted by figures showing that 61% of rural households located within the most income deprived areas own a car (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). The issue of forced car ownership can also be compounded, and likely influenced by, higher fares for bus travel in rural areas across Scotland (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2016). It may also occur in households with a disabled person if accessibility barriers prevent individuals from being able to make some journeys by public transport or active travel.
- 4.4.4 Some areas of the region experience a lack of affordable transport options to reach essential services. Analysis undertaken for the STPR (Jacobs and AECOM, 2021a) identified that there are many areas, particularly in Ayrshire and Arran, which spend more than the Scottish average on transport expenditure (up to 20% compared to the Scotland average of 14%). This research also identified that 58% of datazones in the Ayrshire and Arran region and up to 51% of datazones in North and South Lanarkshire (Jacobs and AECOM, 2021b) were classified as high risk for transport poverty compared to 38% in Scotland. These areas were typically located in rural parts of the region.
- 4.4.5 In rural and remote areas, commuting, accessing key services and undertaking other everyday activities generally involves longer journeys relative to more urban areas. This means higher fuel costs or public transport fares and less time available for other activities. Remoteness from towns, larger employment centres and key facilities coupled with more limited transport options also reduces access to jobs and services and reduced choice of goods, services and employment opportunities. This is especially true for individuals and households that do not have access to a car. These access-related issues are central to rural experiences of deprivation and social isolation (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). Young people in towns and rural areas were more likely to report that they rarely take part in leisure type activities. Across all activities, those living on islands were the most likely to indicate that

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Transport Statistics

they only rarely or never participated (Transport Scotland, 2022b). Access to activities by public transport plays a key role for people in towns, rural and island communities. Public transport services are critical for people in rural areas who cannot drive or do not have access to a car. However, in most cases, access to employment and key services by public transport in rural areas means much longer journey times compared to car users.

- 4.4.6 For example, from remote, mainland areas in the SPT region, a journey to hospital by public transport is well over an hour and typically closer to two hours in one direction compared to an average of about 45 minutes by car (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). This means less time for other activities and long public transport journeys can be physically difficult for many people who are older, sick or disabled, or travelling with children who are unwell. In the SPT region, about one in ten individuals of working age living in a rural or remote area experiences employment deprivation (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). The challenges of accessing employment by public transport from rural and remote areas can mean a greater dependency on limited local employment opportunities, or, alternatively, relatively high public transport fares for the longer journeys required to get to larger centres of employment. Both of these can pose challenges for household income and expenditure, although in different ways.
- 4.4.7 Inequalities of health outcomes is an issue affecting people with socio-economic disadvantage. In the west of Scotland, SPT identify a number of drivers for health outcomes including the need to promote active travel as a means to improve health. Factors such as isolation and loneliness have impacts on health and are recognised as challenges along with the risks of poor air quality which are closely related to transport in built up areas. Air pollutants increase the incidence of a large number of diseases in all groups but with disproportionate impacts on children, older people, people with existing health conditions and areas of higher deprivation (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). Impacts of air pollution includes low birth weight, premature birth stillbirth or organ damage in the womb and reduced lung capacity for children (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2019). In the SPT region there are large health outcome disparities with a difference of seven years between the lowest and highest male life expectancy (at birth) by local authority area (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). The region also has nearly three quarters of Scotland's 5% most deprived areas with clear implications for health and wellbeing.
- 4.4.8 Those on low incomes and people with irregular working patterns may be unable to benefit from existing discounted travel schemes such as monthly passes. Concessionary fare schemes that offer free or discounted travel can make a real difference to those on low incomes but are not available to everyone who might need them (The Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). The concessionary fare scheme in Scotland makes travel by bus free for those over 60 (and under 22) however for rail travel the fare is only discounted by one third, making availability of bus services particularly important for older and younger people with lower available income (AECOM and Stantec, 2020), and there are instances where due to the prevalence of a rail line

## 4.5 Communities of Interest

- 4.5.1 Many people living with socio-economic disadvantage also have protected characteristics ('communities of interest') that may exacerbate the difficulties they experience. People facing other forms of structural disadvantage, such as sexism, racism, homophobia, and ableism, constitute a disproportionate number of those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Affordability barriers to the transport system intersects with other forms of disadvantage. Individuals who face structural disadvantages in society in these communities of interest are disproportionately impacted by income poverty and often employment deprivation which compounds disadvantage including by limiting the ability of people to access and use the transport system (Stantec UK, 2021).
- 4.5.2 Evidence suggests that bus fare rises in particular have a disproportionate impact on women, younger people, disabled people, black and ethnic minority people, people who are unemployed and seeking work, and lower income households as people in these groups are more likely to use buses to meet their everyday travel needs (Transport Scotland, 2020)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the challenges in relation to affordability of bus fares for young people may have been alleviated since the introduction across Scotland in early 2022 of a concessionary bus scheme for people under 22.

4.5.3 Evidence on socio-economic disadvantage relevant to specific 'communities of interest' has identified the following issues:

- Women in Scotland are more likely to be in lower paid work than men, with 61% of people paid below the Living Wage being female (Scottish Parliament, 2020). In particular, lone parents, the vast majority of whom are women, are more likely to be living in poverty than other single working-age adults in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021). Over the period 2014-16, 38.4% of lone households in Scotland were in relative poverty before housing costs. Further, lone parents' ability to work is structured by the availability of childcare.
- While there is a National Concessionary Travel Scheme for those eligible, disabled people are more likely to experience affordability barriers to transport relative to people without disabilities. Individuals who live in households with a disabled person are more likely to experience income poverty than those without (UK Department for Work and Pensions, 2021) and all ethnic groups experience higher poverty and unemployment rates than average (Stantec UK, 2019).
- People from ethnic minority groups also face a disproportionately higher rate of relative poverty. All ethnic minority groups have higher rates of poverty than White British households. Those in the Mixed, Black, and Other ethnicity group face a rate of relative poverty after housing costs more than double that of White British households (UK Government, 2018).
- There is a lack of data which evidences a direct relationship between being transgender and income inequality. However, such persons are likely to have lower income and wealth and are therefore at a higher risk of transport poverty<sup>4</sup>. Transgender people face widespread discrimination and targeted hostility, unequal access to services, and workplace discrimination (Equalities and Human Rights Commission, 2010). Difficulties accessing employment and services which increase disposable income (including healthcare free at the point of use and housing) suggest lower income and associated affordability barriers to transport.

4.5.4 Owing to these relationships, policies in the emerging SRBS should seek to identify any differential impacts on different socio-economic groups (e.g. disaggregated by income, wealth, or social class). Differential impacts between such groups are likely to also be manifest within and between groups with other characteristics and social identities with disproportionate rates of poverty and low income and wealth.

## 4.6 SPT Region Employment & Demographic Profile

4.6.1 For a detailed breakdown of employment statistics by geographic areas, see **Appendix A**. Please see **Appendix A** of the **EqIA** for a demographic profile by geographic areas.

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<sup>4</sup> Limited data does exist, for example, a 2007 survey of 71 Transgender people in Scotland found that 30% of respondents had an income of over £20,000, and 48% of respondents had an income under £10,001. Scottish Transgender Alliance (2008). Transgender Experiences in Scotland Research Summary

## 5 Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment

### 5.1 Business as Usual

- 5.1.1 The current bus operations in the SPT region reflect the provisions of the 1985 Transport Act. The majority of bus services are provided on a commercial basis by privately owned bus companies who recover the cost of operating their services through a mixture of farebox revenues and government payments. Some services are provided as socially necessary services through tendered contracts let by SPT, especially in some rural areas and in the early morning, evening or Sundays. In the City of Glasgow and larger towns in the region, many bus services operate frequently using modern buses equipped with good quality seating, on-board real-time information plus on-board wi-fi and charging facilities. In smaller towns and in rural areas services are typically less frequent – although there are some notable exceptions – and are operated by vehicles that may be a little older but still provide a comfortable passenger environment.
- 5.1.2 Given the commercial nature of operations, operators tend to focus on the corridors and towns where bus ridership, and the potential for growth in ridership, is higher. This means that some communities, or links between relatively nearby communities, can receive a poor bus service or, in extreme cases, no timetabled conventional bus service at all. SPT has a budget of £10m per annum to contract with operators to fill these gaps in the commercial networks and provide socially necessary bus services. These can take the form of:
- Entire services using conventional buses or door-to-door dial-a-ride operations;
  - Early morning, evening and Sunday services where the communities are served by commercial services during the rest of the week; and
  - Extensions and diversions to commercial services that would otherwise not serve certain communities.

Table 5.1: Option 1 – Business as Usual: Fairer Scotland Duty

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?	<p>SPT has identified that the cost of transport is a significant barrier in people’s ability to use the transport network (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Despite poor service coverage, people in low income households are more likely to travel by bus due to the affordability barriers to the private car. 41% of people living in a household with income less than £10,000 in Scotland use a bus at least once per week, compared to 15% for those with an income greater than £50,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration and ticketing complexity (Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy – Case for Change, page 30).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> </ul>



Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy is primarily aimed at addressing cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a business as usual model, a lack of fares integration and ticketing complexity will not reduce existing cost related barriers as services will only increase in price. Additionally, given long-term trends for real terms fare increases, it is likely that fares may continue to become less affordable. This could have a particularly adverse impact on low-income households.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, the business as usual model has the potential to increase cost related barriers to accessing and use of buses in the Strathclyde region. It is not clear in the appraisal how the model would influence other forms of transport.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?	<p>Transport services helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> This policy aims to improve the quality of the service in terms of improved coverage, periods of operation, frequency and efficiency. Under a business as usual model, the bus network is expected to experience a gradual decline and it is anticipated that there would be a continued retraction in the network, especially for buses operating after 1900 and on Sundays. The service is therefore not expected to achieve the aims of improved service quality.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy is primarily aimed at addressing cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a business as usual model, a lack of fares integration and ticketing complexity may not reduce existing cost related barriers as services will only increase in price. Additionally, given long-term trends for real terms fare increases, it is likely that fares will likely continue to become less affordable. This could have a particularly adverse impact on low-income households which may not help to reduce levels of income poverty.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty.</li> </ul>

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
	<p>Overall, the business as usual scenario is not expected to help reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty as declining service will restrict accessibility for people to education, training or job opportunities.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth	<p>Having access to wealth provides some protection from socio-economic disadvantage, particularly when the wealth comes in the form of accessible savings. Examples of households that tend to have below average wealth are lone parent households, households in social rented housing, or households where the household reference person is unemployed or economically inactive (but not retired).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy is primarily aimed at addressing cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a business as usual model, a lack of fares integration and ticketing complexity will not reduce existing cost related barriers as services may only increase in price. Cost related barriers could negatively impact households already experiencing financial challenges.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access basic goods and services?	<p>Transport helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities. Access to transport can reinforce or lessen the impact of poverty. Being unable to access or afford transport can prevent people accessing services, reduce quality of life and lead to social isolation (Titheridge, Christie, Mackett, Hernadez, &amp; Ye, 2014). A ‘poverty premium’ effect also occurs for people on low incomes who may be forced to pay more for food and other services where lack of access to transport prevents them from making journeys to cheaper shops/supermarkets etc. (Davies, 2016). The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel (Stantec UK, 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> The business as usual model is unlikely to support individuals and households in accessing basic goods and services as the transport service will not experience any major improvements as the</li> </ul>

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
	<p>service is likely to deteriorate and it is likely to become even more unaffordable, especially for those on lower incomes. Some groups of people, such as disabled and older people, can benefit from existing discounted travel schemes such as monthly impacts. But other people such as those on low incomes and those who have irregular working patterns who do not quality, may not be unable to benefit from these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?	<p>The SPT region is demographically and spatially diverse with a large number of disadvantaged and access-deprived communities. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services to access. As the service will only deteriorate and become increasingly more unaffordable for these people, it is unlikely to reduce the level of multiple deprivation.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?	<p>Approximately, 22% of households across the SPT area do not have access to a bus stop within a suitable walking catchment (within 400m in large urban and urban areas, within 600m with accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas). In relation to physical barriers, the business as usual model does not propose any measures in relation to this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:</b> In relation to informational barriers, the business as usual model may involve efforts to integrate identity, in particular around information on available services to make this clearer to users.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:</b> As the public have expressed a desire to see simpler and more cost-effective ticketing products, it is unlikely that this can be delivered under Business as Usual.</li> </ul>

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
	<p>Research has shown that ticketing integration and simplification can have a positive impact on passenger volumes and the ongoing cycle of declining demand is likely to be perpetuated under the Business as Usual delivery model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?	<p>In Scotland, people on lower incomes are more likely to use the bus than those on higher incomes, with 51% of those with household incomes up to £10,000 per annum having used the bus in the past week, compared with 27% of those with household incomes over £50,000 per annum (Transport Scotland, 2022a). Those on the lowest incomes often reported longer journey times across most journey purposes. In the SPT public survey for the RTS, many people looking for employment felt that transport was a factor in their decision not to take up opportunities. This often related to the timing of services, or the additional cost and time involved in making multi-operator journeys. Challenges were identified when accessing work by public transport using more limited early morning or evening bus services, particularly where changes between bus services were required. People living in rural areas are likely to have reduced access to employment and essential services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> The business as usual model is unlikely to reduce unequal access, as at present service changes are generally limited to changes at two points in the year, Winter and Summer. SPT can support socially necessary bus services where there is no provision by commercial bus operators. However, the ability to do so is limited based on funding and the absence of alternative public transport options. Therefore, unequal access is likely to remain.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> As discussed, cost may remain a barrier under the business as usual scenario. Cost related barriers could negatively impact households experiencing already experiencing financial challenges.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, it is unlikely under a business as usual model that there will be a reduction in unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities.</p>

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
	<u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b> .
Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?	Structural inequalities resulting from difference from social class are varied and complex. Whilst there are many interrelated factors which are discussed in this assessment that contribute to these inequalities (such as wealth inequality, access to opportunities and material deprivation) the impact of the SRBS on addressing structural inequality as a whole is unclear and is unlikely to be able to be robustly examined at this stage of the project. Therefore, there is insufficient detail or information available to enable an assessment to be made.  <u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b> .
Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?	Overall, 15% of the SPT region’s population is income deprived compared to 10% in Scotland overall.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a business as usual situation. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, as would comparative access by people group (as it is shown that reduced public transport can impact some groups more negatively than others) and comparative access by geographic location (as the reducing service trend is particularly evident in rural areas).</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> </ul> <u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b> .
Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	As stated, the business as usual scenario is unlikely to facilitate or encourage use of public transport for any group, especially those facing socio-economic disadvantage, as the service may continue to deteriorate and bus fares could continue to increase. The business as usual case does not consider the integration of public transport and active travel networks explicitly or options to support this (such as allowing bikes on buses etc.). The impact on active travel and physical recreation is considered neutral/negligible.  <u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b> .
Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors?	There is no clear relationship in the appraisal between the business as usual scenario and supporting economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors. The options appraisal does consider impact on employment of the different options appraised but not in specific reference to Scotland’s key economic sectors. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment that there is a relationship between employment and the Business as Usual model it is considered there is <b>No Clear Relationship</b> for this specific consideration.

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
	<p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> results in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>The transport network itself influences inequalities of opportunity and outcome related to income and socio-economic status (for example through the extent to which it facilitates access to employment and through the costs of using it). People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Those living in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to walk or take the bus to travel to work or school (Transport Scotland, 2020). Being able to access education, employment and training is critical for low income households as a means of escaping poverty, as well as for general wellbeing (Transport Scotland, 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Due to a lack of service, especially after 1900 and on Sundays, those who work unsocial hours may continue to struggle to get to their place of work as the level of service is not expected to improve under the business as usual model. Additionally, those on low incomes and people with irregular working patterns may be unable to benefit from existing discounted travel schemes such as monthly passes. This will not support increase provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support an increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support an increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>The business as usual scenario is unlikely to support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services and facilities, especially to those facing socio-economic disadvantage, as the service may continue to deteriorate and bus fares could continue to increase.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>

Option 1 – Business as Usual	
Will the SRBS Business as Usual option...	
<b>Contribute to the achievement of the Duty’s aims and desired outcomes?</b>	<p>Overall, with a business as usual scenario, it is unlikely that inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage will decrease. The reason for this is because the current service may continue to deteriorate and could continue to become increasingly more unaffordable, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 1 – Business as Usual</b> could result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
<b>Overall consideration with respect to socio-economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Minor Adverse Effect</b> as the service may continue to deteriorate and become increasingly more unaffordable for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
<b>Overall consideration with respect to inequality of outcome</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Minor Adverse Effect</b> as the service may continue to deteriorate and become increasingly more unaffordable for those facing socio-economic disadvantage, reducing the ability of public transport to have a positive impact on access to social and economic infrastructure.

## 5.2 Voluntary Partnerships

5.2.1 A voluntary partnership (VP) provides a formal written framework within which bus operators, local transport authorities, local highway authorities and other relevant actors will work together to achieve stated objectives and deliver agreed measures and facilities. A VP is typically entered into to provide a structure for agreeing enhanced operating and highways standards when a major investment in infrastructure or services is secured. During the engagement process, the operators expressed the desire to establish a more ambitious and transformational VP than previous examples e.g. Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership. It is understood that this enhanced version of a partnership could include:

- A single network identity, including a region-wide app, website and branding;
- A joint management group made up of SPT and operator representatives to consider areas such as network strategy and operational reviews;
- Enhanced data sharing and KPI targets;
- Reinvestment of savings from bus priority measures into service enhancements;
- A review fares and ticketing to provide simpler and consolidated products; and
- Customer service improvements on-street and through other channels.

Table 5.2: Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships: Fairer Scotland Duty

Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships	
Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...	
Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?	<p>SPT has identified that the cost of transport is a significant barrier in people’s ability to use the transport network (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Despite poor service coverage, people in low income households are more likely to travel by bus due to the affordability barriers to the private car. 41% of people living in a household with income less than £10,000 in Scotland use a bus at least once per week, compared to 15% for those with an income greater than £50,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration and ticketing complexity (Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy – Case for Change, page 30). Between 2005 and 2020, while passenger journeys across Scotland fell by 24%, fares increased by 30% in real terms (Glasgow &amp; Strathclyde Transport Act Scoping Study, Options Assessment Study, Final Report, SYSTRA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy is primarily aimed at addressing cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Existing VPs in the region, including the eight Glasgow City Region local authorities, do not have an explicit aim to make fares more affordable and there is no track record of VPs contributing to the principles set out for future affordability. Therefore, voluntary partnerships will not help to break the cycle of declining</li> </ul>



Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships	
Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...	
	<p>patronage and therefore will not deliver the guiding SRBS core policies <b>2a- 2c</b> for affordability. Under a VP option, given long-term trends for real terms fares increases, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable. This will have a particularly adverse impact on low-income households. Therefore, a VP option is unlikely to reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of buses in the SPT region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?	<p>Transport services helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> This policy aims to improve the quality of the service in terms of improved coverage, periods of operation, frequency and efficiency. Under a VP option, it is anticipated that there will be a continued retraction in the commercially provided bus network, especially for buses operating after 1900 and on Sundays. The service is therefore not expected to achieve the aims of improved service quality.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy is primarily aimed at addressing cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a VP option, given long-term trends for real terms fares increases, it is likely that fares will continue to become less affordable. This will have a particularly adverse impact on low-income households. Therefore, a VP option is unlikely to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth	<p>Having access to wealth provides some protection from socio-economic disadvantage, particularly when the wealth comes in the form of accessible savings. Examples of households that tend to have below average wealth are lone parent households, households in social rented housing, or households where the household reference person is unemployed or economically inactive (but not retired).</p>

**Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships**

**Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> As the VP would be unlikely to cause a change in the level of service based on existing VP examples in the region, it is unlikely to have any impact on household wealth distribution.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in an <b>Uncertain Effect</b>.</p>
<p>Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access basic goods and services?</p>	<p>Transport helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities. The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel (Stantec UK, 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:</b> Under a VP, partners can work together to better prioritise improvements and deliver elements such as stop rationalisation which may enable better access for more rural areas in the SPT region. If accessibility increases, it is likely that households will have better access to basic goods and services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>

## Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships

### Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...

<p>Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?</p>	<p>The SPT region is demographically and spatially diverse with a large number of disadvantaged and access-deprived communities. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services to access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand whether this TPO would help to reduce the level of multiple deprivation affecting communities.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand whether this TPO would help to reduce the level of multiple deprivation affecting communities.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:</b> As stated previously, a VP can offer improvements such as stop rationalisation which may help to improve public transport links for those living in areas of deprivation.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand whether these TPO3 categories would help to reduce the level of multiple deprivation affecting communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall Impact:</b> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
<p>Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?</p>	<p>22% of households across the SPT area do not have access to a bus stop within a suitable walking catchment (within 400m in large urban and urban areas, within 600m with accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas). In relation to physical barriers, the business as usual model does not propose any measures in relation to this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:</b> Under a VP, partners can work together to better prioritise improvements and deliver elements such as stop rationalisation which may enable better access for more rural areas in the SPT region.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:</b> VPs offer the potential to achieve significant steps towards creating a more positive, recognisable and trusted network identity if all parties work</li> </ul>

Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships	
Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...	
	<p>together. Additionally, a VP option offers an opportunity for better integrated ticketing which will help to reduce information barriers, especially for older people, when using the bus network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?	<p>In the SPT public survey for the RTS, many people looking for employment felt that transport was a factor in their decision not to take up opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:</b> Under a VP, partners can work together to better prioritise improvements and deliver elements such as stop rationalisation which may enable better access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities for more rural areas in the SPT region. However, under a VP it is unlikely that there will be an improvement in service quality or the punctuality of the service which may hinder accessibility.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?	<p>Structural inequalities resulting from difference from social class are varied and complex. Whilst there are many interrelated factors which are discussed in this assessment that contribute to these inequalities (such as wealth inequality, access to opportunities and material deprivation) the impact of the SRBS on addressing structural inequality as a whole is unclear and is unlikely to be able to be robustly examined at this stage of the project. Therefore, there is insufficient detail or information available to enable an assessment to be made.</p>

Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships	
Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...	
	<p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?	<p>Overall, 15% of the SPT region’s population is income deprived compared to 10% in Scotland overall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> The trend of changes to bus services suggests that reductions would continue under a VP option. In this case, public transport network coverage would worsen, as would comparative access by people group (as it is shown that reduced public transport can impact some groups more negatively than others) and comparative access by geographic location (as the reducing service trend is particularly evident in rural areas). Overall, it is likely that a VP would undermine the regeneration of disadvantaged and deprived groups.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>The VP scenario is unlikely to facilitate or encourage use of public transport for any group, especially those facing socio-economic disadvantage, as the service may continue to deteriorate and bus fares will continue to increase. The VP case does not consider the integration of public transport and active travel networks explicitly or options to support this (such as allowing bikes on buses etc.). The impact on active travel and physical recreation is considered neutral/negligible.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors?	<p>The assessment above considers the impact on employment of the different options appraised but not in specific reference to Scotland’s key economic sectors. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment that there is a relationship between employment and the VP model it is considered there is No Clear Relationship for this specific consideration.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those	<p>The transport network itself influences inequalities of opportunity and outcome related to income and socio-economic status (for example through the extent to which it facilitates access to employment and through the costs of using it). People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Those living in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to walk or catch the bus to travel to work or school (Transport Scotland, 2020). Being able to access</p>

Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships	
Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...	
facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>education, employment and training is critical for low income households as a means of escaping poverty, as well as for general wellbeing (Transport Scotland, 2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO 1 Improve Service Quality and TPO 2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> In terms of the affordability of fares in the region, for people and households with lower incomes, the cost of public transport represents a very significant proportion of their income, especially when it is recognised that affordable housing is often located in peripheral locations generating a need to travel significant distances to access services and employment. This is compounded by the fact that low-income individuals and households cannot access the cheapest form of transport (car) because they are often unable to meet the upfront purchase costs. Therefore, it is unlikely that a VP scenario will support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage and the service may continue to deteriorate and fares could continue to increase.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO 1 Improve Service Quality and TPO 2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> Under a VP, partners can work together to better prioritise improvements and deliver elements such as stop rationalisation to enhance interchange options and delivery of an efficient bus network which may enable improve bus services in rural areas in the SPT region. Although accessibility in more rural areas may increase, the current bus service may continue to deteriorate and become increasing more unaffordable, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
<b>Contribute to the achievement of the Duty’s aims and desired outcomes?</b>	<p>Overall, with a VP option, it is unlikely that inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage will decrease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO 1 Improve Service Quality and TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> The reason for this is because the current service may continue to deteriorate and could continue to become increasing more unaffordable, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul>

Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships	
Will the SRBS Voluntary Partnership (VP) option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would contribute to the achievement of the Duty’s aims and desired outcomes.</li> </ul> <p>Overall Impact: Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 2 – Voluntary Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Adverse Effect</b>.</p>
<b>Overall consideration with respect to socio-economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Neutral / Negligible Effect</b> as there may be some level of improvements to the network, such as more accessible bus stop locations in rural areas. However, the service is likely to continue to deteriorate and becoming increasingly more unaffordable for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
<b>Overall consideration with respect to inequality of outcome</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Neutral / Negligible Effect</b> as there may be some level of improvements to the network, such as more accessible bus stop locations in rural areas. However, the service is likely to continue to deteriorate and becoming increasingly more unaffordable for those facing socio-economic disadvantage which is unlikely to have a significant impact on inequality of outcome.

### 5.3 Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)

5.3.1 A Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) is a new form of statutory quality partnership enabled by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. A BSIP enables partners to come together and agree on binding commitments that will be delivered during the term of the partnership. If measures and facilities agreed upon during the inception of the BSIP are not delivered, then the relevant partner can be at risk of sanctions – as an example, an operator who fails to meet the agreed standards of operation for a service (a vehicle quality standard or the acceptance of multi-operator tickets, for instance) could see its services deregistered by the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland. A Bus Service Improvement Partnership provides the relevant parties with greater confidence that the proposed outcomes developed in the consultation period will be delivered. Within a BSIP, commitments made by partners are more binding, given the statutory nature of the partnership. More ambitious working relationships between partners could result in benefits such as:

- An expansion of the network;
- An enhancement of services through adherence to agreed standards; and
- A more integrated system through area wide tickets and value for money multi-operators tickets.

5.3.2 The process of establishing a BSIP involves consultation between local authorities, bus operators and other relevant parties to establish an initial view on the content of the BSIP plan and scheme(s) and establish commitments. Whilst the statutory nature of the partnership can result in more ambitious

outcomes and deliver benefits, it can create considerable demand in terms of management, and the commitments made are reliant on agreement between all partners.

Table 5.3: Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships: Fairer Scotland Duty

Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships	
Will the SRBS BSIP option...	
Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?	<p>SPT has identified that the cost of transport is a significant barrier in people’s ability to use the transport network (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021b). Despite poor service coverage, people in low income households are more likely to travel by bus due to the affordability barriers to the private car. 41% of people living in a household with income less than £10,000 in Scotland use a bus at least once per week, compared to 15% for those with an income greater than £50,000 (Transport Scotland, 2019). In terms of affordability, the relative cost of travel by bus has risen more than other modes, with a lack of fares integration and ticketing complexity (Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy – Case for Change, page 30).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> With closer and more robust partnership via a BSIP, we would anticipate that the partners would work together to deliver area-wide ticketing and smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to introduce value for money multi-operator tickets. At this early stage, a 20% reduction in average fare has been modelled for the appraisal (SYSTRA, 2024). Therefore overall, a BSIP has potential to reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of bus services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>, given the uncertainty at this stage over the level of improvement to affordability.</p>
Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?	<p>Transport services helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> This policy aims to improve the quality of the service in terms of improved coverage, periods of operation, frequency and efficiency. Under a BSIP, it is expected that there would be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service.</li> </ul>



**Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships**

**Will the SRBS BSIP option...**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> With closer and more robust partnership via a BSIP, we would anticipate that the partners could work together to deliver area-wide ticketing and smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to introduce value for money multi-operator tickets. At this early stage, a 20% reduction in average fare has been modelled for the appraisal (SYSTRA, 2024). Therefore overall, a BSIP has potential to reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of bus services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
<p>Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth</p>	<p>Having access to wealth provides some protection from socio-economic disadvantage, particularly when the wealth comes in the form of accessible savings. Examples of households that tend to have below average wealth are lone parent households, households in social rented housing, or households where the household reference person is unemployed or economically inactive (but not retired).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy is aimed at addressing cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a BSIP, it is anticipated that there would be a delivery of area-wide ticketing and smart cards which will reduce the cost to users. This will help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth as reduced prices will remove cost related barriers for households already experiencing financial challenges.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
<p>Material deprivation: support individuals and households to</p>	<p>Transport helps people to get to work, education and training opportunities, to access healthcare and other services and to participate more fully in society (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021). In particular, many jobseekers rely on public transport (particularly the bus) to reach these opportunities. Access to transport can reinforce or lessen the impact of poverty. Being unable to access or afford transport can prevent people accessing services, reduce quality of life and lead</p>

### Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships

#### Will the SRBS BSIP option...

access basic goods and services?

to social isolation (Titheridge, Christie, Mackett, Hernandez, & Ye, 2014). A ‘poverty premium’ effect also occurs for people on low incomes who may be forced to pay more for food and other services where lack of access to transport prevents them from making journeys to cheaper shops/supermarkets etc. (Davies, 2016). The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel (Stantec UK, 2021).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** A BSIP should allow for a more ambitious working relationship between the partners, which could support targeted expansion to the network and enhancements to levels of service. An increase in service could have a beneficial impact on supporting individuals and households in accessing basic goods and services.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A BSIP may also incorporate performance targets for elements such as reliability and punctuality; however, standards are already set by the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland and are unlikely to greatly benefit the situation. However, any level of improvement will positively impact those who rely on the network to access important services, for example, healthcare appointments.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support individuals and households to access basic goods and services.

Overall Impact: Overall, it is assessed that **Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships** will result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect**.

Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?

The SPT region is demographically and spatially diverse with a large number of disadvantaged and access-deprived communities. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services to access. As the service will only deteriorate and become increasingly more unaffordable for these people, it is unlikely to reduce the level of multiple deprivation.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality and TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** The service is expected to improve under a BSIP through an expansion of the network and enhancements. At this early stage, a 20% reduction in average fare has been modelled for the appraisal (SYSTRA, 2024). Overall, this could help to reduce the level of multiple deprivation affecting communities by making public transport links more accessible.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services,**

Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships	
Will the SRBS BSIP option...	
	<p><b>Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce the level of multiple deprivation affecting communities.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?	<p>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 with accessible small towns and rural small towns, and within 800m in accessible rural areas and remote rural areas).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:</b> Under a BSIP, it is anticipated that partners could work together to deliver actions that promote a more positive, recognisable and trusted network identity through a statutory agreement to delivery SRBS core policy <b>3a</b>. This would be particularly aided where supportive information and ticketing agreements are also put in place. This would help to remove informational barriers to accessing and using transport modes, especially for older people where this has been highlighted as an issue.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:</b> As the public have expressed a desire to see simpler and more cost-effective ticketing products, it is unlikely that this can be fully delivered under a BSIP. Research has shown that ticketing integration and simplification can have a positive impact on passenger volumes. Carefully designed BSIP initiatives should help to increase demand, although the complex product range will still exist. This may help to a certain extent to reduce informational barriers; however, it may remain an issue.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
Reduce unequal access to employment	<p>In Scotland, people on lower incomes are more likely to use bus than those on higher incomes, with 51% of those with household incomes up to £10,000 per annum having used the bus in the past week, compared with 27% of those with</p>

### Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships

#### Will the SRBS BSIP option...

opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?

household incomes over £50,000 per annum (Transport Scotland, 2022a). Those on the lowest incomes often reported longer journey times across most journey purposes. In the RTS public survey, many people looking for employment felt that transport was a factor in their decision not to take up opportunities. This often related to the timing of services, or the additional cost and time involved in making multi-operator journeys. Challenges were identified when accessing work by public transport using more limited early morning or evening bus services, particularly where changes between bus services were required. People living in rural areas are likely to have reduced access to employment and essential services.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Under a BSIP, it is expected that there would be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. This is expected to assist in reducing unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for users through network connectivity improvement. As highlighted, services after 1900 and Sundays are extremely patchy for the region. An improvement in service will benefit those who work unsocial hours or are in part-time employment.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** With closer and more robust partnership via a BSIP, we would anticipate that the partners could work together to deliver area-wide ticketing and smart cards through a statutory agreement, helping to introduce value for money multi-operator tickets. At this early stage, a 20% reduction in average fare has been modelled for the appraisal (SYSTRA, 2024). This would also help to reduce unequal access.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.

Overall Impact: Overall, it is assessed that **Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships** will result in a **Major Beneficial Effect**.

Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?

Structural inequalities resulting from difference from social class are varied and complex. Whilst there are many interrelated factors which are discussed in this assessment that contribute to these inequalities (such as wealth inequality, access to opportunities and material deprivation) the impact of the SRBS on addressing structural inequality as a whole is unclear and is unlikely to be able to be robustly examined at this stage of the project. Therefore, there is insufficient detail or information available to enable an assessment to be made.

Overall Impact: Overall, it is assessed that **Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships** will result in a **No Clear Relationship Effect** at this stage.

Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?

Overall, 15% of the SPT region’s population is income deprived compared to 10% in Scotland overall.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** An expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service through a BSIP would support the regeneration of disadvantaged and deprived areas through improved network connectivity.

Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships	
Will the SRBS BSIP option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overall Impact:</b> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>A BSIP could deliver a modal shift from car to bus, especially as growing patronage is of benefit to operators, and BSIP arrangements can be a good avenue to deliver measures such as bus priority. Overall, the BSIP is likely to facilitate and encourage use of public transport for any group, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage, as the service will significantly improve (<b>TPO1</b>), and bus fares will fall (<b>TPO2</b>). There is a lack of evidence to understand if TPO3 and its categories would facilities and encourage the use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation for this particular group.</p> <p>However, the BSIP scenario does not consider the integration of public transport and active travel networks explicitly or options to support this (such as allowing bikes on buses etc.).</p> <p>The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel.</p> <p><b>Overall Impact:</b> <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> has the potential to widen access for all groups using the bus network to access active travel and physical recreation opportunities, however the overall impact is assessed as <b>Uncertain</b> due to insufficient information at this stage.</p>
Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors?	<p>There is no clear relationship in the appraisal between the BSIP scenario and supporting economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors. The options appraisal does consider impact on employment of the different options appraised but not in specific reference to Scotland’s key economic sectors. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment that there is expected to be a positive relationship between employment the BSIP model, it is considered there is No Clear Relationship for this specific consideration.</p> <p><b>Overall Impact:</b> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Support increased provision of higher	<p>The transport network itself influences inequalities of opportunity and outcome related to income and socio-economic status (for example through the extent to which it facilitates access to employment and through the costs of using it). People living</p>

**Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships**

**Will the SRBS BSIP option...**

skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?

in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Those living in the 10% most deprived areas are more likely to walk or catch the bus to travel to work or school (Transport Scotland, 2020). Being able to access education, employment and training is critical for low income households as a means of escaping poverty, as well as for general wellbeing (Transport Scotland, 2021).

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Under a BSIP, it is expected that there would be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services. An improvement in the network service would have a beneficial impact on employment opportunities and local services. Overall, a BSIP would support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage. An example is for those who currently work unsocial hours or work part-time, an improved service will result in greater accessibility to employment for many who rely on the network.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** A reduction in fare prices would also enable those facing socio-economic disadvantage to have greater accessibility to the bus network in order to access better employment.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support an increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

**Overall Impact:** Overall, it is assessed that **Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships** will result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect**.

Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage?

The affordability, availability and integration of transport to people facing socio-economic disadvantage through low incomes and wealth is a key equalities issue. The transport network itself influences inequalities of opportunity and outcome related to income and socio-economic status. People living in areas with higher levels of deprivation tend to have poorer public transport links, fewer employment opportunities and in some cases fewer local services (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). National statistics (Transport Scotland, 2019 & Transport Scotland, 2020) have shown that people in lower income households are significantly more dependent on public transport and they are more likely to travel by bus, while people in higher income households are more likely to drive.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Under a BSIP, it is expected that there would be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. An improved service would positively impact those in lower income households who depend on public transport the most.

Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships	
Will the SRBS BSIP option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> Cost of public transport fares is one of the top transport-related challenges in the SPT area (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport 2021b). A reduction in fare prices would increase accessibility for those in lower income households.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:</b> A previous BSIP helped to unlock access to capital funding through the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) to deliver highway infrastructure improvements to reduce delays to services. However, the Scottish Government’s recent announcement that there will be no funds available through the BPF in 2024/25 has scaled back this considerable benefit of the BSIP, at least in the short term. A BSIP could also be an appropriate vehicle for delivering an enhanced bus service network should additional revenue funding be sourced. If secured, a more reliable and punctual network service could meet the needs for those facing socio-economic disadvantage by improving accessibility.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
<b>Contribute to the achievement of the Duty’s aims and desired outcomes?</b>	<p>Overall, under a BSIP, it is likely that inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage will improve. The reason for this is because the current service is expected to improve through an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service which will improve the connectivity of the network. Additionally, the price of bus fares could decrease which will make the service more affordable, especially for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 3 – Bus Service Improvement Partnerships</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
<b>Overall consideration with respect to socio-economic disadvantage</b>	<p><b>Overall Impact: Minor Beneficial Effect</b> as there is expected to be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. Additionally, a reduction in fare prices is expected. This is expected to be benefit those who are facing socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
<b>Overall consideration with respect to inequality of outcome</b>	<p><b>Overall Impact: Minor Beneficial Effect</b> as expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service and more affordable fares could be achieved if an ambitious BSIP is delivered. This is likely to have an impact on inequality of outcome.</p>

## 5.4 Franchising

- 5.4.1 Franchising allows the authority to specify service standards, which includes the potential to set ‘ambitious’ levels of service (subject to sufficient funding). Under franchising, service levels will not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is the case currently) but can also support wider public sector policies such as offering sustainable travel alternatives, tackling social deprivation, or supporting local economies. A franchising option is more likely to be applied region wide so could deliver far reaching benefits such as wider network coverage, enhanced comparative access by different population groups, and comparative access by geographic sub-context. A precise franchising model is subject to further development; however, it could range from a comprehensive form (e.g., covering all/most of the region) to a more localised form (e.g., covering a single local authority or part of an authority), with different options available in between. Franchising has the potential to set an ambitious model of comprehensive specifications covering every aspect of bus service operation however it could also seek to operate with more flexible arrangement with a range of risk-sharing between the public and private sectors.
- 5.4.2 The main benefits that could potentially be delivered under a comprehensive franchising model include:
- Safety and security improvements;
  - Improved accessibility standards;
  - Increased affordability via provision of targeted zero or reduced fares, and general affordability benefits by introducing a full-suite of ticketing improvements (e.g., network-wide tickets, smart cards, auto fare capping; lower fares for all with targeted zero fares; and best-value capping); and
  - Measures to enhance network identity to foster a positive, recognisable and trusted identity with enhanced branding and consistency for journey information, ticketing, interchanges and stops, vehicles and other network assets.
- 5.4.3 Delivering a franchising scheme is recognised as a complex and resource intensive endeavour with significant risks associated with funding, set-up and preparation, unknown timescales and potential legal challenges raised from commercial operators.

Table 5.4: Option 4 – Franchising: Fairer Scotland Duty

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?	Cost is an obstacle to using transport and it is an important mechanism by which transport can cause social and health inequality (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Approximately 14% of an average UK household budget is spent on transport – second only to housing costs (17%) (ONS, 2023). Transport is a key concern for people on lower incomes with some reporting that balancing budgets relies on selecting alternative transport modes such as walking long distances, travelling off peak or relying on their wider social network for lifts. In some cases, people will avoid travelling. Combined these factors can limit access to key services such as employment, health-related or education opportunities.



**Option 4 – Franchising**

**Will the SRBS Franchising option...**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income. Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Franchising could allow the transport authority to completely influence fares and associated products. For the purpose of assessment, it is assumed that the franchising option would pursue an ambitious model however any 'lighter-touch' franchising option would likely have a less rigid structure and control with the possibility of revenue-sharing with contracted bus operators. The transport appraisal has modelled a universal 20% reduction in average fares applied across the Strathclyde region with targeted measures allow 29% of bus users in the SPT area being offered free fares. As there are challenges associated with restricting low fares to low income groups (unless these groups can be easily defined) it is deemed more appropriate to apply lower fare ticketing products according to geographic region at the council level, based on average household incomes in those areas (e.g., residents of Inverclyde is almost £2/hour below that of Glasgow residents, and employees working in Inverclyde earn almost £4/hour less than employees working in Glasgow).</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p>This option has the potential to significantly reduce bus related transport costs in the Strathclyde region. However, it is not clear how it will influence all forms of transport. Cost savings in bus travel and enhancements made to network coverage may provide better opportunities for people to access multi-modal transport options who might otherwise be precluded due to cost barriers.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> will result in a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b>, if delivered under an 'ambitious' model.</p>
<p>Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?</p>	<p>Low income drives a range of negative outcomes and can bring cost-related challenges for individuals accessing a range of transport options as described above. Measures to increase affordability will have a direct impact on individuals and households with a low income by reducing transport costs. Additionally, improvement to bus and wider-transport network coverage and operational frequency can have a significant impact on individuals ability to access opportunities linked with employment, education and training which can affect relative income status.</p>

## Option 4 – Franchising

### Will the SRBS Franchising option...

Evidence indicates that people in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. The single most important factor cited by those on low incomes as the greatest transport-related barrier is cost (Transport Scotland, 2020) and transport fares represents a significant cost for groups including low paid, low-skilled, people working irregular shifts/hours and people experiencing in-work poverty (Scottish Government, 2019).

Key policies delivered under a franchising model are described below:

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.

Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Franchising could allow the transport authority to completely influence fares and associated products. For the purpose of assessment, it is assumed that the franchising option would pursue an ambitious model however any 'lighter-touch' franchising option would likely have a less rigid structure and control with the possibility of revenue-sharing with contracted bus operators. The transport appraisal modelled a universal 20% reduction in average fares applied across the Strathclyde region with targeted measures allowing 29% of bus users in the SPT area being offered free fares. As there are challenges associated with restricting low fares to low income groups (unless these groups can be easily defined) it is deemed more appropriate to apply lower fare ticketing products according to geographic region based on average household incomes in specific council areas (e.g., residents of Inverclyde is almost £2/hour below that of Glasgow residents, and employees working in Inverclyde earn almost £4/hour less than employees working in Glasgow).

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A franchising model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to '...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes'. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<p>low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing levels of absolute relative poverty if delivered widely across the region and as an ‘ambitious’ model of operation.</p>
Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth	<p>There is no clear relationship between public transport and reducing low wealth in regard to individual or household assets. Households that tend to have low wealth are likely to be lone parent households, households in social rented housing, or households where a member is unemployed or economically inactive (but not retired) (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). Low wealth is driven by unequal income distribution therefore any measures to increase the affordability of transport may positively, yet indirectly, reduce household wealth inequality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing low wealth.</p>
Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access	<p>Material deprivation refers to households being unable to access basic goods and services, including supermarkets, banks and pharmacies for example (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). Reduced transport costs may allow households to spend more of their budget on other necessities, goods and services. Improvements to network coverage and reliability may also support individuals to access basic goods and services locally.</p>

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
<p>basic goods and services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing basic goods and services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support individuals and households in accessing basic goods and services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on material deprivation.</p>
<p>Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?</p>	<p>Living in a deprived area can exacerbate negative outcomes for individuals and households already affected by issues of low income (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). As discussed, public transport costs can be significant for people and households with low incomes, particularly for people living in rural areas who face longer travel distances and higher costs (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Cost increases of fares disproportionately impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups which increases inequalities of opportunity and outcomes (Stantec UK, 2021). The affordability of bus services varies across Scotland with costs of travel to essential services generally much higher in remote rural areas (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2016). Evidence indicates that people and households in low income or living in a deprived area are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network –</b> This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> </ul>

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce the level of multiple deprivation affecting communities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing levels of absolute relative poverty if delivered widely across the region and as an ‘ambitious’ model of operation.</p>
Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?	<p>In addition to cost related barriers, many population groups may encounter physical or informational challenges in terms of accessing public transport. This is particularly true for protected characteristics groups such as disabled people, ethnic minority groups, and women. The following policies could successfully be delivered under a franchising model and are deemed to positively address these barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:</b> Under a franchising agreement, enhanced reliability and punctuality measures could be delivered under ambitious service specifications. This would positively influence the needs of public transport users who have more reliance on bus travel compared with other population groups. Some individuals, particularly those with a protected characteristics can be deterred from using public transport if they encounter challenges to journey planning and inconsistent or unreliable services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:</b> A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among users who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:</b> Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing has improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, it is intended that maintaining cash payment on board for tickets will also help promote the inclusivity of bus services to a range of users, including older people, who are not confident using electronic payment. Simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting disabled, ethnic minority groups, young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular.</li> </ul>

## Option 4 – Franchising

### Will the SRBS Franchising option...

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** A franchising agreement would allow working with highway authorities to deliver improvements to interchanges which currently present accessibility issues for disabled transport users or parents/carers travelling with you children requiring a buggy. It would also provide greater oversight of bus stop provision and facilities which could better accommodate the access needs of disabled transport users and those with limited mobility.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** As with other options, a franchising agreement could deliver an area-wide app, website and information hub with the authority retaining control and oversight over data use and publication. It is judged that a franchising options would be more likely to deliver a transport network with less complex information requirements (e.g., simplified ticketing options and consistent standards across multiple service quality areas).
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Changes to Services:** People who are most reliant on buses (including older people, younger people, and people on low income) are most vulnerable to service changes, particularly those without access to private vehicles or those with limited physical mobility. Changes to services determined under a franchise agreement are made by the authority with oversight of both community welfare and operational need.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** Policy 3q aims to 'Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.' A franchise agreement would have the ability to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. Given this would be more likely to be applied region-wide, the benefits after a suitable transition period could be far reaching and would in particular raise the standards in areas that are served by smaller operators or do not benefit from modern or more accessible bus fleets suited to the needs of people with physical accessibility needs such as disabled people, parents/carers travelling with children and others with limited mobility.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:** A franchising agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:** All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as "*vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and*

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<p><i>driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback, Drivers + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing physical and information barriers to bus travel.</p>
Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?	<p>People in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. Rural, urban and island communities also face different challenges in the extent to which transport options connect people to the services and opportunities they need, and at the times and with the frequency they need (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Unreliable transport services are also a significant barrier that can limit the geographic areas in which people seek employment, goods and services. Reliability is also a significant issue when multi-modal journeys are impacted causing disruption to people’s daily routines who could be at risk of lost business or dismissal due to lack of punctuality (Public Health Scotland, 2024).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Improved service levels could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training that are linked with wider public sector policy goals.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:</b> A franchising model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3</li> </ul>

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<p>categories would help to reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all, if delivered under an ambitious model.</p>
Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?	<p>Structural inequalities resulting from difference from social class are varied and complex. Whilst there are many interrelated factors which are discussed in this assessment that contribute to these inequalities (such as wealth inequality, access to opportunities and material deprivation) the impact of the SRBS on addressing structural inequality as a whole is unclear and is unlikely to be able to be robustly examined at this stage of the project. Therefore, there is insufficient detail or information available to enable an assessment to be made.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that there is <b>No Clear Relationship</b> between <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> and structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class.</p>
Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?	<p>Living in a deprived area can exacerbate negative outcomes for individuals and households already affected by issues of low income (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). As discussed, public transport costs can be significant for people and households with low incomes, particularly for people living in rural areas who face longer travel distances and higher costs (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Improvements in the transport network coverage that reliably connects disadvantaged or deprived areas with key employment or community infrastructure hubs can positively impact regeneration by making areas more attractive for people to live in if they can successfully commute to work, school and access key services such as supermarkets, healthcare, cultural or leisure facilities. Additionally, disadvantaged or deprived areas with local centres may benefit from increased footfall and business if people are better able to access these locations by bus. This could support regeneration in some areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network</b> – This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b></li> </ul>



Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<p>There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on supporting the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</p>
Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel.</p> <p>Active travel network coverage is unlikely to be significantly affected by the options, other than in the case of integrating public transport and active travel networks and potentially widening access to the network. Under a franchising model, the local authority, as operator, would have greater control over service coverage and may seek to integrate the bus service with local active travel routes. Greater access could also be provided if measures such as allowing bikes on buses could be delivered, however this is uncertain under all delivery options.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> has the potential to widen access for all groups using the bus network to access active travel and physical recreation opportunities, however the overall impact is assessed as an <b>Uncertain Effect</b> due to insufficient information at this stage.</p>
Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland's key economic sectors?	<p>There is no clear relationship in the appraisal between the franchising model and supporting economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland's key economic sectors. The options appraisal does consider impacts on income and employment associated with the different options appraised but does not do this in specific reference to Scotland's key economic sectors. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment that there is a relationship between employment and the franchising model it is considered there is No Clear Relationship for this specific consideration.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> it is assessed that there is <b>No Clear Relationship</b> between <b>Option 4 - Franchising</b> and the growth of Scotland's key economic sectors.</p>
Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>A franchising model could specify training standards, training resources in addition to recruitment and retention policies to deliver bus services and operations in the SPT region. If applied widely across the region benefits could be achieved by creating a supportive environment for a strong driver employment pool if employment conditions are high across the region as whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support an increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul>

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support an increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increased Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:</b> This policy area includes measures to encourage high quality training for bus drivers; and to encourage driver recruitment and retention. To deliver a better performing network in the future relies heavily on the number of available drivers in the SPT region – recruitment and retention are key to this.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support an increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul> <p>A franchising model may also employ more staff, both in terms of drivers and other operational staff to support wider network coverage and enhancement measures to be delivered at a region wide level.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on increasing the provision of higher skilled and higher value employment in the SPT region.</p>
Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>Improvements to the transport network coverage that reliably connects individuals and household to locations for employment, education, healthcare, community infrastructure and services that enable them to meet their daily needs positively impact a wide proportion of the population, particularly those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Increasing the affordability of bus travel can remove a major barrier for a individuals and households experiencing challenges linked with low income.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Franchising would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a bus franchising model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> </ul>

Option 4 – Franchising	
Will the SRBS Franchising option...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:</b> A franchising model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular, those facing socio-economic disadvantage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on supporting the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs.</p>
<b>Contribute to the achievement of the Duty’s aims and desired outcomes?</b>	<p>An ambitious franchising model could deliver a range of positive benefits that contribute to the Duty’s aims and desired outcomes.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 4 – Franchising</b> could have a <b>Minor to Major Beneficial Effect</b>.</p>
<b>Overall consideration with respect to socio-economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Minor to Major Beneficial Effect</b> as there is expected to be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. Additionally, a reduction in fare prices is expected. This is expected to be benefit those who are facing socio-economic disadvantage.
<b>Overall consideration with respect to inequality of outcome</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Minor to Major Beneficial Effect</b> as there is expected to be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. Additionally, a reduction in fare prices is expected. This is likely to have an impact on inequality of outcome.

## 5.5 Municipal Bus Operators

- 5.5.1 Under a Municipal Bus Operator model, the operator would likely be an arms-length company wholly owned by the local authority, providing suitable separation when competing for tendered bus service contracts. This options could come forward under two formats to replace current commercial operators' businesses: either by winning contracts in a franchise scheme, or by acquisition of bus operator assets and businesses – which although possible is not considered feasible to achieve market dominance.
- 5.5.2 It is considered that this option would work in conjunction with the franchise scheme options, inheriting all costs, benefits and risks associated with that option.
- 5.5.3 A municipal operator is unlikely to acquire all existing commercial services in the region, at least in the short term, and is more likely to start at a smaller scale, perhaps by operating subsidised services or filling gaps in the network. Therefore, there is uncertainty about the geographic applicability and relevance of any benefits associated with this option as they are dependent on the wider operating context. Table X. Option 5 – Municipal Ownership: Fairer Scotland Duty

Table 5.5:: Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operator: Fairer Scotland Duty

Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators	
Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...	
Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?	<p>Cost is an obstacle to using transport and it is an important mechanism by which transport can cause social and health inequality (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Approximately 14% of an average UK household budget is spent on transport – second only to housing costs (17%) (ONS, 2023). Transport is a key concern for people on lower incomes with some reporting that balancing budgets relies on selecting alternative transport modes such as walking long distances, travelling off peak or relying on their wider social network for lifts. In some cases, people will avoid travelling. Combined these factors can limit access to key services such as employment, health-related or education opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a municipal bus operator model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> </ul> <p>Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products.</p> <p>The extent of impact that could be delivered under a municipal ownership model depends on the scale and context to which it applies. If the option is applied to the existing deregulated context as a 'challenger operation' the</p>

**Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators**

**Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...**

	<p>municipal operator would need to negotiate partnership arrangements for universal fares initiatives. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operation model, delivering greater control over bus service delivery and fares would deliver similar benefits to the franchising model with a full suite of ticketing improvements as described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p>This option has the potential to significantly reduce bus related transport costs in the Strathclyde region. However, it is not clear how it will influence all forms of transport. Cost savings in bus travel and enhancements made to network coverage may provide better opportunities for people to access multi-modal transport options who might otherwise be precluded due to cost barriers.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Ownership</b> will result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>. However, greater benefits could be realised if this options is delivered as a comprehensive model and applied to wide regional context, similar to franchising.</p>
<p>Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?</p>	<p>Low income drives a range of negative outcomes and can bring cost-related challenges for individuals accessing a range of transport options as described above. Measures to increase affordability will have a direct impact on individuals and households with a low income by reducing transport costs. Additionally, improvement to bus and wider-transport network coverage and operational frequency can have a significant impact on individuals ability to access opportunities linked with employment, education and training which can affect relative income status.</p> <p>Evidence indicates that people in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. The single most important factor cited by those on low incomes as the greatest transport-related barrier is cost (Transport Scotland, 2020) and transport fares represents a significant cost for groups including low paid, low-skilled, people working irregular shifts/hours and people experiencing in-work poverty (Scottish Government, 2019).</p> <p>Key policies that could be delivered under a municipal bus operator model are described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.</li> </ul>

**Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators**

**Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operator model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> </ul> <p>Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products.</p> <p>The extent of impact that could be delivered under a municipal ownership model depends on the scale and context to which it applies. If the option is applied to the existing deregulated context as a ‘challenger operation’ the municipal operator would need to negotiate partnership arrangements for universal fares initiatives. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operation model, delivering greater control over bus service delivery and fares would deliver similar benefits to the franchising model with a full suite of ticketing improvements as described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:</b> Services under municipal ownership could operate at a standard set up to improve reliability and punctuality; however, the extent of improvement would be dependent on the scale of municipal operations as a proportion of the overall network and the existence of any other relevant delivery model within the municipal bus company. Any increase in the reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing levels of absolute relative poverty if delivered widely across the region and as an ‘ambitious’ model of operation.</p>
<p>Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth</p>	<p>Low income drives a range of negative outcomes and can bring cost-related challenges for individuals accessing a range of transport options as described above. Measures to increase affordability will have a direct impact on individuals and households with a low income by reducing transport costs. Additionally, improvement to bus and wider-transport network coverage and operational frequency can have a significant impact on individuals ability to access opportunities linked with employment, education and training which can affect relative income status.</p>

## Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators

### Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...

Evidence indicates that people in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. The single most important factor cited by those on low incomes as the greatest transport-related barrier is cost (Transport Scotland, 2020) and transport fares represents a significant cost for groups including low paid, low-skilled, people working irregular shifts/hours and people experiencing in-work poverty (Scottish Government, 2019).

Key policies that could be delivered under a municipal bus operator model are described below:

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operator model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.

Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A municipal ownership model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options. However, the extent of improvement would be dependent on the scale of municipal operations as a proportion of the overall network and the existence of any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company was operating.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth.

Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators	
Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...	
	<p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> would have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing levels of absolute relative poverty. However, greater benefits could be realised if this option is delivered as a comprehensive model and applied to wide regional context, similar to franchising.</p>
Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access basic goods and services?	<p>Material deprivation refers to households being unable to access basic goods and services, including supermarkets, banks and pharmacies for example (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). Reduced transport costs may allow households to spend more of their budget on other necessities, goods and services. Improvements to network coverage and reliability may also support individuals to access basic goods and services locally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing basic goods and services.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network</b> – This policy primarily addresses cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under municipal ownership, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support individuals and households in accessing basic goods and services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on material deprivation if the model could be delivered comprehensively and applied to a wide regional context.</p>
Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?	<p>Living in a deprived area can exacerbate negative outcomes for individuals and households already affected by issues of low income (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). As discussed, public transport costs can be significant for people and households with low incomes, particularly for people living in rural areas who face longer travel distances and higher costs (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Cost increases of fares disproportionately impact on socio-economically disadvantaged groups which increases inequalities of opportunity and outcomes (Stantec UK, 2021). The affordability of bus services varies across Scotland with costs of travel to essential services generally much higher in remote rural areas (Citizens Advice Bureau, 2016). Evidence indicates that people and households in low income or living in a deprived area are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the</li> </ul>



**Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators**

**Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...**

	<p>case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing basic goods and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under municipal ownership, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups (yet to be determined) could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would help to reduce levels of multiple deprivation affecting communities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing multiple deprivation if delivered widely across the region and as an ‘ambitious’ model of operation.</p>
<p>Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?</p>	<p>In addition to cost related barriers, many population groups may encounter physical or informational challenges in terms of accessing public transport. This is particularly true for protected characteristics groups such as disabled people, ethnic minority groups, and women. The following policies could successfully be delivered under a municipal bus model and are deemed to positively address these barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers in accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would reduce physical and informational barriers in accessing and using all transport modes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:</b> A municipal ownership model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options. However, the extent of improvement would be dependent on the scale of municipal operations as a proportion of the overall network and the existence of any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company was operating</li> </ul>

## Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators

### Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity:** A single network identity across all services, demonstrating inclusivity and safety could help to build trust among users who have concerns or less confidence with public transport use. Municipal ownership could deliver a single identity across all operated services or franchised area or it could operate under a partnership-based area-wide brand which could deliver improved network identity in these areas. A municipal operator could also work as part of a partnership with other operators and authorities to further enhance network identity, as with the voluntary partnership and BSIP options above.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Ticketing:** Whilst the increase in contactless payment and app-based ticketing as improved boarding times and flexibility for most users, it is intended that maintaining cash payment on board for tickets will also help promote the inclusivity of bus services to a range of users, including older people, who are not confident using electronic payment. Simplified ticketing options would help promote the inclusivity of bus services by benefitting disabled, ethnic minority groups, young adults and infrequent or non-users in particular. While the operating authority would have the ability to establish fares and ticketing products under a municipal ownership model it is judged that these would be additional to an existing complex product range and would not contribute to overall simplification if delivered under a sole municipal ownership model. If delivery is linked with other models, such as franchising more simplified ticketing options could be realised.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Interchanges and Bus Stops:** Municipal bus services could be operated to work effectively with interchange and bus stop requirements. However, the scale of benefit would be constrained by the ability of municipal operators to run these services effectively and affordably, in competition with other operators or not. It is also dependent on any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company is operating.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Information:** Information standards can be set by the municipal operator; however, the reach of potential benefits would depend on the scale of operational delivery and the existence of other agreements/delivery models. Positive benefits would be realised if the option could deliver consistent network wide sources of information across the SPT region.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Vehicles and Depots:** Policy 3q aims to 'Make best use of existing assets and consider delivery models that facilitate making best use of vehicles across areas such as healthcare, education and community transport.' A municipal ownership agreement would have the ability to specify consistent vehicle standards, fleet specifications and depot management systems into its contracts, thereby mandating operators to comply in order to be eligible for the contracts. This option is highly dependent on the scale of municipal operation with minimal benefits being realised if delivered within the existing network operation model. Under a more comprehensive municipal operation model, benefits would be

**Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators**

**Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...**

	<p>applied to a wider geographical as a result of acquiring a greater proportion of the commercial network and introducing higher fleet standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Safety and Security:</b> A municipal ownership agreement could allow specified standards for CCTV, training and other security measures to be applied across the region, enhancing surveillance and perceptions of safety among users. It should be acknowledged that existing safety and security measures are reasonably widespread in the region at present so improvement may only be marginal improvement in areas covered by smaller operators or with fewer services. The scale of positive impact that can be delivered in respect to safety and security is constrained by the operational scale of this option. For example, if the municipal operator only runs existing subsidised services and/or perceived network gaps, then the uplift in safety measures would only apply to these areas or corridors. If a municipal operator was able to acquire a greater proportion of the commercial network, and/or implement changes at interchange facilities or roll-out security measures and schemes regionwide, the benefits would be greater, particularly for more rural areas and less profitable routes.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Charter:</b> All options include the potential to deliver a customer charter, this could specify service quality standards such as “<i>vehicle, stops and interchange standards – including topics such as facilities, mobility and access, and cleaning; and staff and driver standards – including training, appearance, and support available for customers, e.g., boarding assistance.</i>”</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Drivers, + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce physical and informational barriers in accessing and using all transport modes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing physical and information barriers to bus travel. However, the extent of this impact is dependent on the scale of coverage that can be delivered and whether a more comprehensive model could be applied in conjunction with other options (e.g., franchising).</p>
<p>Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?</p>	<p>People in low income households are often excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment, health and training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options. Rural, urban and island communities also face different challenges in the extent to which transport options connect people to the services and opportunities they need, and at the times and with the frequency they need (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Unreliable transport services are also a significant barrier that can limit the geographic areas in which people seek employment, goods and services. Reliability is also a significant issue when multi-modal journeys are impacted causing disruption to people’s daily routines who could be at risk of lost business or dismissal due to lack of punctuality (Public Health Scotland, 2024).</p>

**Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators**

**Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...**

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.
  
- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operator model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.  
  
Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products.  
  
The extent of impact that could be delivered under a municipal ownership model depends on the scale and context to which it applies. If the option is applied to the existing deregulated context as a ‘challenger operation’ the municipal operator would need to negotiate partnership arrangements for universal fares initiatives. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operation model, delivering greater control over bus service delivery and fares would deliver similar benefits to the franchising model with a full suite of ticketing improvements as described above.
  
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A municipal ownership model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to ‘...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes’. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options. However, the extent of improvement would be dependent on the scale of municipal operations as a proportion of the overall network and the existence of any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company was operating.
  
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all.

Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators	
Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...	
	<p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on reducing unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all. However, the extent of this impact is dependent on the scale of coverage that can be delivered and whether a more comprehensive model could be applied in conjunction with other options (e.g., franchising).</p>
Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?	<p>Structural inequalities resulting from difference from social class are varied and complex. Whilst there are many interrelated factors which are discussed in this assessment that contribute to these inequalities (such as wealth inequality, access to opportunities and material deprivation) the impact of the SRBS on addressing structural inequality as a whole is unclear and is unlikely to be able to be robustly examined at this stage of the project. Therefore, there is insufficient detail or information available to enable an assessment to be made.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> Overall, it is assessed that there is <b>No Clear Relationship</b> between <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> and structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class.</p>
Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?	<p>Living in a deprived area can exacerbate negative outcomes for individuals and households already affected by issues of low income (Fairer Scotland Duty, 2018). As discussed, public transport costs can be significant for people and households with low incomes, particularly for people living in rural areas who face longer travel distances and higher costs (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019). Improvements in the transport network coverage that reliably connects disadvantaged or deprived areas with key employment or community infrastructure hubs can positively impact regeneration by making areas more attractive for people to live in if they can successfully commute to work, school and access key services such as supermarkets, healthcare, cultural or leisure facilities. Additionally, disadvantaged or deprived areas with local centres may benefit from increased footfall and business if people are better able to access these locations by bus. This could support regeneration in some areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO1 Improve Service Quality:</b> Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.</li> <li>▪ <b>TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:</b> This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operator model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.</li> </ul> <p>Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products.</p>

Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators	
Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...	
	<p>The extent of impact that could be delivered under a municipal ownership model depends on the scale and context to which it applies. If the option is applied to the existing deregulated context as a ‘challenger operation’ the municipal operator would need to negotiate partnership arrangements for universal fares initiatives. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operation model, delivering greater control over bus service delivery and fares would deliver similar benefits to the franchising model with a full suite of ticketing improvements as described above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:</b> There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</li> </ul> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on supporting the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas.</p>
Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	<p>The health of residents in the SPT region is relatively poor compared with the Scottish population and transport is a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing as it influences access to healthcare facilities and services whilst also providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel.</p> <p>Active travel network coverage is unlikely to be significantly affected by the options, other than in the case of integrating public transport and active travel networks and potentially widening access to the network. Under a municipal ownership, the operator will have greater control over service coverage and may seek to integrate the bus service with local active travel routes. Greater access could also be provided if measures such as allowing bikes on buses could be delivered, however this is uncertain under all delivery options.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> has the potential to widen access for all groups using the bus network to access active travel and physical recreation opportunities, however the overall impact is assessed as an <b>Uncertain Effect</b> due to insufficient information at this stage.</p>
Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors?	<p>There is no clear relationship in the appraisal between the municipal bus operator model and supporting economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors. The options appraisal does consider impacts on income and employment associated with the different options appraised but does not do this in specific reference to Scotland’s key economic sectors. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment that there is a relationship between employment and the franchising model it is considered there is No Clear Relationship for this specific consideration.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> it is assessed that there is <b>No Clear Relationship</b> between <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> and the growth of Scotland’s key economic sectors.</p>

**Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators**

**Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...**

Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?

A municipal bus operator model could specify training standards, training resources in addition to recruitment and retention policies to deliver bus services and operations in the SPT region. If applied widely across the region benefits could be achieved by creating a supportive environment for a strong driver employment pool if employment conditions are high across the region as whole.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- **TPO2 Increase Affordability of the Bus Network:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if this TPO would support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- **TPO3 Increased Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Drivers:** This policy area includes measures to encourage high quality training for bus drivers; and to encourage driver recruitment and retention. To deliver a better performing network in the future relies heavily on the number of available drivers in the SPT region – recruitment and retention are key to this.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality, Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

A municipal bus model may also employ more staff, both in terms of drivers and other operational staff to support wider network coverage and enhancement measures to be delivered.

Overall Impact: It is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on increasing the provision of higher skilled and higher value employment in the SPT region.

Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage?

Improvements to the transport network coverage that reliably connects individuals and households to locations for employment, education, healthcare, community infrastructure and services that enable them to meet their daily needs and thus positively impact a wide proportion of the population, particularly those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Increasing the affordability of bus travel can remove a major barrier for a individuals and households experiencing challenges linked with low income.

- **TPO1 Improve Service Quality:** Municipal ownership would allow standards to be set specifying levels of service and network coverage. Level of service would not only be dependent on passenger demand (as is currently the case) but it could also take other factors and public sector policy goals into account, which could

## Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators

### Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...

provide more targeted coverage and enhanced frequency to support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training.

- **TPO2 Increased Affordability of the Bus Network:** This policy primarily address cost related barriers to accessing and using transport. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operator model, network wide tickets, smart cards, auto-fare, best value capping and lower fares for all with targeted zero fares for some population groups could positively impact groups experiencing poverty or low income.

Improved affordability measures could positively impact other members from households experiencing financial challenges associated with increased costs or lower incomes. Municipal ownerships could allow the operating authority to completely influence fares and associated products.

The extent of impact that could be delivered under a municipal ownership model depends on the scale and context to which it applies. If the option is applied to the existing deregulated context as a 'challenger operation' the municipal operator would need to negotiate partnership arrangements for universal fares initiatives. Under a comprehensive municipal bus operation model, delivering greater control over bus service delivery and fares would deliver similar benefits to the franchising model with a full suite of ticketing improvements as described above.

- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Reliability and Punctuality:** A municipal ownership model could set performance targets for reliability and punctuality based on core policy 3a to '...by enhancing vehicle reliability, vehicle driver availability, improving resilience of the bus network, and prioritising consistent bus journey times alongside other sustainable modes'. Increasing reliability and punctuality of the bus service could support low income individuals who need to access employment, training and education opportunities in addition to supporting people in meeting their daily needs who may not have access to a car or other travel options. However, the extent of improvement would be dependent on the scale of municipal operations as a proportion of the overall network and the existence of any other relevant delivery model within which the municipal bus company was operating.
- **TPO3 Increase the Attractiveness of the Bus Network – Network Identity, Ticketing, Interchanges and Bus Stops, Information, Customer Support and Feedback, Changes to Services, Vehicles and Depots, Drivers, Safety and Security, Customer Charter + Data and Monitoring:** There is a lack of evidence to understand if these TPO3 categories would support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

Overall Impact: It is assessed that **Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators** could have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on supporting the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services and facilities to meet identified population and



<b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b>	
<b>Will the SRBS Municipal Ownership option...</b>	
	economic needs. However, the extent of this impact is dependent on the scale of coverage that can be delivered and whether a more comprehensive model could be applied in conjunction with other options (e.g., franchising).
<b>Contribute to the achievement of the Duty's aims and desired outcomes?</b>	<p>An ambitious municipal bus operator model could deliver a range of positive benefits that contribute to the Duty's aims and desired outcomes.</p> <p>Key areas of the Duty that intersect with this option include positive impacts relating to low income from increased transport affordability, improved access to key social infrastructure including education and healthcare services, improved access to employment supported by wider and more reliable network coverage, and enhancements to communities where people will experience greater levels of connectivity as a result of bus network improvements.</p> <p>However, the extent of these impacts are linked to the potential scale and ambition of the option within a wider operating context.</p> <p><u>Overall Impact:</u> It is assessed that <b>Option 5 – Municipal Bus Operators</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b>, if delivered under a comprehensive model with wide geographic coverage.</p>
<b>Overall consideration with respect to socio-economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Minor Beneficial Effect</b> as there is expected to be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. Additionally, a reduction in fare prices is expected. This is expected to benefit those who are facing socio-economic disadvantage.
<b>Overall consideration with respect to inequality of outcome</b>	<b>Overall Impact: Minor Beneficial Effect</b> as there is expected to be an expansion of the network and enhancements to levels of service. Additionally, a reduction in fare prices is expected. This is likely to have an impact on inequality of outcome.

## 6 Summary

Table 6.1: Options Overview

Options Overview	
Option 1	Business as Usual
Option 2	Voluntary Partnerships
Option 3	Bus Service Improvement Partnerships
Option 4	Franchising
Option 5	Municipal Bus Operators

Table 6.2: FSD Assessment of Options - Summary

FSD Framework Criteria	FSD Assessment of Options - Summary				
Will the SRBS options...	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Reduce cost related barriers to accessing and use of all transport modes?	-	-	+	++	+
▪ Low income: help to reduce levels of absolute and relative income poverty?	-	-	+	++	+
▪ Low wealth: help to reduce inequality in the distribution of household wealth	-	?	+	++	+
▪ Material deprivation: support individuals and households to access basic goods and services?	-	+	+	++	+
▪ Area deprivation: help to reduce level of multiple deprivation affecting communities?	0	+	++	++	+
▪ Reduce physical and informational barriers to accessing and using all transport modes?	0	+	+	++	+
▪ Reduce unequal access to employment opportunities, social and cultural activities, and public services and amenities for all?	0	0	++	++	+

FSD Framework Criteria	FSD Assessment of Options - Summary				
Will the SRBS options...	1	2	3	4	5
▪ Socio-economic background: address structural inequalities resulting from differences in social class?	~	~	~	~	~
▪ Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas?	-	-	++	+	+
▪ Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, active travel, and physical recreation, in particular for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	0	0	?	?	?
▪ Support economic development through facilitating the growth of Scotland's key economic sectors?	~	~	~	~	~
▪ Support increased provision of higher skilled and higher value employment, particularly for those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	-	-	+	+	+
▪ Support the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, services, and facilities to meet identified population and economic needs, in particular those facing socio-economic disadvantage?	-	-	++	++	+
<b>Contribute to the achievement of the Duty's aims and desired outcomes?</b>	-	-	+	+ / ++	+
<b>Overall consideration with respect to socio-economic disadvantage</b>	-	0	+	+ / ++	+
<b>Overall consideration with respect to inequality of outcome</b>	-	0	+	+ / ++	+
<b>Overall Assessment</b>	-	0	+	+ / ++	+

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# Appendix A Baseline Data

Table A.1: Employment and Unemployment

Domain	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dumbartonshire	West Dumbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Employment rate	72.5	70.6	68.7	61.4	73.6	74.5	73.4	72.3	77.0	78.4	69.9	72.0	75.2
Unemployment rate	3.1	3.4	3.8	4.2	4.8	2.6	3.7	3.5	2.7	2.9	3.6	3.5	3.4

[Employment, unemployment and related statistics for your area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Table A.2: Economic Activity

Domain	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dumbartonshire	West Dumbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Economically active	68.6	71.5	70.6	67.1	76.2	76.0	75.8	75.0	79.6	79.0	72.6	73.8	69.0
Economically inactive	31.4	28.5	29.4	32.9	23.8	24.0	24.2	25.0	20.4	21.0	27.4	26.2	31.0

[Employment, unemployment and related statistics for your area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Table A.3: Claimant Count

Domain	Region (%)												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dumbartonshire	West Dumbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
Claimant Count (Dec 2023)	2.7	3.8	4.3	3.4	4.7	1.8	4.3	3.3	1.8	3.1	3.6	3.3	2.8

[Employment, unemployment and related statistics for your area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Table A.4: Education and Qualifications

Domain	Region												
	Argyll & Bute	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	South Ayrshire	Glasgow City	East Dumbartonshire	West Dumbartonshire	North Lanarkshire	East Renfrewshire	Renfrewshire	Inverclyde	Combined SPT Region	National
No qualifications	24.7	34.1	31.3	28.5	32.0	19.9	32.8	33.9	19.2	28.1	32.6	28.7	26.8
Level 1 qualifications	22.8	24.4	24.2	22.1	19.7	19.3	25.2	25.6	18.4	23.1	23.0	22.5	23.1
Level 2 qualifications	14.8	13.6	13.4	14.0	13.4	16.3	14.4	13.8	17.2	14.5	13.2	14.4	14.3
Level 3 qualifications	8.8	10.0	11.4	10.3	9.0	9.8	11.1	10.5	9.9	11.2	11.5	10.3	9.7
Level 4 qualifications and above	28.9	17.9	19.6	25.1	25.9	34.8	16.5	17.2	35.2	23.1	19.7	24.0	26.1

Source: Census 2011: [Search | Scotland's Census - Search by location \(scotlandscensus.gov.uk\)](https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/search)