



DRAFT STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL BUS STRATEGY 2025 CONSULTATION REPORT



SYSTRA

DRAFT STRATHCLYDE REGIONAL BUS STRATEGY

2025 CONSULTATION REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

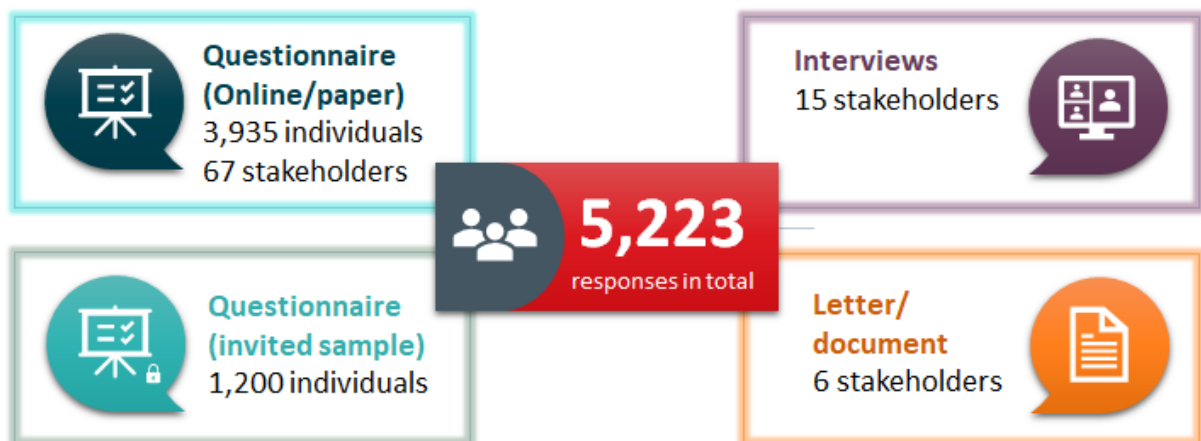
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has been developing a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) that sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered.

SPT has commissioned SYSTRA to consult with stakeholders and the general public to **understand their views on key elements of the draft strategy and supporting documents, and whether any changes to the strategy are required** prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

The consultation forms a critical component in the strategy's development, providing stakeholders and the general public an opportunity to shape the bus network's future direction.

Consultation process

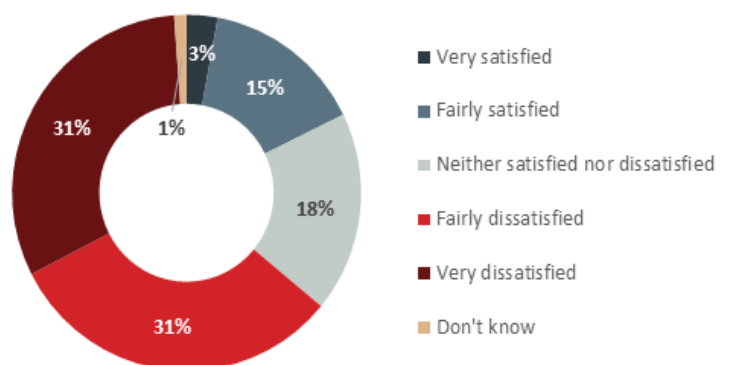
SYSTRA was commissioned to carry out a non-statutory consultation exercise over a twelve-week period, between **Wednesday 5th March 2025** and **Thursday 29th May 2025** to gather feedback from stakeholders and the wider public on the draft SRBS. A total of **5,223 responses** were received across all channels:



Consultation feedback on the current bus network

The consultation gathered feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the current bus network. The questionnaire findings indicate that the majority (62%) of individual respondents are fairly or very dissatisfied with the bus network, while 18% of respondents are satisfied. Frequent bus users were more likely to be very satisfied with the bus network compared to infrequent/non-bus users.

A total of 17% of respondents representing organisations (stakeholders) strongly agree / agree that the bus network currently meets the needs of the general public.



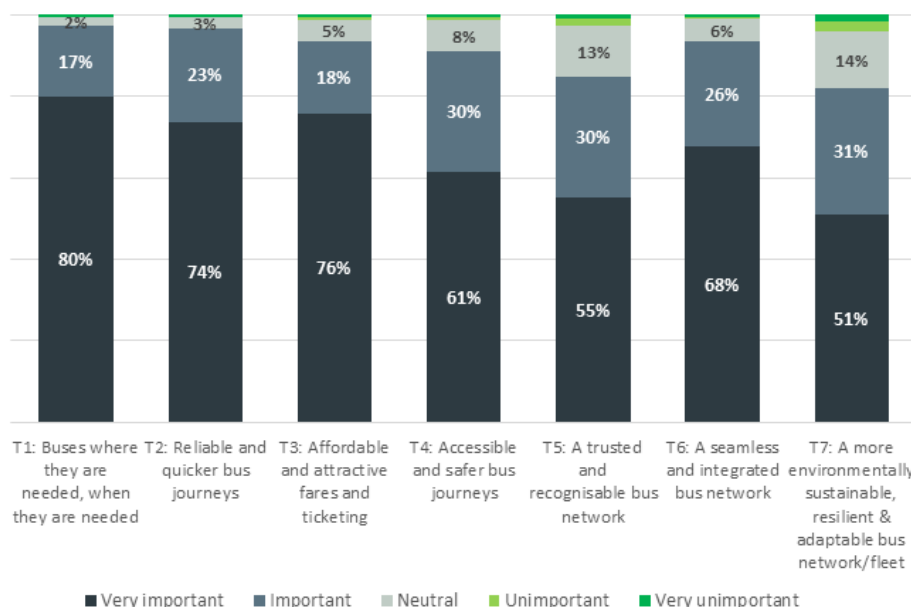
Comments from respondents in the questionnaire highlighted dissatisfaction relating to the cost of bus travel, reliability, lack of services in certain areas, long journey times and a perceived lack of integration between different modes of transport.

Consultation feedback on The Bus Network We Need

Feedback was gathered on the draft SRBS chapter 'The Bus Network We Need', which details seven key themes setting out what the SRBS aims to achieve, alongside policies and measures to support each theme. Respondents were asked about the importance of each theme and whether it should be included in the SRBS.

The vast majority of respondents considered each theme to be important and felt it should be included within the SRBS. Theme 1

('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') had the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%), followed by Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing').

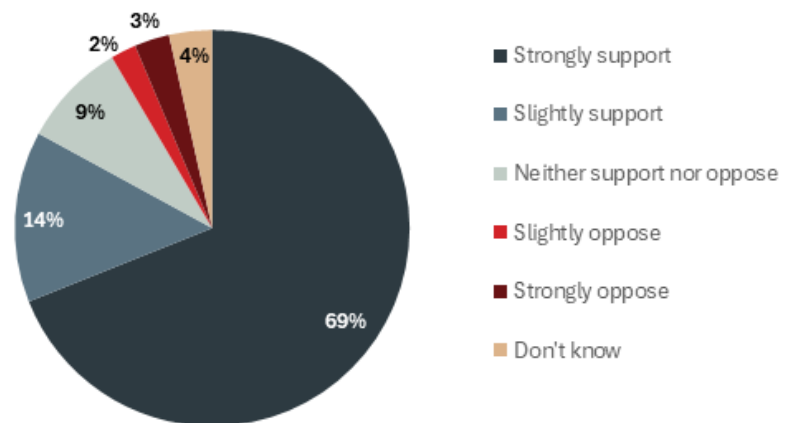


Stakeholders were broadly positive about the proposed policies and measures within each of the seven themes. Support was highest for more frequent and punctual services (P4), improving periods of operation and geographic coverage – several noting that there should be more focus on rural areas (P2), improved frequency (P3), and ensuring bus fares are easy to understand (P8). With the latter, stakeholders felt it was important to retain cash payments as an option. Also receiving high levels of support were improvements related to accurate and reliable real time travel information (M35) and high quality and well maintained vehicles across the region (P18).

Consultation feedback on the draft SRBS Delivery Plan

Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that 83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising, while 5% oppose.

Stakeholder support for franchising was due to a view it would provide stronger public control and oversight, while others felt it may improve integration and lead to bus travel improvements, particularly in rural areas. However there are concerns about the costs involved and uncertainty over funding sources. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.



The majority of stakeholders agree with the **key issues** to be considered in the development of franchising, listed in the draft SRBS Delivery Plan, but wanted to see further inclusion of accessibility, rural service coverage and integration matters. Stakeholders also agreed with the **key risks in the development of franchising**, particularly around funding and governance.

Stakeholders consider the draft **SRBS action plan** an essential foundation, but some perceive it as lacking detail, urgent timelines, and sufficient ambition, especially regarding public ownership and integrated system reform. There are calls for clearer timelines (distinguishing short/medium/long-term priorities), greater clarity on what constitutes a 'minimum level of service,' and explicit commitment to equity across geographies, particularly rural areas.

Feedback on the accompanying background and technical documents was generally positive, with suggestions for further clarity on forecast demand, the evidence base for priority measures, and the resourcing of implementation. Several stakeholders recommended additional impact assessments, particularly around equalities, and the implications for rural communities. The value of strong, clear communication of the SRBS vision and benefits was also highlighted, with calls for ongoing engagement as delivery proposals are further developed.

Next steps

SPT will review all consultation feedback and refine the SRBS accordingly. The revised SRBS will be put forward to the SPT Partnership for approval in the latter part of 2025.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 Bus services are vital to our communities, connecting towns, villages and city neighbourhoods across the west of Scotland, and bus is the most frequently and widely used form of public transport. Despite the significant value of bus to society, economy and the environment, fewer people use bus to travel, and bus services are less frequent than 10 years ago. Many people and communities have told SPT they want an improved bus service.
- 1.1.2 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) wants to reverse this cycle of decline and grow the bus network. To achieve this, SPT has been developing a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) that sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered. SPT has commissioned SYSTRA to consult with stakeholders and the general public to **understand their views on key elements of the draft strategy and supporting documents, and whether any changes to the strategy are required** prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

1.2 Development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

- 1.2.1 In 2023, SPT commenced work on the SRBS. The SRBS is SPT's process to determine a preferred approach to improving the bus network and set the direction of bus policy in the region.
- 1.2.2 The first stage in developing the SRBS was by establishing the SRBS **Case for Change**¹. This report set out the key issues with the bus network and the desired transport outcomes, objectives and core policy areas to improve the bus network.
- 1.2.3 Following this, an initial bus policy framework was developed and an **Options Appraisal**² was carried out on the different models available to deliver bus services including partnership models, bus franchising and municipal bus operations. The recommendations of the Options Appraisal were reported to SPT in March 2024.
- 1.2.4 SPT carried out a consultation on the recommendations from the options appraisal in April to May 2024. The outcomes of the consultation were reported to the SPT Strategy and Programme committee in September 2024.
- 1.2.5 The **draft SRBS**³ has since been developed and in February 2025, the SPT Strategy and Programmes committee approved the strategy for public consultation. This consultation followed a similar format to the consultation carried out in 2024, involving stakeholders and the general public, providing them an opportunity to feedback on the draft strategy. The SRBS process has also been informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

¹ <https://www.spt.co.uk/media/2wrkfd2o/srbs-case-for-change.pdf>

² <https://www.spt.co.uk/media/2pkj4pjr/strathclyde-regional-bus-strategy-options-appraisal-final.pdf>

³ https://www.spt.co.uk/media/gcxp4gmy/spt_strathclyde-regional-bus-strategy-draft-for-consultation.pdf

- 1.2.6 The draft SRBS sets out what SPT feel is needed from bus in the future, including buses that are more frequent, more reliable, more affordable and easier to use. In addition, the SRBS notes that a better coordinated and more recognisable network is needed that provides ‘turn up and go’ service levels on key routes and ensures a consistent level of service for towns and villages. The draft SRBS also refers to the requirement of a bus network that is more accessible and safer to use, with the benefits of a zero-emission fleet felt across the region. As a core part of the strategy delivery, SPT proposes to progress with developing a bus franchising model for local services across the region.

1.3 Consultation

- 1.3.1 SPT carried out a 12-week consultation on the draft SRBS between March and May 2025 to gather views on key elements of the draft SRBS and consider if any changes are required before the SPT Partnership approve the SRBS for delivery. This report provides details on the consultation process, the overall findings from the consultation and recommendations for next steps.

1.4 Structure

- 1.4.1 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2 – Consultation process:** outlines the methodology used and consultation approaches taken, alongside the approach to analysis and reporting;
- **Chapter 3 – Consultation response:** presents the overall response to the consultation, including the number of responses received through different channels;
- **Chapter 4 – Consultation findings: General views on the current bus network:** discusses feedback on this chapter of the draft SRBS, including satisfaction with the current bus network and whether respondents feel change is required;
- **Chapter 5 – Consultation findings: The Bus Network We Need:** details the feedback on the seven themes and individual policies / measures;
- **Chapter 6 – Consultation findings: The Delivery Plan:** presents the level of support and opposition for taking forward bus franchising, alongside stakeholder feedback on potential issues, risks and opportunities. This section also details feedback on the action plan within the draft SRBS;
- **Chapter 7 – Consultation findings: Other feedback:** details the findings relating to other areas in addition to the recommendations, such as feedback on the impact assessments and other comments received; and
- **Chapter 8 – Summary and next steps:** summarises the key findings from the consultation and outlines what will happen next.

2. CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 This section sets out the consultation process undertaken to understand general public and stakeholder opinions on the draft SRBS, including the priorities, issues and opportunities identified.

2.2 Approach

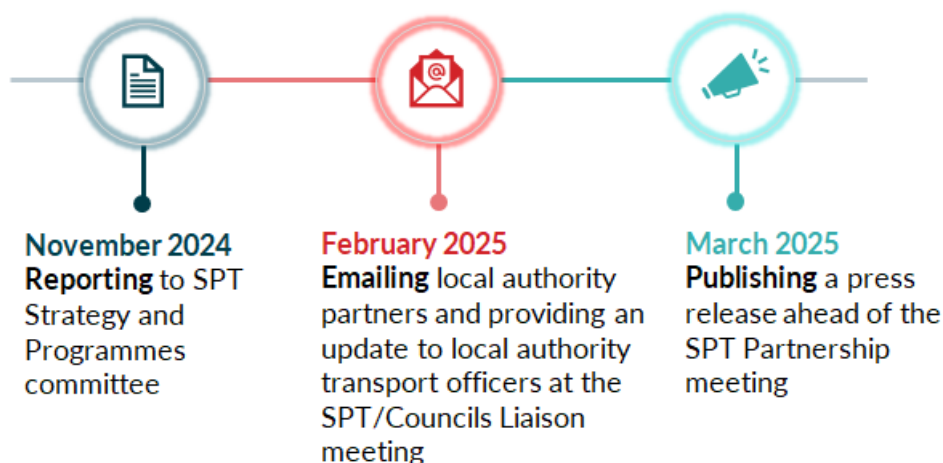
Aim of the process

- 2.2.1 SYSTRA was commissioned to carry out a consultation exercise over a twelve-week period, between **Wednesday 5th March 2025** and **Thursday 29th May 2025** to gather feedback from stakeholders and the wider public on the draft SRBS. The purpose of the consultation was to understand views on key elements of the draft SRBS and consider if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

Communication

- 2.2.2 SPT aimed to consult widely on the recommendations and provide those with an interest with sufficient detail to form a view. Prior to and during the consultation, SPT published the draft strategy which outlined the bus network that is needed to improve bus for existing passengers, make it more attractive to new users, and ensure bus is providing essential access for everyone who relies on it. To deliver the strategy, SPT highlighted their aim to develop bus franchising arrangements for the region. Alongside this, SPT published a series of impact assessments to accompany the regional bus strategy including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

- 2.2.3 Before the consultation period, SPT publicised the consultation by:



- 2.2.4 During the consultation period, the consultation was publicised through the following channels:

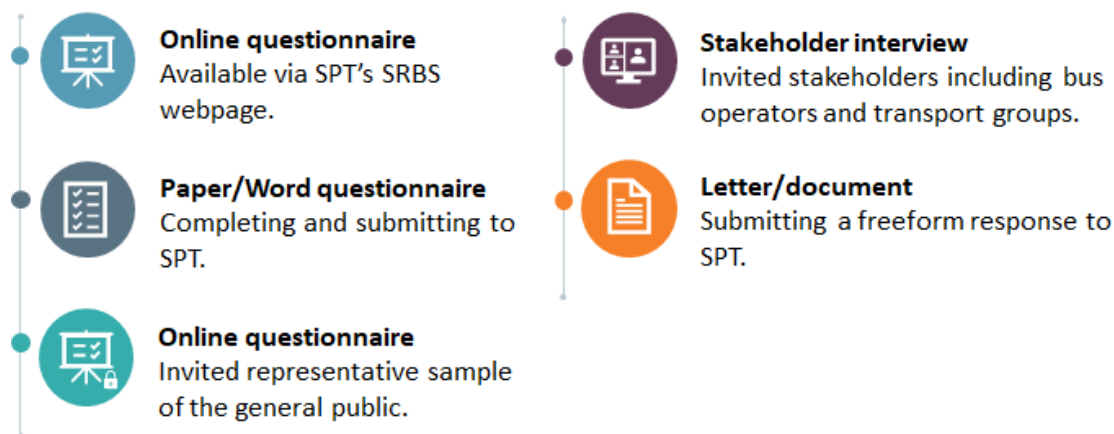
- SPT's website via the homepage and dedicated bus strategy page⁴ (SPT);
- Press release to launch the consultation (SPT);
- Emails to c. 700 stakeholders with information on the consultation and how to participate. A follow up reminder was also emailed towards the end of the consultation period (SPT);

⁴ <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>

- Local authorities were requested to forward the stakeholder email to community councils in their local authority (247 active community councils) (SPT);
- Social media – promoted on the consultation launch date and at regular intervals throughout the consultation periods. Updates were published on SPT's X account and Partnership Board members and partners were encouraged to 'retweet' (SPT);
- Advert in The Glasgow Herald to publicise the consultation (SPT);
- Briefing session with MPs and MSPs, following the launch of the consultation (SPT and SYSTRA);
- Briefing session with Council Leaders and Chief Executives, following the launch of the consultation (SPT and SYSTRA);
- Briefing sessions with local authority transport officers and bus operators, following the launch of the consultation (SPT and SYSTRA); and
- Stakeholder interviews (SYSTRA).

Consultation process

2.2.5 Feedback from the general public and stakeholders was obtained through the following channels:



Online questionnaire

2.2.6 An online questionnaire was developed to allow the general public and stakeholders to share their views on sections of the draft SRBS. The online survey was available from **Wednesday 5th March 2025 to Thursday 29th May 2025**. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in **Appendix A**.

2.2.7 The survey asked respondents about different elements of the draft SRBS, and this included:

- General views on the current bus network;
- Feedback on the themes, policies and measures to improve the bus network (The Bus Network We Need);
- Views on proposals to take forward bus franchising (Delivery Plan);
- Thoughts on key issues / key risks associated with the development of bus franchising, alongside feedback on the action plan (asked to stakeholders only) (Delivery Plan); and
- Feedback on accompanying documents to the draft SRBS.

2.2.8 Respondents were also invited to provide additional comments related to the bus strategy. The survey was accessed via a link on SPT's SRBS webpage and a total of **3,979 responses** were received (note, this is the total figure after cleaning/removal of duplicates – discussed in section 2.3).

Paper / Word questionnaire

2.2.9 A paper/Word version of the questionnaire was also made available to those that requested it, with respondents able to return their responses to SPT by email or post. A

total of **23 responses** were received via this method, and these have been added to the responses provided via the online questionnaire.

Online questionnaire with an invited representative sample

2.2.10 Alongside the online questionnaire, which was open to all members of the general public/organisations, via SPT's website, a similar online questionnaire was also sent to an invited representative sample of the general public. This sample of respondents was representative of the Strathclyde population in terms of gender, age and area, with quotas set to include both current bus users and non-users. The purpose of conducting a sub-set representative sample was to allow comparison against the findings from the online questionnaire that was open to all (via SPT's website), helping understand whether the findings are accurate and representative of the Strathclyde population. Where there are significant differences between the responses given via the SPT website and the invited representative sample, this is noted in the report.

2.2.11 This survey was answered by a sub-set representative sample of **1,200 members of the general public**, recruited through an online market research panel. Findings from the representative sample were analysed alongside the main survey. Taking together the online questionnaire via SPT, paper/Word surveys, and online questionnaire with an invited sample, the total number of responses to the questionnaire was **5,202 responses**.

Stakeholder interviews

2.2.12 A total of 20 stakeholder organisations were invited to take part in a 45-minute in-depth Microsoft Teams interview. The interviews asked participants to provide their feedback on aspects of the strategy in greater depth than the online survey, including on the policies/measures, potential issues/risks in developing franchising and opportunities. Topic guides were used for the interviews and a copy is provided in **Appendix B**. Stakeholders were identified by SPT and were a mix of bus operators and wider stakeholders including transport groups representing passengers and operators.

2.2.13 A total of **15 stakeholders** responded to say they would like to take part in an interview. Of the remaining stakeholders, two chose to provide a written response and three stakeholders did not respond. Each stakeholder was sent an initial email, and then (where applicable) reminder emails from SYSTRA. The breakdown of interviews by stakeholder type is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Organisation type

ORGANISATION TYPE	FREQUENCY
Bus operators	5
Transport group or association	6
Other organisation	4
Total	15

Stakeholder letter / document

2.2.14 A small number of stakeholders chose to submit a separate written response. In total, **six responses** were received from stakeholders who either wished to provide more detailed responses and/or an explanation to the responses they had made in the online questionnaire.

2.3 Approach to analysis

Data processing and cleaning

- 2.3.1 The online questionnaire was hosted using Snap software, and all online survey response data was downloaded by SYSTRA and analysed internally using SPSS software. For the online questionnaire for the invited sample, data was sent securely to SYSTRA by the fieldwork partner, and the data combined with the data from the open online questionnaire.
- 2.3.2 Separate questionnaire responses completed via the Word questionnaire were submitted to SPT and were sent to SYSTRA who then combined them with the online responses for analysis.
- 2.3.3 All data was subject to cleaning e.g. any incomplete or missing rows were removed. Data cleaning also involved checks to ensure the correct routing was followed and base sizes were correct for each question.

Ensuring robustness and authenticity of data

- 2.3.4 It is essential to ensure that the data collected is robust, particularly as the findings may influence the future direction of the bus strategy. To ensure the authenticity and reliability of questionnaire responses, the following steps were implemented:
- **Identification:** As with the previous consultation, respondents were required to provide a name and email address to complete the online questionnaire. After the consultation closed, checks for duplicate email addresses were conducted and also any identical or highly similar answers submitted within short timeframes. Details on how duplicate responses were handled are provided in the subsequent section.
 - **Honest participation:** The introduction to the questionnaire included a message highlighting the importance of providing truthful and unique responses. This was included to foster trust and to discourage dishonest participation.
 - **Comparative sampling:** A separate, representative sample subset was established, enabling the comparison of findings from the self-selecting respondents. This approach allowed analysis of the overall results against a representative Strathclyde population.

Duplicate responses

- 2.3.5 As noted in the previous section, the questionnaire requested basic contact information including name and email, for all respondents. SYSTRA conducted checks on email addresses to identify any potential duplicate responses. The following protocol was applied to manage duplicate email addresses:

CONDITION	ACTION TAKEN
Email addresses and names are the same, and responses are identical	Keep the latest entry, remove earlier entry/entries
Email addresses and names are the same, but responses are different	Keep the latest entry, remove previous entry/entries but merge the open response text
Email address is the same, but name of respondent is different	Keep both entries

- 2.3.6 A total of 74 duplicate responses were identified and processed according to this protocol. Numbers presented throughout this report are the numbers after duplicate responses were dealt with.
- 2.3.7 Checks on duplicate open responses were also carried out to identify whether there were repeat or campaign responses, however no responses of this nature were identified.

Data analysis – closed (quantitative survey questions)

- 2.3.8 All data cleaning and analysis of closed questions was conducted using SPSS, an industry-standard tool. SPSS enables comprehensive data cleaning, the reporting of descriptive statistics, and the application of inferential statistical analysis.
- 2.3.9 In addition to reporting frequencies to summarise the results for the full sample, a series of crosstabulations were produced. These are tables displaying the relationship between two variables; for example (1) support for an option (2) respondent type, to gain deeper insight into respondent sentiments. Chi-Square tests were also run, to identify whether any differences between key sub-samples were statistically significant.
- 2.3.10 Statistically significant differences between sub-samples have been noted throughout the report. Where no information is provided regarding sub-sample variations, no statistically significant differences were found. In some instances, low base sizes for certain questions, or segmentations limited the ability to identify statistically significant differences between sub-samples. Some questions were only asked to individuals in the survey (such as type of area lived in).
- 2.3.11 The variables used for crosstabulations included:
- Type of respondent (e.g. organisation or individual);
 - Response method (e.g. completed via SPT website or invited through the panel);
 - Type of area (e.g. rural, town) (individuals only);
 - Location (individuals only);
 - Access to a car, van, motorbike or moped, as a driver (individuals only); and
 - Frequency of bus travel (individuals only).

Data analysis – open-ended coding (qualitative survey questions)

- 2.3.12 Responses to every open-ended question were read, in full, by trained coders and each sentiment or idea mentioned in relation to a specific question was allocated to a code or heading. These headings (and their relationships) are known as the 'coding framework'.
- 2.3.13 Initial outline coding frames were developed by SYSTRA based on the first batch of responses received. New codes were added as new sentiments were found in the responses. This allowed the coding frames to be fully data-led and developed and refined over time, ensuring all views were captured.
- 2.3.14 Coding was based solely on what the responses stated. Coders did not interpret or assess whether comments were valid. This ensured that the process of coding was as objective as possible, which in turn maximises inter-coder reliability (which is the extent to which independent coders reach the same conclusions from reviewing similar sentiments).

Data analysis – workshop / interviews

- 2.3.15 Interviews were semi-structured and followed a topic guide. Findings were recorded within a stakeholder interview analysis proforma which enabled consistency in reporting. For the workshops, an internal write up of each session was produced that captured the key points raised. Participants were asked for their permission for SYSTRA to record the transcript of the interview. They were informed that this recording was being made for the purposes of accurately writing up the notes of the session afterwards with the file then being deleted.

2.4 Reporting

- 2.4.1 As with all analysis of qualitative data, it should be noted that:

- The views and opinions reported are the views and perceptions of respondents and are not necessarily factually correct (and are not necessarily the views of SYSTRA or SPT); and
- Open question survey responses were optional, and are therefore self-selecting data, and therefore do not provide a sample that accurately represents the views of a larger population. Instead, it allows the views and opinions of different types of people to be heard.

2.5 Considerations when interpreting the findings

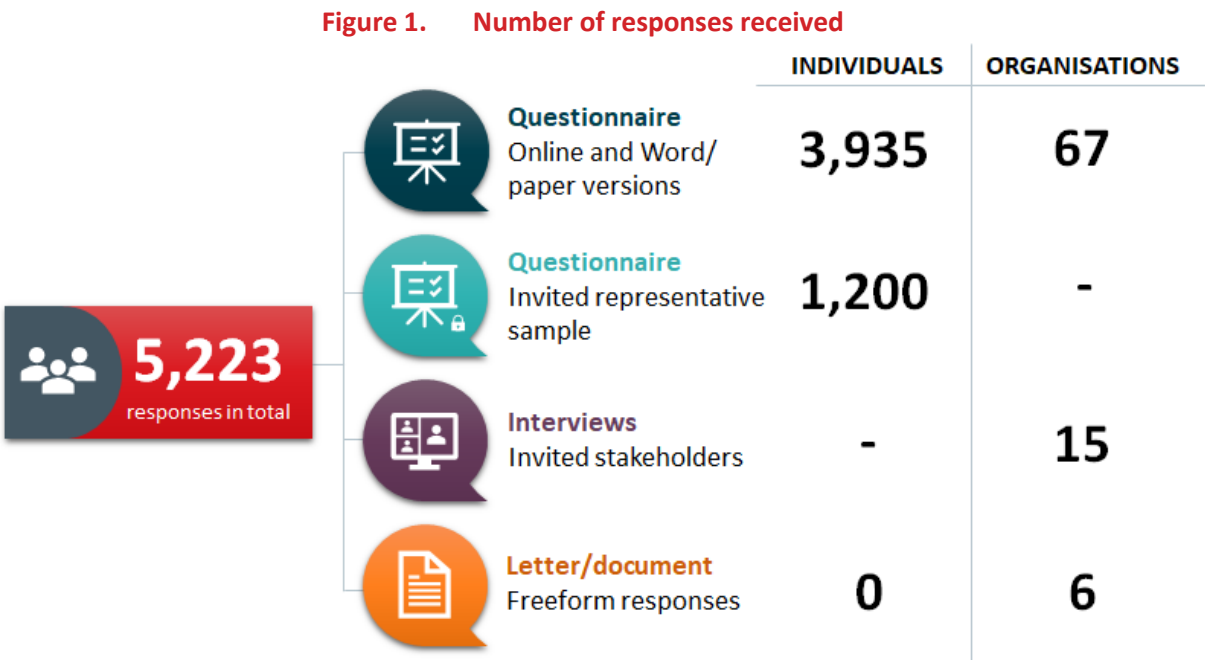
2.5.1 There are several factors which should be considered when interpreting the findings presented in this report:

- In the open questionnaire, respondents were self-selecting and consequently, this sample is not representative. However, as noted previously, an invited representative population sample of the general public was invited to complete the survey, and we have provided comparison with these results throughout.
- Where percentages do not total 100% this is either due to rounding or the multiple response nature of the question.
- Base sizes vary due to some questions being optional.
- The purpose of the research was to provide the general public and stakeholders and opportunity to express their views, and these have been reported as submitted. No assessment/evaluation of the veracity of that feedback has been undertaken for this report and, as such, statements may not necessarily be accurate or reliable.
- It should be noted that all findings have been reported as received, with no additional weighting applied to any particular stakeholder group.

3. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

3.1 Number of responses

3.1.1 The general public and stakeholders were invited to provide their feedback on the draft SRBS during the 12-week consultation period. As noted in chapter 2, respondents were able to provide feedback through various channels. Figure 1 displays the number of responses received through the various channels split by whether the participant was responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.



Note: The total shows the number of responses received overall. However a small number of organisations submitted a response via the online questionnaire as well as taking part in an interview or providing a freeform response.

3.1.2 A total of **5,223 responses were received** during the consultation period across all channels. The majority of responses were from the general public, with **5,135 responses received from individuals**.

3.1.3 In total, **88 responses were received from organisations**, with 15 of these being from organised in-depth interviews. Of the organisations completing the questionnaire, six responses were from bus operators (9%), eight were from local authorities (12%) and 53 classed themselves as another type of organisation (79%).

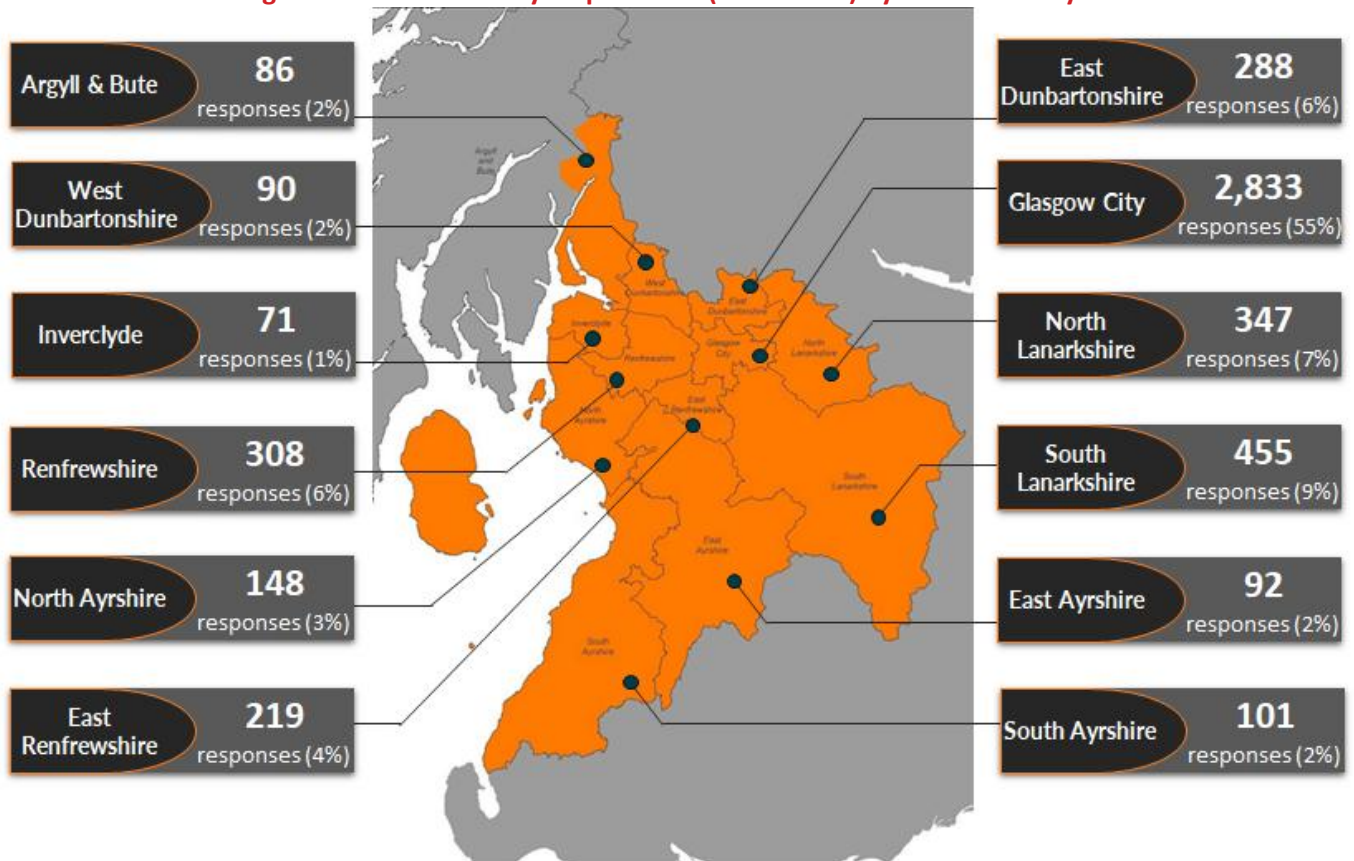
3.2 Distribution of responses (questionnaire)

3.2.1 Questionnaire respondents were asked which local authority they lived in (if responding as an individual) or operated in (for organisations). Some organisations noted they operate across multiple local authorities. Not all respondents answered this question; therefore the base size is less than the total sample.

3.2.2 As shown in Figure 2, the largest proportion of responses from individuals came from respondents residing in Glasgow City, accounting for over half of responses (55%). This is higher than Glasgow City’s share of the Strathclyde population (31%)⁵. This difference is likely due to the open nature of the consultation, which was open to everyone in Strathclyde. To ensure the findings are robust, a separate survey was conducted with a panel sample representative of the Strathclyde population, as described in Chapter 2. The findings from the open questionnaire have been compared against this representative sub-sample to assess the extent to which the results reflect the wider population.

⁵ National Records of Scotland, mid-2023 population estimates

Figure 2. Total survey respondents (individuals) by local authority



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Base: 5,038 responses (Questionnaire, responding as an individual).

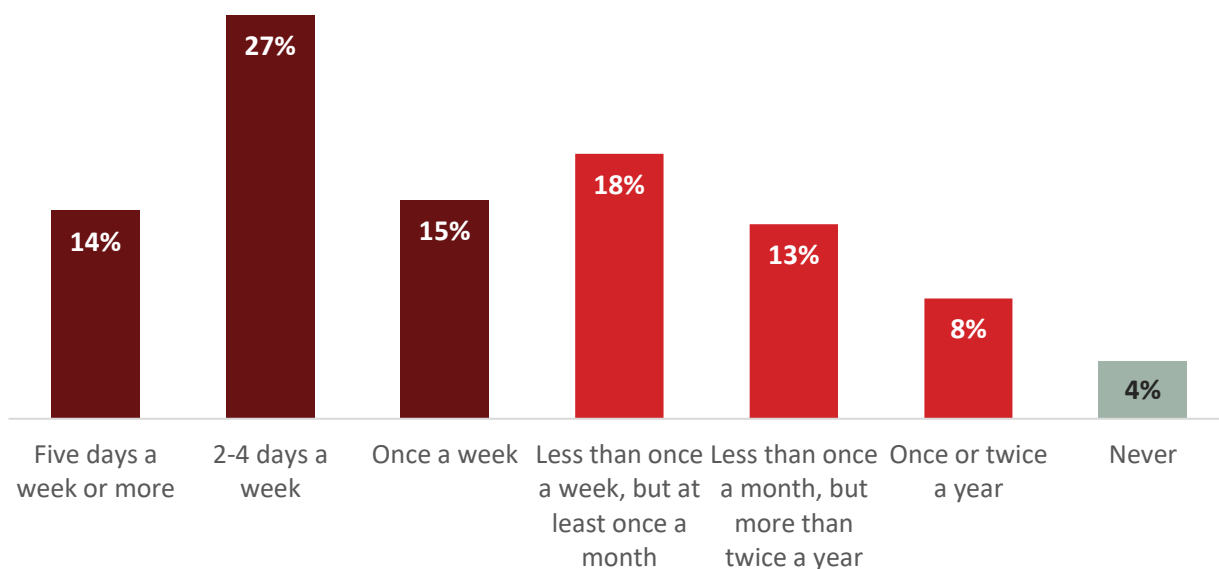
3.2.3 Similarly for organisations, over half of organisations (28, 42%) noted that they operate in Glasgow City. This was followed by 20 organisations (30%) that operate in North Lanarkshire, 14 organisations in South Lanarkshire (21%) and 12 in West Dunbartonshire (18%). Organisations were permitted to choose multiple local authorities in their response.

3.2.4 Those responding to the questionnaire as an individual were also asked about the type of area that they live in. Nearly three fifths of respondents (58%) said they live in a city, whilst a third (31%) live in a town, 9% in a village and 2% in a rural area.

3.3 Travel characteristics

3.3.1 Respondents answering the survey as an individual were asked how frequently they travel by bus in Strathclyde. A small number of respondents chose not to answer this question, which is reflected in the base size being lower than the total sample. As illustrated in Figure 3, 57% of respondents are frequent users of the bus, in that they travel by bus at least once a week or more. A further 40% are infrequent users, travelling by bus fewer than once a week. A small proportion (4%) answered that they never travel by bus.

Figure 3. Frequency of travel by bus



Base: 5,122 responses (Questionnaire, responding as an individual).

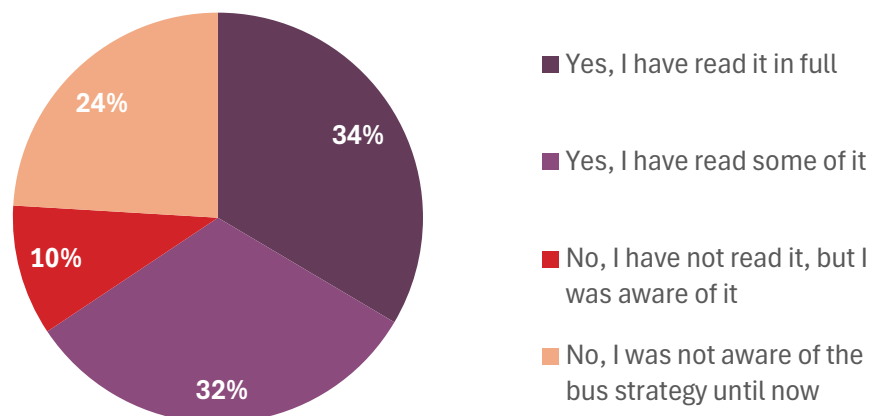
3.3.2 Those completing the open questionnaire via the SPT webpage were more likely to be a frequent bus user. Of those completing the questionnaire through SPT’s website, 59% were frequent bus users compared to 48% of the invited representative sample.

3.3.3 Of those responding as an individual, 58% responded that they have access to either a car, van, motorbike or moped. However, 43% do not have access to any vehicle. A higher proportion of respondents completing the open questionnaire via the SPT webpage did not have access to any vehicle, compared to the invited representative sample (47% compared to 27%, respectively).

3.4 Awareness of the strategy

3.4.1 As the consultation focussed on understanding respondent’s views on the draft SRBS, the questionnaire sought to gauge respondents’ level of awareness of the strategy and whether they had read it to help contextualise their responses. As demonstrated in Figure 4, two-thirds of respondents (66%) said they had read the strategy (either in full or in part). A tenth of respondents had not read it but were aware of it, whilst just under a quarter (24%) were not aware of the draft bus strategy at all.

Figure 4. Have you read the bus strategy?



Base: 5,202 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

3.4.2 Awareness and knowledge of the draft SRBS was noticeably higher amongst those responding to the open questionnaire via the SPT website, compared to the invited representative sample. For instance, 10% of respondents via the SPT website were not

previously aware of the SRBS, compared with 70% of the invited representative sample. This is perhaps likely to be expected, as it is more probable that self-selecting respondents are will have engaged with, or taken an active interest in the SRBS before completing the questionnaire.

3.4.3 Respondents from the following sub-groups also differed significantly in their responses:

- **Satisfaction with the current bus network:** Those who were dissatisfied with the current bus network were significantly more likely to report being aware of the bus strategy, compared to those who were satisfied (42% vs 14%).
- **Frequency of bus use:** Frequent bus users (respondents who travel by bus at least once a week) were significantly more likely to have read the strategy in full (38%), compared to less-frequent bus users (28%) and non-bus users (18%).
- **Type of respondent:** Respondents representing an organisation were more likely to have read the strategy in full compared to those responding as an individual (69% vs 33%).

3.4.4 Both individuals and organisations were asked if they had participated in the 2024 consultation regarding recommendations from the options appraisal. Overall, the majority of respondents did not participate in the previous consultation (69%). There were some differences in type of response, however. A higher proportion of organisations took part in the 2024 consultation compared with individual respondents (58% vs 15%). A greater proportion of open questionnaire respondents also responded to the previous consultation compared to the invited representative sample (19% vs 6%).

4. CONSULTATION FINDINGS: VIEWS OF THE CURRENT BUS NETWORK

The consultation gathered general feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the current bus network. The questionnaire findings indicate that the majority of individual respondents are fairly or very dissatisfied with the bus network (62% respondents), while 18% of respondents are satisfied. Similarly, most organisational respondents (84%) disagreed that the bus network currently meets the needs of the general public. Comments provided in the questionnaire highlighted dissatisfaction relating to the cost of bus travel, issues with reliability, a lack of services in certain areas, long journey times and a perceived lack of integration between different modes of transport.

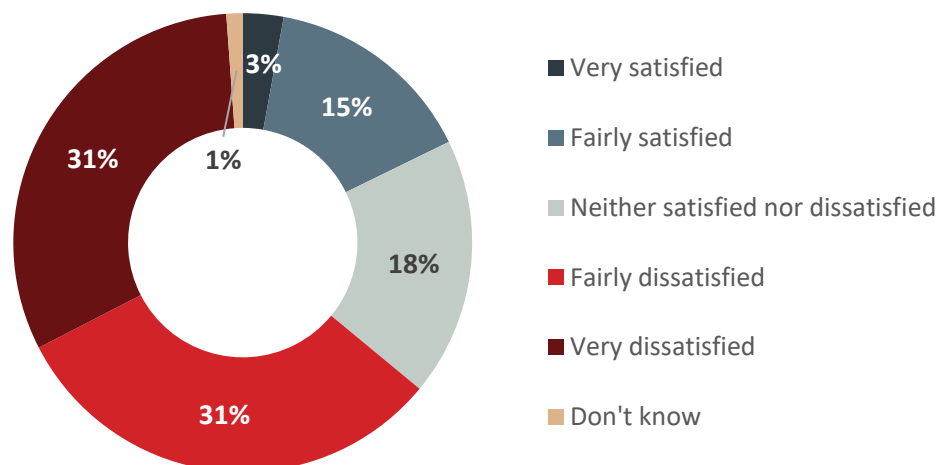
4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The Case for Change chapter of the draft SRBS sets out the opportunity of bus in delivering better social, economic and environmental outcomes. It outlines the problems with the current bus network, including the bus 'cycle of decline'. The consultation gathered feedback from individuals and stakeholder organisations to understand how respondents feel towards the bus network in Strathclyde at present.

4.2 Satisfaction with the bus network

- 4.2.1 Questionnaire respondents (answering as individuals) were asked how they would rate their current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region. The results are shown in Figure 5, and illustrate that more respondents appear to be dissatisfied with the current bus network than satisfied. For instance, 18% were either very or fairly satisfied with the bus network compared to 62% that answered either fairly or very dissatisfied.

Figure 5. How would you rate your current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region?



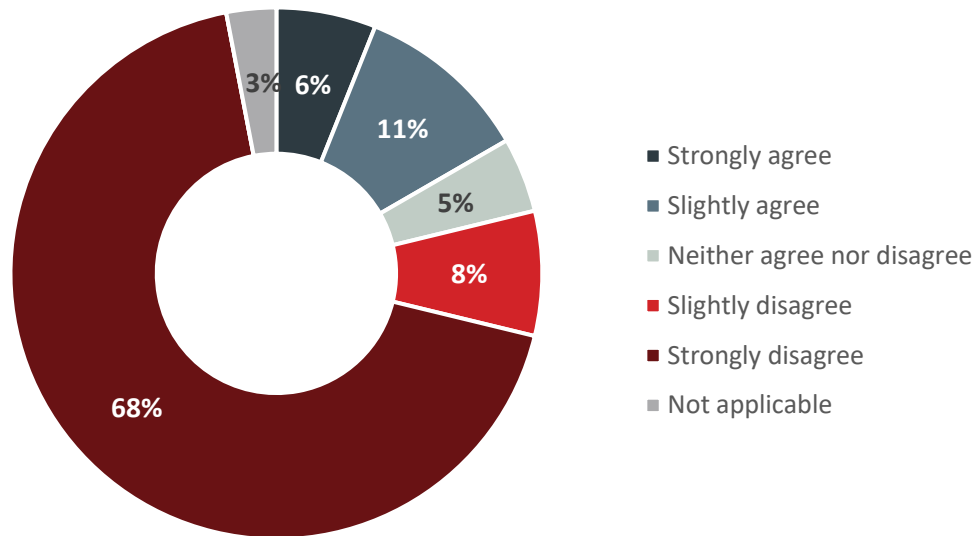
Base: 5,135 responses (Questionnaire, responding as an individual).

- 4.2.2 Respondents from the following sub-groups differed significantly in their responses:
- **Response type:** The invited representative sample were more likely to be satisfied with the bus network compared with open questionnaire respondents via SPT's website (45% vs 9%).
 - **Familiarity with the strategy:** Those who have read at least some of the bus strategy were more likely than others to be very dissatisfied with the current bus network than those that have not read the strategy (38% vs 19%).

- **Previous consultation response:** Those who responded to the previous consultation regarding recommendations from the options appraisal, were less likely to report being very dissatisfied with the current bus network than those that did not respond to the previous consultation (39% vs 29%).
- **Frequency of bus use:** Frequent bus users (respondents who travel by bus at least once a week) were more likely to be satisfied with the current network (21%), compared to less-frequent bus users (14%) and non-bus users (11%).

4.2.3 Questionnaire respondents answering on behalf of an organisation were similarly asked whether they agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public. The responses to this question are displayed in Figure 6. Overall, 17% of respondents answering on behalf of an organisation strongly agree / agree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public, while three-quarters (76%) strongly disagree / disagree.

Figure 6. Do you agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public?



Base: 66 responses (Questionnaire, responding on behalf of an organisation).

5. CONSULTATION FINDINGS: THE BUS NETWORK WE NEED

Feedback was gathered on the draft SRBS chapter 'The Bus Network We Need', which details seven key themes setting out what the SRBS aims to achieve, alongside policies and measures to support each theme. Respondents were asked about the importance of each theme and whether it should be included in the SRBS. The vast majority of respondents considered each theme to be important and felt it should be included within the SRBS. Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') had the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%), followed by Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing'). Stakeholders acknowledged these priorities as foundational to improving satisfaction and increasing patronage, especially in underserved areas such as rural and deprived communities.

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 The draft SRBS contains a chapter entitled 'The Bus Network We Need' which sets out the strategic framework of the strategy and outlines the strategy goals, objectives, policies and measures. The draft SRBS sets out seven key **themes** which set out what the strategy aims to achieve:



5.1.2 Section 5.2 of this report provides high level feedback from the general public and stakeholders on these seven themes, including how important they consider them to be, and whether they felt they should be included as part of the strategy.

5.1.3 Within each theme are a series of policies and measures. The **Policies are the principles that should be applied by SPT** and partners in decision making processes affecting bus in the region. The **Measures describe the activities and outputs** that are needed to support each of the policies. Stakeholders were asked for more detailed feedback on the themes, including whether they felt the individual policies and measures were appropriate to deliver each theme. Section 5.2 also provides this feedback.

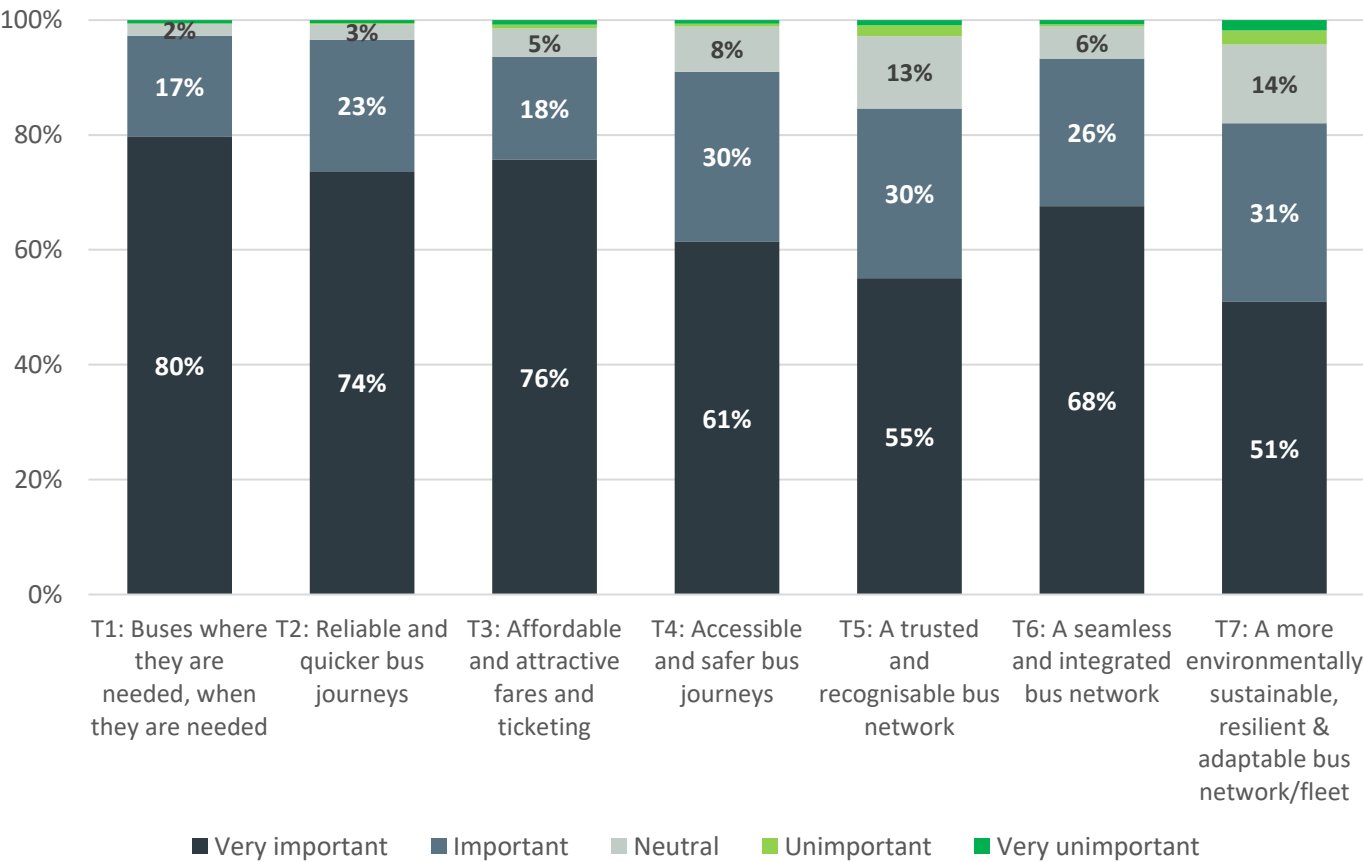
5.2 High level feedback on themes

5.2.1 Questionnaire respondents were asked how **important** each theme is to them / their organisation, when thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved. A very

small number of respondents skipped this question, and therefore the base size is less than the total sample.

5.2.2 The results are presented in Figure 7 and show that across all themes, the vast majority of respondents considered each one to be important. Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') received the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%). It also had the highest proportion selecting 'very important' (80%). Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') had 97% rating it as 'very important' or 'important', though a slightly lower proportion selected 'very important' (74%). Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing') had the third highest level of support, with 93% of respondents rating it as 'very important' or 'important'.

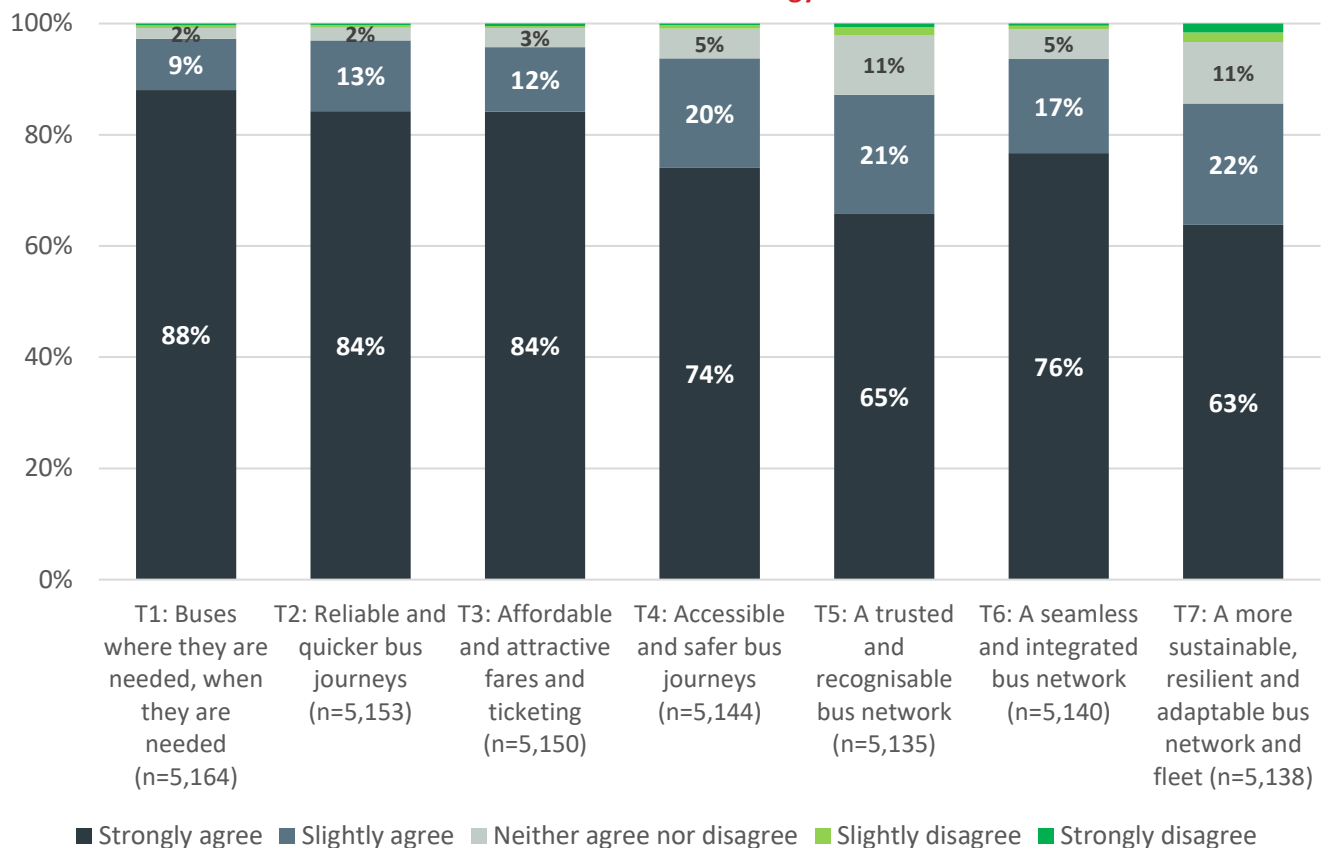
Figure 7. When thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved, how important or not is each theme to [you/your organisation]?



Base: 5,200 responses for each theme (Questionnaire, all respondents).

5.2.3 Respondents were also asked to what extent they agreed that each theme should be included in the draft strategy. Similar to the previous question on importance, the majority of respondents agreed that each theme should be included within the SRBS. As before, the themes with the highest proportion of respondents that strongly agree / agree the theme should be included in the SRBS, were: Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') (97%); Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') (97%); and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing') (95%). As before, fewer responses than the total participants were received due to some respondents skipping this question.

Figure 8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each theme should be included within the bus strategy?



Importance of themes – Interview and free-form response feedback

5.2.4

In the interviews and freeform responses, stakeholders provided feedback about the importance of each of the seven themes. The key points made on the importance of the themes, were as follows:

- **General support for all themes:** Most stakeholders agreed that all seven themes are important and should be included in the strategy, noting their interdependence and the importance of addressing bus challenges in a holistic manner. One stakeholder added that some themes may be more important to passengers, but then others more important to operators, therefore all themes were integral to the strategy.
- **Theme 1 (Buses where they are needed, when they are needed):** This was cited as being important to ensure rural and deprived areas are considered.
- **Theme 2 (Reliable and quicker bus journeys):** Several stakeholders felt this was the most critical theme, and was seen as being transformative in addressing bus decline. One stakeholder had mapped the major, moderate and minor benefits per number of policies and felt that the greatest benefit to customers, businesses, the delivery of public services, the regional economy and the environment comes principally from adopting the policies necessary to deliver Themes 2 and 6.
- **Theme 3 (Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing):** This was emphasised as being important to make bus travel more attractive to the public.
- **Theme 6 (A seamless and integrated bus network):** This theme was recognised as being important, but stakeholders had questions around how different elements fit together and expressed concerns about potential gaps in provision for smaller communities.
- **Other modes:** Some stakeholders felt that integration with other modes should be a key theme. One stakeholder referred to congestion causing delay to buses and felt political action needed to be taken to address car dominance. Another

stakeholder felt car use needed to be less attractive e.g. restricting the amount of parking available, and making that parking shorter duration or more expensive.

5.3 Feedback on policies and measures

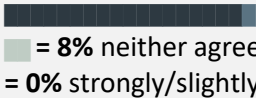
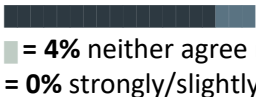
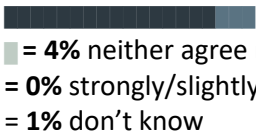
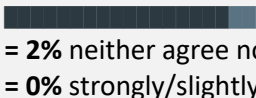
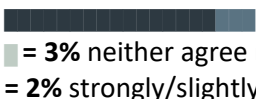
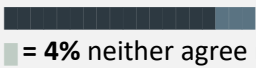
5.3.1 Each of the seven themes contains a number of policies and measures to deliver it. This section provides detailed feedback on each of the individual themes. These questions were optional and so base sizes reflect only those who answered each question.

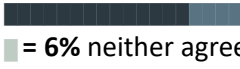
Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed

5.3.2 Theme 1 focuses on maximising the opportunity of bus by providing more high frequency services on busier routes, aiming for 'turn up and go' services over time (a service at least every 10 minutes). The strategy details that this should be supported by a well-defined 'feeder' network that is co-ordinated effectively with higher frequency routes, helping to extend the 'reach' of the high frequency network.

5.3.3 Theme 1 includes three policies and four measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 1. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. It can be seen in Table 2 that the majority of respondents felt that all Theme 1 policies and measures should be included.

Table 2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required	 = 98% strongly/slightly agree = 8% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M1	A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree = 4% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M2	Minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility, working towards more convenient service levels	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree = 4% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required	 = 98% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M3	High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services at appropriate times	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree = 3% neither agree nor disagree = 2% strongly/slightly disagree
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree = 4% neither agree nor disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
		= 2% strongly/slightly disagree
M4	An integrated bus network with better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural to regional express or bus to rail)	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 2% strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 1,458 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.4 Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, and interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. Findings are summarised in Table 3 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I), Questionnaire (Q) or freeform response (FF)).

Table 3. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 1 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 1	Urban-rural equity: A number of respondents commented that they felt policies and measures are skewed towards urban areas. They felt that rural areas can face poorer coverage, have different needs and require tailored approaches.	7	I, Q
	Funding and commercial viability: There was a view that expanding or redesigning the network, especially to unserved/lower-demand areas, may require significant funding, currently uncertain after the Bus Partnership Fund ended.	6	I, FF
	Role of Community Transport: Some felt community transport could be leveraged to improve rural coverage via feeder services, but coordination and funding are considered to be lacking.	3	I
	Definitions: Two respondents suggested that greater clarification is needed on terms such as 'high frequency', 'reliable bus journeys', 'coverage' and 'where and needed', including what is achievable in rural contexts.	2	I, Q
	Calls for SPT to be ambitious: One respondent commented that network redesign is necessary to achieve accessibility targets and mode shift goals.	1	Q
P1	Additional funding is required to expand services and coverage—uncertainty about funding sources is a barrier. In addition, expanding coverage and operating times (e.g., evenings) would improve mobility but may not be commercially viable/profitable; funding gaps are a concern.	6	I, FF
	Extending only the high-frequency network risks overlooking the value of smaller/local services ; local buses through residential areas supporting community connectivity and liveability are also important.	1	Q


THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	Achieving this theme requires significant network redesign , with a focus on reinstating lost routes and creating services that link communities (not just the city), with special emphasis on rural areas.	1	I
	The example of Dublin's BusConnects network redesign was considered relevant, and it was noted that SPT could follow this model, prioritising rural communities and creating a blueprint for sustainable transport for the rest of Scotland.	1	I
	Older people's needs are often considered to be unmet due to limited service levels, routes, operating times, and distance to bus stops. This is especially considered to be the case for rural/remote residents and those with mobility/health needs.	1	Q
M1	Respondent was unsure how principles for frequency and capacity can be defined and applied to the whole SPT region, as this will need to differentiate between urban and rural areas.	1	I
	One respondent felt this risks setting unobtainable standards for rural areas , or setting a low bar for urban centres and removes some of the agility that bus services can offer.	1	Q
	Felt the focus needed to be on disadvantaged communities .	1	I
M2	Welcome the inclusion of this measure.	2	I, Q
	Questions as to whether this also covers smaller areas (e.g. villages) with limited transport connections and the importance of these for economic development and improving prosperity in deprived areas. Consider using Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as one of the criteria in assessing whether the bus network is delivering.	2	I, Q
	Would like more detail on ' minimum levels of service ' wording such as who defines this, and what this encompasses.	1	I
	Consider involving stakeholders in the design of timetables and routes, particularly those providing essential services which are time or appointment based.	1	Q
P2	No specific comments.		
M3	Consideration of Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR) : Increasing peak-hour frequency may be challenging and costly, as it requires more buses to maintain service levels during periods of congestion when all modes are busiest and bus speeds are reduced.	1	Q
P3	Decisions should not be based solely on routes with high passenger numbers; attention needs to be paid to other routes such as routes that cover vital services (healthcare, supermarkets etc.) or areas with limited transport options.	1	Q


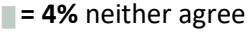







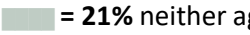
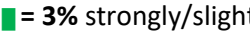
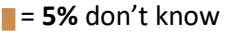

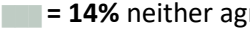
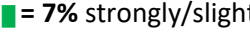



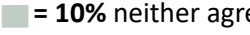

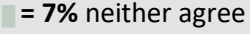


THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M4	It was noted that poor integration between services has a negative impact on older people, disabled people and those with young children, particularly where a journey requires using multiple operators and/or modes.	2	Q
	Existing bus network design limits direct cross-region travel . Consider radial routes and demand mapping for employment hubs.	2	I
	This will require improved reliability to ensure connections are on time – this will require bus priority measures, management of roadworks, consistent parking enforcement.	1	Q
	Need to not just consider the alignment of timetables, but how people move between modes and what accessibility needs have to be considered (such as time to transition, accessibility of routes and services).	1	Q
	Demand mapping should be collaborative – Transport and economic development agencies should be involved, particularly the regional city team and regional intelligence hub.	1	I

Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys

- 5.3.5 Theme 2 looks at reliability of services to encourage growth and mode shift from car to bus. The strategy explains that this includes buses that turn up when scheduled and arrive at destinations on time. The strategy details how buses need to be quicker, with journey times that are attractive compared to using a car, and refers to bus priority measures. Theme 2 includes two policies and nine measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 2. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond.
- 5.3.6 As shown in Table 4, there was strong support for most policies and measures under this theme. Notably, **P4: Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services**, received the highest level of agreement across all seven themes, with 99% of respondents considering this to be appropriate to deliver Theme 2. In general, over 90% of respondents agreed that most of the priorities and measures were appropriate.
- 5.3.7 However, **M10: Traffic management and enforcement measures** had the highest rate of disagreement, with 7% of respondents disagreeing this was appropriate to deliver Theme 2. Additionally, **M9: Support wider car demand management** received the lowest level of agreement among the policies, although it was still supported by 70% of respondents, with 21% answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’.

Table 4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services	 = 99% strongly/slightly agree = 1% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M5	Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways	 = 93% strongly/slightly agree  = 4% neither agree nor disagree = 2% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
M6	Bus services that better meet performance (e.g. punctuality and patronage) standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data	 = 93% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M7	Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services	 = 93% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
M8	Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
M9	Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations	 = 70% strongly/slightly agree  = 21% neither agree nor disagree  = 3% strongly/slightly disagree  = 5% don't know
M10	Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement)	 = 78% strongly/slightly agree  = 14% neither agree nor disagree  = 7% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
M11	More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys	 = 93% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
M12	Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre	 = 88% strongly/slightly agree  = 10% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 7% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M13	Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services	 = 91% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 2% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know

Base: 1,193 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.8 As with Theme 1, those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. The findings are summarised in Table 5 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 5. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 2 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 2	Several participants agreed that bus priority measures on major corridors are key to making journeys quicker and more reliable. Without these, it was felt that congestion, roadworks, and car dominance will undermine reliability.	4	I, Q
	Road congestion was frequently mentioned by respondents. There were repeated calls for strong political will to reduce private car dominance and reallocate road space to buses and sustainable transport.	5	I, Q, FF
	Three participants felt that while SPT can start delivering improvements now, they perceived that only franchising would enable 'turn-up-and-go' services, comprehensive coverage throughout the day/evening, and reinvestment of passenger revenue into less-populated areas.	3	I, Q
	Impact of reliability: Two participants detailed how issues such as late buses are felt more acutely where frequencies are low or services have been reduced/withdrawn. They note that reliability is critical for time-dependent journeys, such as for work, education and health appointments, especially at peak times.	2	I, Q
	One participant commented that bus driver shortages are often a reason for delayed or unreliable journeys; workforce planning should be embedded in the strategy.	1	I
P4	Existing congestion: It was noted that frequency and reliability depend greatly on congestion and local road allocation. They felt that meaningful improvements would require more road space for buses or priority measures, not just more buses.	2	I
	It was noted that achieving reliable and punctual services would require support and collaboration from local authorities and Transport Scotland.	2	I, Q
	One participant commented that they feel reliability is as crucial as frequency or journey time improvements, as unreliable services can force people, especially carers and those with time-sensitive needs, to use taxis or drive, making buses a less viable mode.	1	Q
	One respondent commented that simply increasing frequency without addressing congestion may worsen reliability due to increased traffic. They felt infrastructure and holistic measures were required.	1	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M5	Jurisdiction and responsibility concerns: Several participants commented that SPT lacks control over the Strategic Road Network and the feasibility of this measure was questioned. It was felt that key decisions rest with Transport Scotland and SPT's leverage in delivering infrastructure is unclear.	4	I, Q
	Some felt that effective bus priority may require bold car demand management , potential reduction in car lanes and city centre accessibility, noting the strong political commitment is required. In addition, two participants had concerns that combining bus and cycle infrastructure may complicate priorities, and separate cycle provision should be considered to maximise the benefit of bus.	4	I, Q
	Criteria and rationale for bus priority: The importance of assessing the number of buses/services using a route before implementing infrastructure was noted. It was added that bus priority should not be limited to high-frequency routes and certain congestion hotspots may benefit more.	2	Q
	There were a couple of concerns that there may be a negative impact on small businesses due to loss of parking and accessibility and there may be need for mitigation to offset business impacts.	2	I
	Two participants expressed disappointment over lack of recent progress on bus priority. They saw implementation as being slow and requires additional commitment and funding to deliver tangible change.	2	I
M6	Reliability: This was seen as being an important measure, with some participants noting that people need to be able to trust that bus services will show up as scheduled. This would also help make bus journeys more attractive than car.	3	I
	Congestion: However some felt congestion was the biggest obstacle to adherence and is an issue that is not dependent on regulatory reform.	2	I, Q
	Bus priority infrastructure: These measures were welcomed, however one participant added that bus priority infrastructure should have been explicitly mentioned within the high level description of the theme.	3	I, Q
	One participant queried what the performance standard for patronage is/what the target for this is that SPT is trying to achieve.	1	I
	One participant noted they would like to see this data being open to the public , where feasible.	1	Q
M7	Some felt this measure needs to consider the entire route and all facilities it links up with (i.e. routes that also serve schools, hospitals, etc).	2	I, Q

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	In this measure, it was mentioned that ferry services should also be considered, given the reliance on this mode of travel for many island communities.	1	Q
	Deprived areas: Two participants felt deprived area services should be considered, believing that these areas need more prominence as this is an important step to addressing the high levels of worklessness in the area and a potential 'hurdle to overcome' in terms of getting people into employment. In line with the above suggestion, another participant felt an understanding of what existing service provision looks like to SIMD areas is needed.	2	I
M8	Some participants questioned the measure wording as they felt this implied this is not happening already. One participant added that they felt it was in the interests of bus operators to align services and fleet with existing and potential demand and felt it was unlikely that regulatory reform will identify further efficiencies. Another felt that the wording could be considered 'insulting' to operators.	3	I, Q
	Consideration of disabled people: One participant wanted to see capacity maximised for disabled passengers, such as those who require priority seats and wheelchair spaces. Whilst the participant acknowledged the importance of maximising passenger numbers, they felt this should not come at the detriment of currently available space on fleets, and SPT should also consider how they increase space for disabled passengers who are typically excluded for utilising public transport because of this.	1	Q
M9	Consideration of groups: It was noted that some people will always require the use of a private car or taxi (particularly if living rurally or if they have accessibility needs). Some essential services to support older people and others, such as care at home services and shopping deliveries, also require private vehicles to deliver these services. It was requested that consideration is given to these groups when assessing wider car demand management.	1	Q
	Enforcement: One participant reported receiving feedback that car demand/traffic management and enforcement measures should be stopped (i.e. car parking charges, low emission zones, bus gates), as these do not appear to have made any difference to bus journey times.	1	I
	One participant suggests M9 should only happen once existing bus prioritisation lanes have been enforced.	1	Q
M10	Delivery: Two participants noted they supported this measure but felt it did not rely on a franchise to be delivered.	2	I, Q
	Enforcement: As with M9, one participant felt that car demand/traffic management and enforcement measures should be stopped, as they believe these have not made any difference to bus journey times.	1	I



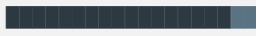




THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M11	One respondent felt that faster and more reliable journeys was contingent on being able to operate free from congestion .	1	Q
	Clarity on measure: One participant was unclear if 'network planning' was in relation to just bus or wider public transport options.	1	Q
M12	Delivery: Two participants noted they supported this measure but felt it did not rely on a franchise to be delivered.	2	I, Q
	Benefits: It was felt this may be beneficial in tackling congestion, improving roadwork processes and enforcement of parking restrictions.	1	Q
	Clarity on measure: One participant was unclear if 'network communication' was in relation to just bus or wider public transport options. They were also unclear as to what a Regional Control Centre would encompass and if this is just for bus or a wider remit. They note that Glasgow already has its Operation Centre which is home to Glasgow City Council's Public Space CCTV monitoring services, Security Services, Partnership Intelligence Unit and Traffic Control Centre.	1	Q
P5	Collaboration: This priority will require support from Local Authorities and Transport Scotland if bus journey times are to be compared to cars.	1	Q
	Impact: It was felt that this priority would benefit older people who are reported to avoid using bus services due to longer journey times in comparison with car, particularly in rural areas.	1	Q
M13	Bus stop rationalisation: Some considered that this may only be beneficial at certain locations (e.g. town centres) and may present disadvantages in non-urban areas by increasing distances to bus stop and service provision. Additionally, there were concerns raised around those with accessibility needs as these may impact accessibility of bus for those who need a stop close to their home.	3	I, Q
	Consider all route types: Faster bus journey times should be considered for all routes. For example, many rural services may not be 'busier' but are essential and people do not use due to length of journey. Whilst this is sometimes unavoidable due to geography, there should be actions to reflect how these routes could be faster using similar measures, and also through provision of additional or new services/routes to cover areas and reduce journey times.	1	Q
	Accessibility: In addition to the reference of people with accessibility needs in relation to bus stop rationalisation, some concerns were raised around 'faster boardings'. Some noted that older people / disabled people have injured themselves when drivers have pulled away at speed before being seated. They required that drivers are not penalised for supporting passengers to board/disembark via	3	I, Q




THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	pressure from faster journeys or punctuality targets. In terms of smart ticketing, it was noted that a proportion of the population will always rely on cash fares and advised not to remove these completely.		

Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing

- 5.3.10 Theme 3 looks to provide simple and easy fares and ticketing to attract people to bus and improve passenger perceptions around value for money. This theme includes discussion of simple fares structures, daily price capping, and best value season products with flexible payment options to be made available across the network.
- 5.3.11 There are three policies and five measures within Theme 3, and the questionnaire asked all respondents the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 3. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. Table 6 demonstrates that the **majority of respondents agreed that all Theme 3 policies and measures were appropriate** to deliver the theme.

Table 6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P6	Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M14	Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all	 = 91% strongly/slightly agree = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 3% strongly/slightly disagree
P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring	 = 96% strongly/slightly agree = 3% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M15	Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made)	 = 96% strongly/slightly agree = 3% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
P8	Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible	 = 98% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M16	Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M17	Accessible and easy to understand fares information	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 3% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M18	Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 1,354 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.12 As with the other themes, those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. The findings are summarised in Table 7 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 7. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 3 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 3	There was support for affordable, flat fares (with reference to London, Manchester, Edinburgh), daily/weekly capping, and “hopper” rights to allow multiple journeys or “trip chaining” for one fare. Such features remove complexity, promote value, and are seen as ‘urgent’ for Strathclyde. It was noted that there are already schemes in place for fare deals (e.g., Glasgow Tripper, discounted staff tickets); there is a need for coordination and scaling up via franchising/integration.	5	I, Q
	Some participants called for integration across all public transport in the region (bus, train, subway, ferry, cycle hire), with tickets that work seamlessly across modes , replacing complex systems like ZoneCard with something simpler and cheaper.	2	Q
	The need for clear, easily available information about fares is highlighted. Digital-only information and payments exclude some users and participants felt that cash payment options must remain , and information should be accessible offline.	3	I, Q
	It was felt that fare structures must adapt for changing work/life patterns (e.g., not everyone commutes 5 days a week); schemes and pricing should reflect flexibility, good value for shorter/occasional travel and “complex” journeys.	2	I
P6	Several participants mentioned that improving fare affordability must focus on those in poverty, low-income households, older people not yet eligible for free transport, supporters/carers, and rural/remote communities.	4	I, Q
	Some were concerned that a shift to digital ticketing may disadvantage those without digital access or literacy , often overrepresented in disadvantaged groups. They felt fare policy must consider those excluded from digital/pay-as-you-go innovations.	3	I
	There were calls for SPT to introduce easy-to-understand flat fares , daily/weekly capping and “hopper” fares to avoid penalising users who need to change buses, reduce planning burden, and model good practice from London/Manchester.	3	I








THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	The Young Person's Card was deemed to have changed travel behaviour patterns positively by encouraging young people onto buses, but it was added that future pricing must keep young people on the buses.	1	I
	Suggestion that fare structures should allow flexibility for longer journeys, so operators in high-cost or longer distance/rural routes aren't financially penalised under a strict flat fare regime.	2	I
M14	Funding and Commercial Sustainability Concerns: Extending or expanding concessionary/discounted fares is perceived to be costly and raises questions of long-term funding certainty. Operators and stakeholders are unclear if reductions would be subsidised and question the impact on commercial network viability and service quality.	6	I, Q, FF
	It was also noted that retaining free/discounted fares is vital for older people and disabled individuals; removing these would have major social, health, economic, and well-being impacts. Public transport is deemed to be a 'lifeline' for those who cannot drive, preventing isolation and dependency.	2	I, Q
	Some called to expand concessionary eligibility to include more community and demand responsive services (especially rural/island areas). They felt current coverage is inconsistent, and extension could address access gaps for the most vulnerable.	2	I
	Clarification was required from some stakeholders about whether the aim is to reduce all fares, only target groups, or give operators subsidies; and there were requests for more clarity and transparency on how M14 would apply in practice across a diverse bus sector.	3	I
	Some operators highlight that claims of "unaffordable" fares can be subjective . They acknowledge that walk-up fares may seem high, but most use discounted/multi-use tickets considered affordable. "Expensive" is context-dependent.	2	I
P7	No specific comments.		
M15	One participant expressed concern over how capped fares will affect the ability of some operators to run their services. More specifically, a non-for-profit operator noted that a capped fare/ hopper fare could mean they would not make enough to run their services into Glasgow.	1	I
P8	No specific comments.		
M16	It was suggested that SPT could work with operators on the delivery of this through a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).	2	Q, FF
M17	This measure was welcomed, and it was suggested that information must also be accessible and available in offline or physical formats , as well as being digitally available.	1	Q


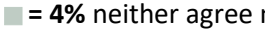
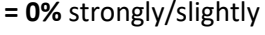


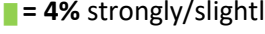


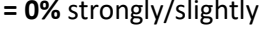
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	One participant suggested that work of the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB) and Bus Open Data will likely deliver further improvements to the already good work demonstrated through operators' digital channels and Traveline Scotland.	1	Q
M18	It was noted that consideration of those who are not online nor digitally confident should be considered when communicating fare increases. They request that SPT ensure that any changes to services or fares are communicated more widely than online platforms, and make every effort to raise awareness of changes with harder to reach groups, by working with partners (local groups, third-sector, and public sector) who are in direct contact with those groups.	1	Q

Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys

- 5.3.13 Theme 4 focuses on making bus travel convenient and accessible to all passengers, as a core component of achieving a fully accessible door-to-door journey experience in the region. This includes well-maintained and accessible routes to bus stops, and more accessible vehicles, stops and stations. The theme also covers travel information, noting this needs to be easily available in accessible formats. Customer service is also included, noting it needs to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for all passengers, informed by training in disability and equality matters.
- 5.3.14 Theme 4 includes one policy and six measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 4. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents felt that all Theme 4 policies and measures should be included.

Table 8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M19	Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 2% strongly/slightly disagree
M20	Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses	 = 93% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M21	Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M22	Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree  = 4% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M23	CCTV on buses and at bus stations	 = 88% strongly/slightly agree  = 7% neither agree nor disagree  = 4% strongly/slightly disagree
M24	High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops	 = 96% strongly/slightly agree  = 3% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 733 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.15 As with the other themes, those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual themes, policies and measures. The findings are summarised in Table 9 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 9. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 4 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 4	Respondents frequently called for all vehicles, stops, stations, information and ticketing to be completely accessible , and not just “more accessible”. Features required included level boarding, space for wheelchairs / scooters on board, ramps and accessible toilets. However there was some confusion over interpretations of accessibility mentioned in the draft Strategy. One thought this referred to disability types, another felt this meant wheelchair access or on-street infrastructure. One operator commented that different people have different interpretations.	7	I, Q
	Safety should encompass personal safety and security as well as physical safety . Concerns include anti-social behaviour, lighting, shelter, CCTV/help points, partnership with police/local authorities, and harmonised reporting mechanisms. Although some queried the meaning of safety as they felt bus travel was relatively safe compared to other modes.	6	I, Q
	There were requests for information (e.g., timetables, fares, next stops) to be available in multiple formats (audio, visual, BSL, other languages) and offline to avoid excluding non-digital/confident users. It was requested that cash payments remain for all ticket types.	5	I, Q
	Some felt that there should be co-design with disabled people , parents (prams), and users with sensory/mobility needs. Continuous monitoring and user feedback (including from seldom-heard groups) was seen as essential for improvement and trust.	3	I, Q
	Clarification of terminology: Some wanted exact and consistent definitions of ‘accessible’ and ‘safe’, noting that operators may	4	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	interpret these differently. In addition, a definition of 'convenient' was required, and 'major network redesign'.		
	Some participants referred to the barriers some disabled people face with obtaining a wheelchair space on board. It was felt a solution was needed, such as taxi alternatives or better managed priority / reserved spaces.	3	I
	Some noted ongoing, standardised staff and driver training for accessibility and inclusion was required. Consistent support for people with mobility, sensory, and cognitive impairments should be provided.	3	I
	The role of community transport was mentioned, as was seen as vital for some groups. In addition, community transport fleet accessibility should be considered, alongside driver support, and funding should be considered under the same standards as mainstream networks.	2	I
	Two participants mentioned on-board anti-social behaviour (feet on seats, noise, vaping etc.) which they felt undermines comfort and sense of safety; with a focus on this needed alongside physical security features.	2	I, Q
	Two respondents mentioned the role of data and monitoring , with consistent ways to gather and use personal security and accessibility data to drive improvements, share good practice and provide reassurance.	2	Q
P9	One organisation for older people said that the feedback they receive is that passengers do not feel buses are accessible or physically safe. They therefore welcomed this policy to improve accessibility. Another noted that concerns around the experience of disabled passengers was raised by the Connectivity Commission.	2	I, Q
M19	Two participants noted that accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, staff and planning teams is already provided . They also added that drivers undertake continuous professional development through the Drivers CPC.	2	I, Q
	Another stakeholder expressed their support for this measure. They asked that the training considers the diverse needs of groups and how vulnerabilities might intersect , and what additional support people might need because of this. For example, how being older and from an ethnic minority might exacerbate challenges in using buses, such as increased feelings of being unsafe due to age and race, or needing support with boarding and also information that is easy to understand in a different language.	1	Q
	Also highlighted was a need for dementia-informed training for all groups mentioned, so that drivers, staff, and those designing services know how to support people living with dementia and understand the unique challenges they may have. They added that this was vital	1	Q






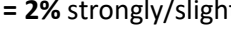
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	that this includes design and planning teams, so they are able to create buses and services which are more dementia-friendly (for example, contrasting colours on handrails and visual communications on signs).		
M20	It was felt that operators already abide by all accessibility legislation , and work is currently in progress to deliver in areas such as audiovisual information on buses.	3	I, Q
	One respondent noted that SPT should explore options to provide audio information at bus stops .	1	Q
	One respondent expressed support for this measure, noting that information should be in different accessible formats such as easy-read, translated versions, large print or braille. In addition, the process for getting these formats should be widely publicised to passengers and relevant organisations who might support passengers with these needs.	1	Q
M21	There was some confusion as to what passenger assistance encompasses or refers to.	2	I, Q
	It was requested that this should cover every type of assistance an older person might need, from journey planning and ticket purchasing to boarding and help with luggage or mobility aids. This includes support for specific disabilities or for those living with dementia. It was added that a single-network wide approach may make it easier for passengers to understand what assistance is available, how to access it, and what expected levels of service should be. Further, this mitigates the 'postcode lottery' risk, meaning older people regardless of where they live or need to go will be able to access the same type and quality of assistance.	1	Q
M22	Some felt that operators already provide this, while others felt it was the responsibility of SPT to address bus stop accessibility.	3	I, Q
	One organisation felt it is important that SPT considers where more stops on routes may be needed to enable older people to access bus services, and also that they work with other stakeholders responsible for road and pavement infrastructure to improve the safety and accessibility of routes to stops and stations.	1	Q
	It was requested that accessibility standards, improvement plans, and a specific accessibility complaints process be made available to the public . This stakeholder felt this would let passengers know what level of services they can expect, and help SPT identify areas of further improvement.	1	Q
M23	Some stakeholders commented that 95%/96% of the Scottish bus fleet currently has CCTV, and felt this measure was already being delivered .	3	I, Q














THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	Further detail was requested as to how measures could be implemented .	2	I
M24	This was deemed to be an important measure, although there was a lack of knowledge as to who the responsibility for this measure lies with.	3	I, Q
	It was noted that maintenance should also cover seating and rest areas (including more accessible seating/rest options and less hostile architecture), structural safety (such as windows, panelling, and canopies), up-to-date and accurate timetables and signage, improved sheltering and cover from weather, improved visibility, easy to read information, and maintenance of any technology such as digital boards or adverts.	3	I, Q
	One participant added that it would be beneficial for all bus stops to be ' smart ' bus stops with bus information, so that timetables are clear to all passengers.	1	I

Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network

- 5.3.17 Theme 5 covers how the bus network should be a trusted and valued regional asset, offering a consistent, high-quality experience for all users, regardless of location or travel frequency. The strategy notes that this involves clear, passenger-oriented branding, stable and well-communicated services, and a strong focus on customer service. Key elements include establishing a customer charter, ensuring accountability, and prioritising positive interactions with drivers. Ongoing mechanisms for passenger feedback and satisfaction monitoring are essential to maintaining and improving service standards.
- 5.3.18 Theme 5 includes four policies and five measures. In the questionnaire, all respondents were asked the extent that they agree or disagree that these policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 5. This question was optional and only answered by those that chose to respond. It can be seen in Table 10 that the majority of respondents felt that all Theme 5 policies and measures should be included, although the proportion was a little lower for 'A network-wide Customer Charter'.

Table 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P10	Develop a consistent network identity across the region	 = 91% strongly/slightly agree  = 7% neither agree nor disagree  = 3% strongly/slightly disagree
M25	A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services)	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree  = 2% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P11	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M26	A network-wide Customer Charter	 = 85% strongly/slightly agree  = 11% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree = 2% don't know
M27	Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
P12	Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree  = 4% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M28	Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree = 2% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
P13	Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region	 = 94% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M29	Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g. travel centres, contact centres, customer services)	 = 93% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 711 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.19 Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. This is summarised in Table 11 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 11. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 5 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 5	Some respondents feel emphasis on network-wide branding/identity is more political than public-serving, and less important than affordability, punctuality, and reliability. Others added that reliability, punctuality, helpful staff, real-time information, and clean vehicles are primary drivers of trust, with branding alone not sufficient and can be secondary.	5	I, Q




THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	That said, others felt consistent branding (including at stops, stations, digital platforms) may help make the network easier to understand , better for new/occasional users, and support perceptions of integration.	4	I, Q
	Some discussed how theme and branding language need precise definitions and they were unclear what compliance looks like and how far requirements would go.	2	I
	Some felt a higher priority was clear, accessible, and unified information , especially through channels like a single journey planning app and more effective marketing/communication.	2	I
P10	One respondent felt this policy could lead to a loss of identity for good operators.	1	Q
	Another had concerns that it may be difficult to adopt a 'one-size fits all' approach , as network identity will be influenced by a number of variables including specific location, coverage, demographics etc.	1	Q
M25	Some questioned whether this measure should be a priority for SPT and whether it is worth the cost , with one noting that it does not feature as an issue in any bus passenger surveys. Some felt that passengers do not care or realise who the operator is.	4	I, Q
	Two participants referred positively to rebranding carried out elsewhere (TfGM Bee Network, Lothian Buses).	2	I
	One respondent argued that branding makes the bus system easier to use . They added that public ownership should be considered within this measure as consistent branding as part of public ownership is how the theme can be delivered.	1	I
P11	Three felt that a better understanding of perceptions around bus travel was required, and understanding how to address these through better communication and engagement. In addition, they added that SPT should collaborate with bus companies who will also have an interest.	3	I
M26	One respondent suggested that a network-wide customer charter could be built upon this without the need for franchising .	1	Q
M27	One participant felt that most operators already do this , however another respondent felt that surveys should not be limited to online platforms , and should include in-person engagement opportunities or physical formats such as paper surveys.	2	Q
P12	No specific comments.		
M28	Several respondents had concerns that restricting changes to set dates undermines the benefits of bus travel : ability to adapt quickly to demand, access, or local change. They felt that buses, unlike	5	I, Q

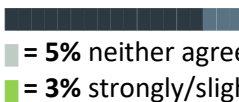
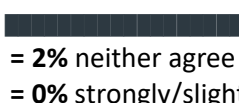
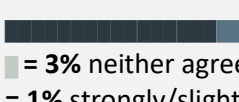
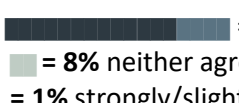

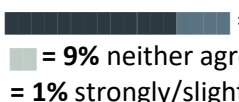
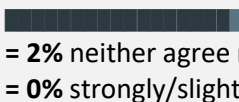
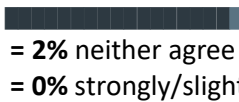
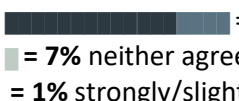
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	trains, can flexibly respond because they operate on public streets/roads, not fixed tracks.		
	Additionally, several were unclear how major events (sporting, concerts, etc.) are to be supported if changes are limited to fixed dates, which may worsen the current difficulties in flexing to event demand.	5	I, Q
	However, some respondents did support the provision of better advanced notice of changes, with participants wanting clear and open communication about <i>why</i> and <i>when</i> service changes happen. This includes rationale, evidence base, and improved passenger engagement/advance information.	3	I, Q
	Two respondents felt the current measure/policy wording is ambiguous regarding event management and whether provisions for flexibility or exceptions exist. They felt clearer language was needed in the strategy.	2	Q
P13	No specific comments.		
M29	One operator commented that they are already committed to providing high quality customer service and invest in ongoing professional development to facilitate this.	1	Q

Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network

- 5.3.20 Within Theme 6, SPT seeks to minimise the inconvenience of changing buses or modes, known as the ‘interchange penalty’, which is seen as being essential to increasing bus patronage and creating an inclusive network. The strategy details how Theme 6 will focus on achieving seamless integration across timetables, interchange facilities, ticketing, and passenger information to make bus journeys easy and convenient. The strategy notes that the network should be designed as a unified system, fully integrated with active travel, rail, and other public transport modes (including future projects like Clyde Metro), enabling straightforward end-to-end journeys.
- 5.3.21 As with the previous themes, respondents largely supported the policies and measures proposed, with nearly nine out of ten respondents reporting they strongly or slightly agreed that each policy and measure was appropriate to deliver Theme 6 (see Table 12).

Table 12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P14	Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree  = 3% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M30	Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer	 = 91% strongly/slightly agree = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 3% strongly/slightly disagree
M31	Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
P15	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region	 = 96% strongly/slightly agree = 3% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M32	High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region	 = 91% strongly/slightly agree = 8% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M33	Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessible and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations	 = 86% strongly/slightly agree = 11% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree = 2% don't know
M34	Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network	 = 89% strongly/slightly agree = 9% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree = 1% don't know
P16	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M35	Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region	 = 98% strongly/slightly agree = 2% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M36	Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements	 = 92% strongly/slightly agree = 7% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 1,146 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.22 Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. This is summarised in Table 13 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 13. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 6 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 6	Integration was widely seen as a high priority for passenger growth and experience, but should include bus, rail, Subway, Metro, and Community Transport.	6	I, Q
	However, participants also wanted clarity around the term ‘ integration ’ and felt this was undefined in the strategy. Respondents wanted to see specifics around which modes, what actions, realistic limits, avoiding ‘forcing’ interchanges, and to clarify if bus-to-bus as well as bus-to-rail is included.	6	I, Q
	There was support for integrated ticketing , and simpler, more flexible multi-modal tickets (ideally with capped fares and real-time integration). However, participants wanted to see cash payment maintained as an option to avoid exclusion.	3	I, Q
	Several interviewees highlight that it is impossible and unnecessary to integrate “all” buses with “all” trains. Specific local priorities, flows, and markets must be considered.	3	I
	Some operators noted they wanted more practical opportunities for real collaboration , e.g., shared depots, feeder services, information sharing, possibly joint franchise participation.	3	I
P14	Smart/cashless systems must not exclude older passengers , those in poverty or anyone unable/unwilling to use digital tools or apps. Participants noted that systems must be inclusive. Two respondents referred to smartcards (such as those used for concession schemes) as a potential way to include those without smartphones.	4	I, Q
	However several participants agreed that genuinely integrated ticketing (covering bus, rail, Subway, future Metro, cycle hire, etc.) makes travel much easier and more attractive for users. There was some frustration around the lack of existing integration.	3	I, Q
	Two stakeholders commented that a single, unified digital (and non-digital) source for tickets, journey planning, and customer service could be effective (citing Manchester as a model to follow).	2	I, Q
M30	As mentioned previously, many participants had concerns that smart/cashless systems may exclude people who cannot or will not use digital tools, noting that some people still require cash fares.	7	I, Q
	In addition to the above, non-digital and cash-based options must be as easy to use and give access to the most affordable fares, with no discrimination against those who cannot use digital channels.	4	I, Q
	Some felt that simpler, more intuitive ticketing products and payment processes would remove uncertainty and attract more passengers , especially from groups who currently find bus access confusing. However, it was added that these were things SPT should be working towards already. It was added that some smart and cashless ticketing is already being addressed by operators and	4	I, Q
















THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	national groups, and SPT should not unnecessarily duplicate or diverge from these efforts.		
M31	One stakeholder specifically commented that integrated ticketing across the network would make it easier for users and felt that the current lack of such option reduces attractiveness of public transport for most people.	1	I
P15	One stakeholder noted that they welcome this policy but added it may not always be possible to locate bus stops in the most convenient location due to restrictions within the existing road network. They felt that the wording should be changed from 'ensure' to being an 'aim' instead.	1	Q
M32	Ensure quality, accessible and comfortable waiting facilities (including free, quality Wi-Fi, and free accessible toilets).	5	I, Q
	Stakeholders also requested this measure should include real-time information and information in multiple formats , including in-person information / support and access to paper timetables and maps.	3	I, Q
M33	One stakeholder cited long waiting times at interchanges, and called for better collaboration between bus and rail operators.	1	Q
M34	One stakeholder noted that they felt this is the current responsibility of SPT.	1	Q
P16	There were again calls for information to be high quality, accurate and consistent which would also have a beneficial impact on older people. Another stakeholder noted that it would be useful to conduct research into how much bus travel information is an obstacle for bus use.	2	Q
M35	Some stakeholders commented that they assume this measure means digital real-time information, but suggested that other sources of information should be available too (e.g. route maps). They suggested that SPT could work with local community groups and associations to provide information and ensure communities are involved in the delivery and promotion of the service. One participant added that SPT should work with partners to set up a portal that everybody is made aware of and can access to find out this information.	4	I
	One stakeholder commented that connectivity may be an issue in rural areas, including lack of broadband in some areas.	1	Q
	One stakeholder felt SPT should note that the provision of real time passenger information has an ongoing revenue impact for local authorities. Without an appropriate revenue stream to provide real time passenger information (RTPI) this would likely have an impact on them.	1	Q

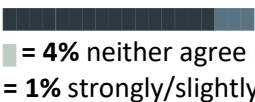
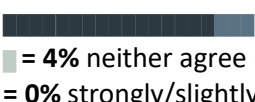
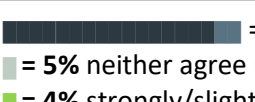
THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
M36	One stakeholder felt that this measure could be achieved through franchising.	1	I

Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet

- 5.3.23 Theme 7 focuses on operating the bus network in an environmentally sustainable and resilient manner to support net zero carbon goals and improved air quality. The strategy emphasises the transition to a zero-emission bus fleet, supported by appropriate infrastructure and skilled workers. Achieving this will be challenging, especially as the network expands, but is necessary to align with national and European climate targets. Additionally, the strategy highlights the need for an adapted and resilient road network to address climate-related risks, such as surface flooding and ensuring continued service reliability as Scotland moves toward its 2045 net zero commitment.
- 5.3.24 The majority of respondents strongly or slightly agreed that each policy and measure was appropriate to deliver Theme 7. Whilst at least 9 out of 10 respondents agreed that each policy/measure was appropriate, 5-6% of respondents disagreed that **P17: Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles** and **M37: High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets**, were appropriate; and, similarly, 4% disagreed that **M41: EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions** (see Table 14).

Table 14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet?

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
P17	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles	 = 90% strongly/slightly agree  = 5% neither agree nor disagree  = 6% strongly/slightly disagree
M37	High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets	 = 89% strongly/slightly agree  = 6% neither agree nor disagree  = 5% strongly/slightly disagree
P18	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region	 = 98% strongly/slightly agree  = 2% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M38	Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network	 = 96% strongly/slightly agree  = 4% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
P19	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network	 = 97% strongly/slightly agree  = 2% neither agree nor disagree  = 0% strongly/slightly disagree

REF	POLICY/MEASURE	RESPONSE
M39	A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change	 = 94% strongly/slightly agree = 4% neither agree nor disagree = 1% strongly/slightly disagree
M40	Resilient and skilled-up workforce	 = 95% strongly/slightly agree = 4% neither agree nor disagree = 0% strongly/slightly disagree
M41	EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions	 = 90% strongly/slightly agree = 5% neither agree nor disagree = 4% strongly/slightly disagree

Base: 627 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

- 5.3.25 Those responding to the questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, as well as interview participants, were invited to comment on the individual theme, policies and measures. This is summarised in Table 15 and each topic raised shows the number of stakeholders this was raised by, and the source of the feedback (e.g. Interview (I) or Questionnaire (Q)).

Table 15. Further feedback from stakeholders on Theme 7 and its policies and measures

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
Theme 7	Several felt that considerable progress has already been made under this theme. Some noted that Strathclyde has a high number and fast-growing percentage of zero emission buses, and many operators have ambitious plans. With this in mind, some participants added this theme is ' <i>already happening</i> ' and less challenging than other priorities.	6	I
	Funding Uncertainty: Some respondents commented that National decarbonisation funding has ended; successful transition and infrastructure upgrades are reliant on large external funding sources not yet secured.	4	I
	Challenges for rural and community transport operators: Some felt that EV/zero emission transitions bring major challenges for rural/community transport infrastructure, such as charging and vehicle type not always being practical. It was added that community transport operators may need support for fleet renewal, access to shared infrastructure, and upfront capital for transition to electric/zero emission vehicles.	3	I
	General public perception: Some participants felt that passengers are not especially concerned about vehicle emissions and predicted that this theme would have lower importance to passengers than other themes.	2	I
	Barriers to rapid EV infrastructure expansion: Two participants commented that infrastructure supply / EV depot upgrades are slow,	2	I

THEME MEASURE POLICY	FEEDBACK	#	TYPE
	challenging and may not align with operator needs, especially outside of the city centre.		
	Additional information: One respondent noted they would like to see more information under this theme on embodied carbon and lifecycle analysis of the network assets.	1	Q
P17	Rural / island considerations: One respondent noted that while supportive of this policy, some remote, rural and island locations may find this difficult to achieve and would require a significant level of investment.	1	Q
M37	Funding: It was noted by one participant that operators have already invested significantly in low and zero emission vehicles. For SPT to accelerate this would be fully dependent on Scottish Government decarbonisation schemes and currently unidentified funding.	2	I, Q
P18	No specific comments.		
M38	Some felt that the depot network is already efficient, resilient and well maintained, and the measure wording suggests this is not the case.	2	I, Q
P19	No specific comments.		
M39	One participant agreed with the measure, but noted that substantial central government investment in the existing road network is required to make this possible.	1	Q
M40	No specific comments.		
M41	It was suggested an audit of depots is required to understand the ability of depots to support zero emission buses.	1	Q
	Potential barriers to this measure were identified as the cost of charging infrastructure and timescales for installation.	1	Q

5.4 Other feedback on themes, policies and measures

5.4.1 Participants representing organisations, through the questionnaire and interviews, were invited to provide any further feedback on themes, policies and measures. This included feedback not already incorporated under the above themes, and/or any areas that they felt were missing from the strategy or where they wanted to reemphasise the importance of certain factors. The key themes raised were as follows:

- **Give greater consideration to rural and peripheral areas (5 stakeholders):** Some felt the strategy was too focused on Glasgow and city centre travel and should consider rural travel and peripheral areas. There were calls for a comprehensive network that serves all parts of the Strathclyde region.
- **Importance of integration (5 stakeholders):** Several stakeholders felt the strategy should put emphasis on seamless connections between different transport modes, including multimodal ticketing, coordinated timetables, and especially better integration of community transport for first/last mile and accessibility. The role of

community transport in serving accessibility needs and rural areas is highlighted by multiple stakeholders.

- **Affordability of bus travel and simplified/integrated ticketing (4 stakeholders):** several stakeholders commented that there was demand for fare capping, integrated ticketing and availability of clear fare information. They called for simplified, one-stop information about tickets and journeys.
- **Reliability, frequency and network quality (4 stakeholders):** This was a frequent concern for stakeholders, especially in terms of bus travel in rural areas. More specifically concerns were raised about low service frequency in outlying areas, and overall reliability of bus services.
- **Accessibility and inclusivity (3 stakeholders):** Some felt the priorities and measures did not go far enough to improve accessibility for older people, disabled people and mobility scooter users.
- **Ownership and governance (3 stakeholders):** This topic was discussed in depth by a few participants. These stakeholders advocated for greater public ownership (municipal or regional), arguing it is under-emphasised despite perceived strong public support. They commented that they see franchising as a pathway to regaining public control/ownership, but not as the only required model. Clarity was also requested on accountability and oversight (e.g. monitoring, watchdog role), which they felt is missing, with specific calls for SPT to report on bus performance and enable user feedback. In addition, there were calls for stronger accountability mechanisms. For instance, it was suggested that SPT should publish statistics on bus punctuality/cancellations and be accountable to users, such as through a watchdog or complaints body.
- **Bus priority and traffic management (4 stakeholders):** Some stakeholders called for bolder bus priority measures, including enforcement and reducing private car dominance in key corridors. They felt more political will is required to ensure buses are timely and not delayed by traffic.

6. CONSULTATION FINDINGS: THE SRBS DELIVERY PLAN

Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that 83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising, while 5% oppose. Stakeholder support for franchising was due to a view it would provide stronger public control and oversight, while others felt it may improve integration and lead to bus travel improvements, particularly in rural areas. However there are concerns about the costs involved and uncertainty over funding sources. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.

The majority of stakeholders agree with the key issues listed in the draft SRBS, but wanted to see the inclusion of accessibility, rural service coverage and integration. Stakeholders also agreed with the key risks, particularly around funding and governance.

Stakeholders consider the SRBS action plan an essential foundation, but some perceive it as lacking detail, urgent timelines, and sufficient ambition, especially regarding public ownership and integrated system reform. There are calls for clearer timelines (distinguishing short/medium/long-term priorities), greater clarity on what constitutes a 'minimum level of service,' and explicit commitment to equity across geographies, particularly rural areas.

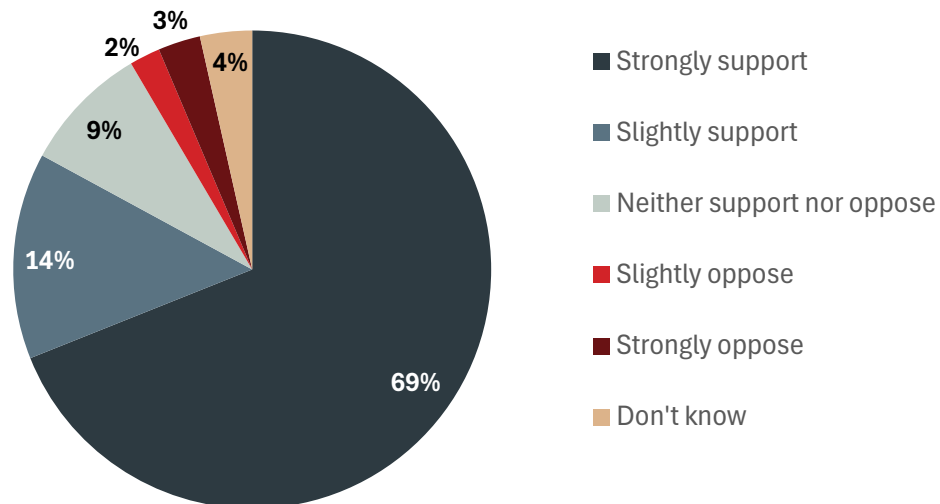
6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 The draft SRBS has a chapter which sets out how it will be delivered. A core element of the delivery plan is the development and implementation of a franchising model. In the consultation, participants were asked whether they support/oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising.
- 6.1.2 The draft SRBS chapter on the delivery plan also sets out key issues and risks associated with the development of franchising. Again, consultation respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with these issues/risks and whether they felt any were missing.
- 6.1.3 The delivery plan chapter of the draft SRBS also displays the process to initiate franchising development described in the 'Franchising Route Map', which also sets out an Action Plan covering actions for the Franchising Route Map, Pre-franchising period, Bus Infrastructure and Traffic Management, and Bus 'Friendly' Environment. Stakeholders were also asked for feedback on the action plan.

6.2 Feedback on bus franchising

- 6.2.1 The draft SRBS notes that SPT is proposing to develop bus franchising for the region's bus network, following the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. Questionnaire respondents were asked to what extent they support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising.
- 6.2.2 Figure 9 illustrates the results of this question, demonstrating that over four fifths of respondents (83%) either strongly or slightly support SPT taking forward bus franchising (69% were in strong support). In turn, 5% either slightly or strongly opposed.

Figure 9. To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?



Base: 5,199 responses (Questionnaire, all respondents).

6.2.3 Response varied slightly depending on the source. Respondents who completed the open questionnaire via SPT's website were much more likely to select 'strongly support' than those in the invited representative sample (80% vs 34%). However, the overall level of support (combining 'slightly support' and 'strongly support') showed a smaller difference between the two groups (86% vs 72%).

6.2.4 Respondents from the following sub-groups differed significantly in their responses:

- **Familiarity with bus strategy:** Those who had either partially or fully read the bus strategy were more likely to strongly support franchising, compared to those who had not read it (79% vs 51%). However, the overall level of support (combining 'slightly support' and 'strongly support') showed a smaller difference between the two groups (88% vs 74%).
- **Current satisfaction:** Those who previously answered that they were dissatisfied with the current network, were more likely to strongly support taking forward franchising, compared to those who are satisfied with the current bus network (81% vs 48%). Again, this difference was smaller when viewing the overall level of support (slightly/strongly support) – 88% vs 75%.
- **Frequency of bus travel:** Those who travelled frequently (at least once a week) were more likely to strongly support franchising compared to non-bus users (72% vs 44%). When combining the overall level of support (strongly and slightly support), 84% of frequent bus users strongly/slightly support franchising, compared to 67% of non-bus users.

6.3 Reasons for support or opposition

6.3.1 Within the questionnaire, stakeholders provided further feedback on whether they supported or opposed franchising. Franchising was also discussed in the stakeholder depth interviews.

Support for franchising

6.3.2 The key themes as to why stakeholders were in support of franchising are as follows (responses raised through the questionnaire are denoted by a 'Q'; interviews by an 'I'; freeform responses by 'FF'):

- **Public control and accountability** (9 responses, Q, I): Several stakeholders view franchising as a route to stronger public control and oversight. They feel this approach emphasises standards, accountability and service quality, rather than profit.

- **Greater integration** (7 responses, Q, I): Respondents expect franchising to deliver better integration across bus services, rail, and other transport modes. They comment that joined-up ticketing, one-stop information, and coordinated timetables depend on unified network planning.
- **Bus travel improvements** (8 responses, Q, I): Several respondents felt that franchising is linked to more reliable, frequent, accessible, affordable bus services. Respondents believe it will deliver higher standards and better experiences for all, with regional rather than perceived profit-based priorities.
- **Better service coverage, especially for rural, peripheral or poorly-served areas** (5 responses, Q, I): Franchising is seen as way to ensure people in rural, peripheral, or poorly-served areas have reliable services. They feel it will empower regional authorities to plan networks inclusively.

Franchising considerations and concerns

6.3.3 Throughout the interview conversations and questionnaire responses, participants raised points of consideration and concern regarding elements of franchising. The most frequently raised themes are listed as follows (note – some of the risks and issues raised will also be discussed in the following sub-sections):

- **Funding and financial risk** (24 responses, Q, I, FF): Some respondents are concerned that franchising is resource-intensive, with costs for setup and ongoing operation (subsidy, infrastructure, decarbonisation, integration, etc.). Sustained Scottish Government funding and strong financial planning are seen as pre-conditions. There is an element of fear that costs may fall on local authorities, limit improvements, or divert funds from other vital projects.
- **Uncertainty over outcomes and greater detail required** (14 responses, Q, I, FF): There is some scepticism about whether franchising will resolve systemic delivery issues. Some point to perceived poor outcomes in other regions (e.g. Manchester). Many respondents (including those neutral or positive toward franchising) cite a lack of granular detail on how franchising would operate, be governed, staffed, funded and tailored to local priorities. Key areas where detail is perceived to be lacking includes implementation plans, business cases, funding model, performance standards, and operator engagement. This lack of clarity hinders stakeholder buy-in and informed decision making. Stakeholders called for comprehensive detail on how franchising will be adapted to address the needs of rural areas. One stakeholder wanted detail on the level (or intensity) of franchising to be implemented (i.e. basic, moderate or advanced) and felt SPT should be clear on this.
- **Operator impact** (13 responses, Q, I, FF): Some stakeholders, including operators, fear ‘theft’ of established commercial routes and loss of business. In addition, some feel there is a lack of recognition for commercial investments and potential loss of local knowledge. One operator in particular notes that operators are already trying to address issues mentioned by SPT, such as investing in ticketing, user information and vehicles (including zero emission vehicles). They feel there is a risk that transition to franchising will delay delivery of bus prioritisation measures and that it will discourage investment in bus companies due to them not knowing / not having a guarantee that they will have control of their fleets in the long-term. Some are concerned over the impact to bus operators, staff and their livelihoods. Some felt that the largest of the bus operators would be affected differently (and more adversely) than other operators. Some requested that SPT should consider potential losses to operators and what steps could be taken to mitigate such losses being suffered.
- **Infrastructure, bus prioritisation and wider policy** (13 responses, Q, I, FF): Several stakeholders see underlying issues (particularly congestion, lack of bus priority, and dominance of private vehicles) as more pressing factors. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.

- **Governance and accountability** (8 responses, Q, I): Stakeholders wanted to see early consideration and ongoing input from SPT, member authorities, and local communities alongside clear accountability for performance.
- **Urban – rural balance** (7 responses, Q, I): In the previous sub-section, some stakeholders viewed franchising as a way of improving service delivery to rural areas. However stakeholders also raised concerns that a ‘one size fits all’ franchising approach may fail to accommodate rural realities or differing council needs. They commented that there was a risk of urban-centric focus or dilution of local priorities.

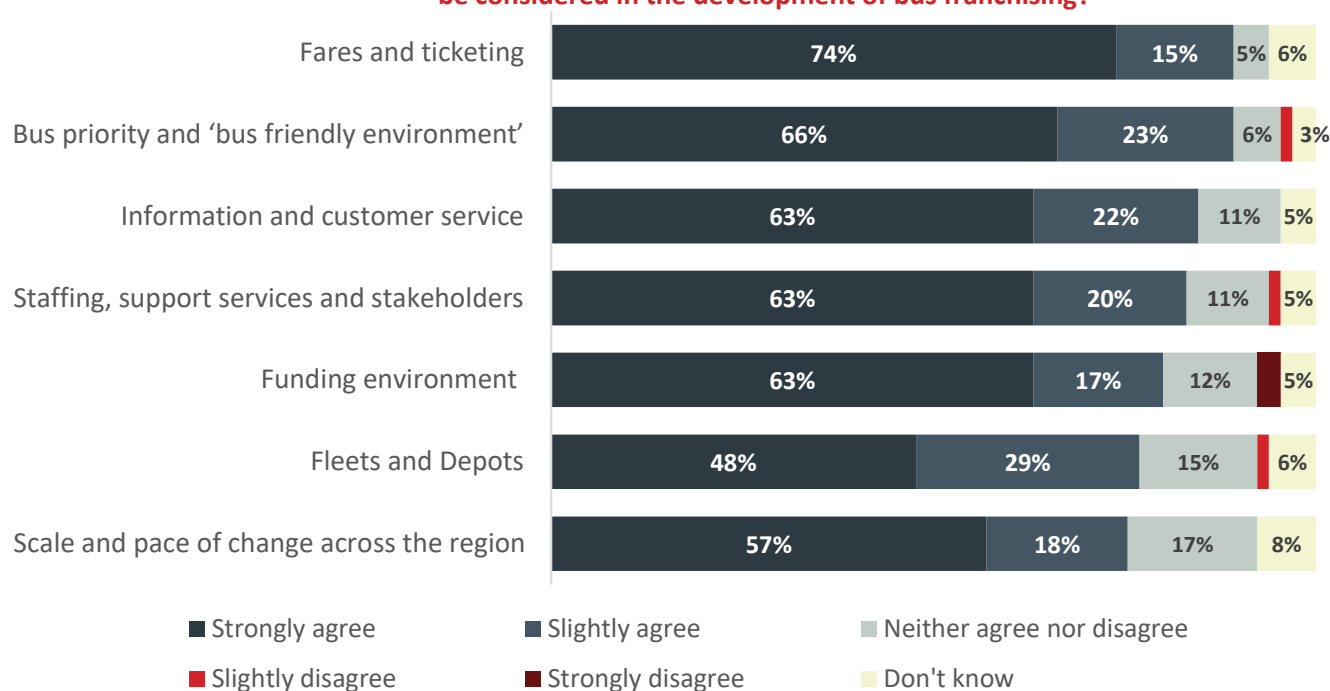
6.4 Key issues in developing franchising

6.4.1 The draft SRBS lists a number of key issues that are anticipated in the development of bus franchising. The questionnaire asked respondents (answering on behalf of an organisation) the extent to which they agree or disagree that each is a ‘key issue’ to be considered.

6.4.2 The feedback is displayed in Figure 10. The **majority of respondents agree that the listed topics constitute key issues for the development of bus franchising**. At least three-quarters of all respondents either slightly or strongly agreed that each topic should be considered during the franchising process.

6.4.3 Nearly nine in ten stakeholders (89%) either strongly or slightly agreed that ‘fares and ticketing’ was a key issue needing consideration – this issue received the highest overall agreement. The same proportion (89%) also agreed that ‘bus priority and a bus friendly environment’ is a key issue to be included, though a slightly smaller proportion strongly agreed with this item compared to fares and ticketing. The issue with the lowest level of agreement was ‘scale and pace of change across the region’; however, 75% of respondents still agreed it was a key issue for consideration. The greatest proportion of disagreement was for the ‘funding environment,’ but this accounted for only 3% of respondents, indicating generally strong consensus across all areas. Perhaps most notable from Figure 10 is that the strength of agreement was lowest for ‘Fleets and Depots’ with less than half of respondents ‘strongly agreeing’ that this needed consideration.

Figure 10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a ‘key issue’ to be considered in the development of bus franchising?



Base: 66 responses (Questionnaire, responding on behalf of an organisation)

In both the questionnaire and depth interviews, stakeholders were invited to share any further thoughts on key issues, including any they felt were missing from the list presented within the draft SRBS. Stakeholders chose to provide feedback both on the key issues presented in the draft SRBS but also additional ones they felt could be included:

Feedback on key issues for the development of franchising

- **General agreement with key issues** (6 responses, I, Q): Some respondents commented that the list of key issues broadly reflects the main challenges associated with the development of franchising.
- **Fares and ticketing** (7 responses, I, Q): Some mentioned the importance of affordability, integration and multi-operator options. Some feel current ticketing is already competitive, while others call for wider integration with metro and rail.
- **Bus priority and bus friendly environment** (8 responses, I, Q): Stakeholders felt that progress would require action to be taken on congestion, bus lane enforcement and wider road/traffic policies, which they felt can and should commence even without franchising.
- **Information and customer service** (4 responses, Q): Some stakeholders wanted to remind SPT about ensuring information was inclusive and accessible to all, both before boarding and while on the bus.
- **Funding environment** (13 responses, I, Q, FF): Stakeholders had some concerns around long-term certainty of funding sources and a lack of clarity around the funding environment.
- **Fleets and depots** (7 responses, I, Q): Financing and replacing fleets for zero-emission buses was seen as a risk, and the importance of aligning franchise length with vehicle life-span. In addition, there were some concerns around Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) and staff transfer, with stakeholders commenting that any TUPE agreements should be fully thought out and practical.
- **Scale and pace of change across the region** (6 responses, I, Q): Some warned about transition time for franchising and the risks of either moving too quickly or slowly. Some suggested using a phased model, as other areas have.

Additional key issues for consideration

6.4.5 Stakeholders also suggested a number of additional key issues for consideration, and these covered the following topics:

Accessibility / inclusion (9): Call for accessibility to be a standalone key issue, especially for older / disabled / pregnant people.

Rural service coverage (7): Strategy should give more consideration to rural areas and consider challenges unique to less populated areas.

Integration (6): Requests to consider multi-modal integration, particularly in rural areas.

Personal safety / security (4): Some felt that passenger safety at stops and on vehicles should be more prominent in the strategy.

Accountability / transparency (4): Calls for more open, transparent, and democratically accountable governance for franchised bus services, including public reporting and stakeholder participation.

Operator sustainability / small operators (4): Another key issue raised was that franchise models potentially risk excluding smaller operators.

6.5 Key risks in developing franchising

6.5.1 The bus strategy lists a number of key risks for the 'franchising route map' when developing and implementing franchising. This includes:

- Political and partnership support and leadership
- Requirement for a strong governance framework
- Funding
- Resourcing
- Market uncertainty
- Untested legislation

6.5.2 As with the 'key issues', questionnaire respondents (representing organisations) and stakeholders interviewed were asked whether they had any comments on these 'key risks' or whether they felt there were any other 'key risks' that SPT should be considering in the development of franchising. Some freeform responses also covered key risks.

6.5.3 Feedback on the list of key risks was as follows:

POLITICAL AND PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

Political will is seen as being key at Scottish Government, local authority, and cross-party/MSP-level. However there are concerns that there is the **risk of policy reversal** or waning support if leadership changes. **Partnership risks include** operators' potential withdrawal or legal challenge, erosion of collaborative working during transition, resistance from car/road lobbies.

REQUIREMENT FOR A STRONG GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

A strong governance framework was seen as being **essential for franchising** but there were queries about what structure this will take. Some stakeholders expressed a need for democratic/local representation in governance bodies and cross-sectional stakeholder involvement in decision-making. They felt there was risk of inappropriate or insufficient governance leading to either a lack of accountability and/or inequitable enforcement against large/small operators.

FUNDING

Funding challenges dominated as the most frequently commented on risk by stakeholders. Many expressed concern about a **perceived lack of information** on sufficient, reliable, and long-term funding for franchising model setup and ongoing operation. Some stakeholders discussed high expectations for service improvements vs limited budgets and had concerns that ambitions may be diluted due to funding shortages. There was some uncertainty about **specific funding sources**. For instance, would the Scottish Government or SPT be responsible? Would there need to be dedicated new revenue streams? Some noted risks of **funding 'gaps'** in the period between existing arrangements and franchising being implemented, and concern that service quality could decline during implementation. Finally, some stakeholders had concerns about responding to **inflation**, especially fuel costs and staff wages.

RESOURCING

Participants feel that **significant skills and staff resources** will be needed for network planning, procurement, contract management, and system oversight. Some had concerns over a potential lack of expertise in SPT or local authorities due to long period of deregulation.

MARKET UNCERTAINTY

Some stakeholders see a key risk as being the **reaction of operators** to franchising, with concerns over a **reluctance to invest** in the interim which may lead to service decline. Some anticipate legal challenges to the franchising process or legalisation. Others had concerns over **smaller operators**, due to bidding complexity and costs. They added that this is an important consideration given their importance to the local area as they tend to employ staff locally and therefore spending wages in the local economy. Other potential risks to smaller operators included the potential for market concentration, for instance franchising could undermine objectives of a competitive, locally responsive market.

UNTESTED LEGISLATION

Some commented on **legislative risks**, including potential complexity and ambiguity of Scottish franchising powers. There was also **regulatory uncertainty** e.g., role and attitude of Independent Panels/Traffic Commissioners, and whether the Traffic Commissioner Panel would approve a proposed franchising framework. There were also potential risks raised from reserved matters such as accessibility regulations not devolved may make some requirements hard to enforce. One stakeholder noted that SPT aim to mitigate risks by liaising with Transport Scotland and the Competition and Marketing Authority, however one stakeholder raised concerns that there is uncertainty that any change to the legislation would be passed.

6.5.4 Other potential risks raised by stakeholders that do not fit into the above categories were as follows:

- **Transition/interim service and reputational risk:** There were concerns as to what may happen if service degrades or if public support wanes mid-process. For instance, some have concerns that during transition, operators may reduce investment or disengage, leading to a decline in service quality. Additionally, some felt that unrealistic expectations may lead to a loss of public support if 'headline' improvements are not delivered rapidly.
- **Operator insolvency risk:** Raised in several interviews and there were concerns this could have a major short-term disruptive effect.
- **Complexity risk:** Numerous stakeholders commented about SPT/the Government's ability and resources to be able to deliver the scale of change successfully. Including whether there is adequate time, resource, and legal/technical certainty.

- **Integration risk:** Comments included integration with other modes, as well as ticketing and technical infrastructure.
- **Customer/community engagement risk:** Some felt this was not fully recognised and could be crucial for building/maintaining support.

6.6 SRBS action plan

6.6.1 SPT aim to progress the 'Franchising Route Map', subject to the outcomes of this consultation and approval by the SPT committee through initial actions set out in the draft SRBS action plan. Stakeholders responding via the questionnaire, through interviews and via freeform responses shared their views on the action plan. This included feedback on the action plan as a whole, as well as the following sections of the action plan:

- **Franchising route map;**
- **Pre-franchising period;**
- **Bus infrastructure and traffic management; and**
- **Bus friendly environment.**

6.6.2 Feedback has been summarised by theme for the action plan as a whole, as well as the areas listed above. The key points raised are described in this section, and the five most frequently raised themes (mentioned by at least nine stakeholders) are displayed by a star (★) icon:

Action plan as a whole

- ★ **Urgency and ambition:** Some stakeholders perceived the pace of delivery to be 'slow'. There were also calls for SPT to be more ambitious, particularly on public ownership.
- ★ **Political Support and Funding:** Delivery is seen to depend on ongoing, strong political will at all levels and explicit, secure funding sources. Fears were expressed over national funding pressures.
- ★ **Greater clarity required on action plan:** Some respondents found the action plan too high-level or '*light on the details*' to comment fully and want to see a more developed version of the action plan. As per earlier comments, they queried some of the terminology, for example, what 'minimum level of service' would entail.
- ★ **Equity Across Geographies:** Some felt there was a risk that rural/outlying communities may be overlooked in favour of urban centres. It was requested that consideration is given to strategic corridors affecting outlying areas including more isolated/rural communities.
- **Communications and engagement:** A small number of stakeholders commented that early and meaningful involvement with all stakeholders (including grassroots passengers, community transport, business, LAs, and operators) would be critical.
- **Ownership and fleet models:** One stakeholder provided input on alternative bus and battery ownership models to reduce capital risk and facilitate SME participation.

Franchising route map

- ★ **Clarity of timelines:** There were multiple requests for the final action plan to include clear timescales, or at least classification of actions as short/medium/long-term.
- ★ **Passenger and community representation:** There were requests for authentic bus user and community input (formed of actual bus users rather than user representatives). Others mentioned the importance of co-production and the need for a disabled passenger forum.

- **Inclusion of vulnerable and community transport representatives:** In addition to the above point, respondents noted that input should also include those relying on services due to access needs. Participants mentioned community transport users, as often those reliant on community transport are excluded from public transport because it is not accessible, and may be able to offer insights and lived experience in making local buses more accessible.
- **Transparency and accountability:** It was noted by a small number of stakeholders that governance structures should ensure all operators (large and small) are held to the same standard with no favouritism. They felt there needs to be strong governance which takes prompt action to deal with operators who do not meet contractual requirements.
- ★ **Public ownership:** Several stakeholders stressed that franchising should be a step toward full public ownership.

Pre-franchising period

- **Resourcing:** There were some concerns around 'organisational readiness' for franchising, including resourcing staff, skills, and financial resources and whether these are sufficient to deliver transition tasks.
- **Need for early actions/benefits:** Some stakeholders mentioned that they would like to see improvements (service, infrastructure, fares, behaviour change) begin in the pre-franchising window.
- **Role of Partnerships and BSIPs:** Several stakeholders commented that they believe partnerships and statutory Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) should remain on the table to deliver quicker wins and secure partner buy-in, even if franchising is the longer-term trajectory. Another stakeholder felt that BSIPs as an option had not been fully assessed by SPT.
- **In-house trial:** One stakeholder suggested that SPT could consider running some currently contracted services directly in pre-franchising period as practical preparation.
- **Operator engagement:** Some operators noted that they should be listed as key partners, and the approach should not be purely unilateral from SPT.

Bus infrastructure and traffic management

- **Funding uncertainty:** As above, there were some concerns over where funding for major infrastructure improvements will come from, especially given recent lack of access/support.
- ★ **Bus priority measures:** There was support from stakeholders for bus lanes, parking enforcement, etc., to increase bus reliability/attractiveness, but also warnings that bus priority measures should not be at the expense of cycling/walking infrastructure.
- **Inclusive/accessible infrastructure:** Some stakeholders felt bus stop/shelter design guidelines should be reviewed with passenger experience in mind. One stakeholder offered to share with SPT recent research they had conducted into what passengers want from bus shelters. Some wanted to see consistency in information provided across operators, such as clear route mapping.
- **Business community as stakeholder:** Input from late-working and hospitality-focused business groups was suggested, particularly given the impact of timetabling and priority on their operations.
- **Role of park & ride:** Some stakeholders suggested setting up more park & ride schemes in outlying areas.
- **Integration with emerging developments:** It was suggested that the action plan should account for strategic corridors and areas of new development and to better understand evolving workforce/commuter patterns. One stakeholder referred to

the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District Scotland (AMIDS) as an example of a significant employment destination.

Bus friendly environment

- **Travel information:** Several stakeholders requested clearer, more integrated, consistent and more accessible travel information.
- **Staff training:** A small number mentioned the need for driver and staff training, particularly in customer care and dealing with antisocial behaviour.

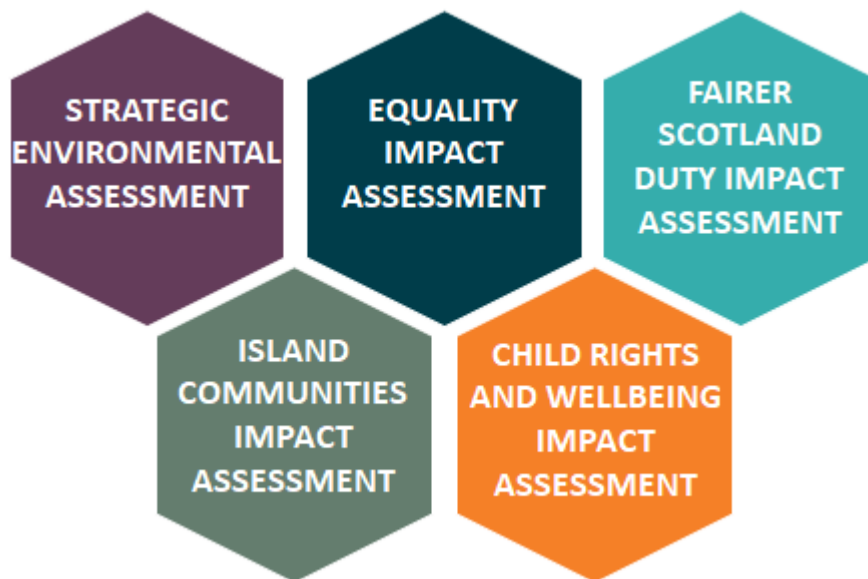
7. CONSULTATION FINDINGS: OTHER FEEDBACK

7.1 Overview

- 7.1.1 This section provides the findings from the consultation on the accompanying documents to the draft SRBS. Both individuals and those representing organisations were given the option of providing feedback on the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. In addition, this section includes any other comments received on the draft SRBS, either made through the questionnaire or through stakeholder interviews.

7.2 Accompanying documents

- 7.2.1 The SRBS has been assessed through the following:



- 7.2.2 These documents were all made available by SPT alongside the draft SRBS. Within the questionnaire, both individuals and those representing organisations were asked if they would like to provide feedback on any of these documents. A summary of the feedback given is provided in the following sub-sections.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 7.2.3 The Strategic Environment Assessment's purpose is to identify, assess, and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of a qualifying plan, programme or strategy (in this case, the SRBS). A key objective of the assessment is to enhance the environmental and wider sustainability performance of a plan or programme. This is achieved through identifying any likely significant effects from implementation of the plan or programme as drafted, proposing mitigation measures to address any identified significant adverse environmental effects, and identifying enhancement measures to improve the overall performance of the plan or programme.
- 7.2.4 All questionnaire respondents were invited to provide comments on the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and 130 chose to do so (all of which were responding as an individual). Despite the number of comments, many were unrelated to the strategic environmental assessment, instead choosing to reiterate previous points made about bus travel. Comments that were directly related to the environment tended to focus on the environmental direction of the SRBS and bus travel in general, rather than specifically on the assessment document, however some themes are directly related:

- **Support for zero-emission / electric buses** (17 respondents): Respondents expressed a desire for cleaner, greener buses and/or a shift to electric vehicles as a clear outcome of the plan.
- **Timescales** (14 respondents): Some respondents added that they felt there was an urgent need to tackle climate change and the importance of environmental policies.
- **Data, targets and transparency** (7 respondents): Some respondents asked for clearer targets, measurable outcomes, quantifiable benefits and transparent/ongoing monitoring. With the latter point, some felt quantified headline benefits would make the report stronger, e.g. tonnes CO_{2-e} saved. Some commented on the visibility of the targets and how these would be measured/reported, but also communicated to the public.
- **Scope of the document** (4 respondents): A small number suggested the document may benefit from broader alternatives, and stronger cumulative impact analysis. Others felt it could be improved by including more detail on long term impacts and better integration with social and economic aspects.

7.2.5 When looking specifically at the Strategic Environmental Assessment, it appears that respondents wanted to see **clear monitoring, measurable targets and independent verification** of these. Some respondents want the assessment to have more focus on rural fleets and “*not just prioritising urban areas*”. There are also suggestions for **whole-life carbon analysis** of zero-emission buses.

Equality Impact Assessment

7.2.6 The accompanying Equality Impact Assessment to the draft SRBS evaluates strategy in relation to the three requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty states that public sector authorities consider the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; promote equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without. This document was made available for public review alongside the draft SRBS.

7.2.7 In total 127 individuals and stakeholders provided comments on the Equality Impact Assessment, however a large proportion of these were unrelated to the document / equality. Key themes on the topic are as follows:

- **Improve accessibility for disabled people** (25 responses): The most frequently raised theme was respondents highlighting the necessity for all services, stops and vehicles to be accessible for disabled people, including those with non-visible disabilities. This included level boarding, clear information and payment systems, and driver behaviour.
- **Support for safer, inclusive and equitable networks** (14 responses): Several respondents felt there was a need for a focus on safety (especially for women at night and vulnerable groups), and equal access regardless of income, location, or characteristics.
- **Improved driver and staff training** (8 respondents): Some commented that better disability awareness, diversity and equality training should be provided for drivers and staff.
- **Accessibility of documents** (4 responses): A small number considered the published equality impact assessment to not be accessible or easy to understand. One respondent felt that the document should be published in an accessible/inclusive format so that passengers could understand, including an Easy Read version and British Sign Language version. They also noted they would expect to see a Human Rights Impact Assessment.

Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

7.2.8 The purpose of the Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment is to demonstrate how proposals for the SRBS show due regard to the Fairer Scotland Duty (FSD). The 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 document was provided alongside the draft SRBS for respondents to view and comment through the questionnaire.

7.2.9 When respondents were asked if they would like to provide feedback on the document, 39 respondents chose to do so, one of which was responding on behalf of an organisation. Some themes are broader rather than specifically on the impact assessment itself, but the key points made are as follows:

- **Cost and affordability of bus travel** (12 respondents): Many highlighted bus fares as a direct barrier to bus travel, especially compared to other modes, and flagged the impact of fare policy on lower income groups.
- **Focus on rural and outlying areas** (9 respondents): Some commented that unequal access for rural areas is problematic, and the impact of poor bus provision for those with no alternative transport. They felt this should have more consideration in the assessment and the SRBS.
- **Positive comments on the document and specific suggestions** (5 respondents): A smaller number of respondents welcomed the inclusion of the Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment and felt it clearly set out the issues relating to social and economic inequalities. One respondent suggested that more explicit links to specific legal or policy obligations would strengthen compliance with the Fairer Scotland Duty principles. It was also suggested that the assessment should flag that delays or cuts to external funding streams (e.g. Bus Partnership Fund rounds) could widen socio-economic gaps, and suggested that SPT should set contingency plans to protect affordable coverage if that risk materialises.

Island Communities Impact Assessment

7.2.10 The Island Communities Impact Assessment demonstrates how proposals for the draft SRBS show due regard to island communities through the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. This Act provides a legal basis for greater decision making at a local level within Scottish Islands and seeks to increase economic prosperity for island communities. This document was provided alongside the draft SRBS for respondents to view and comment through the questionnaire.

7.2.11 Very few respondents (a mix of individuals and organisations) commented on the island communities impact assessments, and just six respondents commented specifically about the document. Most commented that they agreed with how the document had highlighted the challenges and difficulties that island communities face and that improvements were required. Other comments included:

- Better **integration** of bus and ferry timetables would have a large impact on island living;
- One respondent felt the final version should publish **baseline and monitoring** tables disaggregated by each inhabited island and SIMD quintile, and then set targets.
- Two stakeholders felt the document should be more specific around actions to **mitigate** disproportionate impacts. For instance, contingency measures for periods of ferry disruption, as these disproportionately hit islanders. In addition, one stakeholder added that there should be a commitment to **publishing annual progress updates**, ensuring transparency and continuous community co-design in line with best practice from the National Islands Plan implementation reports.

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

7.2.12 The Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment evaluates the draft SRBS in relation to the duties required under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The purpose of the document is to assist SPT in fulfilling the duties of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 by reviewing the implications of the SRBS and associated

measures on children and young people. The assessment process involved consultation to inform the impact evaluation. This document was provided alongside the draft SRBS for respondents to view and comment through the questionnaire.

- 7.2.13 Eight stakeholders requested that bus services better align with **school start and finish times**.
- 7.2.14 Two stakeholders flagged issues in North Lanarkshire due to the removal of dedicated **school transport for secondary schools**. They note that it is presenting challenges with the number of children trying to use public transport to get to school, citing instances where children had not been able to board a bus due to it being full then being late for school. They felt attention in this area was urgently needed.
- 7.2.15 One stakeholder noted that children living in some areas of Strathclyde (including rural areas) are entitled to free bus travel, but cannot use it due to **lack of bus services** in their area.
- 7.2.16 Another stakeholder requested that the final version of the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment should include **baseline and monitoring data**, and adopt SMART, time bound **targets**. They wanted to see a commitment to ongoing child participation via the Lundy model, in line with Scottish Government Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment guidance.

7.3 Other feedback

- 7.3.1 At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were invited to leave further comments related to the draft SRBS. A total of 2,119 respondents chose to leave further comments, and these align to the following key themes:

Feedback on current bus travel:

- 7.3.2 A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding their current experience with the provision of buses as they are at present. This included:

- **Cost** of bus travel (214 responses), which is considered to be a barrier to travel for some.
- **Reliability** of bus travel (196 responses).
- A perceived **lack of bus services** in certain areas (61 responses), particularly in rural areas.
- A perception that journey times are **too long** (61 responses), particularly in comparison to other modes.

Feedback on future bus travel:

- 7.3.3 A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding their vision of the future bus network, and how it could be improved. Several comments were the 'solution' to the issues respondents had about bus travel at present. This included:

- Would like bus travel to be more **affordable** (223 responses).
- Would like to see improved **integration** with other modes of public transport (195 responses).
- Requests for improvements to **reliability** of buses (178 responses).
- Some respondents (93 responses) commented that they would **travel by bus more** if improvements to services and the network detailed in the draft SRBS were made.
- Requests for improved frequency of services (83 responses), including services that start earlier and finish later (76 responses).

Specific comments on the bus strategy:

7.3.4 A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding the bus strategy. This included:

- **Support** for the strategy / the work SPT is conducting (213 responses).
- A desire to see **quicker progress** made and for change to happen as soon as possible.
- However some wanted SPT to be more **ambitious** / as ambitious as possible.
- A desire for SPT to consider the role of community transport, and not lose existing services (specifically noting the 3C Strathaven – Glasgow service).

SRBS delivery plan:

7.3.5 A significant minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding their views on franchising and the draft SRBS delivery plan. This included:

- Requests to ‘nationalise the buses’ and for buses to be under **public ownership** (176 responses).
- **Comparisons** made with Edinburgh (Lothian Buses) and aspirations for a similar bus network (138 responses).
- General **support for franchising** (91 responses).

Feedback on the consultation:

7.3.6 A small minority of respondents provided detailed comments regarding the consultation itself. This included:

- Positive comments regarding the consultation process and the opportunity to be able to provide feedback (40 responses).
- Requests for ongoing engagement with stakeholders and the community on the strategy (11 responses). Several other stakeholders also noted their desire to support and engage with SPT on the strategy moving forwards.

7.3.7 In the stakeholder interviews, some participants also provided some final thoughts and feedback, and this included:

- The main theme, around the importance of **communicating** well with stakeholders (including the general public and bus operators) and how **collaboration** would be key. One bus operator noted that they are keen to collaborate with SPT and work together, noting that they share the same goal of wanting to get more people on buses and out of cars. Another stakeholder saw the relationship with bus operators as being a big risk to the delivery of the SRBS, and felt SPT should convince operators as to how changes would benefit them.
- Another stakeholder added that it was important to get the general public ‘on side’, which would include making it clear to the public on potential beneficial impacts. Another stakeholder was keen to ensure the voice of passengers and communities is captured in the SRBS process, utilising groups such as the bus operator forum and including community transport representation.
- One stakeholder felt the draft strategy summarised the key issues impacting the bus well and feels there is consensus that these are the issues affecting bus travel. But the main challenge is the differing view from stakeholders on the best way to tackle these issues.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Overview

- 8.1.1 SPT carried out a non-statutory consultation exercise over a twelve-week period, between **Wednesday 5th March 2025** and **Thursday 29th May 2025**. The purpose of the consultation was to understand views on key elements of the draft SRBS and consider if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery. Feedback from the general public and stakeholders was gathered, with **5,223 responses** received in total across the following channels:

- Online questionnaire (Paper/Word versions also available);
- Online questionnaire with an invited representative sample;
- Interviews; and
- Stakeholder letters/ documents.

8.2 Summary of findings

Views on the current bus network

- 8.2.1 The consultation gathered feedback from individuals and stakeholders on the current bus network. The questionnaire findings indicate that the **majority of individual respondents are fairly or very dissatisfied with the bus network** (62% respondents), while 18% of respondents are satisfied. Similarly, most **organisational respondents (84%) disagreed that the bus network currently meets the needs of the general public**. Comments provided in the questionnaire highlighted dissatisfaction relating to the **cost** of bus travel, issues with **reliability**, a **lack of services** in certain areas, long **journey times** and a perceived lack of **integration** between different modes of transport.

The Bus Network We need

- 8.2.2 Feedback was gathered on the draft SRBS chapter 'The Bus Network We Need', which details seven key themes setting out what the SRBS aims to achieve, alongside policies and measures to support each theme. Respondents were asked about the importance of each theme and whether it should be included in the SRBS. The **vast majority of respondents considered each theme to be important and felt they should be included within the SRBS**. Theme 1 ('Buses where they are needed, when they are needed') had the highest proportion of respondents rating it as either 'very important' or 'important' (97%), followed by Theme 2 ('Reliable and quicker bus journeys') and Theme 3 ('Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing').
- 8.2.3 Most respondents agreed with the policies and measures described in the draft SRBS. Of particular note is **Policy 4: 'Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services', which received the highest level of agreement**, with 99% of respondents considering this to be appropriate to deliver Theme 2. **Measure 10: 'Traffic management and enforcement measures' had the highest rate of disagreement**, with 7% of respondents disagreeing this was appropriate to deliver Theme 2, the highest rate of disagreement of any policy or measure across all themes. Additionally, Measure 9: 'Support wider car demand management' received the lowest level of agreement among the policies, although it was still supported by 70% of respondents.
- 8.2.4 The feedback also highlighted nuanced challenges and priorities for implementation. Stakeholders expressed the need for tailored approaches to urban and rural service provision, and emphasised the necessity for integrated multi-modal transport. They also identified potential barriers such as funding uncertainties, digital exclusion, and infrastructure. Measures such as bus priority lanes, accessible vehicles, real-time passenger information, and simplification of fare structures were widely endorsed by respondents. Accessibility was a recurring theme throughout the consultation.

Respondents emphasised the importance of making public transport accessible for everyone by involving disabled people in the design and planning process and ensuring that ticketing and information systems accommodate all users. This included retaining cash payment options for those who are reliant on this form of payment, and actively consulting with disabled passengers to inform decisions.

The SRBS Delivery Plan

- 8.2.5 Feedback from questionnaire respondents on bus franchising finds that **83% of respondents are in support of SPT taking forward bus franchising**, while 5% oppose. Stakeholder support for franchising was due to a view it would provide stronger public control and oversight, while others felt it may improve integration and lead to bus travel improvements, particularly in rural areas. However there are concerns about the costs involved and uncertainty over funding sources. Others felt that franchising without parallel major infrastructure improvements may be insufficient.
- 8.2.6 The majority of stakeholders agree with the key issues listed in the draft SRBS, but wanted to see the inclusion of accessibility, rural service coverage and integration. Stakeholders also agreed with the key risks, particularly around funding and governance.
- 8.2.7 Stakeholders consider the SRBS action plan an essential foundation, but some perceive it as lacking detail, urgent timelines, and sufficient ambition, especially regarding public ownership and integrated system reform. There are calls for clearer timelines (distinguishing short/medium/long-term priorities), greater clarity on what constitutes a 'minimum level of service,' and explicit commitment to equity across geographies, particularly rural areas.

8.3 Next steps

- 8.3.1 SPT will review the findings from this consultation to understand how the draft SRBS has been received and consider whether any changes are required. The SRBS will then go to the SPT Partnership for approval.

Appendix A – Questionnaire

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this research

- 1.1.1 Bus services are vital to our communities, connecting towns, villages and city neighbourhoods across the west of Scotland. Despite the significant value of bus to society, economy and the environment, the bus network has been experiencing a decline.
- 1.1.2 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) wants to reverse this cycle of decline and grow the bus network. This means a bus network that attracts more people to buses and ensures access for communities who rely on buses for every day travel needs. This also means a bus network for everyone.
- 1.1.3 To achieve this, SPT has been developing a **Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy** that sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered. The draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy can be accessed from SPT's website: <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>
- 1.1.4 This survey will help SPT understand views on key elements of the draft strategy and consider if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.

1.2 This survey

- 1.2.1 Throughout this survey, we will refer to the **draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy as 'the bus strategy'**.
- 1.2.2 It is important that the bus strategy meets the needs of people, businesses and organisations of the west of Scotland. SPT is holding this consultation so they can hear your views on the bus strategy and supporting documents.
- 1.2.3 SPT has commissioned SYSTRA, an independent transport consultancy, to consult with stakeholders and the general public on the bus strategy. Your views are important and will be gratefully received. This survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. All feedback received will be considered and will help to develop the final version of the bus strategy. You are able to provide a response to the survey from now until **Tuesday 27th May 2025**.
- 1.2.4 If you would prefer to fill in a paper version of the questionnaire, you can request this by emailing RTS@spt.co.uk. A 'text only version' link is also available at the top of each page to aid accessibility.

1.3 Your data

- 1.3.1 All survey responses are confidential and results will be analysed and reported anonymously by SYSTRA. The research complies with the Market Research Society Professional Code of Conduct and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You can withdraw from the research at any time.
- 1.3.2 The survey will ask you for some basic contact information for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses, as well as asking for your feedback on the bus strategy. Those responding on behalf of an organisation will also be asked to provide some basic details about their organisation. Those responding as an individual will be asked about the area they live in and their current travel behaviour.

- 1.3.3 To develop a bus strategy that truly reflects the needs and preferences of the community, it is crucial that each participant provides honest and unique responses. Your feedback is invaluable in shaping a bus network that serves everyone effectively. We kindly ask that you complete the survey only once to ensure the integrity of the results.
- 1.3.4 You have rights in relation to how your personal data is handled and you can find full details by clicking here: <https://www.systra.com/uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2025/02/spt-srbs-privacy-notice.pdf>.

0. Question text: Are you happy to proceed with the survey?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: None

Other: Forced

a	Yes
b	No [Thank & Close]

ABOUT YOU

These first few questions are to understand a little bit more about you / your organisation.

1. Question text: Are you completing this questionnaire as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: None

Other: Forced

a	I am responding as an individual
b	I am responding on behalf of an organisation

2. Question text: What is the name of the organisation that you are responding on behalf of?

Instruction text: Please enter your organisation's name below

Question type: Open

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)

Other: Forced

3. Question text: Which of the following best describes your organisation?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)

Other: Forced

a	Bus operator
b	Local authority
c	Other organisation

4. Question text: In which local authority area does your organisation primarily operate?

Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

a	Argyll and Bute
b	East Ayrshire
c	East Dunbartonshire
d	East Renfrewshire
e	Glasgow City
f	Inverclyde
g	North Ayrshire
h	North Lanarkshire
i	Renfrewshire
j	South Ayrshire
k	South Lanarkshire
l	West Dunbartonshire
m	Other (please specify)

5. Question text: Please provide your name, job title, and email address below.

Note, this information is being requested for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses. A list of all organisations that respond to the consultation will also be included in reporting, but will not be linked to responses. Your details will not be used for any other purpose.

Instruction text: Please enter your name and email address below.

Question type: Open
Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)
Other: Forced

Name:
Job title:
Email:

6. Question text: Please provide your name and email address below. Note, this information is being requested for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses. It will not be used for any other purpose.

Instruction text: Please enter your name and email address below.

Question type: Open
Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUAL)
Other: Forced

Name:
Email:

7. Question text: Have you read the bus strategy?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select
Routing: None (ALL)
Other: Forced

a	Yes, I have read it in full
b	Yes, I have read some of it
c	No, I have not read it
d	I was not aware of the bus strategy until now.

8. Question text: In 2024, SPT carried out a consultation regarding recommendations from the options appraisal. Did [\[you/your organisation\]](#) respond to this consultation?

Question type: Single select

Routing: None (ALL)

Other: Forced

a	Yes
b	No
c	Don't know

YOUR VIEWS ON THE BUS NETWORK

9. Question text: Firstly, how would you rate your current satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the bus network across the Strathclyde region?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / Smiley face (emoji)

Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)

Other: Forced

a	Very satisfied
b	Fairly satisfied
c	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
d	Fairly dissatisfied
e	Very dissatisfied
	Don't know



10. Question text: Firstly, do you agree or disagree that the bus network meets the needs of the general public?

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)

Other: Forced

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know
g	Not applicable

THE BUS NETWORK WE NEED

The bus strategy sets out policies and measures. The **Policies** are the principles that should be applied by SPT and partners in decision-making processes affecting bus in the region, while the **Measures** describe the activities and outputs that are needed to support the Policies. In the bus strategy, these policies and measures are grouped under seven **themes**. The themes are set out below alongside brief explanatory text, with further details available in chapter 4 of the draft bus strategy.

- 1**  **Buses where they are needed, when they are needed**
 A bus network that provides more **high frequency services on busier routes**.
 More **consistent levels of service** across the region and at different times of day.
 Better coverage during early morning hours, evenings, and Sundays.
- 2**  **Reliable and quicker bus journeys**
 Buses **turning up** when scheduled, arriving at destinations **on time**.
 Bus journey times that are **attractive compared to using a car**.
- 3**  **Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing**
 Fares and ticketing that are **simple and easy to understand**
Affordable bus travel, particularly for those who face cost-related travel barriers.
- 4**  **Accessible and safer bus journeys**
 Convenient, accessible and safer bus journeys for all.
- 5**  **A trusted and recognisable bus network**
 A bus network that people trust to deliver a **consistent, high-quality service** no matter where one lives in the region or how often one travels by bus.
- 6**  **A seamless and integrated bus network**
 A bus network that is **easy and convenient to use**
 Better **integration** of timetables, services, interchange locations, ticketing and information.
- 7**  **More environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network / fleet**
Zero emission buses and infrastructure that is resilient to effects of climate change

11. Question text: When thinking about the bus network and how it may be improved, how important or not is each theme to [you/your organisation]?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Grid

Routing: None (ALL)

Other: Forced

For each of the seven themes:

Very important
Important
Neutral
Unimportant
Very unimportant
Don't know

Themes:

a	Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed
b	Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys
c	Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing
d	Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys
e	Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network
f	Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network
g	Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet

12. Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that each theme should be included within the bus strategy?

Instruction text: Please select one

[Show each theme]

Question type: Carousel – respondents will select an answer option for each theme separately

Routing: None (ALL)

Other: Optional

a	Strongly agree
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b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

13. Question text: Would you like to provide feedback on any of the Policies within the following Themes?

Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select check box

Routing: None (ALL)

Other: Forced

a	Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed
b	Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys
c	Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing
d	Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys
e	Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network
f	Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network
g	Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet
h	No – I do not wish to provide any further feedback.

14. Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_a

Other: Forced

Policies

i	P1: Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required
ii	P2: Improve the frequency of bus services, where required
iii	P3: Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network

Measures

i	M1: A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity , periods of operation, coverage and connectivity
ii	M2: Minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility, working towards more convenient service levels
iii	M3: High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services at appropriate times
iv	M4: An integrated bus network with better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g. rural to regional express or bus to rail)

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver **Theme 2: Reliable and quicker bus journeys?**

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_b

Other: Forced

Policies

i	P4: Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services
ii	P5: Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times

Measures

i	M5: Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways
ii	M6: Bus services that better meet performance (e.g. punctuality and patronage) standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data
iii	M7: Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services
iv	M8: Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity
v	M9: Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations
vi	M10: Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g. bus lane cameras, parking enforcement)
vii	M11: More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys
viii	M12: Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre
ix	M13: Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_c

Other: Forced

Policies

i	P6: Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities
ii	P7: Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring
iii	P8: Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible

Measures

i	M14: Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all
ii	M15: Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made)
iii	M16: Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys
iv	M17: Accessible and easy to understand fares information
v	M18: Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policy and measures are appropriate to deliver Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys?

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_d

Other: Forced

Policy

i	P9: Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers
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Measures

i	M19: Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams
ii	M20: Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses
iii	M21: Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach
iv	M22: Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations
v	M23: CCTV on buses and at bus stations
vi	M24: High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver **Theme 5: A trusted and recognisable bus network**

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_e

Other: Forced

Policies

i	P10: Develop a consistent network identity across the region
ii	P11: Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region
iii	P12: Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers
iv	P13: Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region

Measures

i	M25: A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services)
ii	M26: A network-wide Customer Charter
iii	M27: Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction
iv	M28: Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change
v	M29: Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g. travel centres, contact centres, customer services)

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver **Theme 6: A seamless and integrated bus network?**

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_f

Other: Forced

Policies

i	P14: Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS
ii	P15: Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region
iii	P16: Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region

Measures

i	M30: Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer
ii	M31: Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro - networks/services/hub, ticketing and information
iii	M32: High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region
iv	M33: Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations
v	M34: Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network.
vi	M35: Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region
vii	M36: Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements.

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

Question text: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following policies and measures are appropriate to deliver **Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet?**

Instruction text: Please select one for each policy and measure within this theme

Question type: Single select grid

Routing: Q13_g

Other: Forced

Policies

i	P17: Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles
ii	P18: Ensure high quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region
iii	P19: Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network

Measures

i	M37: High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets
ii	M38: Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network
iii	M39: A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change

iv	M40: Resilient and skilled-up workforce
v	M41: EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

15. Question text: Would you like to provide a reason for why you answered disagree?

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: Q14_de (Stakeholders – disagree to any of 14) – please open for each time disagree is selected

Other: Forced

a	No [Single select]
b	Yes (open text box)

16. Question text: Do you have any other comments on the chapter ‘The Bus Network We Need’ within the bus strategy?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)

Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No [Single select]

DELIVERY PLAN

To deliver the bus strategy, SPT is proposing to develop bus franchising for the region's bus network, following the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

The bus strategy provides an overview of bus franchising, sets out the rationale for pursuing franchising, 'key issues' to be considered in the development of franchising and the processes required to take forward the development of franchising.

17. Question text: To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: None (ALL)

Other: Forced

a	Strongly support
b	Slightly support
c	Neither support nor oppose
d	Slightly oppose
e	Strongly oppose
f	Don't know

18. Question text: Would you like to provide a reason for your response? This may include presenting alternatives to SPT's proposals (which for the avoidance of doubt, may include making no changes to the way bus services are currently delivered).

If there is any information that you wish to provide in support of your views, please include this in the text box below. If the space provided is not sufficient, or you would like to provide further supporting material, please email this to rts@spt.co.uk

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: : Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)

Other: Forced

a	No [Single select]
b	Yes (open text box)

19. Question text: The bus strategy lists a number of key issues for the development of bus franchising. To what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a 'key issue' to be considered?

Instruction text: Please select your ranking for each issue

Question type: Carousel – respondents will select an answer option for each theme separately

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)

Other: Forced, randomise

Scale and pace of change across the region
Fares and ticketing
Information and customer service
Funding environment
Fleets and Depots
Staffing, support services and stakeholders
Bus priority and 'bus friendly environment'

a	Strongly agree
b	Slightly agree
c	Neither agree nor disagree
d	Slightly disagree
e	Strongly disagree
f	Don't know

20. Question text: Do you have any other comments on these 'key issues' or think there are any other 'key issues' that should be considered by SPT in the development of bus franchising?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)

Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No [Single select]

The bus strategy lists a number of key risks for the 'franchising route map' when developing and implementing franchising. This includes:

- Political and partnership support and leadership
- Requirement for a strong governance framework

- Funding
- Resourcing
- Market uncertainty
- Untested legislation

21. Question text: Do you have any other comments on these 'key risks' or think there are any other 'key risks' that should be considered by SPT in the development of franchising?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)

Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No [Single select]

A draft Action Plan is included in the Delivery Plan, with actions arranged under 4 topics:

- **Franchising Route Map** - initial actions to progress the development of franchising;
- **Pre-franchising period** - actions to support the management of the transition period ahead of the implementation of any franchising scheme;
- **Bus infrastructure and traffic management** - actions to support delivery of bus infrastructure (including bus priority) and traffic management measures.
- **Bus friendly environment** – actions related to wider transport policies, interventions or programmes complementary to the bus strategy

22. Question text: Would you like to provide any feedback on the action plan?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER)

Other: Forced

a	Yes
b	No

23. Question text: Please click on the specific actions in the plan where you would like to leave a comment, or select the first box if your comment relates to the action plan as a whole.

Instruction text: Please select all that apply – only the actions you select will be shown for comment

Question type: Multi-choice checkbox list

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDER), Q22_a

Other: Forced

a	Action plan as a whole
b	Franchising route map
c	Pre-franchising period
d	Bus infrastructure and traffic management
e	Bus friendly environment

Action plan as a whole

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open

Routing: Q23_a

Other: Forced

--

Franchising route map

No	Action(s)
Franchising Route Map	
1	Report an outline programme for bus franchising development to SPT Partnership within c. 3 months following approval of the final SRBS.
2	Develop and agree governance plan for bus franchising development programme
3	Develop a bus operator forum to facilitate transition to franchising and to address concerns and issues throughout the process
4	Liaise with Transport Scotland and Competition and Marketing Authority regarding application of existing legislation for bus franchising
5	Hold regular briefing sessions and funding discussions with Transport Scotland, Councils and elected officials
6	Develop a bus passenger forum to support the planning and engagement on bus franchising and other specific matters e.g. accessibility and inclusive design
7	Continue to engage with transport authorities across the UK to learn emerging best practice in relation to bus franchising
8	Consider and, as necessary, make the case for any changes to relevant Scottish legislation, including learning from the emerging legislative developments in England and Wales

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image

Routing: Q23_b

Other: Forced

Pre-franchising period

No	Action(s)
Pre-franchising period	
1	SPT will continue its core activities in bus, including supporting socially necessary services subject to budgetary availability, managing bus stations, delivery of bus improvement capital projects with councils and others, provision of bus stops and shelters, information and school transport on an agency basis
2	SPT will work with councils and operators to develop the goals of the voluntary bus partnership, with a key focus on delivery of bus infrastructure
3	SPT will continue to work with Transport Scotland on funding, legislative issues, and bus policy
4	SPT will continue to work with bus operators to promote service continuity in the interim period
5	Continue to work with Transport Scotland on the delivery of the Fair Fares review action plan
6	Support the outcomes of the Bus Decarbonisation Task Force
7	Develop business case for small scale municipal bus operation, alongside identification of any area-based supply side challenges identified in the process to develop franchising

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image

Routing: Q23_c

Other: Forced

Bus infrastructure and traffic management

No	Action(s)
Bus infrastructure and traffic management	
1	Deliver bus priority and other enhancements on the 5 bus corridors already appraised through the Bus Partnership Fund. As part of this, carry out a rapid review of the appraisal outcomes for the 5 bus corridors, ensuring that the level of ambition is sufficiently high across relevant local authorities and identify funding and delivery plans. The 5 corridors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dumbarton Road • Great Western Road • Maryhill Road • Paisley Road West • Pollokshaws Road
2	Enforcement of existing measures and 'quick wins': Work with operators and local authorities to develop targeted enforcement plans for priority locations. Work with local authorities to identify 'quick win' actions at priority locations e.g. renew road linings and signage.
3	Regional bus corridor plan: Development of key corridor principles including network identity, quality, journey times and accessibility, integrated with relevant Clyde Metro developments and wider active travel interventions as appropriate. Appraise and identify infrastructure requirements and projects for regional corridors, including relevant town centres and key interchange locations, integrated with the development of the bus network redesign plan, regional active travel network and Clyde Metro network development. Create a single, prioritised plan for bus corridor upgrading across the network and a programme for detailed design and construction for individual corridors/routes. This should build on existing work already carried out for the Bus Partnership Fund, avoiding duplication of work but ensuring a cohesive and ambitious region-wide approach linked to network plans under franchising.
4	Regional hospitals, Colleges/Universities and town centres: Review arrangements for bus at key sites including vehicle access/circulation, passenger waiting facilities, and RTPI. Develop and deliver solutions, as required. Ensure appropriate bus arrangements are developed for new Monklands Hospital.
5	Bus stops quality and access: Review bus stop design guidelines and update as required. This should include principles for accessible and inclusive design, provision of lighting, shelters, travel information and RTPI, and bus stop location. This should include consideration of vehicle access and passenger boarding needs. Assess bus stops in line with updated guidance and develop programme of upgrading as required. In tandem with local and regional active travel strategies, develop programme of assessing and upgrading walking, wheeling and cycling access to bus stops.
6	Interchanges and Mobility Hubs: Identify suitable locations to provide interventions that promote easy, effective interchange between bus, rail, active travel, and private vehicles where appropriate (for example, rural hubs). These locations would entail bus stations and local bus stops within both urban and rural areas, ensuring that the region's population have appropriate solutions which reflect their specific needs.
7	Bus termini / driver welfare: Review conditions for drivers at bus termini locations and develop proposals for improvements as required.
8	Regional network communication and transport co-ordination centre: Develop and assess options for improving co-ordination of transport network communications, monitoring and management, including consideration of a regional transport co-ordination centre. Develop business case as required.
9	Road network resilience: Work with roads authorities to identify and develop mitigations for surface flooding affecting bus network. Continue to chair the Climate Ready Clyde Transport Resilience Working Group. Lobby for increased resources for local authority road maintenance.

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image

Routing: Q23_d

Other: Forced

Bus friendly environment

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

Instruction text: Please provide your comments below:

Question type: Open / Image

Routing: Q23_e

Other: Forced

--

24. Question text: Are there any other actions that SPT should consider?

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)

Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No [Single select]
c	Don't know [Single select]

25. Question text: Do you have any other comments on the Delivery Plan?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select / open

Routing: Q1_b (STAKEHOLDERS)

Other: Forced

a	Yes – please state
b	No [Single select]

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

The bus strategy has been assessed through Strategic Environment Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. The relevant documents are available at: <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>

26. Question text: Would you like to provide feedback on any of these documents:

Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select

Routing: None

Other: Forced

a	Yes – Strategic Environmental Assessment
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b	Yes – Equality Impact Assessment
c	Yes – Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment
d	Yes – Island Communities Impact Assessment
e	Yes – Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
f	Yes – I would like to provide comments on the documents overall
f	No [Single select]

27. Question text: Please leave feedback relating to supporting documents below

Question type: Open – bring up text box for each separate document chosen in Q24

Routing: 26_a, b, c, d, e, f

Other: Optional

ABOUT YOU

Finally, the following questions will ask where you live and about your current travel behaviour. These questions will be used to understand how views differ by different types of people. They will not be used for any other purpose. All questions are optional and your responses are confidential and results will be analysed and reported anonymously.

28. Question text: In which town/area do you live?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)

Other: Optional

a	Argyll and Bute
b	East Ayrshire
c	East Dunbartonshire
d	East Renfrewshire
e	Glasgow City
f	Inverclyde
g	North Ayrshire
h	North Lanarkshire
i	Renfrewshire
j	South Ayrshire
k	South Lanarkshire
l	West Dunbartonshire
m	None of the above

29. Question text: Which of the following best describes the area you live in?

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)

Other: Optional

a	City
b	Town
c	Village
d	Rural

30. Question text: Do you live on an island?

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q29_a,g

Other: Optional

a	Yes
b	No

31. Question text: Do you have access to a car, van, motorbike or moped, as a driver?

Instruction text: Please select all that apply

Question type: Multi select

Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)

Other: Optional

a	Yes – car or van
b	Yes – motorbike or moped
c	No – none of these [Single select]

32. Question text: In the last 12 months, how often, on average, have you travelled by bus?

Instruction text: Please select one

Question type: Single select

Routing: Q1_a (INDIVIDUALS)

Other: Optional

a	Five days a week or more [Current/frequent user]
b	2-4 days a week [Current/frequent user]
c	Once a week [Current/frequent user]
d	Less than once a week, but at least once a month [Less frequent user]
e	Less than once a month, but more than twice a year [Less frequent user]
f	Once or twice a year [Less frequent user]
g	Never [Non-bus user]

FINAL COMMENTS

33. Question text: Finally, if you have any further comments related to the bus strategy, please enter them here.

Question type: Open

Routing: None (ALL)

Other: Optional

--

That's all of our questions. Thank you so much for your time.

Please click 'Submit' to save your response.

Appendix B – Topic Guide

1. INTRODUCTION [5 MINS]

- Hello, thank you for your time and agreeing to speak with us today.
- My name is ..., I am part of SYSTRA's Social and Market research team. We undertake independent research to understand views and experiences on different topics.
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport has been developing a regional bus strategy which sets out what is needed from buses in the future and how this may be delivered. SPT has commissioned SYSTRA to gather stakeholder views on key elements of the draft strategy and to see if any changes are required prior to the SPT Partnership approving the strategy for delivery.
 - This consultation builds on previous consultation stages relating to the development of the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy.
 - As a summary of the overall process, work on the bus strategy began in mid-2023 by establishing a Case for Change, followed by an options appraisal on the different models available to deliver bus services including partnership models, bus franchising and municipal bus operations.
 - SPT held a public consultation on the recommendations from the options appraisal in April - May 2024. Subsequently, the SPT Partnership approved an approach that would see SPT taking forward the development of franchising whilst working with partners and stakeholder to interim period, and to further investigate opportunities for municipal bus operations.
 - Following this, the draft bus strategy was developed in the latter half of 2024 and subsequently approved for consultation by SPT committee in February 2025.
 - The SRBS process also has been informed by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty. Impact Assessment, Island Communities Impact Assessment, and Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.
- The feedback you give today will be really valuable in helping SPT better understand what key stakeholders, such as yourself, think of what they are proposing in the Strategy. In this interview, I will ask you about your opinions on different sections of the draft Strategy.
- The interview will last up to 45 minutes.
- I have some questions to ask around different elements of the draft Strategy to help steer the conversation.
- Please be as honest as you feel comfortable being. Your honest and expert opinion, as a key stakeholder, is integral to developing a Strategy which can set out a path for having a resilient bus network for the future. There are no right or wrong answers.
 - Everything you say will be analysed and reported anonymously.
 - There may be instances where we use verbatim quotations to bring your views to life, but these will not be attributed to you as an individual but rather grouped by stakeholder type (this includes bus operators and [stakeholder type such as charity]).
- Is it okay with you if we record this interview? We're asking that as it helps us capture your views accurately and means I don't have to take notes at the same time as talking

to you now. The recording will be deleted as soon as we've finished taking notes and anything you say will be anonymised. **Are you happy for our discussion to be recorded? Y/N**

- This research is conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and Data Protection legislation.
 - Your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.
 - More information can be found in the privacy notice for the research, which was attached to the email organising this session.
- Do you have any questions?
- **Are you happy to start the interview? Y/N**

2. BACKGROUND [5 MINS]

- Please could you tell me about your role at [\[organisation\]](#) and what that involves?
- How familiar are you with the regional bus strategy? [\[e.g. have they read it, and in what level of detail, were they aware of it beforehand etc.\]](#)
- What impact, if any, would the bus strategy have on your organisation and the work it carries out?

3. PERCEPTION OF DRAFT STRATEGY POLICIES [15 MINS]

[\[Show slide with seven themes\]](#)

The bus strategy sets out **Policies** and **Measures**. Just to explain, the **Policies** are the principles that should be applied by SPT and partners in decision-making processes that affect buses in the region. The **Measures** describe the activities and outputs that are needed to support the Policies. In the bus strategy, these are grouped under seven themes.

I'd firstly like to ask for your feedback on the themes at a high level, and then we can look at the individual themes (and their policies and measures) in more detail.

- When thinking about the bus network and how it might be improved, how important (or not) is each theme to your organisation?
- Do you have any feedback as to whether each theme should be included/be a priority within the strategy?

As mentioned, under each theme are a number of policies and measures.

- Are there any in particular you would like to give feedback on? [\[jump to the questions of the themes mentioned, this may include all of them\]](#)

[\[Show slide 1 with theme 1 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The first theme in the draft Strategy is **"Buses where they are needed, when they are needed"**. This theme in the strategy explains that the bus network needs to have more frequent services on busier routes and more consistent levels of service across the region. It also notes that there's a need for better coverage at different times, including mornings, evenings and on Sundays. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.

- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)

[\[Show slide 2 with theme 2 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The second theme is **“Reliable and quicker bus journeys”**. Under this theme, the strategy notes a desire for buses to turn up as scheduled, and that they arrive on time and that bus journey times should be attractive compared to using a car. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.
- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)

[\[Show slide 3 with theme 3 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The third theme is **“Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing”**. This theme covers a need for fares and ticketing to be simple and easy to understand. This also covers the affordability of bus travel, especially for the people who experience cost as a barrier to travel to access their everyday needs. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.
- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)

[\[Show slide 4 with theme 4 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The fourth theme is **“Accessible and safer bus journeys”**. This theme in the bus strategy covers a need for bus to be convenient, accessible and safer for all. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.
- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)

[\[Show slide 5 with theme 5 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The fifth theme is **“A trusted and recognisable bus network”**. This theme in the strategy priorities setting up a singular bus network in Strathclyde. This network should be trusted by people to deliver a consistent, high-quality service regardless of where in the region they live or how often they travel by bus. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.
- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)

[\[Show slide 6 with theme 6 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The sixth theme is **“A seamless and integrated bus network”**. Here, the strategy notes a priority for the region is to have a bus network that is easy and convenient to use with better integration of timetables, services, interchange locations, ticketing and information. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.
- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)

[\[Show slide 7 with theme 7 \(policy and associated measures\)\]](#)

- The seventh and final theme of the draft Strategy is **“A more environmentally sustainable, resilient and adaptable bus network and fleet”**. This theme covers a desire to work towards zero emission buses and infrastructure that is resilient to the impact of climate change. The information on the screen shows the policies and measures attached to this theme.
- Do you have any feedback on the policy(ies) and measure(s) that have been linked with this theme? [\[probe to understand which they may agree/disagree with and why, and whether they feel anything is missing\]](#)
- Thank you for all your input on the themes, policies and measures. Do you have any other comments on the themes, policies or measures before we move on to discuss the next part of the strategy?

4. PERCEPTION OF DELIVERY PLAN [15 MINS]

As part of the bus strategy, SPT is proposing to develop bus franchising for the region’s bus network. This would be done following the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

Explain bus franchising if needed:

What is bus franchising? Bus franchising is when a transport authority, like SPT, specifies the bus services which are provided in an area and contracts with bus operators for those services. This is different to the current situation where, for the majority of bus services, bus operators decide which services to provide and what fares to charge. Under bus franchising, the transport authority decides when and where buses run, how they connect with other transport options, and what the fares will be, ensuring that the services meet community needs and stays within budget.

- To what extent do you support or oppose SPT taking forward bus franchising through the processes required by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019?
- Why is that? [\(Probe to understand reasons for support or opposition, would they support it if there were modifications, if they oppose then what would they like to see introduced instead, this might include no changes.\)](#)

In the draft Strategy, SPT have identified and described **key issues and risks** in franchising. I would now like to get your feedback on these.

Key issues in developing franchising

The key issues in developing franchising SPT have described in the bus strategy are:

1. Scale and pace of change across the region
 2. Fares and ticketing
 3. Information and customer service
 4. Funding environment
 5. Fleets and Depots
 6. Staffing, support services and stakeholders
 7. Bus priority and 'bus friendly environment'
- Do you have any initial thoughts on these 'key issues'?
 - [If yes] To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the key issues for franchising? Why do you agree / disagree?
 - Are there any other key issues that haven't been considered here? If yes, what are these?
 - Which of these issues do you feel is the most prominent in terms of bus franchising? [Probe to understand reasoning].

Key risks in developing franchising

The 'key risks' for the 'franchising route map' identified in the draft Strategy are:

1. Political and partnership support and leadership
 2. Requirement for a strong governance framework
 3. Funding
 4. Resourcing
 5. Market uncertainty
 6. Untested legislation
- Would you like to comment on any of these identified key risks to bus franchising?
 - [If yes] To what extent do you agree or disagree that these are the key risks for franchising? Why?
 - Do you disagree with any of these key risks? (Probe to understand reasoning).
 - Are there any other key risks that you think haven't been considered here?
 - [If no] In your view, what do you see as being key risks in bus franchising being developed in Strathclyde? (Probe to understand reasoning).

Action Plan for delivery of bus franchising

The bus strategy includes an Action Plan which covers the actions required to deliver bus franchising, and this will be progressed subject to the outcome of this consultation and approval by the SPT committee. The action plan is split into four areas (*franchising route map, pre-franchising period, bus infrastructure and traffic management, and creating a bus friendly environment*).

- Would you like to provide any feedback on the Action Plan?
 - [If yes] do you agree / disagree with this approach? Why/why not?
 - Will it help SPT achieve their goals?
 - Do you have any comments on the specific actions included?
 - Are there any actions not shown in the draft Strategy that you think SPT should be considering? If yes, what are these actions? Why should these actions be considered?
 - Are there any risks to the delivery of these actions? Or any other factors that should be considered?

5. END OF INTERVIEW [5 MINS]

Thank you so much for your time today, and all your input. This feedback will be useful for SPT to understand how their draft Regional Bus Strategy is received by key stakeholders including you.

We will report our findings from the consultation back to SPT and they will use this as the basis for making any changes to the draft Strategy before it goes to the SPT Partnership for approval.

Before we wrap up, is there any other feedback on the draft Strategy you would like to provide?

Thank and close.

SYSTRA provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

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