

# Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

Island Communities Impact Assessment Final Report



Stantec UK Limited

Prepared for:  
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

February 2025

Prepared by:  
Stantec UK Limited

Project/File:  
332410916

**[Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy]**

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Quality Check</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Independent Review</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	ICIA	JK	21/2/25	KM	21/2/25		
2.0	ICIA	JK	25/2/25	KM	26/2/25	PW	26/2/25
3.0	ICIA	PW	28/2/25				



**[Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy]**

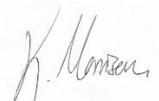
The conclusions in the Report titled Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy: Island Communities Impact Assessment Final Report are Stantec's professional opinion, as of the time of the Report, and concerning the scope described in the Report. The opinions in the document are based on conditions and information existing at the time the scope of work was conducted and do not take into account any subsequent changes. The Report relates solely to the specific project for which Stantec was retained and the stated purpose for which the Report was prepared. The Report is not to be used or relied on for any variation or extension of the project, or for any other project or purpose, and any unauthorized use or reliance is at the recipient's own risk.

Stantec has assumed all information received from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (the "Client") and third parties in the preparation of the Report to be correct. While Stantec has exercised a customary level of judgment or due diligence in the use of such information, Stantec assumes no responsibility for the consequences of any error or omission contained therein.

This Report is intended solely for use by the Client in accordance with Stantec's contract with the Client. While the Report may be provided by the Client to applicable authorities having jurisdiction and to other third parties in connection with the project, Stantec disclaims any legal duty based upon warranty, reliance or any other theory to any third party, and will not be liable to such third party for any damages or losses of any kind that may result.

Prepared by E. McWilliams, Jenny Keenan  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Eve McWilliams, Jenny Keenan  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Reviewed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Kathleen Morrison  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Approved by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Prudence Wales  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name



## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acronyms / Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1.1 Overview.....	5
<b>2 Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.1 Project Background .....	6
<b>3 Assessment Framework</b> .....	<b>9</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	9
3.2 Guide Questions .....	9
3.3 Assessment Criteria Matrix .....	10
<b>4 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>4.1 Overview</b> .....	<b>11</b>
4.2 Summary of Consultation Findings .....	11
4.3 Accessibility engagement .....	13
<b>5 Baseline Conditions</b> .....	<b>15</b>
5.1 Overview.....	15
5.2 Island Accessibility .....	15
5.3 Social and Demographic Issues.....	16
5.4 Socio-Economic Disadvantage .....	16
5.5 Safety.....	17
5.6 Key Issues for Arran and Cumbrae.....	17
<b>6 Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft SRBS Objectives</b> .....	<b>19</b>
6.2 Draft SRBS Objectives .....	19
6.3 Will the SRBS Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities? .....	21
6.4 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities? .....	22
6.5 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities? .....	23
6.6 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities? .....	24
6.7 Will the SRBS impact on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity? .....	25
6.8 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands’ communities? .....	26
6.9 Will the SRBS protect and enhance quality of life for island residents? .....	27
6.10 Overall Assessment.....	27
<b>7 Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft SRBS Policies</b> .....	<b>29</b>
7.1 Introduction .....	29
7.2 The below section outlines the impact assessment for each theme, policies and associated measures .....	29
7.3 Seven Draft SRBS Policy Themes were developed, alongside 19 policies and associated measures and features. The seven policy themes and corresponding measures are outlined in Appendix A, but the themes are outlined below: .....	29
7.4 Policy Theme 1: Buses Where They Are Needed, When They Are Needed .....	29
7.5 Policy Theme 2: Reliable and Quicker Journeys .....	35
7.6 Policy Theme 3: Affordable and Attractive Fares and Ticketing .....	40
7.7 Policy Theme 4: Accessible and Safer Bus Journeys.....	45



# [Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy]

## Executive SummaryTable of Contents

7.8	Policy Theme 5: A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Network.....	49
7.9	Policy Theme 6: A Seamless and Integrated Network.....	53
7.10	Policy Theme 7: A More Environmentally Sustainable, Efficient and Adaptable Bus Network and Fleet.....	57
<b>8</b>	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>60</b>
	Objectives.....	60
	Policies	60
<b>9</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>61</b>
	<b>Appendix A Draft SRBS Themes, Policies and Measures .....</b>	<b>63</b>

### List of Tables

Table 1.1: Report Structure.....	5
Table 3.1: Assessment Criteria Matrix .....	10
Table 7.1: Theme 1 – Buses Where They Are Needed, When They Are Needed .....	30
Table 7.2: Theme 2 – Reliable and Quicker Journeys.....	35
Table 7.3: Theme 3: Affordable and Attractive Fares and Ticketing.....	40
Table 7.4: Theme 4 – Accessible and Safer Bus Journeys .....	46
Table 7.5: Theme 5 – A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Network.....	49
Table 7.6: Theme 6 – A Seamless and Integrated Network ICIA .....	53
Table 7.7: Theme 7 – A More Environmentally Sustainable, Efficient and Adaptable Bus Network and Fleet.....	57

### List of Appendices

Appendix A Draft SRBS Themes, Policies and Measures



## **Executive Summary**

This report entitled 'Island Communities Impact Assessment Final Report' has been prepared by Stantec UK Ltd to demonstrate how proposals for the Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy 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.

The purpose of this report is to support Strathclyde Partnership for Transport in exercising its public functions to check and review that island communities and impacts have been considered within the proposals. The process has benefitted from consultation to inform the impact assessment. This report sets out the background to the Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (Draft SRBS) and presents the evidence base and Island Communities Duty Impact Assessment of the final option put forward.

Overall, the objectives, policies and measures are assessed to have a minor beneficial to major beneficial impact against the guiding framework questions and criteria within the ICIA. There are a number of impacts that are designated as 'no clear relationship'. This denotes where there are multiple complex factors influencing the trends and factors discussed in the guiding questions and further evidence would be required to undertake a robust impact assessment. Furthermore, there are a number of impacts marked as 'neutral or negligible impact'. This denotes where the impact of the objective, policies and associated measures are likely to have a positive or negative impact associated with the question or criteria but not at a significant level



## **Acronyms / Abbreviations**

BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Partnership
ICIA	Island Communities Impact Assessment
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RTP	Regional Transport Partnership
RTS	Regional Transport Strategy
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SPT	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
SRBS	Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy
STAG	Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 provides a legal basis for greater decision making at a local level within Scottish Islands and seeks to increase economic prosperity for island communities.
- 1.1.2 This is to be achieved through ‘island proofing’ legislation, policy, and strategic decisions by taking account of the special circumstances of island communities and ensuring no disadvantage to people living and working on islands (as defined by Section 1 of the Act).
- 1.1.3 Section 7 of the Act sets out a specific duty for relevant public bodies (including Regional Transport Partnerships) to “*have regard to island communities*” in carrying out their functions. A related duty in Section 8 of the Act requires relevant public bodies to undertake an island communities impact assessment “*in relation to a policy, strategy, or service which, in the authority’s opinion, is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities) in the area in which the authority exercises its functions*”.
- 1.1.4 This Report sets out the background to the Draft Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (Draft SRBS) and presents the evidence base and Island Communities Duty Impact Assessment (ICIA) of the Strategy =

Table 1.1: Report Structure

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



## 2 Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy

### 2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) is developing a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) for the Strathclyde region.

2.1.2 SPT is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the West of Scotland region, as designated under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005. Schedule 1 of this Order defines the extent of the West of Scotland region (hereafter 'the SPT region') by reference to local authority and council ward boundaries. The region encompasses 11 entire local authorities from South Ayrshire in the southwest to North Lanarkshire in the northeast, and also includes two wards within the Argyll and Bute Council area (Helensburgh and Lomond).

2.1.3 The development of a SRBS has its foundations embedded in SPT's A Call to Action: The Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland (2023 – 2038) (or 'RTS') and its vision, priorities and objectives, and clear policy statement setting out the aim for a world class passenger focused public transport system. The RTS was published in 2023, and reinforces national policy ambitions, setting out the following Vision for transport in the region:

*"The west of Scotland will be an attractive, resilient and well-connected place with active, liveable communities and accessible, vibrant centres facilitated by high quality, sustainable and low carbon transport shaped by the needs of all."*

2.1.4 The RTS recognises the need to invest in transformative public transport ensuring a sufficiently attractive 'offer' to move more people by more sustainable transport modes rather than by car. Therefore, a key theme within the strategy encompasses enhancing the quality and integration of public transport with a specific objective to make public transport a desirable and convenient travel choice for everyone.

2.1.5 The RTS is clear that its strategy Vision will not be achieved without improving the quality and integration of the bus network. Given this conclusion, the need for the development of the SRBS was recognised with the new powers and opportunities available through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 requiring consideration in its development.

2.1.6 The first stage of SRBS development was the development of the Case for Change, which was commenced in June 2023.

2.1.7 The Case for Change set out the key problems to be tackled, the desired transport outcomes, and the objectives, and core policy areas to deliver on these. The Case for Change report has been published by SPT on its website.

2.1.8 Following the Case for Change, the core policy areas were developed further, including the formulation of initial policies, which would be necessary in order to undertake the Options Appraisal workstream to follow.

2.1.9 The Options Appraisal considered options for enhancements to how bus services can be delivered in the west of Scotland using the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

2.1.10 The aim of the appraisal was to identify a recommended operational model for bus services in the region, with the development and refinement of the SRBS building upon that preferred model into a strategy for delivery, including responding to consultation feedback.

2.1.11 The Options Appraisal was undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) process, which provides a framework to assess the performance of transport options to address identified problems and present the results in a consistent manner to inform decision makers. A proportionate approach was taken, appropriate in the context of strategy development.

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

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

## 3 Assessment Framework

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The following guide framing questions and assessment criteria matrix will be applied to testing the performance of the Draft SRBS in relation to implementing the ICIA, with the assessment to be undertaken with regard to the Scottish Government's guidance and toolkit prepared on ICIA's (Scottish Government, 2020). This provides a transparent framework to assess the extent to which the Draft SRBS objectives, policies and measures seek to increase economic prosperity, address unique challenges for island communities and protect and enhance quality of life.
- 3.1.2 During the options appraisal for the strategy, an interim assessment was undertaken on the five options that were being developed and appraised toward the development of the Draft SRBS. The interim assessment was also undertaken using the Guide questions and assessment criteria matrix as set out below. The assessment supported the options appraisal process and the outcomes of that process. The assessment within this report is the assessment of the Draft SRBS being taken forward.
- 3.1.3 This assessment of the Draft SRBS has been informed through engagement activities with relevant groups of interest and impact (as discussed below in **Section 4**).

### 3.2 Guide Questions

- 3.2.1 The framing questions, as set out below, will be applied in relation to the two key parts of the Duty, with relevant criteria identified from the statutory guidance.

#### Guide Questions: Island Communities Duties

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

- *Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?*
- *Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?*
- *Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?*
- *Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?*
- *Impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?*
- *Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?*
- *Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?*

- 3.2.2 Consideration will be given to the thematic questions in the ICIA guidance around:
- Demographics – including current demographic structure, challenges faced in areas with greater proportion of older people and impacts on these challenges including encouraging young people to leave;
  - Economy – potential for impacts on key industries, on island infrastructure and natural environment, on communications networks, on small businesses and their supply chains and taking account of the costs of travel particularly for people on low incomes; and
  - Social – the often dispersed nature of island deprivation, impacts on the cost of living, changes affecting people in fuel poverty, consideration of part time and self-employed nature of much of the islands' workforce and issues with availability of childcare provision.

3.2.3 The framing questions will also be applied taking account of key aspects in Section 8 of the Act around the potential for differential impacts on the islands' communities and on consideration of the extent to the Draft SRBS objectives, policies and measures might improve or mitigate outcomes.

### 3.3 Assessment Criteria Matrix

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

Table 3.1: Assessment Criteria Matrix

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

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

## 4 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

### 4.1 Overview

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

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

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

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

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

### 4.2 Summary of Consultation Findings<sup>1</sup>

#### *Rule out Business as Usual*

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

---

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

### ***Rule out Voluntary Partnerships***

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

### ***Take Forward Local Services Franchising***

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

### ***Take Forward Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)***

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

### ***Further Investigate Small-Scale Municipal Bus Operations***

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

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

### ***Outcomes of the consultation***

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

- Business As Usual and Voluntary Partnerships should be ruled out as means to deliver a better bus network as more radical intervention is required.
- SPT should commence work on franchising, in line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
- SPT will consider developing business case(s) for small-scale municipal bus company(ies) aimed at providing socially necessary services in parts of the region where private operators are currently very limited.
- SPT, and our partners, should progress with the necessary transition arrangements appropriate (e.g. time-limited, voluntary partnerships or other agreements aimed at improving the bus network) to provide a structured basis for private and public sector collaboration in attempting to arrest further passenger decline and stabilise the bus network in the pre-franchising period.

## **4.3 Accessibility engagement**

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

### ***Before the journey***

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

### ***Before boarding the bus***

- The importance of seating at bus stops was raised by several respondents, noting that passengers with a physical disability need to sit down as standing can worsen pain.
- Respondents with a visual impairment noted they do not always know the exact point to wait for the bus and it was suggested tactile paving could be installed to indicate this.



- Several respondents emphasised the importance of audio information at bus stops, stating that they cannot always read information at bus stops and on buses.

### ***During the journey***

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

### ***After the journey***

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

## 5 Baseline Conditions

### 5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 There are almost 100 populated islands within Scotland. Whilst the overall population of Scotland's Islands has grown over the last 20 years, there is considerable variation and some islands have a declining population (Scottish Government, 2023a).
- 5.1.2 Within the SPT area, there are two populated islands: Arran and Cumbrae. At the time of 2022 Census, the total combined population of Arran and Cumbrae was 5,941 (4,643 people lived on Arran and 1,298 people lived on Cumbrae) (Scotland's Census, 2022). Population decline is a real threat to the sustainability of many of Scotland's Island communities, especially Arran and Cumbrae. According to the Isle of Cumbrae Economic Baseline Report (North Ayrshire Council, 2021), the total population of the Isle of Cumbrae has experienced a sustained contraction in population since the mid-2000s. This was evidenced from the population change between the 2011 and 2022 Censuses. In 2011, the population was 6,036 and has fallen to 5,941 in 2022 (a 1.6% decrease).

### 5.2 Island Accessibility

- 5.2.1 Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.
- 5.2.2 Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.
- 5.2.3 Poor transport links both to connect within the islands, and connecting to transport on and off the islands can disadvantage island communities relative to one another and to similar mainland communities. Respondents to the consultation for the National Plan for Scotland's Islands (Scottish Government, 2019a) emphasised that island communities face many different transport challenges in their day-to-day lives compared to those living in less rural areas on the Scottish mainland. These include a lack of transport services, long journey times, the need for interchange / overnight stays, and the high cost of transport to and from the islands. Baseline data for Young persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme shows those living in rural areas and on islands were more likely to cite timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, a lack of bus stops nearby, and having to rely on family members when travelling as issues they faced, compared to those living in towns and cities (Transport Scotland, 2022). SPT's RTS public survey in 2019 reported issues around frequency, costs and timetabling between ferries and onward public transport connections on the mainland (Stantec UK, 2021).
- 5.2.4 Analysis undertaken as part of the Case for Change for the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (Stantec, 2023) considered weekday bus service frequency and highlighted bus frequencies on Arran and Great Cumbrae almost entirely operating at 1 to 2 buses an hour or less, with the north of Arran in particular with many bus stops served less often than one bus every 3 hours. Further analysis undertaken to inform the Case for Change highlighted that, in Scotland, between 2004-05 and 2021-22, whilst bus fares have increased by 88%, this has largely reflected increasing operating costs per bus-kilometre which have increased by 98% (both in current prices) - similarly, and reflecting the reduction in passenger numbers, the operating cost per passenger has increased by 215% over this period (all figures in current prices).
- 5.2.5 Those in the islands are generally more likely to drive, and less likely to use the bus - this is consistent with results from the Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020), where 71% of those aged 18-35 used the bus once a year or less, or never.

## 5.3 Social and Demographic Issues

- 5.3.1 Island rurality can exacerbate inequality already experienced on account of the protected characteristics defined under the Equalities Act 2010. Issues which impact on all islanders such as access to transport may be acutely felt by some groups more than others requiring targeted measures to redress the inequality experienced (Scottish Government, 2020).
- 5.3.2 The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland's Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland) and 6.0% of the population comprised of people in the 16 to 24 years age group (compared with 9.2% in North Ayrshire and 10.7% in Scotland) (Scotland's Census, 2022).
- 5.3.3 Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people. In survey work undertaken for the National Islands Plan (Government, Scottish, 2020), less than 82% of respondents in Arran, Bute and Cumbrae identified that they would be likely to stay on the island for the next five years (compared with 86% for all islands), indicating the potential for further reductions in future island populations.
- 5.3.4 The lack of transport connectivity, and to some extent digital links, to employment opportunities for young people in island communities can be a major factor in out-migration towards the mainland, exacerbating issues of shrinking working-age populations even further (Transport Scotland, 2021). In the National Islands Plan survey 71% of young islanders indicated they would be likely to stay on the islands for the next 5 years, significantly below the average of 86% for all island residents. More generally, poor public transport links, gaps in network provision and high costs of travel can restrict the ability of people to travel to employment opportunities and limits the availability of a workforce for employers.

## 5.4 Socio-Economic Disadvantage

- 5.4.1 Whilst reported levels of satisfaction with island quality of life across the Scottish islands are often high, the lack of visible poverty (and/or its dispersed pattern) can hide the existence of pockets of deprivation in some island communities. For example, data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scottish Government, 2020) indicates that some parts of south and east Arran are within the second and third lowest deciles for housing and parts of Millport on Cumbrae are within the second lowest decile overall due to high levels of income, employment, health, education and housing deprivation.
- 5.4.2 Relative child poverty for local authorities in Scotland using the Department of Work and Pension's experimental statistics on local child poverty indicate relatively high levels of children were living in low-income families, both relative and absolute, in the Ardrossan and Arran ward, with figures increasing from 552 to 672 from 2015 to 2023, an increase of 38% (UK Department for Work and Pensions, 2023). Whilst this data includes part of the mainland areas and therefore does not directly represent the island situation, it indicates that socio-economic disadvantage is encountered in some island communities.
- 5.4.3 Transport plays a key role in alleviation of poverty and the rest of this section reviews relevant evidence on the relationship between transport and socio-economic disadvantage for the islands relevant to the SPT region.
- 5.4.4 The cost of transport within island communities is a significant factor and contributes to an overall higher cost of living relative to other locations. Parents/carers from rural areas and those living on islands were more likely to be spending £100+ each month on household travel compared to those living in urban areas and towns (Transport Scotland 2022b). They are also more likely to indicate that

they/their child missed out on activities/opportunities compared to people living in cities. Research conducted by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) in 2016 (Highland and Islands Enterprise, 2016), found that the minimum living cost for a single person living in a remote island settlement was 35% higher than those living in an urban area on the mainland, with transport and delivery costs accounting for a considerable proportion of this additional expense. The higher costs of living in rural and island areas represents a threat to the sustainability of local communities by making it harder for people from lower income households (and potentially some people in protected groups such as elderly, young or disabled) to live in island locations at an acceptable standard. Further work by HIE in 2021 identified that people needing to travel between islands by ferry for work incur costs in order of £30-£40 per week which effectively doubles the additional cost of fuel compared with equivalent journeys to work made in rural England (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, 2021). Whilst the cost of living disparities may not be quite so marked for islands in the SPT region they indicate the higher costs for island communities compared to the mainland.

5.4.5 The ICIA for the National Transport Strategy 2 identified key factors giving rise to additional costs for households in islands communities compared to the rest of the UK include:

- longer commuting distances compounded by higher fuel prices;
- issues around integrated timetabling;
- the additional cost of the need to make occasional trips to the mainland; and
- additional ferry/air costs for inter-island travel.

5.4.6 Island communities can also face additional freight costs, such as to get goods, including farming and seafood produce, to market or to import energy sources or building materials and labour. Additional charges for deliveries can also be a challenge.

5.4.7 Across Scotland, tourism accounts for 1 in 12 jobs, while rural and island communities, rely more heavily on tourism than some of Scotland's other regions. Poor transport links may reduce the number of tourists resulting in negative impacts on people who works in this sector.

5.4.8 Currently, the cost of transport on islands is much higher, relative to income, than in the rest of Scotland. Lack of integrated ticketing adds further cost and complexity. Difficulties with accessing public transport in the islands and service limitations have promoted the use of private cars and vans as the principal means of transport for many families. In Scotland, the proportion of island households with at least one car or van available was 79%, compared with just over two-thirds (69%) nationally. However, for low-income families, car ownership may be pushing them into poverty due to maintenance and fuel costs (Skerratt, et al., 2014). These effects may be exacerbated for island communities particularly where regular ferry and onward travel is required to access employment or key services.

## 5.5 Safety

5.5.1 Accident rates reported in the STPR2 show greater casualty rates in local authorities that have island communities. Road traffic accident casualty rates (per 100,000 between 2017-2019) in North Ayrshire is 65.79 (national average 59.34). Any reduction in traffic, achieved through a more attractive and affordable bus network that encourages modal shift should support a reduction in road traffic and associated casualties.

## 5.6 Key Issues for Arran and Cumbrae

5.6.1 The islands of Arran and Great Cumbrae are identified as 'remote rural' areas under the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification (Scottish Government, 2018) (areas with a population of less than 3,000 people and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a settlement of 10,000 or more). Their primary connection with the mainland is via ferry services to Ardrossan (currently Prestwick) and Largs (for Arran and Cumbrae respectively) in North Ayrshire (within the SPT region) although there is also a ferry connection from the north of Arran to Kintyre (in Argyll and Bute and outwith the SPT region). The RTS Case for Change (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021) identified that access issues for

island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas, but dependence on ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and **aligning journeys to ferry services**. Connectivity priorities in the Ayrshire and Arran Regional Spatial Strategy include connections to Arran.

5.6.2 Information collated by North Ayrshire Council for the Isle of Arran and Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plans (North Ayrshire Council, 2019a; North Ayrshire Council 2019b) provides a useful summary of key priorities for Arran and Cumbrae and a context for consideration of islands communities impacts related to transport issues identified during development of the RTS.

#### **Key Issues for Arran and Cumbrae**

- Economic growth, investment and sustainability, and retention of local businesses, requiring more targeted investment by public and private sector to create opportunities which will provide employment and resilience.
- Reliance on seasonal tourism and the need for diversification.
- Community capacity and empowerment, including more subsidiarity and control of local budgets.
- Education and skills and retention of young people on the islands.
- Recruitment and retention of employees, including proposals for an islands' allowance for key staff.
- Population and depopulation and the demographic imbalance.
- Housing, including affordable housing, older people's housing, and local construction.
- Transport, including the impact of RET on island residents; concessionary transport; cycling infrastructure; need for more reliable ferry service (Arran); more integrated transport arrangements across providers, including online purchasing; priority for residents on ferries; better disabled facilities and a strategic approach to regulation of the number of vehicles allowed on to the islands (Cumbrae).
- Marine planning, including licensing, consistent with the empowerment of communities and work to further devolve powers from the Crown Estate, Scotland. Provide opportunity for island communities to promote sustainable development of their own waters, which best reflect the commercial, recreational and conservation interests of the islands.
- Health and social care, especially lack of care homes, need for improved care at home packages and better transport to hospital.

## 6 Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft SRBS Objectives

- 6.1.1 The following section contains the full ICIA. The assessment below evaluates the impact of each SRBS objective on the ICIA framing questions, using insights from the baseline report above. Following this, the policies and associated measures under each SRBS theme are assessed to determine their effects on each of the framing questions. The overall aim of the assessment is to provide a comprehensive overview of how the SRBS affects each of the questions in relation to fulfilling the requirements of The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. To avoid repetition and duplication where questions share similar issues, barriers or potential impacts these have been grouped in the commentary.
- 6.1.2 In **Appendix A**, a breakdown of each of the seven policy themes, policies and measures can be found for reference.

### 6.2 Draft SRBS Objectives

- 6.2.1 Three Draft SRBS Objectives were developed:
1. Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services
  2. Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all
  3. Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network
- 6.2.2 **Table 6.1** summarises the determined impact of each objective, on each framing question. Further commentary on each impact designation is explored below.

Table 6.1: Draft SRBS Objectives Island Communities Impact Assessment

ICIA Framework Criteria							
Objectives	Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?	Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?	Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?	Impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?	Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?	Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?
Aim for a consistent and improved level of service across the region, ensuring communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services	++	+	~	+	0	+	+
Aim for bus travel to be affordable, safe and accessible for all	+	0	+	+	+	+	++
Aim for an attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network.	~	+	~	~	+	0	+

## 6.3 Will the SRBS Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?

- 6.3.1 The primary connection to the mainland from both the islands of Arran and Great Cumbrae is by ferry, and both islands are served by bus services that run directly from the ferry terminal. Whilst existing bus services are relatively direct to the ferry terminal, island communities face different transport challenges (Scottish Government, 2019a). These challenges include a lack of available, frequent, and affordable transport services to the mainland, reducing employment, educational, and training opportunities for island communities. These challenges, combined with the perceived peripheral nature of islands, results in youth outmigration from Scottish islands, reducing the working age population and jeopardising the economic prosperity of island communities (Alexander, 2021). In the National Islands Plan survey, 71% of young islanders indicated they would be likely to stay on the island for the next 5 years, significantly below the average 86% for all island residents. More generally, poor public transport links, gaps in network provision and high cost of travel can restrict the ability of people to travel to employment opportunities and limits the availability of a workforce for employers.
- 6.3.2 The economic sustainability of both islands relies heavily on the tourism industry (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Total employment on the Isle of Cumbrae is estimated at 400, of which a quarter work in tourism related sectors and tourism related employment accounted for over one in three jobs in Arran in 2019 (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Affordable, frequent, and available transport options support tourism to the islands, harnessing the economic benefits for the island communities.
- 6.3.3 The SPT Regional Transport Strategy (2023-2038) states that *“Rural, remote and island areas need to be connected to their closest town centres and public transport hubs. Good connections are required between towns that have highly integrated labour markets and economies, such as within Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and between the whole of the region and Glasgow. The region also needs good connections to the rest of Scotland and beyond, for passenger and freight movements”*.
- 6.3.4 The region’s connectivity needs are highly complex, the SPT Regional Transport Strategy (2023-2038) states that *“Amongst these needs, the regional transport network needs to support rural, island and coastal areas to reverse depopulation trends and manage sustainable growth in rural tourism; ensure access to jobs both within many sub-regional contexts as well as region-wide access to Glasgow, and underpin regional cohesion and economic development goals whilst also ensuring integration with other regions and national economic and development policy”*.

### **Objective 1**

- 6.3.5 The economic prosperity of island communities is influenced by many complex factors. However, the provision of a consistent and improved level of service across the region will ensure that island communities, as well as visitors, have greater access to key destinations and services. A more consistent and improved level of service will benefit both local island residents and visitors who could deliver positive impacts to the local economy through a chain of causality. For example, a more consistent service across the islands may attract more visitors to stay on Arran and Great Cumbrae.
- 6.3.6 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** could result in a **Major Beneficial Effect** on protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities.

### **Objective 2**

- 6.3.7 The economic prosperity of island communities is influenced by many complex factors. As stated, the cost of transport within island communities is a significant factor and contributes to an overall higher cost of living relative to other locations. Parents/carers from rural areas and those living on islands were more likely to be spending £100+ each month on household travel compared to those living in urban areas and towns (Transport Scotland 2022b). However, the provision of an affordable, safe and accessible service will benefit both local island residents and visitors by delivering positive impacts to the local economy through a chain of causality. For example, a more affordable service across the islands may encourage younger residents to remain on the island if they have a more affordable method of travelling to work.



- 6.3.8 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.3.9 There is a lack of evidence to suggest that Objective 3 would specifically protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.

- 6.3.10 Overall, it is assessed that there is **No Clear Relationship** between **Objective 3** on protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities.

## **6.4 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?**

- 6.4.1 The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland's Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland) and 6.0% of the population comprised of people in the 16 to 24 years age group (compared with 9.2% in North Ayrshire and 10.7% in Scotland).

- 6.4.2 The data from Young persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme shows that young people living in rural areas and on islands were more likely to cite timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, a lack of bus stops nearby, and having to rely on family members when travelling as issues they faced, compared to those living in towns and cities (Transport Scotland, 2022).

- 6.4.3 Depopulation is a major concern for island communities as it can reduce confidence and the sustainability of services, consequently increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. A reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people. In survey work undertaken for the National Islands Plan (Government, Scottish, 2020), less than 82% of respondents in Arran, Bute and Cumbrae identified that they would be likely to stay on the island for the next five years (compared with 86% for all islands), indicating the potential for further reductions in future island populations.

### ***Objective 1***

- 6.4.4 A more consistent and improved level of service across the region in all areas, will allow more rural communities, including island communities, to be better connected to key services. As highlighted by the data from the Young persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme, these are key issues in preventing young people to use buses in rural communities. A better service could encourage use of the bus throughout island communities.

- 6.4.5 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.

### ***Objective 2***

- 6.4.6 A more affordable, safe and accessible service is proposed under Objective 2. As the population of the island communities within the SPT region has a higher proportion of people aged 65+ compared to the North Ayrshire and national averages, a safer and more accessible service would particularly benefit this age group who are more likely to experience mobility issues with current service provision. Additionally, as stated, the cost of transport within island communities is a significant factor and contributes to an overall higher cost of living relative to other locations. A more affordable service could encourage more people within island communities to use the bus service.

- 6.4.7 However, it has been acknowledged that the service may require additional funding to support additional or enhanced service to connect with rural services. Given this, overall, it is assessed that

**Objective 2** could result in a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.4.8 The attractiveness and integration of buses for people in rural areas, including island communities, will be improved, particularly with longer distance services and other modes. This could be particularly beneficial for island communities who face many challenges when using the bus service.
- 6.4.9 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 3** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.

## **6.5 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?**

- 6.5.1 Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.
- 6.5.2 The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland's Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).
- 6.5.3 Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.
- 6.5.4 Island communities can also face additional freight costs, such as to get goods, including farming and seafood produce, to market or to import energy sources or building materials and labour. Additional charges for deliveries can also be a challenge. The Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plan identified that suppliers of goods to the island may apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of the ferries. The cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island (North Ayrshire Council, 2022).

### ***Objective 1***

- 6.5.5 Th **Objective 1** could have a positive impact on addressing the unique economic challenges faced by Island communities if services are designed to be consistent and reliable, aligning with other transport modes, particularly ferry, timetables.
- 6.5.6 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** has a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.

### ***Objective 2***

- 6.5.7 A more affordable, safe and accessible service is proposed under **Objective 2**. The cost of transport within island communities is a significant factor to socio-economic disadvantage and contributes to an overall higher cost of living relative to other locations. A more affordable service could encourage more people within island communities make use of the bus service.
- 6.5.8 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.5.9 There is a lack of evidence to suggest that Objective 3 would effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.
- 6.5.10 Overall, it is assessed that there is **No Clear Relationship** between **Objective 3** on effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.

## **6.6 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?**

- 6.6.1 Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.
- 6.6.2 The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland's Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).
- 6.6.3 Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.
- 6.6.4 Island communities can also face additional freight costs, such as to get goods, including farming and seafood produce, to market or to import energy sources or building materials and labour. Additional charges for deliveries can also be a challenge. The Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plan identified that suppliers of goods to the island may apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of the ferries. The cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island (North Ayrshire Council, 2022).

### ***Objective 1***

- 6.6.5 The provision of a consistent and improved level of service across the region will ensure that island communities have greater access to key destinations and services. A more consistent and improved level of service could deliver beneficial impacts for local island residents through a chain of causality. For example, a more consistent service across the islands may encourage more businesses to locate to the island, thereby increasing the number of jobs on the island which may ultimately help to tackle population decline.
- 6.6.6 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.

### ***Objective 2***

- 6.6.7 As the island communities within the SPT region have an increasing number of people aged 65+, a safer and more accessible bus service could benefit those who are more likely to have mobility or accessibility issues.
- 6.6.8 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.6.9 There is a lack of evidence to suggest that Objective 3 would effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities.
- 6.6.10 Overall, it is assessed that there is **No Clear Relationship** between **Objective 3** on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.

## **6.7 Will the SRBS impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?**

- 6.7.1 Future transport systems on islands will have to play their role in reaching net zero emissions and contribute to the Scottish Government's climate change obligations. Access to sustainable travel choices such as bus transport is integral to helping to achieve this.
- 6.7.2 Community Energy Scotland conducted an audit of the Transport sector on the Isle of Cumbrae to develop a baseline of greenhouse gas emissions study as part of the Carbon Neutral Island Project. The transport sector includes emissions from on-road traffic as well as ferries departing the island. Waterborne transport accounts for around 33% of emissions in this sector predominately due to the fuel powering the ferry, while around 66% of emissions come from on-road vehicles. The reduction of emissions from on road vehicles on both islands could benefit the natural environment and improve biodiversity.

### ***Objective 1***

- 6.7.3 There is a lack of evidence to suggest that Objective 1 would impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity. It is expected that as any specific interventions are planned and designed these specific impacts will be assessed.
- 6.7.4 Overall, it is assessed that there is **Neutral/ negligible impact** between **Objective 1** and impacting on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.

### ***Objective 2***

- 6.7.5 Any reduction in traffic, achieved through a more affordable bus network could encourage a modal shift from private vehicles to buses. This could support a reduction in overall road traffic and associated emissions, thereby reducing negative effects on the natural environment and biodiversity.
- 6.7.6 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on impacting the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.7.7 Objective 3 aims for an attractive, integrated and sustainable network. This will be achieved through a high quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles which align with Scottish Government targets. Additionally, EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions. Both measures under this objective will contribute towards delivering an environmentally sustainable bus network by decarbonising the bus network and delivering air quality benefits.
- 6.7.8 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 3** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on impacting on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.

## 6.8 Will the SRBS effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?

- 6.8.1 Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by the mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islands who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.
- 6.8.2 Respondents to The National Islands Plan (2019) highlighted concerns about the perceived centralisation of healthcare services; both in terms of access to certain services being moved to the mainland or the population centres of larger islands.
- 6.8.3 Local access to services was an important issue for many women who reported having to travel long distances for appointments. In island communities, there was a desire to have as much care as possible provided locally, although women did recognise the need to ensure that services were safe and sustainable. Travel challenges leading to lengthy periods away from home were particularly difficult for families with other children or caring responsibilities (Scottish Government, 2019).
- 6.8.4 Additionally, the population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands. An older population will typically have more health challenges than a younger population. A key issue identified in the RTS Case for Change (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021) included the need for better transport networks to and from hospitals.

### ***Objective 1***

- 6.8.5 Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from an accessibility perspective. This especially apparent in Cumbrae and Arran as the population on these islands is older than the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas.
- 6.8.6 A more consistent and improved level of service under Objective 1 will ensure that island communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key services such as GP surgeries and hospitals. Greater accessibility to health facilities could improve challenges that island communities face in terms of health issues.
- 6.8.7 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities.

### ***Objective 2***

- 6.8.8 Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from an affordability perspective.
- 6.8.9 A more affordable bus network under Objective 2 will ensure that island communities have greater accessibility to key services such as GP surgeries and hospitals. Although the younger and older population are likely to have National Entitlement Cards, a more affordable bus network will benefit those who are not eligible for discounted travel. For example, pregnant people who require visits to GPs and/or hospital appointments.
- 6.8.10 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on effectively addressing the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.8.11 Objective 3 aims for an attractive, integrated and sustainable network. As stated, several measures under this objective will support and facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions. This could deliver air quality benefits which could also protect and enhance the health for island residents.
- 6.8.12 However, further assessment would be needed to understand the level of emission reduction and its potential impact on human health. Therefore, overall, it is assessed that **Objective 3** could result in a **Neutral/Negligible Effect** on effectively addressing the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities.

## **6.9 Will the SRBS protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?**

- 6.9.1 Whilst reported levels of satisfaction with island quality of life across the Scottish islands are often high, the lack of visible poverty (and/or its dispersed pattern) can hide the existence of pockets of deprivation in some island communities. For example, data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2020) indicates that some parts of south and east Arran are within the second and third lowest deciles for housing and parts of Millport on Cumbrae are within the second lowest decile overall due to high levels of income, employment, health, education and housing deprivation.

### ***Objective 1***

- 6.9.2 A more consistent and improved level of service under Objective 1 could have beneficial effects on the quality of life for island residents. SIMD data for the islands shows that the further a community lives from a ferry port, the more deprived the area is in terms of the geographic access rank. For example, Millport is within the third highest decile for geographic access, whereas Ballochmartin is within the third highest decile for geographic access. An improved bus network would improve these scores as island communities would be able to access goods and services more easily.
- 6.9.3 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 1** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on protecting and enhancing the quality of life for island residents.

### ***Objective 2***

- 6.9.4 The cost of transport within island communities is a significant factor and contributes to an overall higher cost of living relative to other locations. A more affordable, safe and accessible bus network could enhance the quality of life for island residents who live in deprived areas.
- 6.9.5 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 2** could result in a **Major Beneficial Effect** on protecting and enhancing the quality of life for island residents.

### ***Objective 3***

- 6.9.6 Objective 3 aims for an attractive, integrated and sustainable network. As stated, several measures under this objective will support and facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions. This could deliver air quality benefits which will also protect and enhance the quality of life for island residents.
- 6.9.7 Overall, it is assessed that **Objective 3** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on protecting and enhancing the quality of life for island residents.

## **6.10 Overall Assessment**

- 6.10.1 Overall, it is assessed that the Draft SRBS objectives could result in a **Neutral / Negligible Effect to Major Beneficial Effect** on island communities. The policies could support connectivity to and from Arran and Cumbrae by providing a more consistent and improved level of service across the region,

especially for these island communities, and will ensure that these communities are connected quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services. A more affordable, safer and accessible bus network could also improve levels of deprivation throughout the islands and encourage a modal shift from private cars to buses. A more attractive and integrated bus network could also support local growth and tourism opportunities that would directly benefit Arran and Cumbrae.

## 7 Island Communities Impact Assessment – Draft SRBS Polices

### 7.1 Introduction

7.2 The below section outlines the impact assessment for each theme, policies and associated measures

7.3 Seven Draft SRBS Policy Themes were developed, alongside 19 policies and associated measures and features. The seven policy themes and corresponding measures are outlined in **Appendix A**, but the themes are outlined below:

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

### 7.4 Policy Theme 1: Buses Where They Are Needed, When They Are Needed

7.4.1 To maximise the opportunity of buses, there needs to be more high frequency services on busier routes, aiming for a service at least every 10 minutes. The network also needs to be more comprehensive to ensure access for all. This means aiming for more consistent levels of service across the region, and at different times and days with better coverage during early morning hours, evenings, and Sundays. The network also needs to be co-ordinately efficient across the region to avoid over- or under-provision and inequalities of access by place.

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



7.4.3 The key policies under this theme include:

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

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

ICIA Criteria	Policies			Commentary
	P1	P2	P3	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	+	+	+	<p>The primary connection to the mainland from both the islands of Arran and Great Cumbrae is by ferry, and both islands are served by bus services that run directly from the ferry terminal. Whilst existing bus services are relatively direct to the ferry terminal, island communities face different transport challenges (Scottish Government, 2019a). These challenges include a lack of available, frequent, and affordable transport services to the mainland, reducing employment, educational, and training opportunities for island communities. These challenges, combined with the perceived peripheral nature of islands, results in youth outmigration from Scottish islands, reducing the working age population and jeopardising the economic prosperity of island communities (Alexander, 2021). In the National Islands Plan survey, 71% of young islanders indicated they would be likely to stay on the island for the next 5 years, significantly below the average 86% for all island residents. More generally, poor public transport links, gaps in network provision and high cost of travel can restrict the ability of people to travel to employment opportunities and limits the availability of a workforce for employers.</p> <p>The economic sustainability of both islands relies heavily on the tourism industry (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Total employment on the Isle of Cumbrae is estimated at 400, of which a quarter work in tourism related sectors and tourism related employment accounted for over one in three jobs in Arran in 2019 (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Affordable, frequent, and available transport options support tourism to the islands, harnessing the economic benefits for the island communities.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 1</b> improvements to operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required, would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.</p> <p><b>Policy 2</b> improvements to frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity of buses would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. As people on lower incomes are more dependent on buses, this would be</p>

				<p>especially beneficial for those who rely on buses to access such opportunities within island communities.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 3</b>, and particularly M4 improved efficiency of the regional network, particularly for rural to regional networks, will also improve accessibility to socio-economic opportunities for those living in island communities areas which may help to protect and increase the economic prosperity of the island communities. This is especially beneficial as people living within island communities are more likely to have reduced access to employment and essential services.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.</p> <p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 1</b> improvements to operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required, would support people with accessing essential services and employment opportunities. Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage could enable people to have greater faith in public transportation and not have to rely on private vehicle use.</p> <p><b>Policy 2</b> improvements to frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity of buses would support people with accessing essential services and employment opportunities. Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage could enable people to have greater faith in public transportation and not have to rely on private vehicle use.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 3</b>, including M4 improved efficiency of the regional network, particularly for rural to regional networks, would also support people with accessing essential services and employment opportunities. Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage could enable people to have greater faith in public transportation and not have to rely on private vehicle use.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.</p>

				<p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).</p> <p>Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.</p> <p>Island communities can also face additional freight costs, such as to get goods, including farming and seafood produce, to market or to import energy sources or building materials and labour. Additional charges for deliveries can also be a challenge. The Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plan identified that suppliers of goods to the island may apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of the ferries. The cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island (North Ayrshire Council, 2022).</p> <p>The improvements under <b>Policy 1</b>, <b>Policy 2</b> and <b>Policy 3</b> and their associated measures through improved periods of operation, frequency and efficiency could benefit island communities economically through a chain of causality. Through these policies, people could have greater access to employment opportunities which may encourage young people to remain on the island. This could reduce the rate of depopulation on the islands.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1</b>, <b>Policy 2</b> and <b>Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect on</b> effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.</p> <p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).</p> <p>Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service</p>

				<p>provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.</p> <p>Improved periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus service under <b>Policy 1</b> would benefit island communities. M1 and M2 under this policy is to provide minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals). This could be beneficial for those who rely on buses for employment opportunities or for access to healthcare services. This would be particularly beneficial as the islands have an ageing population who are more reliant on healthcare services.</p> <p>An improvement to the frequency of bus services under <b>Policy 2</b> would benefit island communities through a chain of causality. People could have greater access to employment opportunities which may encourage young people to remain on the island. This could reduce the rate of depopulation on the islands.</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 3</b>, it is proposed that there will be improvements to the efficiency of the regional bus network. This could entail better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common. This would be particularly beneficial for island communities who depend on interchange between ferry and bus services.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?</p>	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 or Policy 3</b> and associated measures would impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?</p>	+	+	+	<p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by the mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islands who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Respondents to The National Islands Plan (2019) highlighted concerns about the perceived centralisation of healthcare services; both in terms of access to certain services being moved to the mainland or the population centres of larger islands.</p> <p>Local access to services was an important issue for many women who reported having to travel long distances for appointments. In island communities, there was a desire to have as much care as possible provided locally, although women did recognise the need to ensure that services were safe and sustainable. Travel challenges leading to lengthy periods away from home were particularly difficult for families with other children or caring responsibilities (Scottish Government, 2019).</p>

				<p>Additionally, the population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands. An older population will typically have more health challenges than a younger population. A key issue identified in the RTS Case for Change (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021) included the need for better transport networks to and from hospitals.</p> <p>All three policies (<b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b>) could improve accessibility to healthcare services for the ageing population, particularly those aged 65+. <b>Policy 1</b> in particular would provide minimum levels of services for all towns, key destinations (e.g. hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility (M2). This would particularly benefit the older population who may require access to healthcare facilities at any time of the day.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique health challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Whilst reported levels of satisfaction with island quality of life across the Scottish islands are often high, the lack of visible poverty (and/or its dispersed pattern) can hide the existence of pockets of deprivation in some island communities. For example, data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2020) indicates that some parts of south and east Arran are within the second and third lowest deciles for housing and parts of Millport on Cumbrae are within the second lowest decile overall due to high levels of income, employment, health, education and housing deprivation.</p> <p>All three policies (<b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b>) could provide greater accessibility for employment and training opportunities for island communities. As stated, there are high levels of deprivation within the island communities according to SIMD data. Greater access to such services may protect and enhance the quality of life for these communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> and their associated measures under <b>Theme 1</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and enhancing quality of life for island residents.</p>
<p><b>Overall Assessment</b></p>				<p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 1, Policy 2 and Policy 3</b> under <b>Theme 1</b> could result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on island communities as improved periods of operation, geographic coverage, frequency and efficiency of the bus network could provide greater accessibility to healthcare services, employment and training opportunities.</p>

## 7.5 Policy Theme 2: Reliable and Quicker Journeys

- 7.5.1 The bus network needs to deliver reliable services that people know they can depend upon to encourage passenger growth and get people out of cars. This means buses turn up on when scheduled and arrive at destinations on time. Buses also need to be quicker, with journey times that are attractive compared to using a car.
- 7.5.2 Bus priority is needed in places where there is too much traffic or too little capacity for traffic to flow freely. This places the emphasis on maximising the movement of people, rather than the number of vehicles, due to bus's greater efficiency in the use of road space. Bus priority also helps ensure buses run to time and makes bus journeys quicker and more consistent. Bus priority is key, but other measures can support more reliable and quicker bus journeys including faster boarding times enabled through technology, information and capacity enhancement. More express services, where appropriate, and improved co-ordination of rural or 'feeder' bus services with higher frequency services can improve the overall journey time experienced by passengers.
- 7.5.3 The key policies under this theme include:
- **Policy 4:** Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services
  - **Policy 5:** Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times

Table 7.2: Theme 2 – Reliable and Quicker Journeys

ICIA Criteria	Policies		Commentary
	P4	P5	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	+	+	<p>The primary connection to the mainland from both the islands of Arran and Great Cumbrae is by ferry, and both islands are served by bus services that run directly from the ferry terminal. Whilst existing bus services are relatively direct to the ferry terminal, island communities face different transport challenges (Scottish Government, 2019a). These challenges include a lack of available, frequent, and affordable transport services to the mainland, reducing employment, educational, and training opportunities for island communities. These challenges, combined with the perceived peripheral nature of islands, results in youth outmigration from Scottish islands, reducing the working age population and jeopardising the economic prosperity of island communities (Alexander, 2021). In the National Islands Plan survey, 71% of young islanders indicated they would be likely to stay on the island for the next 5 years, significantly below the average 86% for all island residents. More generally, poor public transport links, gaps in network provision and high cost of travel can restrict the ability of people to travel to employment opportunities and limits the availability of a workforce for employers.</p> <p>The economic sustainability of both islands relies heavily on the tourism industry (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Total employment on the Isle of Cumbrae is estimated at 400, of which a quarter work in tourism</p>

			<p>related sectors and tourism related employment accounted for over one in three jobs in Arran in 2019 (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Affordable, frequent, and available transport options support tourism to the islands, harnessing the economic benefits for the island communities.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 4</b> improvements to the reliability and punctuality of the bus service (M6), would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities encouraged high levels of co-ordination under M7.</p> <p><b>Policy 5</b> improvements to the attractiveness of bus journey times through measures such as, faster journey times, faster boardings and express services (M13), could encourage people to use the service over private vehicles. Greater connection and accessibility by bus could support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. As people on lower incomes are more dependent on buses, this would be especially beneficial for those who rely on buses to access such opportunities within island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> and <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities.</p>
Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?	+	0	<p>Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.</p> <p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p><b>Policy 4</b> proposes to improve the reliability and punctuality of the bus services, this includes better coordination of rural services with region/express services (M7) . As island communities are classed as rural, this would be beneficial to them as they could have greater accessibility to services and employment.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 5</b> and associated measures would significantly address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities given the fewer number of routes and options that will be affected.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> would result in a <b>Neutral or Negligible Effect</b> on address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities .</p>
Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?	+	0	<p>Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in</p>

			<p>some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.</p> <p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).</p> <p>Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.</p> <p>Island communities can also face additional freight costs, such as to get goods, including farming and seafood produce, to market or to import energy sources or building materials and labour. Additional charges for deliveries can also be a challenge. The Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plan identified that suppliers of goods to the island may apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of the ferries. The cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island (North Ayrshire Council, 2022).</p> <p><b>Policy 4</b> proposes to improve the reliability and punctuality of the bus services, this includes better coordination of rural services with region/express services. As island communities are classed as rural, this would be beneficial to them as they could have greater accessibility to services and employment.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 5</b> and associated measures would significantly address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities given the fewer number of routes and options that will be affected.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> would result in in a <b>Neutral or Negligible Effect</b> on address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>~</p>	<p>Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.</p> <p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in</p>



			<p>North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).</p> <p>Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.</p> <p>Improved reliability and punctuality of the bus network under <b>Policy 4</b> would benefit island communities. A measure under this policy is to provide better coordination of rural services with region/express services. This would benefit those who rely on buses for employment opportunities or for access to healthcare services. This would be particularly beneficial as the islands have an ageing population who are more reliant on healthcare services.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 5</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
<p>Impact on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>It is likely that <b>Policy 4</b> or <b>Policy 5</b> will have a neutral/negligible effect on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity. It is likely that individual interventions may include impacts on these factors which would need to be explored individually.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> and <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> would result in <b>Neutral/Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands’ communities?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>~</p>	<p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by the mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islands who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Respondents to The National Islands Plan (2019) highlighted concerns about the perceived centralisation of healthcare services; both in terms of access to certain services being moved to the mainland or the population centres of larger islands.</p> <p>Local access to services was an important issue for many women who reported having to travel long distances for appointments. In island communities, there was a desire to have as much care as possible provided locally, although women did recognise the need to ensure that services were safe and</p>

			<p>sustainable. Travel challenges leading to lengthy periods away from home were particularly difficult for families with other children or caring responsibilities (Scottish Government, 2019).</p> <p>Additionally, the population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands. An older population will typically have more health challenges than a younger population. A key issue identified in the RTS Case for Change (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021) included the need for better transport networks to and from hospitals.</p> <p><b>Policy 4</b> proposes to improve the reliability and punctuality of the bus services, this includes better coordination of rural services with region/express services. As island communities are classed as rural, this would be beneficial to them as they could have greater accessibility to healthcare services, such as hospitals and GP practices. This is particularly apparent for the communities within the SPT region who are experiencing a higher ageing population than the rest of the region.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 5</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique health challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique health challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
<p>Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Whilst reported levels of satisfaction with island quality of life across the Scottish islands are often high, the lack of visible poverty (and/or its dispersed pattern) can hide the existence of pockets of deprivation in some island communities. For example, data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2020) indicates that some parts of south and east Arran are within the second and third lowest deciles for housing and parts of Millport on Cumbrae are within the second lowest decile overall due to high levels of income, employment, health, education and housing deprivation.</p> <p><b>Policy 4</b> and its associated measures could provide greater accessibility for employment and training opportunities for island communities. As stated, there are high levels of deprivation within the island communities according to SIMD data. Greater access to such services may protect and enhance the quality of life for these communities.</p> <p><b>Policy 5</b> could provide faster busy journey times on busier routes and express services. Although the benefits of faster busy journey times may focus mostly within urban areas of the SPT region, any improvement to journey times could also benefit island communities. Express services for island communities could provide greater accessibility for employment and training opportunities, reducing the amount of time spent travelling. Greater access to such services may protect and enhance the quality of life for these communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> and <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and enhancing quality of life for island residents.</p>

<b>Overall Assessment</b>	Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 4</b> and <b>Policy 5</b> under <b>Theme 2</b> could result in a <b>Neutral/Negligible to Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on island communities as improved reliability and punctuality of the bus service, alongside more attractive bus journey times compared to car journey times could result in greater accessibility to healthcare services, employment and training opportunities.
---------------------------	---

## 7.6 Policy Theme 3: Affordable and Attractive Fares and Ticketing

- 7.6.1 Fares and ticketing need to be simple and easy to understand to attract people to bus and improve passenger perceptions of value for money by ensuring passengers are confident that they've selected the best available fare for their journey.
- 7.6.2 Simple fares structures and daily price capping should be available, aiming for 'tap on, tap off' to be available across the bus network to make bus travel as easy and convenient as possible for the greatest number of people.
- 7.6.3 Bus journeys also need to be affordable, particularly for those who face cost-related travel barriers to accessing their everyday needs. Ways to achieve this include best value season products with flexible payment options to be available across the bus network. Additional targeted support on fares should also be considered for people most in need of this to ensure the bus network is available to all.
- 7.6.4 Any fare increases need to be consistently and effectively communicated and, as far as practicable, aligned to established time periods to help passengers plan for any changes that may affect them.
- 7.6.5 The key policies under this theme include:
- **Policy 6:** Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities.
  - **Policy 7:** Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring.
  - **Policy 8** Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible.

Table 7.3: Theme 3: Affordable and Attractive Fares and Ticketing

ICIA Criteria	Policies			Commentary
	P6	P7	P8	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	+	+	+	The primary connection to the mainland from both the islands of Arran and Great Cumbrae is by ferry, and both islands are served by bus services that run directly from the ferry terminal. Whilst existing bus services are relatively direct to the ferry terminal, island communities face different transport challenges (Scottish Government, 2019a). These challenges include a lack of available, frequent, and

				<p>affordable transport services to the mainland, reducing employment, educational, and training opportunities for island communities. These challenges, combined with the perceived peripheral nature of islands, results in youth outmigration from Scottish islands, reducing the working age population and jeopardising the economic prosperity of island communities (Alexander, 2021). In the National Islands Plan survey, 71% of young islanders indicated they would be likely to stay on the island for the next 5 years, significantly below the average 86% for all island residents. More generally, poor public transport links, gaps in network provision and high cost of travel can restrict the ability of people to travel to employment opportunities and limits the availability of a workforce for employers.</p> <p>The economic sustainability of both islands relies heavily on the tourism industry (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Total employment on the Isle of Cumbrae is estimated at 400, of which a quarter work in tourism related sectors and tourism related employment accounted for over one in three jobs in Arran in 2019 (North Ayrshire Council, 2022). Affordable, frequent, and available transport options support tourism to the islands, harnessing the economic benefits for the island communities.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 6</b>, improvements to the affordability of bus fares, especially for those living in island communities would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.</p> <p>By improving the attractiveness of bus fares compared to private car use under <b>Policy 7</b> particularly M15, would ensure that the best fare is applied for those who use the bus network and those with chain trips get the best price. This would support people within island communities with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.</p> <p>Similarly, under <b>Policy 8</b>, easy to understand fares that are flexible would support people within island communities (M16, M17, M18) with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment. The primary connection to the mainland from both the islands of Arran and Great Cumbrae is by ferry, and both islands are served by bus services that run directly from the ferry terminal. Whilst existing bus services are relatively direct to the ferry terminal, island communities face different transport challenges (Scottish Government, 2019a). These challenges include a lack of available, frequent, and affordable transport services to the mainland, reducing employment, educational, and training opportunities for island communities.</p> <p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost,</p>

				<p>time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 6</b>, improvements to the affordability of bus fares, especially for those living in island communities would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to address the unique transport challenges.</p> <p>By improving the attractiveness of bus fares compared to private car use under <b>Policy 7</b>, would ensure that the best fare is applied for those who use the bus network. This would support people within island communities with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to address the unique transport challenges.</p> <p>Similarly, under <b>Policy 8</b>, easy to understand fares that are flexible would support people within island communities with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Improved access to such opportunities may help to address the unique transport challenges.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6, Policy 7 and Policy 8</b> and associated measures under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>++</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.</p> <p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).</p> <p>Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.</p> <p>Island communities can also face additional freight costs, such as to get goods, including farming and seafood produce, to market or to import energy sources or building materials and labour. Additional charges for deliveries can also be a challenge. The Isle of Cumbrae Local Island Plan identified that suppliers of goods to the island may apply an additional premium to compensate for the unreliability of</p>

				<p>the ferries. The cost is passed on to the consumer, creating a higher cost of living on the island (North Ayrshire Council, 2022).</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 6</b>, <b>Policy 7</b> and <b>Policy 8</b> and their associated measures, improvements to the affordability of bus fares, especially for those living in island communities would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. This would be particularly beneficial as a main economic challenge is lack of affordable transport options to access employment opportunities on the mainland. Additionally, under <b>Policy 6</b>, those facing socio-economic disadvantage within island communities will be prioritised for concessionary / discounted fares which will reduce overall fares for all.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 7</b> and <b>Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?</p>	<p>++</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Population decline is a threat to the sustainability of many island communities. Over the last 10 years, almost twice as many islands have lost populations as have gained (Scottish Government, 2024). Population levels on Arran and Cumbrae between 2010 and 2020 declined by between 10% and 20% in some data zones although this trend has been partly reversed in the last 5 years in parts of west and south Arran.</p> <p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland's Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland).</p> <p>Depopulation can have an adverse effect on communities, reducing confidence and the sustainability of services, increasing the vulnerability of communities already experiencing higher costs of service provision and market access. These changes and the corresponding reduction in the working age population on the islands means there are fewer people of working age available to provide necessary support services for the increasing number of older people.</p> <p>Improved affordability of bus fares under <b>Policy 6</b>, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities, could promote community confidence and the sustainability of the bus service. By providing concessionary / discounted fares for groups most in need, the bus will be accessible for all. A more affordable service may increase the number of working age people on the island as they could have greater access to work and training opportunities.</p> <p>Similarly, under <b>Policy 8</b>, easy to understand and flexible fares will make the service more affordable for all, especially island communities where deprivation is higher.</p>

				<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 7</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 7</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> would result in a <b>Neutral or Negligible Effect</b>. This is as although improved attractiveness of public transport could make living on the highland more attractive it is not likely on its own to have a significant impact.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?</p>	0	0	0	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 6, Policy 7</b> or <b>Policy 8</b> and associated measures would impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6, Policy 7</b> or <b>Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> would result in <b>Neutral/Negligible Effect</b>. It is likely that a more affordable public transport system may have positive impacts on the island infrastructure, for example increased use of services, and natural environment through indirect environmental improvements it is unlikely that significant beneficial impacts on these factors could be robustly identified.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?</p>	+	0	0	<p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by the mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islands who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Respondents to The National Islands Plan (2019) highlighted concerns about the perceived centralisation of healthcare services; both in terms of access to certain services being moved to the mainland or the population centres of larger islands.</p> <p>Local access to services was an important issue for many women who reported having to travel long distances for appointments. In island communities, there was a desire to have as much care as possible provided locally, although women did recognise the need to ensure that services were safe and sustainable. Travel challenges leading to lengthy periods away from home were particularly difficult for families with other children or caring responsibilities (Scottish Government, 2019).</p> <p>Additionally, the population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands. An older population will typically have more health challenges than a younger population. A key issue identified in the RTS Case for Change (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, 2021) included the need for better transport networks to and from hospitals.</p>

				<p>Under <b>Policy 6</b>, concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need (M14) will make the bus service more accessible for those who rely on it. For example, a pregnant person who requires transportation to the hospital for appointments will benefit from this policy and associated measures. Additionally, as the islands have an ageing population, access to healthcare services for this group is becoming increasingly more important. This policy would also benefit the older population.</p> <p><b>Policy 7</b> or <b>Policy 8</b> and associated measures may have positive impacts on health issues on island populations through increasing access to healthcare destinations. However, these may be negligible on a population level.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique health challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 7</b> or <b>Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> would result in a <b>Neutral / Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
<p>Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>+</p>	<p>Whilst reported levels of satisfaction with island quality of life across the Scottish islands are often high, the lack of visible poverty (and/or its dispersed pattern) can hide the existence of pockets of deprivation in some island communities. For example, data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (Scottish Government, 2020) indicates that some parts of south and east Arran are within the second and third lowest deciles for housing and parts of Millport on Cumbrae are within the second lowest decile overall due to high levels of income, employment, health, education and housing deprivation.</p> <p>Through <b>Policy 6</b>, <b>Policy 7</b> and <b>Policy 8</b> and associated measures, improvements to the affordability of bus fares, especially for those living in island communities would support people with accessing socio-economic opportunities linked with employment, education and training. Additionally, more affordable fares would provide improved access to those who require transportation to essential services, such as medical appointments. Overall, more affordable bus fares that are easier to understand and more flexible will have beneficial effects on the quality of life for island residents.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6</b>, <b>Policy 7</b> and <b>Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and enhancing quality of life for island residents.</p>
<p><b>Overall Assessment</b></p>				<p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 6</b>, <b>Policy 7</b> and <b>Policy 8</b> under <b>Theme 3</b> could result in a <b>Neutral/Negligible to Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on island communities as more affordable bus fares, improvements to the attractiveness of bus fares alongside easier to understand and flexible bus fares could result in greater accessibility to healthcare services, employment and training opportunities.</p>

## 7.7 Policy Theme 4: Accessible and Safer Bus Journeys

- 7.7.1 Bus travel should be convenient and accessible to all passengers, as a core component of achieving a fully accessible door-to-door journey experience in the region. This means well-maintained and accessible routes to bus stops, and more accessible vehicles, stops and stations. Travel information needs



to be easily available in accessible formats, covering pre-journey planning, waiting at bus stops and on-board the bus. Customer service also needs to provide a consistent, high-quality experience for all passengers, informed by training in disability and equality matters.

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

7.7.3 The key policy under this theme includes:

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

Table 7.4: Theme 4 – Accessible and Safer Bus Journeys

FSD Criteria	Policies	Commentary
	P9	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	0	<p><b>Policy 7</b> and associated measures are likely to contribute to protecting and increasing the economic prosperity of island communities through increasing the number of passengers able to access public transport. However, further robust study would be needed to assign a clear assessment identifying impact pathways.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 7</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> would result in <b>Neutral/Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?	+	<p>Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.</p> <p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Poor transport links both to connect within the islands and connecting to transport on and off the islands can disadvantage island communities relative to one another and to similar mainland communities. Respondents to the consultation for the National Plan for Scotland's Islands (Scottish Government, 2019a) emphasised that island communities face many different transport challenges in their day-to-day lives compared to those living in less rural areas on the Scottish mainland. These include a lack of transport services, long journey times, the need for interchange / overnight stays, and the high cost of transport to and from the islands. Baseline data for Young persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme shows those living in rural areas and on islands were more likely to cite timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, a lack of bus stops nearby, and having to rely on family members when travelling as issues they faced, compared to those living in towns and cities (Transport Scotland,</p>

		<p>2022). SPT's RTS public survey in 2019 reported issues around frequency, costs and timetabling between ferries and onward public transport connections on the mainland (Stantec UK, 2021).</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 9</b>, the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all will be improved. An improvement in safety measures (e.g. well-lit bus stops, CCTV on buses, M23 and M24 respectively) would potentially encourage people within the community to use the bus service, especially protected characteristics such as women. Additionally, accessibility features (e.g. accessible vehicles, passenger assistance services, M22) could encourage older people, mainly those aged 65+, to use the service. A more attractive service to these groups could overall increase the usage of it.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p>
Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?	0	<p><b>Policy 9</b> and associated measures are likely to contribute to addressing the unique economic challenges of island communities through increasing the number of passengers able to access public transport. However, further robust study would be needed to assign a clear assessment identifying impact pathways. Increasing accessibility is likely to have an indirect positive impact.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> would result in <b>Neutral/Negligible Effect</b>.</p>
Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?	+	<p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland's Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland) and 6.0% of the population comprised of people in the 16 to 24 years age group (compared with 9.2% in North Ayrshire and 10.7% in Scotland) (Scotland's Census, 2022).</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 9</b>, the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all will be improved. Measures such as accessible vehicles, accessible travel information and passenger assistance services will be particularly beneficial to those who require assistance. A main group is people aged 65 and over who may experience mobility issues, hearing or vision issues or other disabilities. Additionally, pregnant people are another group who would benefit from accessibility measures. Both groups may rely on public transportation to attend medical appointments either within the island or on the mainland. Additionally, CCTV on buses and at bus stations and well-lit bus stops would deter any anti-social behaviour and promote safety perceptions for the bus service.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> and its associated measures under <b>Theme 4</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p>
Impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 9</b> and associated measures would impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?	0	<p><b>Policy 9</b> and associated measures would likely have an indirect positive impact on health challenges through increasing accessibility of healthcare infrastructure and allowing people to travel by public transport reducing reliance on the private care. However, further robust study would be needed to assign a clear assessment identifying impact pathways. Increasing accessibility is likely to have an indirect positive impact.</p>

		Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> would result in <b>Neutral/Negligible Effect..</b>
Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?	+	<b>Policy 9</b> and its associated measures is likely to have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and enhancing the quality of life for Island residents who would benefit from the increased quality of service. Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> would result in <b>Minor Beneficial Effect.</b>
<b>Overall Assessment</b>		Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 9</b> under <b>Theme 4</b> could result in a <b>Neutral/Negligible to Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on island communities, whilst acknowledging that a more accessible and safer bus travel for all could encourage the use of the service. This could result in greater accessibility to healthcare services, employment and training opportunities indirectly.

## 7.8 Policy Theme 5: A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Network

- 7.8.1 The bus network should be a valued regional asset that people trust to deliver a consistent, high-quality service no matter where one lives in the region or how often one travels by bus. The bus network should provide a recognisable 'offer' for both regular and infrequent users.
- 7.8.2 This means branding that is more focused on building passenger awareness and understanding of the network and less focused on who is operating the bus. This means aiming for a network that is not regularly changing and, when changes are made, ensuring that this is done in a consistent and well-communicated manner.
- 7.8.3 Passengers should also expect a consistently, high quality customer experience, backed by a customer charter setting out what passengers can expect from the bus network and who is accountable for the service provided. The bus driver has a critical role in the overall passenger experience, with friendly and helpful drivers being particularly key to delivering 'great' bus journeys. This will require providing consistent mechanisms for passenger feedback and monitoring passenger satisfaction across the network.
- 7.8.4 The key policies under this theme include:
- **Policy 10:** Develop a consistent network identity across the region.
  - **Policy 11:** Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region.
  - **Policy 12:** Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers.
  - **Policy 13:** Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region.

Table 7.5: Theme 5 – A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Network

FSD Criteria	Policies				Commentary
	P10	P11	P12	P13	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	~	~	~	~	There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> and associated measures would protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities specifically. Although these policies and measures may help increase uptake of public transport.  Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b> .
Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?	~	~	+	~	Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.

					<p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Poor transport links both to connect within the islands and connecting to transport on and off the islands can disadvantage island communities relative to one another and to similar mainland communities. Respondents to the consultation for the National Plan for Scotland’s Islands (Scottish Government, 2019a) emphasised that island communities face many different transport challenges in their day-to-day lives compared to those living in less rural areas on the Scottish mainland. These include a lack of transport services, long journey times, the need for interchange / overnight stays, and the high cost of transport to and from the islands. Baseline data for Young persons’ Free Bus Travel Scheme shows those living in rural areas and on islands were more likely to cite timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, a lack of bus stops nearby, and having to rely on family members when travelling as issues they faced, compared to those living in towns and cities (Transport Scotland, 2022). SPT’s RTS public survey in 2019 reported issues around frequency, costs and timetabling between ferries and onward public transport connections on the mainland (Stantec UK, 2021).</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11</b> or <b>Policy 13</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p><b>Policy 12</b> proposes to develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that would minimise disruption to passengers. Beneficial effects from this would be felt across island communities who cite that frequency and cancellation issues with transportation are a major challenge. This is particularly apparent when connecting to the ferry service. Minimised disruption to routes will ensure that island communities are able to access key services, such as hospital appointments, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11</b> and <b>Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 12</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p>
Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?	~	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12</b> or <b>Policy 13</b> and associated measures would specifically effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities. Although increased high-quality and affordable transport as a whole are expected to have beneficial economic effects on the region.</p>

					Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b> .
Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?	~	~	+	~	<p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland) and 6.0% of the population comprised of people in the 16 to 24 years age group (compared with 9.2% in North Ayrshire and 10.7% in Scotland) (Scotland’s Census, 2022).</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>However, <b>Policy 12</b> could restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year which would minimise disruption to passengers. This would ensure that island communities have greater access to essential services and employment services year round.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11 and Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 12</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p>
Impact on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?	~	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> and associated measures would impact on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands’ communities?	~	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands’ communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?	~	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> and associated measures would protect and enhance the quality of life for island residents.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11, Policy 12 or Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
<b>Overall Assessment</b>	Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 10, Policy 11 and Policy 13</b> under <b>Theme 5</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b> due to a lack of evidence.				



Overall, it is assessed that **Policy 12** could result in a **Minor Beneficial Effect** on island communities as a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region could minimise disruption to passengers. This would ensure that island communities are better connected to other transport services, such as the ferry. Island communities therefore would not face as many accessibility issues.

## 7.9 Policy Theme 6: A Seamless and Integrated Network

- 7.9.1 The bus network should provide a ‘seamless’ journey with integration across key features – services/timetables, interchange locations/facilities, ticketing, and information - making it easy and convenient for people to use the bus network. The bus network also needs to be more integrated with active travel, rail and other public transport to make it easy to make whole journeys by public transport and active travel.
- 7.9.2 The bus network should be perceived as a single system that is easy, attractive and efficient for people to transfer between buses and to other modes. The location and access arrangements at bus stops should allow for convenient and attractive interchanging between services or modes, particularly in town centres and at rail stations. This can be facilitated by the development of a ‘mobility hub’ network, which are spaces for integrating public, active and shared transport. Integrating bus with placemaking schemes can also help mitigate the ‘interchange penalty’ by ensuring the waiting environment is pleasant.
- 7.9.3 The region benefits from multi-modal integrated ticketing, but future developments should aim to provide even more convenience and flexibility such as tap-and-go multi-modal ticketing with daily and weekly price capping based upon actual number of journeys made. Travel information that is integrated, accessible, high quality and ‘real time’ for all passengers is also important to the seamless experience.
- 7.9.4 The key policies under this theme include:
- **Policy 14:** Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.
  - **Policy 15:** Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.
  - **Policy 16:** Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region.


Table 7.6: Theme 6 – A Seamless and Integrated Network ICIA

ICIA Criteria	Policies			Commentary
	P14	P15	P16	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	~	+	~	<p>It is expected that <b>Policy 14</b> would have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> through M31 and aligning ferry routes for services, ticketing and information.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 15</b> or <b>Policy 16</b> and associated measures would protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14</b> is expected to have a Major Beneficial Effect. <b>Policy 15</b> or <b>Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>



<p>Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?</p>	+	~	+	<p>Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.</p> <p>Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.</p> <p>Poor transport links both to connect within the islands and connecting to transport on and off the islands can disadvantage island communities relative to one another and to similar mainland communities. Respondents to the consultation for the National Plan for Scotland’s Islands (Scottish Government, 2019a) emphasised that island communities face many different transport challenges in their day-to-day lives compared to those living in less rural areas on the Scottish mainland. These include a lack of transport services, long journey times, the need for interchange / overnight stays, and the high cost of transport to and from the islands. Baseline data for Young persons’ Free Bus Travel Scheme shows those living in rural areas and on islands were more likely to cite timetables, frequency of buses, limited route options, a lack of bus stops nearby, and having to rely on family members when travelling as issues they faced, compared to those living in towns and cities (Transport Scotland, 2022). SPT’s RTS public survey in 2019 reported issues around frequency, costs and timetabling between ferries and onward public transport connections on the mainland (Stantec UK, 2021).</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 14</b>, the bus service will be integrated more closely with the ferry network. This could benefit island communities who depend upon ferry services to access essential services and some employment opportunities.</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 15</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p><b>Policy 16</b> would provide island communities with higher quality and more consistent bus travel information. The frequency of buses was highlighted as a challenge and this policy would ensure that island communities can better plan out their use of bus transportation.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> could have a <b>Major Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 15</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p>Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?</p>	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 14</b>, <b>Policy 15</b> or <b>Policy 16</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.</p>

				Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14, Policy 15 or Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b> .
Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?	~	+	~	<p>The population on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran is typically older than for the rest of the North Ayrshire and SPT areas, with 38.8% of people aged 65 or over on these islands compared with 23.7% in North Ayrshire and 20.0% in Scotland (Scotland’s Census, 2022). Similarly young people are under-represented in island population demographics with 11.3% of the population under the age of 16 (compared with 15.9% in North Ayrshire and 16.4% in Scotland) and 6.0% of the population comprised of people in the 16 to 24 years age group (compared with 9.2% in North Ayrshire and 10.7% in Scotland) (Scotland’s Census, 2022).</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 14</b> and <b>Policy 16</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>However, <b>Policy 15</b> proposed to ensure that bus stops and interchanges are high quality with accessibility modes. As the island communities within the SPT region have an ageing population, this would benefit those who have mobility issues. This would also benefit pregnant people and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14</b> and <b>Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 15</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p>
Impact on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 14, Policy 15 or Policy 16</b> and associated measures would impact on the islands’ infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14, Policy 15 or Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands’ communities?	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 14, Policy 15 or Policy 16</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique health challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14, Policy 15 or Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?	~	+	~	<p>The commitment to ensuring bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region under <b>Policy 15</b>, could enhance the quality of life for island residents. As accessibility is a key transport issue for the communities, closer bus stops and interchanges would potentially reduce the distance travelled to and from bus stops and interchanges to create a more seamless and efficient network. This could ensure that island communities have greater access to essential services and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 14</b> and <b>Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>

		<p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 15</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p>
<p><b>Overall Assessment</b></p>	<p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy1 4, Policy 15</b> and <b>Policy 16</b> under <b>Theme 6</b> could result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on island communities as a seamless and integrated network, with high quality bus stops and interchanges, smart and integrated ticketing system, and more consistent bus travel information could result in greater accessibility to healthcare services, employment and training opportunities.</p>	

## 7.10 Policy Theme 7: A More Environmentally Sustainable, Efficient and Adaptable Bus Network and Fleet

- 7.10.1 The bus network should be operated in an environmentally sustainable and resilient way and support goals for net zero carbon and better air quality. Transitioning the fleet to zero emission vehicles, and delivering the supporting infrastructure and upskilled workforce, is a huge challenge for government and industry, but one which is already well underway in Scotland.
- 7.10.2 The challenge will be even greater if service frequencies and network coverage are to increase to deliver passenger growth and better access for communities, as this will increase the number of vehicles required to deliver the bus network. Scenarios developed for this strategy suggest that most of the bus fleet will need to be zero emission vehicles by around 2035 to align well with national climate change targets.
- 7.10.3 Alongside this, the bus network needs to be supported by a road network that is managed and adapted, where necessary, to mitigate effects of climate change. Mitigating surface flooding problems is important to avoiding disruption to bus services and passengers.
- 7.10.4 The key policies under this theme include:
  - **Policy 17:** Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.
  - **Policy 18:** Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region.
  - **Policy 19:** Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.

Table 7.7: Theme 7 – A More Environmentally Sustainable, Efficient and Adaptable Bus Network and Fleet

ICIA Criteria	Policies			Commentary
	P17	P18	P19	
Protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities?	~	~	~	There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 17</b> , <b>Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> and associated measures would protect and increase the economic prosperity of island communities.  Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17</b> , <b>Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b> .
Effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities?	~	+	+	Transport is a fundamental issue for island communities, and it is a key factor in the ability of people living in the islands to access services and employment.  Access issues for island communities are similar to those faced by mainland remote areas. However, dependence upon ferry services creates additional access issues for island residents in terms of cost, time and aligning journeys (and especially those made by public transport) to ferry schedules. For Islanders who require frequent trips to the mainland for medical appointments, this is even more pertinent, from both an accessibility and affordability perspective.

				<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 17</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 18</b>, there will be high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region. A more reliable network would address the reliability issues that island communities often face.</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 19</b>, the bus fleet will also be resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change which is particularly pertinent to island communities who are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on effectively addressing the unique transport challenges faced by island communities.</p>
Effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities?	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 17</b>, <b>Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique economic challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17</b>, <b>Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities?	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 17</b>, <b>Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique social challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17</b>, <b>Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Impact on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity?	+	+	+	<p>Future transport systems on islands will have to play their role in reaching net zero emissions and contribute to the Scottish Government's climate change obligations. Access to sustainable travel choices such as bus transport is integral to helping to achieve this.</p> <p>Community Energy Scotland conducted an audit of the Transport sector on the Isle of Cumbrae to develop a baseline of greenhouse gas emissions study as part of the Carbon Neutral Island Project. The transport sector includes emissions from on-road traffic as well as ferries departing the island. Waterborne transport accounts for around 33% of emissions in this sector predominately due to the fuel powering the ferry, while around 66% of emissions come from on-road vehicles. The reduction of emissions from onroad vehicles on both islands could benefit the natural environment and improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 17</b>, there would be a transitioning of the regional bus fleet to net zero emission vehicles (M37) in line with Scottish Government targets. The reduction of emissions from onroad vehicles on both islands could benefit the natural environment and improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Under <b>Policy 18</b>, high-quality and well-maintained vehicles would be introduced across the region which would increase the efficiency and resiliency of the buses. This would have environmental impacts, particularly on biodiversity, by reducing emissions from the bus fleet.</p>

				<p>Under <b>Policy 19</b>, a network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change will have beneficial effects on the natural environment and biodiversity. Island communities are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change and therefore it is essential that buses are resilient to these effects as climate change will only become a greater challenge in the future.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17, Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on impacting on the islands' infrastructure or natural environment and biodiversity.</p>
Effectively address the unique health challenges faced by the islands' communities?	~	~	~	<p>There is a lack of evidence to suggest that <b>Policy 17, Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> and associated measures would effectively address the unique health challenges faced by island communities.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17, Policy 18</b> or <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> would result in <b>No Clear Relationship</b>.</p>
Protect and enhance quality of life for island residents?	+	+	+	<p>The commitments to ensuring a bus fleet that is resilient and adaptable to climate change under <b>Policy 17, Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> will protect and enhance the quality of life for island residents. By reducing the emissions from buses, there will be beneficial effects on the local air quality.</p> <p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17, Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> could have a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> on protecting and enhancing the quality of life for island residents.</p>
<b>Overall Assessment</b>				<p>Overall, it is assessed that <b>Policy 17, Policy 18</b> and <b>Policy 19</b> under <b>Theme 7</b> could result in a <b>Minor Beneficial Effect</b> non island communities as high-quality, well-maintained net-zero vehicles which are resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change will result in a range of beneficial effects such as, lower emissions, enhanced quality of life as well as beneficial effects for the natural environment and biodiversity.</p>

## 8 Summary

8.1.1 On balance the SRBS objectives, policies and measures are assessed to provide a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** to **Major Beneficial Effect** regarding the ICIA. Alongside this, a number of objectives and policies have been assessed as **'having no clear relationship'** to the guiding questions within this assessment. This is because further detail regarding the implementation of the objectives and policies would be needed to make a robust impact assessment.

8.1.2 Overall, the following impacts have been found against the ICIA guiding questions:

### Objectives

8.1.3 Generally, all three objectives will have a **Neutral / Negligible Effect** to **Major Beneficial Effect** in relation to the guiding questions within this assessment.

8.1.4 Through a more consistent and improved level of service across the region under **Policy 1**, island communities could be connected more quickly and efficiently to key destinations and services. This could have benefits in relation to economic prosperity, unique transport challenges, unique social challenges, unique health challenges and enhancing the quality of life. No clear relationship was assigned to addressing unique economic challenges and impact on the islands' natural environment and biodiversity.

8.1.5 A more affordable, safe and accessible service for all under **Policy 2** would ensure that communities are better connected the key destinations and services. This could have benefits in relation to economic prosperity, unique economic challenges, unique social challenges, impacts on the natural environment and biodiversity, unique health challenges and enhancing the quality of life. A neutral effect was assigned for addressing unique transport challenges.

8.1.6 A more attractive, integrated and sustainable bus network under **Policy 3** would have a range of benefits in relation to unique transport challenges, the natural environment and biodiversity, unique health challenges and quality of life for island residents. No clear relationship was assigned to protecting and increasing the economic prosperity, unique economic challenges and unique social challenges.

### Policies

8.1.7 Generally, the 19 policies under the seven policy themes will have a **Minor Beneficial Effect** in relation to the guiding questions within this assessment. Several policies were assessed as having **No Clear Relationship or a Neutral/Negligible Effect** as either with the framing questions as they did not directly relate to island communities or although there may be potential positive impacts they would not be significant.

8.1.8 The assessment concluded that the policies that could have the greatest beneficial effect on island communities could be **Policy 1, Policy 2, Policy 3, Policy 4, Policy 5, Policy 6, Policy 8, Policy 9, Policy 12 and Policy 14**. These policies are anticipated to have the greatest impacts on island communities as they could encourage island communities to use the bus network and could provide greater accessibility to essential services (i.e. hospital appointments) and employment and training opportunities. Which through a chain of causality could have greater benefits in relation to reducing deprivation and improving economic prosperity.

## 9 References

- Amos Weintrob, Luke Hansell, Martin Zebracki, Yvonne Barnard & Karen Lucas (2021) Queer mobilities: critical LGBTQ perspectives of public transport spaces
- Clery, E., Kiss, Z., Taylor, E., & Gill, V. (2017). *Disabled people's travel behaviour and attitudes to travel*. London: Department for Transport.
- Colley, K., & Irvine, K. N. (2018). *Investigating use of the outdoors across adult population groups in Scotland*. The James Hutton Institute.
- Davis, A. (2014). *Addressing attitudes of young people aged 16-24 and young mothers towards sustainable travel modes, barriers to behaviour change, and channels to engage them in voluntary travel behaviour change*. Bristol: Wheels to Work West.
- Disability Equality Scotland. (2017, May). *National Baseline Results, May 2017*. Retrieved 2021, from <https://accessibletravel.scot/surveys/>
- Disability Equality Scotland. (2018). *National Survey: Transport in Rural Areas Disabled Passenger Results*. Cited in Transport and Poverty in Scotland, Report of the Poverty and Inequality Commission (2019).
- Duchene, C. (2011). Gender and Transport. *International Transport Forum Discussion Papers*. Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2016, July). *Assessing impact and the Public Sector Equality Duty - A guide for public authorities in Scotland*. Retrieved from <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities>
- Fatima, K., Moridpour, S., De Gruyter, C., & Saghapour, T. (2020). Elderly Sustainable Mobility: Scientific Paper Review. *Sustainability*.
- Gentin, S. (2011). Outdoor recreation and ethnicity in Europe - A review. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 153-161.
- Jacobs and AECOM. (2022). *Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) Report*.
- Jarvis, F. (2020). *All aboard? Barriers for disabled passengers on public transport*. Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- LGBT Youth Scotland. (2017). *Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People*.
- MACS. (2019). *Report: Transport to Health and Social Care*. Retrieved from <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47020/subgroup-transport-to-health-report.pdf>
- National Records of Scotland. (2011). *Scotland's Census 2011. Table LC3045SC*.
- National Records of Scotland. (2020). *Mid-Year Population Estimates*. Retrieved from National Records of Scotland: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates>
- Poverty and Inequality Commission. (2019). *Transport and Poverty in Scotland*.
- Sanchez de Madariaga, I. (2013). The Mobility of Care: A new Concept in Urban Transportation. In I. S. Roberts, *Fair Share Cities: The Impact of Gender Planning in Europe*. London: Ashgate.
- Scotland's Census. (2022). UV103 - Age by single year.
- Scottish Government. (2015). *Active Scotland Outcomes: Indicator Equality Analysis*.
- Scottish Government. (2016). *Mainstreaming equality: Scottish Government's equality duties*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-equality-duties/>
- Scottish Government. (2017). *The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-advisor-poverty-inequality-life-chances-young-people-scotland-report/>
- Scottish Government. (2017b). *Sexual orientation in Scotland 2017: summary of evidence base*. Scottish Government.
- Scottish Government. (2023a). Scottish Islands Data Overview. Retrieved from A Scottish Government publication: [Scottish Islands Data Overview \(2023\)](#)
- Scottish Government. (2023b). *Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22*. Retrieved from A Scottish Government National Statistics publication: <https://data.gov.scot/poverty/index.html>
- Scottish Trans Alliance. (2016). *Non-binary people's experiences in the UK*. Retrieved February 2022, from Scottish Tran Alliance: <https://www.scottishtrans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Non-binary-report.pdf>
- Stantec. (2021). *SPT Regional Transport Strategy, Baseline Performance Statistics*.



## [Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy: Island Communities Impact Assessment ]

### References

- Stantec UK. (2021). *The New Regional Regional Transport Strategy for Strathclyde, Initial Consultation and Engagement Report*.
- Stantec UK. (2021). *The New Regional Transport Strategy for Strathclyde, Draft Case for Change Equalities Impact Assessment*.
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. (2021a). *The New Regional Transport Strategy for the West of Scotland: Draft 'Case for Change' report for consultation*.
- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport. (2021b). *Advancing Equality 2021*.
- Su, F., & Bell, M. G. (2012). Travel differences by gender for older people in London. *Research in Transportation Economics*, 35-38.
- Transport Scotland. (2019). *Transport and Travel in Scotland - Results from the Scottish Household Survey*. Retrieved January 2022, from Transport and Travel in Scotland 2018: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-results-from-the-scottish-household-survey-1/>
- Transport Scotland. (2019b). *Transport and Travel in Scotland - Results from the Scottish Household Survey*. Retrieved January 2022, from Transport and Travel in Scotland 2018: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-results-from-the-scottish-household-survey-1/>
- Transport Scotland. (2020). *National Transport Strategy 2*. Scottish Government.
- Transport Scotland. (2021, October). *NTS2 Delivery Plan - Social and Equality Impact Assessments Screening Report*. Retrieved January 2022, from <https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/nts2-delivery-plan-impact-assessments-consultation/>
- Transport Scotland. (2021b). *Disability and Transport: Findings from the Scottish Household Survey*. Transport Scotland.
- Transport Scotland. (2022). *Baseline data report - June 2022 - Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme*. Transport Scotland.
- UK Government (2023) Children in low income families: local area statistics, financial year ending 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2023/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-financial-year-ending-2023#scotland>
- UK Government Equalities Office. (2020). *2020 Sexual Harrassment Survey*. UK Government Equalities Office.
- Valentine, V. (2016). *Non-binary people's experiences in the UK*. Retrieved January 2022, from Scottish Trans: <https://www.scottishtrans.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Non-binary-report.pdf>
- Yarde, J., Clery, E., Tipping, S., & Kiss, Z. (2020). *Capability, health and travel behaviour of older people*. Department for Transport. Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/935822/capability-health-and-travel-behaviour-of-older-people.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935822/capability-health-and-travel-behaviour-of-older-people.pdf)

## Appendix A Draft SRBS Themes, Policies and Measures

Policy Ref	Draft SRBS Policy	Measure Ref	Draft SRBS Measure
<b>Theme 1: Buses where they are needed, when they are needed</b>			
P1	Improve periods of operation and geographic coverage of the bus network, where required.	M1	A regional bus network based upon defined principles for frequency, capacity, periods of operation, coverage and connectivity.
		M2	Minimum levels of service for all towns, key destinations (e.g., hospitals) and off-peak time periods to ensure basic accessibility, working towards more convenient service levels.
P2	Improve the frequency of bus services, where required.	M3	High frequency services (every 10 minutes minimum) on core routes, working towards a turn-up-and-go service level for some services at appropriate times.
P3	Improve the efficiency of the regional bus network.	M4	An integrated bus network with better coordination between services and modes, particularly for journeys where interchange is more common (e.g., rural to regional express or bus to rail).
<b>Theme 2: Reliable and quicker journeys</b>			
P4	Improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services.	M5	Bus priority infrastructure on high frequency routes (every 10 minutes minimum) and routes that are prone to congestion, including motorways.
		M6	Bus services that better meet performance (e.g. punctuality and patronage) standards and objectives, supported by more performance monitoring and the open sharing of performance data.
		M7	Better coordination of rural services with region/express services and rail services.
		M8	Better co-ordination of appropriate fleets for appropriate routes and services, maximising fleet and boarding capacity.
		M9	Support wider car demand management and centralised network disruption management policies, measures and operations.
		M10	Traffic management and enforcement measures (e.g., bus lane cameras, parking enforcement).
		M11	More efficient network planning via a whole of region approach to provide faster and more reliable journeys.

**[Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy: Island Communities Impact Assessment ]**

References

		M12	Network-wide communication and monitoring teams to manage and respond to disruption, including the development with partners of a regional control centre.
P5	Improve the attractiveness of bus journey times compared to car journey times.	M13	Faster bus journey times on busier routes, supported by bus priority, faster boardings (through smart ticketing, bus stop rationalisation and faster vehicle access/egress) and express services.
<b>Theme 3: Affordable and attractive fares and ticketing</b>			
P6	Improve the affordability of bus fares, especially for people living in poverty, disadvantaged communities and rural or remote communities.	M14	Concessionary / discounted fares prioritised for groups most in need, progressing towards overall fare reductions for all.
P7	Improve the attractiveness of bus fares compared to the cost of motoring.	M15	Automatic fare capping for single and multi-journey (ensuring best fare is applied for the actual journey made).
P8	Ensure that bus fares are easy to understand and flexible.	M16	Simplified fare structures providing customers with the best value for money ticket for all journeys.
		M17	Accessible and easy to understand fares information.
		M18	Consistent and well-communicated approaches to any fare increases.
<b>Theme 4: Accessible and safer bus journeys</b>			
P9	Improve the accessibility and safety of bus travel for all passengers.	M19	Accessibility and equality training for bus drivers, bus station staff and bus planning teams.
		M20	Inclusive and accessible travel information, including audio-visual information on buses.
		M21	Passenger assistance services on buses, aiming for a single, network-wide approach.
		M22	Accessible vehicles, bus stops and bus stations, and routes to bus stops and stations.
		M23	CCTV on buses and at bus stations.
		M24	High quality, well-lit and maintained bus stops.
<b>Theme 5: A Trusted and Recognisable Bus Network</b>			
P10	Develop a consistent network identity across the region.	M25	A strong network-wide identity across key assets, services and information (e.g. vehicles, stops and stations, online and app services).
P11	Ensure passengers receive a consistent, high quality standard of customer service across the region.	M26	A network-wide Customer Charter.
		M27	Network-wide passenger engagement and monitoring of passenger satisfaction.

**[Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy: Island Communities Impact Assessment ]**

References

P12	Develop and ensure a consistent approach to bus service changes across the region that minimises disruption to passengers.	M28	Restrict significant service changes to well-defined dates each year (like trains) with a clearly reported rationale for change.
P13	Develop and ensure high quality and consistent driver standards across the region.	M29	Consistent, high quality customer service provided by drivers and other customer-facing staff (e.g., travel centres, contact centres, customer services).
<b>Theme 6: A seamless and integrated network</b>			
P14	Develop a smart and integrated ticketing system for the bus network that makes it easy to use bus across the region and supports wider multi-modal integration and MaaS.	M30	Smart and cashless ticketing options and simplified product offer.
		M31	Bus integrated more closely with ferry, rail, Subway, cross-regional routes and the emerging Clyde Metro - networks/services/hub, ticketing and information.
P15	Ensure bus stops and interchanges are high quality and located conveniently and efficiently across the region.	M32	High quality passenger waiting facilities (stops/hubs/stations) across the region.
		M33	Integrate waiting facilities with active, accessibility and micro-mobility modes, and with wider mobility hub and place-making proposals in appropriate locations.
		M34	Review, improve and rationalise waiting facility infrastructure and locations to provide a more seamless, welcoming and efficient network.
P16	Ensure bus travel information is provided consistently as high quality, accurate and integrated for all bus users across the region.	M35	Accurate and reliable real time travel information across the region.
		M36	Open and transparent performance monitoring of services to assess performance and target improvements.
<b>Theme 7: A more environmentally sustainable, efficient and adaptable bus network and fleet</b>			
P17	Transition the regional bus fleet to zero emission vehicles.	M37	High quality bus fleet that is transitioning fully to 100% zero emission vehicles in line with Scottish Government targets.
P18	Ensure high-quality and well-maintained vehicles across the region.	M38	Efficient, resilient and well-maintained depot network.
P19	Ensure the regional bus fleet supports a resilient and operationally efficient bus network.	M39	A road and bus infrastructure network that is resilient and adaptable to the effects of climate change.
		M40	Resilient and skilled-up workforce.
		M41	EV enabled bus depot facilities and supporting infrastructure that are future proofed to facilitate the conversion of the bus fleet to zero emissions.



**With every community, we redefine what's possible.**

Stantec is a global leader in sustainable architecture, engineering, and environmental consulting. The diverse perspectives of our partners and interested parties drive us to think beyond what's previously been done on critical issues like climate change, digital transformation, and future-proofing our cities and infrastructure. We innovate at the intersection of community, creativity, and client relationships to advance communities everywhere, so that together we can redefine what's possible.