

## OFFICIAL

**EHTR 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 – Item 4, Appendix: DRAFT GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE, FOR INFORMATION**

### **Appendix 1 - Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS)**

The Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS) is SPT's process to determine a preferred strategy to improving the bus network and set the direction of bus policy in the region. SPT has developed a set of recommendations to guide the development and implementation of its bus strategy.

SPT is now seeking GCC's feedback, as a key stakeholder, on their approach the extent of support for its recommendations and whether they should consider amending their approach before moving into the next stage of the bus strategy process

The survey is also open for individual comments which anyone can respond to and details on the consultation can be found at <https://www.spt.co.uk/about-us/what-we-are-doing/regional-transport-strategy/bus-strategy/>

SPT has been considering how a future bus network could be delivered. Details on these options can be found within the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy Consultation document. SPT has appraised each option to understand how well each one could help with the delivery of a better bus network, based on their anticipated benefits, costs and any implementation issues.

GCC's proposed response to their recommendations and their appraisal is detailed within their supplied questionnaire as follows:



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of this research**

In 2023, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) commenced work on the Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS). The SRBS is SPT's process to determine a preferred strategy to improving the bus network and set the direction of bus policy in the region. SPT has now developed a set of recommendations to guide the development and implementation of its bus strategy.

SPT has commissioned SYSTRA, an independent transport consultancy, to consult with stakeholders and the general public to understand the extent of support on these recommendations.

OFFICIAL

## OFFICIAL

### This survey

SPT is keen to get your feedback on whether you feel these are the right recommendations, and why. Your feedback is important so that SPT can understand the extent of support for its recommendations and whether they should consider amending their approach before moving into the next stage of the bus strategy process.

We would be very grateful if you would take the time to complete the survey, which will take approximately 10 minutes. The feedback that you can provide will help SPT to further develop the bus strategy for the region and consider if any changes should be made to the recommendations. You are able to provide a response to the survey from now until **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024**.

If you would prefer to fill in a paper version of the questionnaire, you can request a paper version be posted to your household by emailing the team at [RTS@spt.co.uk](mailto:RTS@spt.co.uk).

### Your data

All survey responses are confidential and results will be analysed and reported anonymously by SYSTRA. The research complies with the Market Research Society Professional Code of Conduct and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). You can withdraw from the research at any time.

The survey will ask you for some basic contact information for the purposes of ensuring the authenticity of responses, as well as asking about your level of support or opposition on the different options. Those responding on behalf of an organisations will also be asked to provide some basic details about their organisation. Those responding as an individual will be asked about the area they live in and their current travel behaviour.

You have rights in relation to how your personal data is handled and you can find full details by clicking [here](#).

#### 0. Are you happy to proceed with the survey?

*Please select one*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

### ABOUT YOU

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

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

*Please select one*

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am responding as an individual
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I am responding on behalf of an organisation

#### 2. What is the name of the organisation that you are responding on behalf of?

**OFFICIAL**

*Please enter your organisation's name below*

<b>Glasgow City Council</b>
-----------------------------

**3. Which of the following best describes your organisation?**

*Please select one*

	Bus operator
<b>X</b>	Local authority
	Other organisation

**4. In which local authority area does your organisation primarily operate?**

*Please select all that apply*

	Argyll and Bute
	East Ayrshire
	East Dunbartonshire
	East Renfrewshire
<b>X</b>	Glasgow City
	Inverclyde
	North Ayrshire
	North Lanarkshire
	Renfrewshire
	South Ayrshire
	South Lanarkshire
	West Dunbartonshire

**5. Please provide your name, job title, and email address below.**

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

*Please enter your name and email address below.*

Name:
-------

Job title:
------------

Email:
--------

## OFFICIAL

### FEEDBACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the last nine months, SPT has been considering a number of ways, or options, that the future bus network could be delivered. More detail on these options can be found within the [Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy Consultation document](#). SPT has appraised each option to understand how well each one could help with the delivery of a better bus network, based on their anticipated benefits, costs and any implementation issues.

After reviewing the evidence and appraisal findings, SPT has developed a set of recommendations to guide the development and implementation of the bus strategy. These next few questions are to understand whether you think these are the right recommendations and why.

OFFICIAL

**1.1.1.1 Business as Usual and Voluntary Partnerships**

SPT is proposing to rule out **business as usual** and **voluntary partnerships** for further consideration in its bus strategy. These options, and the reasons for ruling them out, are described in brief below.

**Business as usual** describes the existing bus network. Operators are free to run any service, set their own fares and choose their own vehicles, subject to meeting safety and operating standards and applicable government policies such as Low Emission Zones. Evidence suggests that with this option, it is highly unlikely that the cycle of decline will be broken. SPT also anticipate that continuing with business as usual is unacceptable to most stakeholders and communities.

**Voluntary partnerships** are when bus operators and public sector partners come together to improve the bus network through agreeing, on a voluntary basis, to provide or deliver improvements to services and infrastructure or other local policies to support bus services. The option appraisal process found no evidence in the region to suggest that voluntary partnerships are likely to break the cycle of bus decline.

**6. To what extent do you support or oppose SPT’s recommendation to rule out ‘business as usual’ and ‘voluntary partnerships’ for further consideration in the bus strategy?**

*Please select one for each option*

	<b>Rule out business as usual</b>	<b>Rule out voluntary partnerships</b>
Strongly support	<b>X</b>	
Somewhat support		
Neither support nor oppose		
Somewhat oppose		<b>X</b>
Strongly oppose		
Don't know		

## OFFICIAL

### 1.1.1.2 Local services franchising and Bus Service Improvement Partnerships

SPT is recommending that they begin work on local services franchising, in line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. SPT is also recommending that they work with partners to develop Bus Service Improvement Partnerships while franchising is developed.

**Local services franchising** is a system that allows a Local Transport Authority to plan the bus network and to award exclusive rights to an operator to run certain bus services for a set period of time. Under this franchise framework, the Local Transport Authority then enters into franchise agreements with bus operators, generally awarded through competitive processes, to deliver the specified services and standards. SPT believes franchising offers the greatest certainty in delivering an improved bus network for the region in the long term.

**Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)** are a statutory partnership between a Local Transport Authority (or authorities) and one or more bus operators. This model differs from a voluntary partnership in that there is a legal basis for the Plan and Scheme(s) and, therefore, elements of the Plan and Scheme(s) can be enforced. SPT believes BSIPs play an important role in delivering key improvements for the bus network, including bus priority measures to improve reliability, ahead of implementing local services franchising.

#### 7. To what extent do you support or oppose SPT's recommendation to take forward local services franchising and BSIPs?

*Please select one for each option*

	Take forward Local services franchising	Take forward BSIPs
Strongly support	X	X
Somewhat support		
Neither support nor oppose		
Somewhat oppose		
Strongly oppose		
Don't know		

OFFICIAL

**1.1.1.3 Municipal bus company**

SPT is proposing to further investigate the opportunity offered by the creation of a small-scale municipal bus operation to target provision in areas where there is a lack of commercial services or as an operator of last resort.

A **municipal bus company** is an operator of bus services owned by a Local Transport Authority. A municipal bus company can be formed from the purchase of an existing bus or coach company or the creation of a new company. Municipal bus companies compete for the market in the same way as privately owned bus companies.

**8. To what extent do you support or oppose SPT's recommendation to further investigate the opportunities offered by the creation of a small-scale municipal bus operation?**

*Please select one*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strongly support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither support nor oppose
<input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat oppose
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly oppose
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

OFFICIAL

9. If you wish, please use the box below to explain why you support or oppose any of SPT's recommendations.

<p>Rule out business as usual</p>	<p>The Council's Glasgow Transport Strategy work and associated Case for Change highlights improvements required to bus in Glasgow, and sets out ambitious policy aspirations for a world-class public transport system in Glasgow. The Council has also published a bus governance routemap to explore alternative forms of bus governance.</p> <p>We also recognise however that there are many influencing factors in the decline of bus patronage including travel demand changes (many of which were already in motion before Covid-19) - changes in how / when / why people travel (particularly around retail and commuting).</p> <p>As per the Systra research for GCC and SPT in 2022, the Council acknowledges 'business as usual' is unlikely to deliver the GTS policy aspirations around a world-class public transport system.</p> <p>We would however question what "business as usual" means in the SPT SRBS work – arguably business as usual within Glasgow currently is the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership, which is a Voluntary Partnership, and therefore overlaps with the option below on Voluntary Partnerships. We have therefore interpreted this "business as usual" option to mean a scenario where there is no Voluntary Partnership in place.</p> <p><b>GCC Strongly Supports</b> SPT 's recommendation to rule out business as usual (on the assumption it does not include Voluntary Partnerships)</p>
<p>Rule out voluntary partnerships</p>	<p>GCC are concerned at the SRBS recommendation to rule out a Voluntary Partnership completely, and would request clarification in the wording that this should still be a short term option. This would support the continuation of the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership, which has achieved improvements for bus passengers in recent years including growth of the integrated bus ticket Glasgow Tripper, capped fares and tap on tap off technology on some bus services, delivery of bus priority through signal enhancements on Paisley Road West via the BPF, and the current "Don't be a bus blocker" public</p>

**OFFICIAL**

	<p>awareness campaign. A new operations sub-group has also been set up to enhance communications between GCC and bus operations, and ensure events and roadworks better take into account the impacts on bus services – this group is chaired by GCC and is meeting monthly.</p> <p>It will take time for any other bus governance intervention to be implemented, particularly when there is currently no certainty over funding availability for these bus governance changes. GCC would argue it is in the best interests of bus passengers to continue the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership and positive dialogue and partnership working within that, whilst other options are being explored by SPT. It should also be noted that a franchising system also relies on private sector provision.</p> <p><b>GCC Somewhat Opposes</b> SPT ‘s recommendation to rule out Voluntary Partnerships completely, and would request amended wording to support voluntary partnership working in the short term until another option is in place.</p>
Take forward local services franchising	<p>The Council’s Glasgow Transport Strategy work and associated Case for Change highlights improvements required to bus in Glasgow, and sets out ambitious policy aspirations for a world-class public transport system in Glasgow. The Council has also published a bus governance routemap to explore alternative forms of bus governance, including franchising.</p> <p><b>GCC Strongly Supports</b> SPT’s recommendation to commence work on bus franchising.</p>
Take forward BSIPs	<p>The Council’s Glasgow Transport Strategy work and associated Case for Change highlights improvements required to bus in Glasgow, and sets out ambitious policy aspirations for a world-class public transport system in Glasgow. The Council has also published a bus governance routemap to explore alternative forms of bus governance, including BSIP in the short-term.</p> <p>It should be noted however that the funding context has changed significantly since the SPT SRBS work</p>

**OFFICIAL**

	<p>began and since GCC's bus governance routemap was published. The Scottish Government Budget end 2023 saw the Bus Partnership Fund paused for 2024/25, as well as capital funding for SPT removed. A key expectation for any BSIP is local authority investment in measures to support enhanced bus services from operators as part of any BSIP Scheme, and GCC currently has little funding to deliver this in 2024/25. GCC anticipates the Strategic Bus Network Plan work funded by BPF in 2022/23 and co-commissioned by SPT and GCC, to be of value in the development of any BSIPlan.</p> <p>GCC would also seek clarity from SPT on expectations over roles and responsibilities in taking forward BSIP in Glasgow (SPT or local authorities), as well as the appropriate spatial level.</p> <p>GCC <b>Strongly Supports</b> SPT's recommendation to progress with BSIP arrangements, subject to funding reinstated for local authority bus improvement investment and clarity over roles and responsibilities on taking forward BSIP in Glasgow.</p>
Further investigate municipal bus operations	<p>The Council's Glasgow Transport Strategy work and associated Case for Change highlights improvements required to bus in Glasgow, and sets out ambitious policy aspirations for a world-class public transport system in Glasgow. The Council has also published a bus governance routemap to explore alternative forms of bus governance, including municipal bus operations.</p> <p>At this stage the full cost of running a Municipal Bus Company is unknown, and the SRBS report highlights "significant commercial risks to stakeholders and no certainty of success". As also noted in the report, any such company would be operating within the prevailing delivery model.</p> <p>GCC does not currently have the funding available to take this any further forward and will be interested in the outcomes of SPT's ongoing work on this topic, funded by the Community Bus Fund. GCC would also seek clarity from SPT on expectations over roles and responsibilities in taking forward municipal bus operations in the region – SPT and/or local authorities.</p>

**OFFICIAL**

	<p>GCC <b>Strongly Supports</b> the SPT recommendation to consider developing business cases for small-scale municipal bus companies, subject to clarity over roles and responsibilities in delivering these (SPT and/or local authorities).</p>
--	--

**OFFICIAL**

**10. Have you read any of the impact assessments that accompany the bus strategy consultation document?**

<b>X</b>	Yes
	No
	Don't know

**11. If you would like to make any comments on the impact assessments, please leave these below.**

GCC broadly supports the impact assessment findings though would query the adverse effect findings on Voluntary Partnerships – see comments above on achievements already seen to date via the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership which have benefitted bus passengers.

## OFFICIAL

### FINAL COMMENTS

**12. Finally, if you have any further comments related to the consultation on the bus strategy recommendations, please enter them here.**

Glasgow City Council welcomes the SPT work on a Strathclyde Regional Bus Strategy. The Council would request a more active and collaborative role in the next stages of the work (beyond as a consultee) to ensure the interests of the Council are represented. The work should also better link with Clyde Metro as an overarching and integrated public transport concept in the city and region.

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

*Please submit this response through the online questionnaire or email to [RTS@spt.co.uk](mailto:RTS@spt.co.uk)*

OFFICIAL