

## TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

10 SEPTEMBER 2024

## BUS PLAN PROGRESS

## REPORT BY PROJECT MANAGER

Purpose

This report provides the Partnership with details of the draft Tactran Bus Plan.

Summary

The draft Bus Plan provides a framework for the development of bus services across the Tactran region. The plan develops the concepts of minimum and optimal networks, making recommendations for actions at regional and local level. The plan concludes on delivery and governance structures appropriate to specific geographies, at regional, city, town, and rural levels; and provides a series of best practice evidence to support the conclusions. The plan integrates and develops from previous work undertaken under the community bus fund, reported to the Partnership at its meeting on 11 June 2024.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 1.1 That the Partnership:

- (i) notes the development of the Tactran Bus Plan; and
- (ii) approves the continued consultation, development and implementation of the Tactran Bus Plan, in agreement with the local transport authorities in the region.

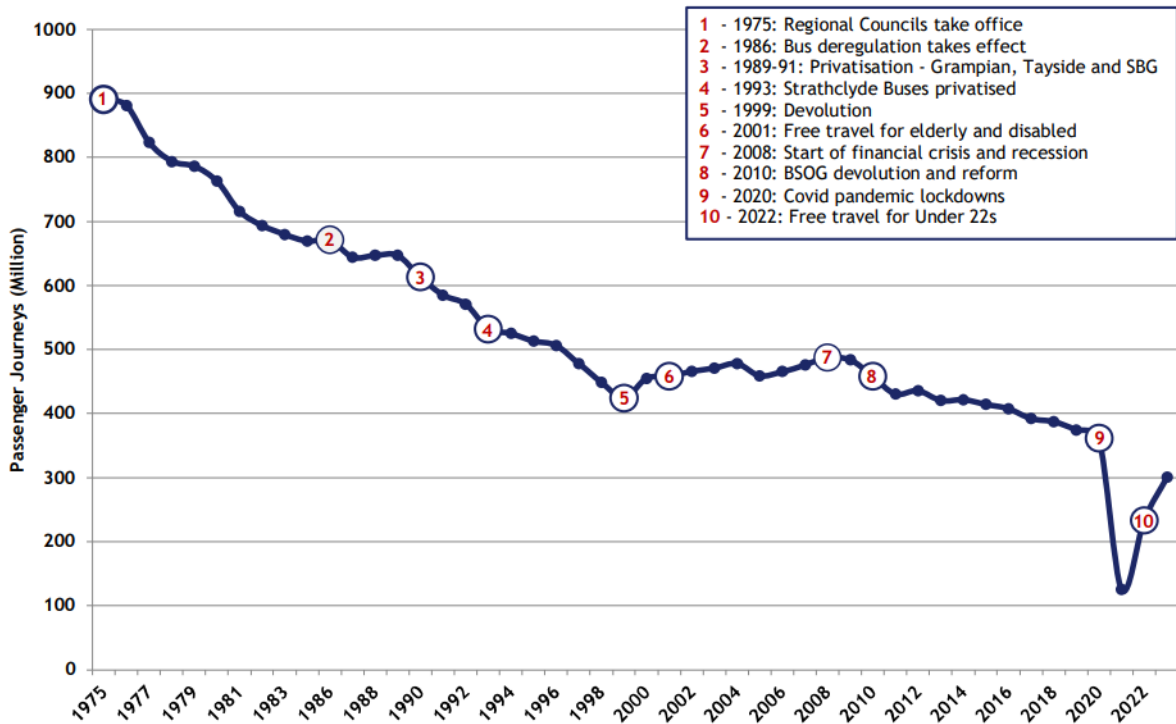
**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Tactran Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) 2024-2034 was adopted at the of the Partnership meeting on 11 June 2024 (RTP/24/12 refers). The RTS states that new models of bus provision need to be explored to address user confidence, integration and affordability.
- 2.2 At the same meeting the Partnership approved the development of a Tactran Bus Plan, in consultation with the local transport authorities in the region. Inputs to the plan include bus pathfinder review, completed for Tactran and supported by the Community Bus Fund; optimal service delivery network review, and parallel Transport Scotland reviews of fares (RTP/24/16 refers).
- 2.3 A draft Tactran Bus Plan is available in the members area of the Tactran [website](#), as Appendix A.

### **3 DISCUSSION**

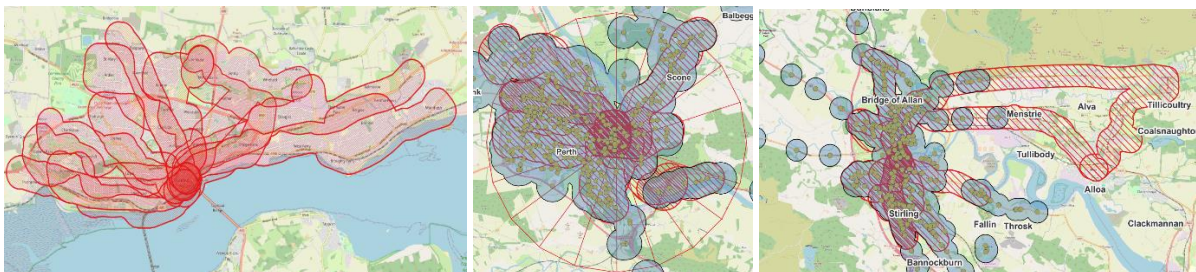
- 3.1 The draft Tactran Bus Plan sets out a framework for the development of bus services across the Tactran region. The Plan is an integral element in the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), which recognises a need for alternative models for bus provision to be investigated, providing a pathway to develop bus services and enhance their use.
- 3.2 The Bus Plan sets out a series of principles that recognise the delivery structures and commercial nature of the existing bus market.
- 3.3 The Bus Plan draws from a series of parallel studies completed by and for Tactran, including the assessment of bus network reach, factors affecting mode choice, and an assessment of the regulatory powers included in the Transport Scotland Act 2019 (TSA19).
- 3.4 The work provides a toolkit for the development of bus partnerships at regional and local levels across the Tactran area and is proposed as a structure within which bus service delivery plans can be developed.
- 3.5 Current bus services in Scotland are broadly provided under a framework first defined by the Transport Act 1985 (TA85), which had the effect that most buses moved to private operation and control. The act was focused on commercial delivery for profit, replacing widespread public ownership and control that had existed prior. Various concept shifts have followed TA85, culminating in TSA19 which returned some emphases back toward public sector participation.
- 3.6 Most of the policy shifts seen, across multiple acts, are justified on the basis of reversing passenger trends, though these have remained consistently downward in the period since 1975, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Bus patronage in Scotland since 1975



- 3.7 The Bus Plan is intended to establish a wide-ranging framework that would have a tangible positive impact on bus use, through the improvement of key facets in supply, including those facilitated by TSA19. The plan splits into network optimisation, service quality and regulatory framework(s).
- 3.8 A minimum service concept provided indicative route corridors, developed on the basis of the RTS priorities: climate action, health and wellbeing, reduced inequalities, inclusive and sustainable growth, focused on SIMD areas (maps 1–3). All three Tactran cities benefit from mature service provision with significant route coverage, though aspects of quality, frequency, and reliability need also be considered.

Maps 1-3, de minima city service provision, Dundee, Perth, and Stirling



- 3.9 Regional routes tend to be focused on primary and trunk road infrastructure, with the potential for tethered flexible transport (FT) services, those with defined and timed connecting points (tethers) as supporting rural areas (maps 4 and 5).

Maps 4-5 de minima regional and rural provision NE, and SW, includes tethered FT



- 3.10 Service quality is further addressed as a route vision, supporting the benefits of an integrated and connecting network, both within and across modes, with significant emphases on the aspects of supply that contribute to ease of use, and its perception. The route vision including optimal outcomes as a series of practical actions that would encourage use. These include examples taken from best practice, including ticketing initiatives, integration, and vehicle quality standards, amongst others.
- 3.11 Desirable outcomes were defined reflecting specific geographies, as well as an over-arching regional approach, proposing both regulatory and delivery structures as appropriate to each, as a route map to delivery. Local frameworks are included to reflect the specific circumstances of city, town, and rural travel needs, as well as the structures applicable to the current LTAs. Consideration was also given to transport provision between the Tactran region and neighbouring authority areas.
- 3.12 A series of gaps analyses identified network and areas of integration aspects that would benefit from an updated approach. Critical areas affecting ease of use, and their perception, were also identified.
- 3.13 The plan concludes:
- at regional level: a proposed single regional partnership, defining minimum standards.
  - at city and peripheral city travel area level: city specific partnerships, to develop service level agreements, integration and coordination.
  - at town level: locally defined service standard, focused on access and connectivity; including defined service standards.
  - across rural areas: area based focused flexible services, including defined connectivity and standards definitions.
- 3.14 The final sections set out the development of a range of interventions for each of the geographies identified previously. A multivariate assessment was undertaken to score and arrive at proposed actions by location, as set out in summary above. These include a series of minimum proposed standards, and potential future standards that could be adopted by the Local Transport

Authorities. An over-arching minimum standard is also proposed across the Tactran area.

- 3.15 The plan concludes by identifying roles and responsibilities but does not preclude collaboration and support. The plan also recognises additional benefits of scale where initiatives, especially integration, occurs across authorities, including into neighbouring RTP areas. An approach to optimal network delivery is also included in the concluding sections.
- 3.16 A presentation on the draft Tactran Bus Plan will be provided at the Partnership meeting.

#### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with the relevant Local Authority transport officers, and with the Tayside Bus Alliance.

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The work reported falls within grant allocations as awarded to the Alliances (BPF), and Tactran (CBF).

#### **6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified.

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The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report:

Reports to Partnership RTP/24/12, Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy: Adoption and RTP/24/16, Bus Initiatives Update, 11 June 2024