

Transport Scotland

Overview of the Bus, Accessible and Active Travel Directorate



About the BAAT Directorate

Responsible for developing and implementing policy relating to bus, active travel, smart and integrated ticketing and accessible travel for disabled people.

Note: active travel reports to Patrick Harvie MSP, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, so is not covered in detail here – see text in this colour and slides towards the back.

Key stats and facts

- 301 million bus journeys were made in Scotland during 2022/23 or which 51% were made using the Older & Disabled Persons and Young Persons National Concessionary Travel Scheme
- Since launch in January 2022 over 116 million journeys have been made under the Young Persons' Free Bus Scheme, with over 715,000 young people signed up.*
- Bus accounted for 79% of public transport journeys in 2021-22, allowing people to access essential jobs and services. Bus use is more common in urban areas with 42% of adults using the bus monthly or more frequently. This falls to between 12% and 15% in remote rural areas.
- In Scotland smart ticketing is available on bus, rail, subway and tram, with 'universal' smartcards for use across these modes (for commercial and/or concessionary travel) as well as m-tickets and contactless payment widely accepted.

*(As of 31 Jan 2024)



Responsibilities

- To make accurate, timely **concessionary reimbursement (older and disabled persons and young persons)** and **Network Support Grant (NSG)** payments to circa 300 bus operators every 4 weeks.
- To develop and implement **funding arrangements to support bus services in the short to medium term while passenger numbers recover from the effect of the pandemic** and link into the Fair Fares Review on how bus is funded beyond that point.
- To implement the bus, smart ticketing and bus open data provisions in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 which include options for local transport authorities (LTAs) to **franchise, establish formal bus partnerships and run municipal bus companies**, sponsorship of the newly established **National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board**, and introduction of enhancing legislation on ticketing arrangements and schemes.
- To develop and implement the **Community Bus Fund (CBF)** to support LTAs to explore the range of options in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and improve local bus services in their area.
- To develop **long term bus strategy** in line with outcomes from the Fair Fares Review.



Responsibilities (cont.)

- Working with LCE Directorate, to accelerate the **decarbonisation of the Scottish bus fleet**.
- To work with, and **grant fund, Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and active travel delivery partners** to make walking or cycling the most popular choice for shorter, everyday journeys focussing on the delivery of transformational active travel infrastructure by LAs [*reports to Patrick Harvie MSP*].
- To work with LTAs and public transport operators to accelerate the delivery of multi-operator/ multi-modal **smart ticketing and payment** options in Scotland, to deliver the next generation travel data service, and test the concept of Mobility as a Service
- To work with local authorities, public transport operators and the third sector to make Scotland's transport network noticeably more **accessible to disabled people**.
- To maintain the **National Concessionary Travel Schemes** which provide free travel for over 2 million people across Scotland.



Strategic Priorities – link to NTS, statutory duties etc

- Active Travel supports wider Scottish Government outcomes that underpin the **National Performance Framework**, including health, climate change, place and economy as well as Transport Scotland's ambitions as set out in the **National Transport Strategy (NTS2)** and the subsequent objectives within the **Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)**
- In addition, the new **Cycling Framework** will inform the delivery of high quality, safe cycling infrastructure for the next 5-10 years, and work is underway, led by Active Scotland and Paths for All to inform a new **Walking Strategy**.
- The **Transport (Scotland) Act 2019** provides powers which offer an ambitious new model for bus services. It provides local transport authorities with options to influence and improve bus services in their area, collectively ensuring that there are sustainable bus networks across Scotland. The Act in combination with the **Community Bus Fund** will support local transport authorities to meet local needs and circumstances, whether they wish to pursue partnership working, local franchising or running their own bus services.
- As well as smart ticketing improvements to be delivered by the 2019 Transport Act, smart ticketing, digital travel data services and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) are all highlighted as future opportunities for growth and investment in the **National Transport Strategy, STPR2**, and are included in Climate Change, Best Start, Bright Futures and other corporate deliverables. A refresh of the Smart Delivery Strategy 2018 is currently underway.
- Accessible travel policy connects (in particular) with the “Reduces Inequalities” priority of NTS2 as well as the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the public sector duty provisions of the Equality Act 2010



Current Key Workstreams

Active Travel

- **Infrastructure** – This £124m programme in 23-24 is delivering projects led by national partners, local authorities and community groups to construct new and improve existing routes that can support people to make walking and cycling their preferred mode of transport for everyday journeys.
- **Transformation** - The Transformation Project will maximise the opportunities in AT delivery to achieve the most effective and efficient outcomes, and will make recommendations on a new holistic system for AT delivery in Scotland. As part of this commitment, a £20m Transformation Fund saw projects awarded funding directly to eleven Local Authorities, one Regional Transport Partnership and one National Park Authority for construction ready projects. For 24-25, a new tiered delivery model is being implemented for infrastructure.
- **Behaviour Change** - The Active Travel Behaviour Change programme for 23-24 is designed to support people to choose active travel for everyday journeys. Our interventions are designed to shape the individual and social contexts that give people the capability and the motivation to take up the opportunities afforded to them by our other unit strands of infrastructure and access to bikes.
- **Access to Bikes** - The Access to Bikes programme will be a £23m investment in total, designed to maximise the opportunities for people throughout Scotland to choose cycling as an accessible form of sustainable transport for everyday journeys.



Current Key Workstreams

Bus

- The **Transport (Scotland) Act 2019** provides a range of options for local authorities to consider, including formal partnerships, franchising and running their own bus services. These provisions empower local authorities with the flexible tools they need to respond to their own transport challenges. The Scottish Government has now delivered all the bus powers within the 2019 Act, and further **regulations will be laid throughout 2024 alongside guidance**, which will give the partnership and franchising powers full effect.
- **Community Bus Fund** – This is mainly a capital fund for 24-25, with £5 million allocated in the draft Scottish Budget. This will deliver local authority led infrastructure projects, and capital related expenditure associated with establishing local authority run services. It may also help support initiatives such as the purchasing of a vehicle for Community Transport. The lower resource allocation of £1 million may help in beginning initial exploratory work for business cases. The fund is intended to run for the lifetime of the parliament.
- **Network Support Grant** – This grant directly supports bus services by helping to keep services more extensive, and fares more affordable than would otherwise be the case. The grant is paid at a rate per kilometre, with operators only receiving the grant for services run.
- **Concessionary travel** – Free bus travel is available to over 2 million people in Scotland for those aged under 22, over 60 or with qualifying disability. Statutory schemes where eligibility and reimbursement of operators are set in primary legislation. Draft budget in 2024–25 allocates £370.4 million for the concessionary schemes. Separately £2 million was announced last year to provide free bus travel for asylum seekers in 2024-25.
- We have awarded over £26.9m of bus priority funding through Transport Scotland’s **Bus Partnership Fund** since it commenced. This has delivered bus lane enforcement cameras and traffic light equipment to help buses get through them more quickly in Glasgow, Ayrshire and Inverness, bus priority in Aberdeen City Centre, as well as making a number of temporary measures permanent in Fife and Edinburgh. **Given the budgetary constraints faced the Bus Partnership Fund will be paused for 2024-25.** Bus partnership funding will proceed as planned for 2023-24, this will complete the delivery of the bus priority infrastructure already under construction for the benefit of passengers, as well as concluding appraisal work that could inform future investment.



Current Key Workstreams

Smart Programme

- **Smart and integrated Ticketing policy**

- Sponsor the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB) to advise on the future of smart ticketing (established in later 2023)
- Developing 2019 Act provision, including on a technological standard for smart ticketing and on Bus Open Data requirements
- Refreshing Smart Delivery Strategy

- **Projects**

- Ferries project - rolling out smart concessionary travel on ferry, replacing paper vouchers
- Location data project - improvements for bus concession scheme to have automated location info
- Digital Travel Data Services Project - passenger Information: delivering the next generation travel information services, including fares, accessibility, realtime and disruption information, for all modes, providing open data feeds and via new Traveline Scotland website and app
- Review of future concession scheme digital platforms
- £2m Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Investment Fund (5 MaaS pilots now complete, and evaluation underway, due Spring 2024)



Current Key Workstreams

Accessible Travel : Develop and launch a new delivery plan to run for the remaining duration of the Accessible Travel Framework (i.e. until 2026). Key themes as follows:

- Passenger Experience : improve the pre-boarding and on-board experience for disabled passengers across all modes (including taxi and Private Hire Cars)
- Journey Planning and Wayfinding : ensure digital information resources are fit for purpose so that disabled travellers can make more journeys
- Clear Pathways: paths and pavements are clear and accessible for all
- Blue Badge : deliver continuous improvement
- Transport to Health & Social Care : support for disabled people to travel safely to appointments
- Measuring progress : create and implement an effective evidence-based performance reporting system



Forthcoming Opportunities (including comms, with stakeholders) first 100 days

- Opportunity to announce continuation of network support and community bus fund for bus (following approval of AO templates).
- Opportunity to announce record spend of almost £200m investment in active travel funding programme and projects for fy 23/24 (following approval of AO templates).
- Opportunities to visit Infrastructure, Behaviour Change and Access to Bikes projects from across the active travel portfolio, including infrastructure projects funded through the new £20m Active Travel Transformation Fund 23-24.
- Opportunities to visit Manchester (including meeting with Mayor) to discuss bus service franchising and Belfast to discuss bus reprioritisation and glider bus rollout.
- Opportunity to meet with the Chair of the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board, who are due to submit their intended work programme to you in May 2024.
- MfT invited to be key speaker at MaaS Conference 6 June 2024.
- MfT meeting scheduled with CPT to discuss the pausing of BPF on 28 February 2024.
- MfT meeting scheduled with Get Glasgow Moving (“people-led public transport campaign demanding better public transport for everyone in the Greater Glasgow region”) who are wanting franchising across the Glasgow City Region.



Financial Position

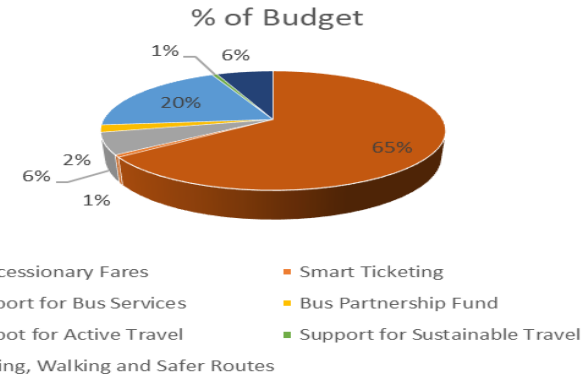
Key Messages

1. Concessionary Travel forms approx. 65% of entire budget for 2023/24
2. Concessionary Fares flagged pressures currently stands at £8.5 million – teams are still reviewing and monitoring together with economists
3. Significant savings have been achieved during the financial year
4. Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes budget uplifted to £35m with £11m coming from Support for Active Travel CDEL and there is firm forecast to achieve this outturn
5. Community Bus Fund capital allocation of £5 million was transferred through the general capital grant. The revenue portion of CBF is included under Support for Bus Services

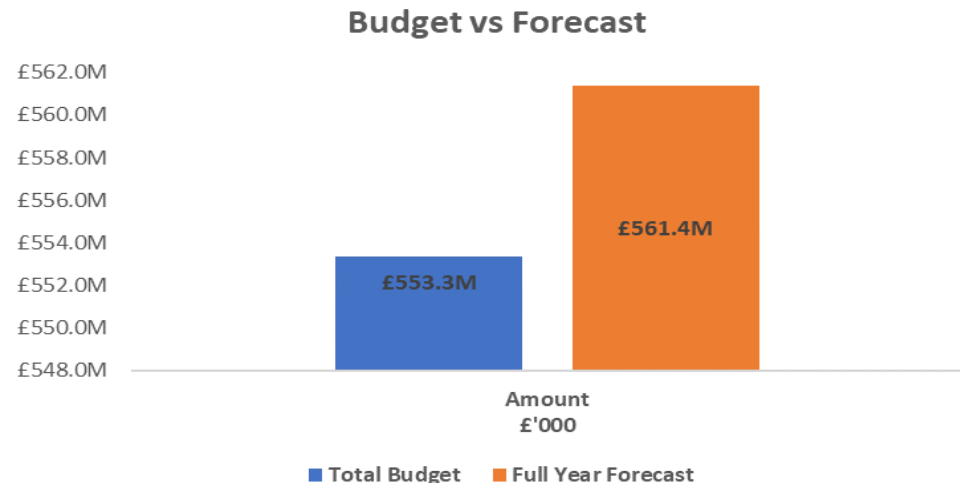
Programme Budget – 2023/24

BAAT	2023-24 Total RDEL £'000	2023-24 Total CDEL £'000	2023-24 Savings/AB R/SBR £'000	2023-24 Revised Budget £'000	2023-24 Up-to-date Forecast £'000
Concessionary Fares	359,301		800	360,101	368,625
Smart Ticketing	1,884	2,000	- 422	3,462	2,888
Support for Bus Services	57,508		- 25,000	32,508	32,600
Bus Partnership Fund	35,000		- 24,059	10,941	10,941
Support for Active Travel	12,383	152,900	- 57,163	108,120	108,120
Support for Sustainable Travel	7,301		- 4,100	3,201	3,201
Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes		23,927	11,073	35,000	35,000
Community Bus Fund		5,000	- 5,000	-	-
TOTAL	473,377	183,827	- 103,871	553,333	561,375

Share of Budget - %



Budget vs Forecast



Key Challenges



Active Travel

- Single-year funding cycle restricts ability to plan ambitious infrastructure programmes in the absence of certainty
- Increased scrutiny in approval process has delayed distribution of grants in 23-24
- Capacity and Capability within local authorities and supply chain a risk, given competitive market for technical skills

Improving Bus Services

- Bus operator data indicates bus fares rose by an average of 12% in 2023 following the end of the higher level of subsidy provided through the Network Support Grant Plus on 1 April 2023. Core subsidy NSG from April not sufficient to protect services or fares.
- Potential overspend on concessionary travel depending on level of patronage and fares increase.
- Single-year Community Bus Fund funding cycle will restrict LTAs ability to run pilots, as new services or solutions need support for a number of years to allow patronage to grow.
- Current levels of funding for the Community Bus Fund, particularly resource, will make it challenging for local authorities to explore the range of options in the Transport Act.

Smart ticketing

- Conflicting legacy technologies often means multi-modal, multi-operator tickets are very difficult to establish due to different front and back end systems, plus complexity of commercial arrangements between operators over the reimbursement modals
- De-regulated bus market means each bus operator wishes to retain the customer and often provides tickets using medium that is most commercially advantageous rather than passenger focused
- Passengers want a 'blended' estate with a mix of contactless payment, smartcard, m-ticket (bar or qr code) approaches to suit their preference, which creates additional complexity and requires more and significant investment to enable pan-Scotland

Pausing of the Bus Partnership Fund for bus priority infrastructure investment (bus lanes, traffic signal priority etc)

- BPF infrastructure investment also levered in service improvements on the urban corridors funded as well as collaboration between operators and LTAs/RTPs. Pausing of the fund garnered attention at recent NZET committee evidence sessions. A meeting is scheduled with CPT to discuss on 28 February as they are significantly concerned about the pausing.
- Officials will continue work with partners to identify the schemes which could be supported in the future as part of an integrated approach to bus service improvement in the long term bus strategy, drawing on the robust evidence base that BPF business cases have provided to date.



Key documents and channels

Documents

- [Smart & Integrated Ticketing Delivery Strategy 2018](#)
- [The Accessible Travel Framework](#)
- [Active Travel Framework](#)
- National Transport Strategy 2
- [Strategic Transport Projects Review \(STPR2\)](#)

Channels

- [Traveline Scotland – Scotland’s public transport journey planner](#)
- [Transport Scotland website](#) – info on concessionary travel schemes, funding for bus, active travel policy and programmes, accessible travel, the Bus Partnership Fund etc
- [Smart Travel website](#)



Director for Bus, Accessibility & Active Travel Directorate



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