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THE NATIONAL SMART TICKETING ADVISORY BOARD (NSTAB)

WORK PROGRAMME 2024-28

May 2024

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1 Introduction

This Work Programme 2024-28 is agreed between the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB) and the Scottish Ministers. This Work Programme reflects NSTAB's Strategic Functions, sets out the Work Programme activities and the advice NSTAB intends to issue to the Scottish Ministers, and demonstrates how NSTAB supports the delivery of wider Scottish Government priorities.

1.1 The Aim of NSTAB

To provide advice to the Scottish Ministers on how to make it easier for people to reach their end destination by simplifying how they access and pay for travel. Such simplification should make public transport, regardless of provider, more convenient, accessible, flexible and attractive to the user, and further act as a positive incentive to encourage people to switch from private car use, in support of more sustainable travel modes.

1.2 Background

There are many ways to pay for journeys in Scotland. Smart ticketing is the term given for any kind of digital ticket, which can be loaded on to a smartcard, or kept on your mobile device as a Barcode/QR code M-ticket or within a digital wallet, or as a token on other Media. For certain smart tickets such as rail and ferry, these may also be printed at home or other locations.

There is a national standard for interoperable smartcard products for public transport within the UK, known as [ITSO](#) enabling products to be used on multiple operators and modes, but there is no such equivalent standard for M-tickets. In recent years, contactless EMV (cEMV), where you use your bankcard (physical or virtual – within a smartphone/device) to either buy a ticket onboard a bus or to Tap-On and Tap-Off (ToTo) a bus, is also becoming popular across Scotland.

As technological opportunities develop, it is expected that Account Based Ticketing (ABT) solutions, where the customer may be offered Pay As You Go travel or the use of more than one smart 'token' for travel, and where the System can link these back to the customer to make sure they are charged appropriately, will become more widely used. For the purposes of NSTAB, all forms of payment and product fulfilment for smart ticketing including cEMV and cash is to be considered to improve multi-modal based options for the travelling customer.

What is NSTAB

NSTAB was established under [the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#) (the "2023 Regulations") in fulfilment of a legal requirement placed on the Scottish Ministers by section 27C of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 (the "2001 Act") to establish an advisory committee to be known as the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board. Section 27C was inserted into the 2001 Act by section 43 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (the "2019 Act").

NSTAB has statutory functions set out in section 27C of the 2001 Act which include:

- a) To issue advice and recommendations to the Scottish Ministers in relation to the strategic development of smart ticketing in Scotland.
- b) To advise the Scottish Ministers in relation to their functions insofar as they relate to the national technological standard for smart ticketing.
- c) To advise the Scottish Ministers in relation to their functions insofar as they relate to smart ticketing arrangements.

NSTAB is required to produce a Work Programme, and this must be approved by the Scottish Ministers. In addition, NSTAB must prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Scottish Ministers measuring its success and collating all advice given and recommendations made to the Scottish Ministers in the past year. This Report is the first of NSTAB’s 3 year Work Programmes.

1.2.1 NSTAB Members/Governance

Members of NSTAB, including the Chairperson, are non-executives appointed by the Scottish Ministers. Members of NSTAB are accountable to the Scottish Ministers and also to the Scottish Parliament and may be required to give evidence to Parliamentary Committees. NSTAB ensures that a Code of Conduct (aligned to the [Model Code of Conduct for Board Members](#)) is in place, that corporate actions are taken to implement it as required and that members understand their responsibilities, using the [guidance provided by the Standards Commission](#). Current Members of NSTAB include:

Chairperson	Voting?	
1 Chairperson	Only if tied	1x Chairperson -Andrew Seedhouse
Balanced Voting Membership	Voting?	
5-7 operator representatives of different modes	Yes	1x Bus operator rep - Alex Hornby 1x Ferry operator rep - Diane Burke 1x Rail operator rep - Claire Dickie 1x Tram operator rep - Marilena Papadopoulou 1x Subway operator rep - Michael Nimmo
2-4 representatives of local and regional transport authorities / partnerships	Yes	1x Local Transport Authority rep - Margaret Roy 1x Regional Transport Partnership rep - Ranald Robertson
1-3 passenger and accessibility representatives	Yes	1x Passenger rep - Kirsten Urquhart 1x Accessibility rep - Hussein Patwa
1 representative of Scottish Ministers	Yes	1x Transport Scotland rep - Mary Docherty
Board Advisors:	Voting?	
Up to 3 advisory roles relating to smart ticketing	No	1x Technical Systems Advisor - Mostafa Gulam 1x Smart Delivery Advisor - Matt Smallwood 1x Transport Strategy Advisor - James Gleave

1.2.2 NSTAB Secretariat

The NSTAB Secretariat are civil servants and are required to comply with the Civil Service Code and Scottish Government HR policies. Their primary responsibility for all operational matters is to the Board, and to ensure that NSTAB’s aims and objectives are met, and its functions delivered. They will support the Board in meeting its targets

through effective and properly controlled executive action, whilst managing the budget for NSTAB in line with Finance guidance, policies and procedures, including the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#).

2 NSTAB Work Programme 2024-28

Regulation 8 of the [2023 Regulations](#), requires NSTAB to prepare a Work Programme setting out how we intend to perform our statutory functions, and such other matters relating to NSTAB's role as we consider appropriate.

This Work Programme is for the period June 2024 – March 2028 covering the period of the remaining current financial year 2024-25 in addition to the “relevant period”, meaning a further three full financial years to end March 2028.

This Work Programme:

1. Reflects NSTAB's Strategic Functions as agreed with the Scottish Ministers;
2. Sets out the Work Programme Activities for the period of the programme and what advice NSTAB intends to issue to the Scottish Ministers by when; and
3. Demonstrates NSTAB's relevance in the delivery of the National Transport Strategy 2, Smart Delivery Strategy and Fair Fares Review recommendations.

This Work Programme, and its subsequent amendments, has been shared with the Sponsor Team.

2.1 Statutory Function 1

To issue advice and recommendations to the Scottish Ministers in relation to the strategic development of smart ticketing in Scotland.

Based upon the use of S.M.A.R.T¹ Objectives, the Work Programme Activities will be achieved through consultation and engagement, taking in to account the collective views of NSTAB Members and the sectors they represent.

In 2024-25 NSTAB will:

- 1) Benchmark the as-is situation for smart ticketing in Scotland including a review of inclusivity, accessibility and value-for-money.
- 2) Identify and advise on quick wins and support partners in implementing enhancements of smart ticketing.
- 3) Review the requirements and actions included within the Fair Fares Review, Climate Change Action Plan, and the forthcoming refreshed Smart Delivery Strategy, and advise on the implications for strategic development of a smart ticketing system in Scotland.
- 4) Provide a collective response to proposed ticketing study/report commissions, including:
 - pre-tender proposals, consultations and calls for evidence;
 - draft studies & reports; and
 - published reports across the Scottish Government and within the Sector;

In 2025-26 NSTAB will:

- 5) Provide advice on Low, Medium and High level intervention opportunities in smart ticketing, building on the quick wins, to:
 - improve accessibility & inclusivity of smart ticketing;
 - improve smart ticketing integration & systems affordability; and
 - improve smart ticketing delivery.
- 6) Provide advice on opportunities to enhance the smart provision of regional integrated multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing arrangements and schemes (e.g. consistent customer proposition, consistent technology, ABT).
- 7) Continue to provide a collective response to proposed ticketing study/report commissions, including:
 - Pre-tender proposals, consultations and calls for evidence;
 - Draft studies & reports; and
 - Published reports across the Scottish Government and within the Sector;

¹ A [S.M.A.R.T](#) Objective relates to one which is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

In 2026/27 NSTAB will:

- 8) Provide advice on legislative, governance and partnership barriers and opportunities to improve multi-modal account based ticketing style smart ticketing, and smart ticketing accessibility and delivery.
- 9) Support the Scottish Government to develop the business case for a new national integrated ticketing system.
- 10) Continue to provide a collective response to proposed study/report commissions, including:
 - Pre-tender proposals, consultations and calls for evidence;
 - Draft studies & reports; and
 - Published reports across the Scottish Government and within the Sector.

The 2027/28 Work Programme for Statutory Function 1 will be provided in the second NSTAB Annual Report.

2.2 Statutory Function 2

To advise the Scottish Ministers in relation to their functions insofar as they relate to the national technological standard for smart ticketing.

Based upon the use of S.M.A.R.T Objectives, the Work Programme Activities will be achieved through consultation and engagement, taking in to account of the collective views of NSTAB Members and the sectors they represent.

In 2024-25 NSTAB will:

- 1) Benchmark the as-is situation for smart ticketing in Scotland in relation to technological standards used and compare this with the standards used within the rest of the UK;
- 2) Review international best practice application of technological standards for smart ticketing to identify any transferable lessons;
- 3) Review the smart ticketing technological standard(s) required to deliver the Fair Fares Review, Climate Change Action policy, and the forthcoming refreshed Smart Delivery Strategy actions; and
- 4) Identify opportunities and challenges related to standardising smart ticketing technology, including customer experience, that will help to deliver an integrated multi-modal ABT style smart ticketing system.

In 2025-26 NSTAB will:

- 5) Develop the strategic outline business case for technological standard(s) options, including consideration of:
 - A range of cost and scale related interventions; and
 - Implementation of the standard(s) within back office solutions to deliver a range of multi-modal integrated ticketing outcomes, including ABT.

In 2026-27 NSTAB will:

- 6) Develop the case for change for the preferred technological standard(s) and advise on the full business case for the standard(s), that will support delivery of an integrated multi-modal ABT style smart ticketing system.

The 2027/28 Work Programme for Statutory Function 2 will be provided in the second NSTAB Annual Report.

2.3 Statutory Function 3

To advise the Scottish Ministers in relation to their functions insofar as they relate to smart ticketing arrangements.

Based upon the use of S.M.A.R.T Objectives, the Work Programme Activities will be achieved through consultation and engagement, taking in to account of the collective views of NSTAB Members and the sectors they represent.

In 2025-26 NSTAB will:

1. Advise on the introduction of Transport Act measures, including specifically to inform the guidance for sections 41-48 of the 2019 Act.

In 2026-27 NSTAB will:

2. Advise on legislative barriers and opportunities for smart ticketing, identifying the extent where legislation would need to be further developed to deliver enhanced smart ticketing through multi-modal integrated ABT arrangements and standards.

The 2027/28 Work Programme for Statutory Function 3 will be provided in the second NSTAB Annual Report.

2.4 NSTAB Scope Exemptions

Whilst it is important to define what NSTAB will deliver through the Work Programme, it is equally important to define what is out of scope in terms of NSTAB's activities.

The primary purpose of NSTAB is to focus on the technology platform(s) and standard(s) generating informed advice to the Scottish Ministers – therefore work not in scope includes:

- Owning the commercial arrangements for products/tickets;
- Owning the governance of products/tickets;
- Responsibility for fare structure reform and changes;
- Responsibility for discount/entitlement policy;
- Delivery of new Schemes and Standards.

Whilst NSTAB is not a delivery vehicle, it has influence and senior board membership from across the industry. NSTAB should therefore seek to drive implementation of identified opportunities.

3 Work Programme Delivery

The Work Programme activities identified in Section 2. will be delivered in parallel in accordance with the timetable included within Annex 1. The formal advice will be issued by NSTAB to the Scottish Ministers at any time the members consider appropriate, and will fall within the scope of the statutory functions of NSTAB as provided by [Section 27C of the 2001 Act](#).

The Advice will, as a minimum, set out clearly the issue being discussed, the options considered and associated preferred option(s)/solution(s), as well as the reasons for the board's determination with views from Board Members. It will provide as appropriate an overview of impact to those relevant bodies (e.g. stakeholders, industry, passengers, government).

The formal advice will also outline the voting record for the submission of the advice, including how many voted for or against it, and any proposed next steps. All formal advice and recommendations from NSTAB to Scottish Ministers will be processed via the standard communication channels. Advice and recommendations will follow a consistent structure, with support from the secretariat in the creation of this, in line with Scottish Government processes.

Where a voting member does not agree with advice from NSTAB, we will support the voting member in communicating their dissenting opinion to the Scottish Ministers on an individual basis or acting collectively as appropriate.

In developing the advice, NSTAB will have the opportunity to provide statements of work for additional resource support within Transport Scotland managed contracts. These will be considered by the Sponsor Team. NSTAB will engage with the Operator Smart Steering Group, the Scottish Government, and member's wider networks to support delivery of workstreams.

3.1 NSTAB Annual Review

Regulation 10 of the [2023 Regulations](#), requires The Board to prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers by 30 June each year a report for the previous financial year. This Annual Review will complement the Work Programme.

4 Strategic & Operational Context of the 2024-8 Work Programme

The Work Programme should be conducted within the strategic and operational context of the [National Transport Strategy 2](#), the [Smart Delivery Strategy](#), the [Fair Fares Review](#) and the new package of [Climate Change Actions](#). Below is a summary of the relevant recommendations of these three reports.

4.1 National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)

“We will have a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors.”

Relevant NTS2 Recommendations for NSTAB:

- Reduces inequalities:
 - Remove barriers to public transport connectivity and accessibility within Scotland.
- Takes climate action:
 - Improve the quality and availability of information to enable all to make more sustainable transport choices. Facilitate a shift to more sustainable and space-efficient modes of transport for people and goods.
- Helps deliver inclusive economic growth:
 - Integrate transport and wider infrastructure policies and investments, including digital and energy, to unlock greater benefits. Support Scotland to become a market leader in the development and early adoption of beneficial transport innovations.
- Improves our health and wellbeing:
 - Provide a transport system that promotes and facilitates active travel choices which help to improve people’s health and wellbeing across mainland Scotland and the Islands. Smart ticketing or payment options have been introduced on a number of rail, bus, tram, and subway services across Scotland and these will continue to be key areas for investment to encourage modal shift to public transport.

4.2 Smart Delivery Strategy (SDS)

The refreshed Smart Delivery Strategy was published in mid-2024.

“To increase the use of sustainable public transport by providing smart and integrated ticketing, payment, and journey planning data enhancements, contributing to a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland”

Core SDS Objectives:

- Be more available, simple and consistent
- Be accessible and inclusive
- Promote affordable travel

Relevant SDS Recommendations for NSTAB:

Smart & integrated ticketing policy

- To improve the powers available to local transport authorities and Ministers and to see growth of smart and integrated ticketing in Scotland, we will commence ticketing measures from the 2019 Act.
- To explore how we can build on the 2019 Act and NSTAB, and further support better smart and integrated ticketing infrastructure, we will develop options and recommendations for a new national integrated ticketing system.
- Building from NSTAB’s advice to improve the consistency and interoperability of smart ticketing technology, we will consider the specification of a technological standard(s) for smart ticketing following advice from NSTAB.
- Building on any specification of technological standards, and to confirm how we will enable smart and integrated ticketing, we will deliver the business case for a national integrated ticketing system for public transport in Scotland, including determining legislative requirements.
- Following the business case, and to deliver better smart integrated ticketing, we will introduce the new national integrated ticketing system for public transport in Scotland (subject to the business case and the availability of funding).
- To continuously enhance ticketing arrangements and schemes, we will work closely with local transport authorities and operators, maximising the benefits of any new technology, system and legislation.

Concessionary travel improvements:

- To identify how to improve the accessibility of the concessionary travel scheme, we will complete a feasibility study on its potential future smart platforms, including on a smartphone.
- To enhance the accessibility and experience of the concessionary travel scheme, we will act on the feasibility study on the future potential digital platform for concessionary travel.

4.3 Fair Fares Review:

“[The] Fair Fares Review [will] ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares.”

Relevant Fair Fares Review Recommendations for NSTAB:

- We will develop a national integrated ticketing system, integrated travel hubs and develop proposals for an all age national travel scheme and fare structure.
- We will develop a proposal for a bus flat fares pilot for an area-based scheme to provide flat fares on bus travel, or reduced fares on zonal integrated travel for consideration in future budgets.
- Consider options and develop the business case for introducing a national and/or regional integrated ticket and fare structure.
- Consider establishing a National Forum on the Future of Public Transport, to coordinate improvement of delivery of a quality, accessible, available, and affordable integrated public transport system.
- Receive advice from National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board on the strategic development of smart ticketing in Scotland, including advice on the national technological standard to improve smart ticketing integration between modes, as well as advising on schemes.
- Publication of the refreshed Smart & Integrated Ticketing Strategy Delivery Plan in early 2024 and progression of its associated actions and policy deliverables.

NSTAB’s work should also consider how the activities in the work programme can contribute to the delivery of:

- Wider roll-out of existing multi-operator ticket and multi-modal tickets to cover RTP geographies and expansion of those to all modes;
- Wide roll-out of contactless across modes;
- Multi operator fare capping, not just pre-purchase multi-operator tickets;
- Multi-operator fare capping within a national / regional / local framework; and
- Variable concession rates within a national / regional/ framework.

4.4 Climate Change Action:

In April 2024, the Scottish Government announced a new package of climate action measures, including specifically:

“We will develop a new national integrated ticketing system for public transport in Scotland across all modes of transport to enable a system that can be used for all elements of a journey, with a first step of publishing a new smart ticketing delivery strategy in 2024, alongside the business case for introducing a national and/or regional integrated fare structures.”

Building from NSTAB's advice, the Scottish Government will identify the business case, with associated cost and timescale options, to deliver a national integrated ticketing technology system in Scotland. This is intended to deliver a system that allows smart, digital or contactless ticket or payment to be read across the different modes and operators in Scotland. A coordinated system, across operators reflects passenger's preference to travel without having to think about a ticket for each leg of the journey. The Scottish Government intend to encourage operators across all modes to participate in these options for a new system that could offer multi-modal fare capping, removing the need to think about a ticket for each leg of the journey.

NSTAB's advice will be key to supporting the Scottish Government develop these proposals, including the technological standards for smart ticketing, options to enhance integrated ABT, and opportunities to improve the accessibility and value for money of ticketing systems in Scotland.

5 Funding the Work Programme

The Scottish Ministers are required to provide staff and resources to enable NSTAB to carry out its functions. A budget is provided for NSTAB to undertake its duties and the approved Work Programme. The budget is held and accounted for by Scottish Government with the NSTAB Secretariat responsible for its management in line with the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) (SPFM) and its requirements for monitoring and reporting.

In delivering this Work Programme, NSTAB has no legal personality and recognises it is unable to enter into contracts in its own name. The procurement activity as required by the Work Programme will be undertaken through the Scottish Government in line with the requirements of the [Procurement](#) section of the SPFM.

NSTAB will not engage in financial investments, borrowing, lease holding or lending, and under normal circumstances is not permitted to generate income; receive gifts, bequests or donations; provide grant funding to a third party; make gifts or special payments; or write off losses. Any exceptions will be agreed in advance with Portfolio AO or Senior Sponsor and the Scottish Government Financial Management Directorate.

Where the approved Work Programme, as detailed within Section 2 requires more funding than allocated within the NSTAB budget for the forthcoming financial year, then NSTAB will prepare a business case for additional funding to be submitted to the Sponsor Team for consideration as part of the annual budget setting process.

Where additional resources are needed in-year, or underspends become apparent, then NSTAB will raise these as soon as possible with the Portfolio AO and/or their delegate(s). For all expenditure, it is expected that counter-fraud policies and practices will be adopted to safeguard against fraud, theft, bribery and corruption, in line the [Fraud](#) section of the SPFM.

6 Work Programme Risk Management

In delivering this Work Programme, NSTAB shall develop an approach to risk management consistent with the Risk Management section of the Scottish Public Finance Manual and establish reporting and escalation arrangements with the Portfolio AO or Senior Sponsor. NSTAB has a clear understanding of the key risks, threats and hazards it may face in the personnel, accommodation and cyber domains, and will take action to ensure appropriate organisational resilience, in line with the guidance in: [Having and Promoting Business Resilience](#) (part of the Preparing Scotland suite of guidance) and the [Public Sector Cyber Resilience Framework](#).

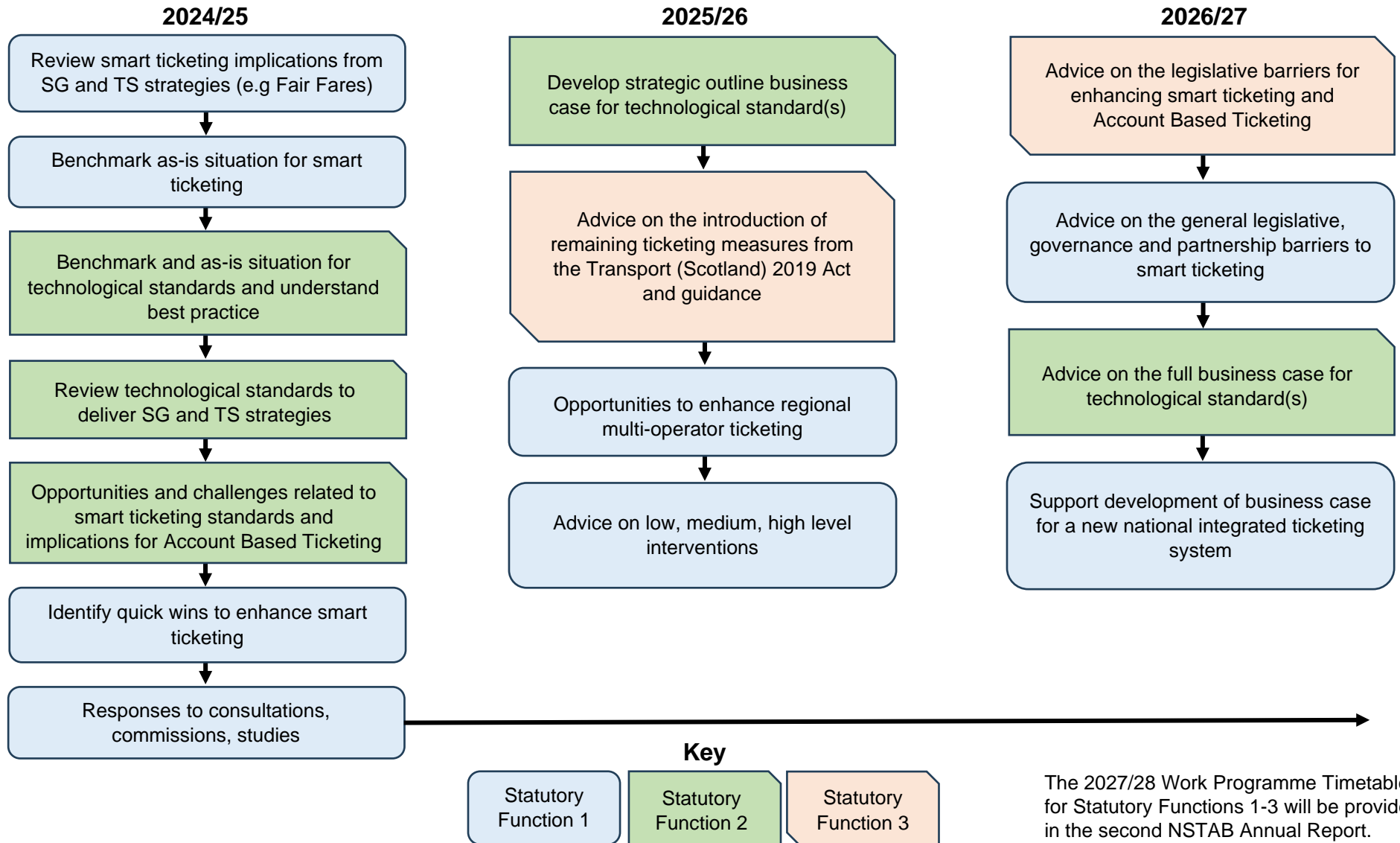
7 NSTAB's Commitment to Fairness, Inclusion and Representation

To ensure the work of NSTAB is inclusive, NSTAB has been added to the [Gender Representation on Public Boards \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) via [The National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board \(Gender Representation on Public Boards\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#) making it a “public authority” under the Act. As such, NSTAB is committed to achieving the gender representation objective, which is that 50% of board members are women. Legal duties have been placed on NSTAB and the Scottish Ministers to support the achievement of the gender representation objective.

NSTAB is also subject to the [Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2000](#), and the [Public Services Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). NSTAB is committed to reporting on its compliance with these duties as part of its Annual Report process.

Annex A

NSTAB Work Programme visual



The 2027/28 Work Programme Timetable for Statutory Functions 1-3 will be provided in the second NSTAB Annual Report.

Annex B

An Overview of Existing Modal Governance in relation to Smart Ticketing in both a Pre and Post Transport Scotland Act 2019 environment.



NSTAB Annex B
Diagrams

