



Regional Transport Strategy 2015 – 2025

Refresh

Executive Summary
August 2015

SEStran is a Regional Transport Partnership, comprised of eight local authorities:



1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 SEStran (the South East Scotland Transport Partnership) is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) in Scotland, set up under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. SEStran contains eight constituent council areas – City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian. A key requirement under the Act is for RTPs to develop a statutory Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) to provide a strategic framework for transport management and investment for the Partnership area over a 10-15 year period. SEStran's RTS 2008-2023 was approved by the Scottish Government in 2008.
- 1.1.2 Since the establishment of the RTPs, their role has moved away from direct funding and implementation of transport measures to a more strategic and co-ordinating function working in partnership with Scottish Government, local authorities and other stakeholders. The purpose of the RTS is to set a policy framework that will guide effective transport provision over the wider city region by marshalling resources, including for cross-boundary measures, by promoting connectivity requirements essential to the whole regional economy and by supporting the transport functions of the constituent local authorities.
- 1.1.3 The RTS 2015 is an updating of the RTS 2008 rather than a new strategy. The vision, objectives and policy framework of the Strategy remain unchanged, and the various chapters have been revised only where necessary to take account of the most recent data and information and the more detailed strategy development that SEStran has undertaken since 2008. The substance of the strategy and suggested interventions have not changed.
- 1.1.4 This Executive Summary is an extract from the full RTS which can be found at the SEStran website www.sestran.gov.uk.

1.2 Strategy Overview

- 1.2.1 The RTS developed for the SEStran area combines many initiatives into a coherent overall strategy. The main aspects of the RTS are summarised in the following paragraphs:
- Good **access to a wide labour market** is essential to the SEStran economy. Many of the RTS policies aim to improve access by public transport to key employment sites. This reduces dependence on the private car at a time when the use of the car is coming under increasing pressure from congestion, environmental issues and pricing, and widens labour markets;
 - Key **connectivity** on the transport networks in the SEStran area is also supported by the RTS, to maintain and improve external links, ports and airport links to facilitate a successful **economy**;
 - The RTS supports extensive measures to **improve public transport** in SEStran in terms of journey time, reliability, price, convenience, quality, availability, information and integration;

1. Introduction

- It also includes a policy framework on parking standards and a recognition that **integrating land-use and transport planning** is key to developing sustainable employment and residential locations in the medium and long term;
- There is a strong emphasis on **'Smarter Choices'** measures– influencing travel behaviour at the level of the individual through personalised planning and information and the use of innovative technology;
- Increased use of **walk/cycle** is a win/win scenario – motorised travel is reduced and there are **health benefits** to the nation – the RTS encourages this;
- Targeted proposals to improve **accessibility** for disadvantaged areas to **health services, education and employment** opportunities are supported, as well as improving travel opportunities for those with **mobility difficulties** and improving public transport more generally in **rural areas**;
- The RTS recognises that transport must play its part in the **reduction of greenhouse gas** emissions and **improvement of local air quality**. Many of the RTS measures are aimed at reducing the need for car travel, and indeed reducing the need to travel at all is also a priority; and
- **Road safety** measures will be supported to meet ambitious targets for the reduction of casualties.

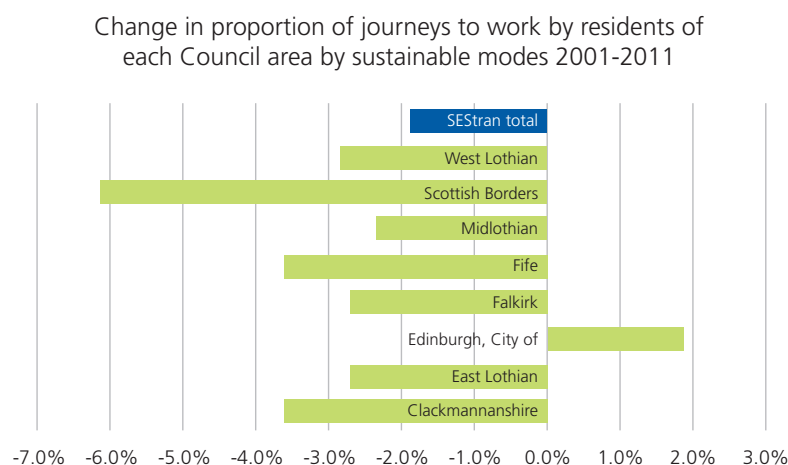
1.2.2 In summary, this RTS will help deliver a SEStran area which is economically successful, accommodating growing prosperity and population in a much less car-dependent way, whilst improving access for the most excluded and vulnerable groups. This will be of benefit to the residents of the SEStran area, the SEStran economy and the wider environment.



2.1 Trends over the last decade

- 2.1.1 The first SEStran RTS was set in the context of a strongly growing economy, and a growing demand for transport. Since the publication of the RTS in 2007, the UK economy contracted sharply in 2008 and 2009 and in 2012, the economy was still 2% smaller than its 2007 peak. This has had a significant impact on transport in the SEStran area. The promotion of sustainable transport policies at national and local authority level over a prolonged period has also had an effect on transport behaviour.
- 2.1.2 The 2011 census provides some indications of the changes over the longer term, including periods of both growth and recession in the overall economy. There has been a general continuation in the long term trend of car ownership growth and reducing overall use of ‘sustainable modes’ – especially bus, cycle and walk, illustrated in Fig 1.

Figure 1 Journeys to work



- 2.1.3 However, there are some marked exceptions to these patterns. The City of Edinburgh is the only local authority area in Scotland where the proportion of households without a car available has increased, and the proportion of journeys to work as car driver has reduced. Cycling has increased substantially for journeys to work in the City of Edinburgh (over 50%), East Lothian (25%) and Midlothian (12%). Edinburgh and the Lothians have also shown increases in public transport usage, although it should be noted that train travel has significantly increased over the ten year period by residents of all the SEStran authorities. However, after many years of continuous growth, **Road traffic** levels in Scotland peaked in 2007 and have declined slightly thereafter.
- 2.1.4 The census data above suggest that in general underlying trends towards increasing car use have been sustained over the last ten years, although reduced traffic levels since the economic downturn of 2007/8 suggest shorter or less frequent journeys. It also appears that the policies favouring sustainable modes of travel that have been implemented over a sustained period in the SEStran area have had some success in stemming traffic growth, particularly in the urban area of Edinburgh which shows a very different pattern of change to the rest of the SEStran area and to the other Scottish cities.
- 2.1.5 Forecasts of future transport demand in the SEStran area, based on a return to overall economic growth combined with significant amounts of new development, suggest that traffic growth pressures will continue with the potential for increasing problems of congestion and environmental damage.

- 2.1.6 This refreshed RTS therefore has a rather wider set of issues to tackle compared to the original RTS at least in the short-medium term. There is also a more challenging financial backdrop in terms of transport budgets. The two major challenges are:
- a) to support economic recovery; and
 - b) to spread the environmental and social benefits of reduced car dependency beyond Edinburgh to settlements in the remainder of the SEStran area – including the new developments that will be required to house the forecast increase in population and households.
- 2.1.7 At the heart of the RTS is the need to balance the needs of a growing area (in terms of population) and a recovering economy, with the associated growth in movement of people and goods this implies, and the recognition that this increased movement has consequences for the local and global environment. In addition, many in society without access to a car, particularly outside core urban areas, are excluded in some ways through lack of access to services and opportunities, with a detrimental impact on their quality of life, and this could be exacerbated by reductions in bus services.

2.2 Implications for the SEStran RTS

- The projected increases in population and households will have pronounced effects on the transport system – the integration of land use and transport planning is essential if dispersed, car dependent growth is to be avoided.
- Economic recovery will bring employment growth which will require larger labour markets, potentially with employees travelling from further afield. This will add to pressure on the transport networks in the SEStran area in the medium term. Again, new developments must be planned together with public transport to minimise car-based commuting.
- There is significant scope for car ownership to continue to grow in the SEStran area, but this need not inevitably lead to increased car use; very large numbers of households remain without access to a car – many of these are in more vulnerable groups.
- The allocation of extensive new land for development underlines the importance of integrating land-use and transport planning in the SEStran area, linking Strategic and Local Development plans closely with the RTS. Failure to do so will lead to further significant increases in car use.
- The significance of coastal shipping and the importance of linking sea and land-based transport effectively need further attention. Grangemouth and Rosyth are becoming increasingly important within the SEStran area as hubs for freight activity. SEStran must continue to act to support efficient movement of goods to facilitate economic recovery.
- SEStran must work to continue the trend of reducing transport related casualties and contribute to the national targets.
- If Scottish environmental policy commitments are to be met, very significant reductions in vehicle emissions will be necessary, using the pathways outlined in national policy. RTPs and local authorities need to act in line with these policies.

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The RTS is framed in the context of Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives, the emphasis placed on Community Planning by Government and Local authorities, Local Transport Strategies developed by constituent local authorities, the Agenda for Cities¹ and the statutory Strategic and Local Planning framework.

3.2 RTS Vision Statement

- 3.2.1 The following high-level Vision Statement for the RTS was agreed in 2007:

'South East Scotland is a dynamic and growing area which aspires to become one of northern Europe's leading economic regions. Essential to this is the development of a transport system which enables businesses to function effectively, allows all groups in society to share in the region's success through high quality access to services and opportunities, respects the environment, and contributes to better health.'

- 3.2.2 This Vision Statement continues to encapsulate the spirit of the RTS, covering economic development, accessibility, the environment and health.

3.3 RTS Objectives

- 3.3.1 The objectives of the RTS are as follows:

1. **Economy** – to ensure transport facilitates economic growth, regional prosperity and vitality in a sustainable manner;
 - 1.1 to maintain and improve labour market accessibility to key business/employment locations, from all localities and communities.
 - 1.2 to maintain and improve connectivity to the rest of Scotland, the UK and beyond for business and tourists.
 - 1.3 to support other strategies, particularly land-use planning, and economic development.
 - 1.4 to reduce the negative impacts of congestion, in particular to improve journey time reliability for passengers and freight.
2. **Accessibility** – to improve accessibility for those with limited transport choice (including disabled people) or no access to a car, particularly those who live in rural areas:
 - 2.1 to improve access to employment.
 - 2.2 to improve access to health facilities by working with health boards and other agencies.
 - 2.3 to improve access to other services, such as retailing, leisure/social and education.
 - 2.4 to influence decisions on the provision of public transport to make it more affordable and socially inclusive.

1 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy/Cities>

3. RTS Objectives & Policies

3. Environment – To ensure that development is achieved in an environmentally sustainable manner:
 - 3.1 to contribute to the achievement of the Scottish national targets and obligations on greenhouse gas emissions.
 - 3.2 to promote more sustainable travel.
 - 3.3 to reduce the need to travel.
 - 3.4 to minimise the negative impacts of transport on natural and cultural resources.
 - 3.5 to increase transport choices, reducing dependency on the private car.
4. Safety and Health – To promote a healthier and more active SEStran area population:
 - 4.1 to improve safety (accidents) and personal security.
 - 4.2 to increase the proportion of trips by walk/cycle.
 - 4.3 to meet or better all statutory air quality requirements.
 - 4.4 to reduce the impacts of transport noise.



4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Strategy is set out in four sections covering three geographic themes – national/international connectivity; regional movement corridors; and region-wide measures to support specific economic, environmental and social objectives.

4.2 Connectivity

4.2.1 The SEStran area is a key driver of the Scottish Economy. Key business sectors include Financial Services, Tourism, the Knowledge economy, Creative Industries and Retailing, all of which are crucially dependent on the ability of people, goods and ideas to connect easily locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

4.2.2 Connectivity requirements for the SEStran area are varied. For example:

- Businesses and their customers need to be able to get around the SEStran area easily to facilitate business activity
- Business needs good rail, road and air connections to access other centres of economic activity in the UK and abroad;
- Customers (including tourists) need to consider South East Scotland an easily accessible destination from elsewhere in the UK and abroad;
- Good port, rail and road infrastructure and suitable intermodal terminals are required to support freight movement and efficient logistics;
- Good connections for commuters maximise the labour force that is accessible to the area's employers.

4.2.3 Underpinning all connectivity requirements is the need for a sustainable approach that will support the long-term competitive position of the area through resource efficiency, social inclusion and minimum environmental impact.

4.2.4 The SEStran area has a number of major links and gateways that provide external connections including key rail stations, Edinburgh Airport, the Forth Ports, and the motorway and trunk road network. These are important in themselves, but they are only of value if they can be accessed easily from throughout the SEStran area and if they operate effectively. They should also support the other strengths of the SEStran area for business and the workforce – in particular the quality of the environment.

4.2.5 The Scottish Government agency, Transport Scotland, has responsibility for the maintenance and development of Scotland's strategic transport networks while the UK Department for Transport retains responsibility for cross border rail services and international air and sea connections. These elements therefore fall outwith the direct remit of SEStran. SEStran will however seek to influence and work constructively with Transport Scotland on the development of its transport proposals within the SEStran area and with Transport Scotland and the Department for Transport on external links serving the SEStran area in the context of available financial resources.

4.3 Region-Wide Measures

- 4.3.1 35 RTS measures are identified in the strategy which can be classed as 'region wide' ie they are not necessarily geographically specific in the way that infrastructure or transport services are. Region-wide measures include initiatives to address travel behaviour – smarter choices agenda; ticketing arrangements; freight; parking; demand management; safety; walking and cycling; public transport – services, vehicles, fares, integration, information; mobility impaired; urban design; enforcement; and other measures. In many cases these measures will link with national strategies.
- 4.3.2 In addition to these region-wide topics, further initiatives focussed on improving accessibility for specific groups of travellers are identified. These are particularly relevant to rural areas and those in the community who have difficulties in accessing public transport vehicles, covering:
- access to health care services (key hospitals);
 - access to employment;
 - community transport/demand responsive transport;
 - public transport in rural areas; and
 - the travel needs of disabled people.
- 4.3.3 The potential role for SEStran in all these areas will involve one or more of the following:
- collating information on best practice across the area;
 - establishing this as an information source for other local authorities, providing 'added value' by taking a regional perspective where appropriate;
 - development of 'regional frameworks' – where appropriate, frameworks will be developed which recognise the diverse geographical nature of the SEStran area;
 - encouraging the development of consistency of provision across the area, seeking to 'level up' provision across the area;
 - acting as a 'centre of excellence' offering information and advice to particularly the smaller councils, in areas where lack of resources affect the councils' capabilities in these areas;
 - marshalling funding from third parties (eg from EU, Scottish Enterprise, SUSTRANS, and the private sector); and
 - funding local council implementation or implementing the measures itself.

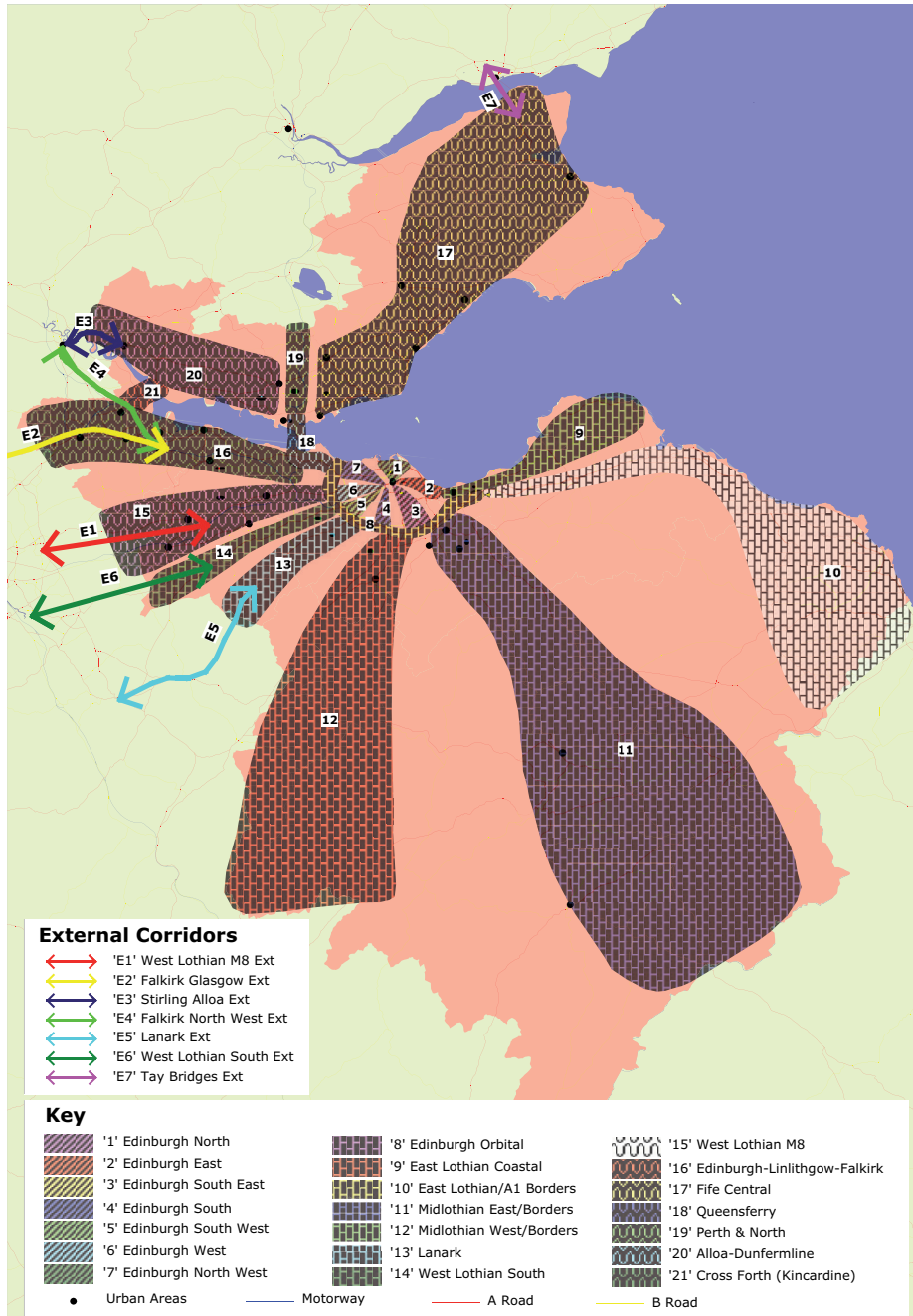
4.4 Regional Transport Corridors

4.4.1 The third of the main RTS themes, 'Regional Transport Corridors', is primarily concerned with targeting improvements in public transport towards the main regional corridors of commuting travel within SEStran and between SEStran and its neighbouring areas as shown in Figure 2. The main purpose of this theme is to provide improved labour market accessibility in terms of public transport. By doing so, this:

- makes public transport more attractive to those who currently drive, and provides an improved service for current users of public transport;
- expands labour markets from an employer's perspective, giving them a wider pool of labour to choose from;
- can open up new employment opportunities for employees, improving their earning potential and improving regional economic efficiency; and
- reduces the reliance and dependence on the private car as a means of travel to work in SEStran.



Figure 2 Regional Transport Corridors



4.4.2 Forecasts suggest that as a result of increases in population, households and employment in the area AM peak traffic levels in 2024 will be 26% higher than in 2007 and congestion is forecast to increase by 131%.

- 4.4.3 It is notable that the most obvious problems are associated with the city bypass and its various junctions. These need to be tackled through a multi-faceted approach – resolving the problems at one junction on its own will inevitably place greater pressure on the other junctions on the bypass and the associated link roads which are also already congested. SEStran supports an integrated approach to managing congestion on the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass that incorporates all the following:
- Encouraging the use of public transport through the provision of good quality public transport services and infrastructure – in particular:
 - a) measures based on the Orbital Bus Rapid Transit proposals;
 - b) the maintenance and development of ‘Cross Rail’ services through Edinburgh.
 - Provision of additional Park and Ride;
 - The removal of obvious bottlenecks such as Sheriffhall through measures which are compatible with the capacity of the surrounding network and which also prioritise public transport, and
 - The use of up to date technology to maximise traffic flow and support bus priority.
- 4.4.4 The other corridors which are under considerable pressure are those coming in from the west, including the Queensferry corridor. Significant investment has taken place in the rail network in this corridor, with the introduction new and improved services. The maximisation of the benefits of these new services should be pursued with the provision of new stations along with improvements to station park and ride provision.
- 4.4.5 The potential of express bus services should be encouraged with increased bus priority on the motorway approaches to the west of Edinburgh and building on the benefits of the Forth Road Bridge being dedicated to bus services, on completion of the new road bridge. The tram route from Edinburgh airport gives a significant improvement of services from the west of Edinburgh into the city centre and to the employment centres of the Gyle and Sighthill. The development of a comprehensive tram network is seen as a major benefit to people travelling within the city and encouraging those coming into the city to use public transport for at least part of their journey.
- 4.4.6 The analysis also indicates that there is pressure on the road network within most of the large towns within the SEStran area mainly through new development. The main challenge here is to ensure that new developments are sustainable and residents are able to travel without having to use a car. We are working with SESplan in identifying the most accessible and sustainable sites for new development.
- 4.4.7 The network analysis tends to focus on road network capacity. However, rail and bus networks are a key part of the solution to these issues and capacities for these modes are also of critical importance. SEStran will work closely with rail and bus industries, for example through the Rail and Bus forums.
- 4.4.8 For shorter journeys, Active Travel modes are crucial and should be promoted through design and implementation of all new development and transport interventions following the principles of ‘Designing Streets’¹.

1 Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland, Scottish Government, March 2010

5. Delivery and Funding

5.1 Delivery

- 5.1.1 The RTS will be delivered by SEStran working in partnership with the key providers and in particular the local authorities and the Scottish Government. The RTS outlines the direction for investment in transport in the SEStran area and provides a strong policy and prioritisation for this investment. Securing the delivery of the RTS will clearly depend on the availability of adequate funding.
- 5.1.2 SEStran has no direct capital monies available to allocate to capital projects. However there is some capital expenditure by Transport Scotland and the constituent councils which reflects priorities within the Strategy, as well as potential private sector funding resulting from new development and from partnership initiatives. Funding can also be sought from challenge funds from Scottish Government, EU or other sources.
- 5.1.3 The annual Business Plan indicates the proposed expenditure and priorities for the forthcoming year and the Annual Report reviews the budgets and provides a Monitoring report on our Key Objectives. Through these annual reports a clear indication is given on budget proposals and monitoring, along with progress on identified priorities.



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