New Regional Transport Strategy (RTS): Update Report

1   Introduction

1.1   This report provides Performance and Audit Committee with an update on work to develop the new RTS, as agreed by the Board on 21 June including progress on the first, preliminary stage of the RTS, and clarification on the next steps for the RTS.

1.2   The report provides an update on the national context for the RTS rewrite, including legislative changes with relevance to the operation of Regional Transport Partnerships.

2   New RTS – national context

2.1   The report to the June 2019 Partnership Board noted the key areas of national legislation and policy development with clear significance for a new RTS. Since June 2019, the following process concluded:-

- The **Planning (Scotland) Act 2019** received Royal Assent in July 2019. It requires a National Planning Framework to be presented to Parliament, and to be supported by Regional Spatial Strategies (replacing Strategic Development Plans), covering one or more planning authority areas.

- The **Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019** received Royal Assent in October 2019. It sets targets to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero (from 1990) by 2045, with interim targets specified.

- The **Transport (Scotland) Act 2019** received Royal Assent in November 2019. It clarifies, amongst other things, the powers by which Local Authorities will introduce Low Emission Zones, and by which transport authorities may pursue integrated ticketing between public transport operators.

- The Act establishes a number of changes and new opportunities for RTP operation, as follows:

    o With reference to Part 3 and in particular s.35's insertion of provisions into the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, including '3L Multi-authority bus services improvement partnerships'; this will present opportunities for the RTPs – and perhaps more so if there was agreement to take on functions under s.10 or s.14 of the 2005 Act. Regulations are awaited before further consideration of additional functions.

- o s.38 of the new Act on local services franchises doesn't mention RTPs but does make some provision for 'multi-authority franchising.'

- The changes that directly affect SEStran and the other RTPs are in s.122. Sub section (1) amends s.3 of the 2005 Act (amended version attached at **Appendix 1**) has the effect to expressly allow carry over of both expenses and reserves. There's also provision in the new subsection 4A for an RTP to provide a budget forecast to the constituent authorities.

  - o Subsection (2) amends the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975 to bring the RTPs into the provisions about borrowing and lending in Schedule 3 to that Act - previously it was only SPT.
  - o Subsection (3) similarly amends s.165(6) of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 to bring the RTPs within the ambit of that section's powers about borrowing and lending.

- The **National Transport Strategy, (NTS2)** published in February 2020. It establishes the twenty-year vision for Transport in Scotland, with four key priorities (reducing inequalities, taking climate action, delivering inclusive economic growth and improving health and well-being).

2.2 The Second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) process is due to conclude in the first quarter of 2021, identifying the transport investment projects and priorities for Scotland for the next twenty years, to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes for transport set out in the NTS2.

2.3 It is worth also noting Scotland's Programme for Government 2019/20, which announced £500M in new investment for bus priority measures in September 2019; the expectation is that RTPs will be instrumental in developing any cross-boundary partnership bids for these funds. There is clear synergy between these opportunities and the considerations around a new RTS.

3 New RTS – regional context update

3.1 SEStran is closely involved with the three STPR2 related Regional Transport Working Groups (RTWGs) operating within the region and chairs the South East of Scotland grouping. RTWG groupings conform to growth deal areas. Given the synergies between STPR2 process and the RTS, the RTWGs will continue to have a significant role as consultee groups in the development of the RTS.

4 New RTS Progress – Main Issues Report

4.1 The Main Issues Report (MIR) is underway, with significant data analysis completed across a wide range of data sets relating to travel patterns, costs of travel, land use, demographics, employment areas, and more, as agreed in the delivery plan reported to the June 2019 Board. Progress is being shared with the RTS Steering Group.

4.2 A summary report of the Main Issues, and a presentation by Jacobs (consultants working on the MIR) will be provided at the Partnership Board meeting of 20 March 2020. This will be an opportunity for comments to be gathered from the Board. The final draft report will be circulated to the Board for comment and agreement at the end of March.

5 New RTS Next Steps

5.1 The ensuing, full RTS rewrite process will be carried out, as required by statute, in accordance with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, and delivered through further consultancy support services. Update detail on proposed delivery arrangements is provided at Appendix 2.

5.2 In terms of the determination of appropriate interventions arising from the developing strategy, there is an obvious need for integration with the conveniently concurrent STPR2 development process. As stated previously, SEStran is well placed within the relevant RTWGs to ensure that this happens. There is also a clear need for Tactran and SEStran to be well coordinated where the STPR2 defined regions overlap.

5.3 It is also necessary to be mindful of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which will require one or more local authorities or regions, however they may be defined, to produce a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Allied to this, over the medium term a revised form of regional governance will be devised; ensuring that the developing RTS can be integrated within this and be fully aligned with future RSS arrangements is an important and challenging consideration for the process.

5.4 As the preliminary Main Issues stage of the RTS development concludes, officers have developed an updated delivery plan attached at Appendix 2. A notional delivery programme timeline is available; this may require further time to be allocated for appraisal tasks, to ensure appraisal of interventions takes into account the evolving regional picture described in this report. Further detail on the indicative timeline will be available at the Partnership Board.

5.5 It is anticipated that a Prior Information Notice will be issued in late March 2020, before the tender for consultancy support for the RTS is advertised.

5.6 A preliminary meeting has been held to instigate the Equalities Impact Assessment, and discussions have commenced with Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) to set out the terms of a Strategic Environment Assessment for the RTS.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the content of this report.

Anna Herriman
Senior Partnership Manager
March 2020

Policy Implications	A new RTS will impact on future strategy development.
Financial Implications	Funds are earmarked from the 2020/2021 budget, for consultancy services to develop and deliver the new Regional Transport Strategy.
Equalities Implications	The new RTS is subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)
Climate Change Implications	The new RTS will be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Appendices	Appendix 1: Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended by 2019 Act Appendix 2: New Regional Transport Strategy: Updated Delivery Plan

Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended by 2019 Act

Administration

3 Regional Transport Partnerships: funding and borrowing

(1) The net expenses of a Transport Partnership for each financial year shall be paid by—

    (a) its constituent councils; or
    (b) where there is only one, that council.

(2) The share of the expenses to be paid by a constituent council under subsection (1)(a) above shall be—

    (a) such as the Transport Partnership, having regard to its transport strategy, thinks fit; or
    (b) where the Partnership is unable to decide, such as is determined by the Scottish Ministers by order.

(3) The Scottish Ministers may, by order, provide as to the arrangements for the payment of amounts payable under this section.

(4) For the purposes of this section, the net expenses of a Transport Partnership for a financial year are those of its estimated expenses for that year, and of any outstanding expenses from the financial year previous to that year, which are not met—

    (a) by a grant made by any person which is not repayable;
    (b) by a grant so made which is subject to a condition requiring repayment and which remains unsatisfied;
    (c) by any other income for that year; or
    (d) by funds held by the Transport Partnership that it allocates to meet expenses for that year.

(4A) A Transport Partnership must, having regard to its Transport Strategy, prepare a forecast of its net expenses for each financial year and provide a copy of its forecast to –

    (a) its constituent councils, or
    (b) where there is only one, that council.

(5) A Transport Partnership may give grants or loans to any person for any purposes that, in its opinion, contribute to the implementation of the Partnership's transport strategy.

(6) Such grants or loans may be given subject to such conditions (including conditions requiring repayment in specified circumstances) as the Transport Partnership decides.

(7) A Transport Partnership may borrow money for the purpose of its capital expenditure.

(8) In this section, "financial year" means the period of 12 months ending with 31st March.

New Regional Transport Strategy

Updated Delivery Plan

Background

The requirement to prepare and publish a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the South East of Scotland is contained within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. SEStran's current RTS was first published in 2008, and refreshed in 2015.

Given the pace of change in terms of legislation, and policies at both a national and a local level, it was agreed at the June 2019 SEStran Board, that a full review of the RTS should be undertaken and a new RTS developed.

The report to the June 2019 Board, outlining the terms of reference and initial project plan and timescale, provide the basis for the new RTS development. Subject to acceptance by the Board of the Main Issues Report, the next stage of the RTS will be developed, in accordance with an updated Delivery Plan.

Requirements of the new RTS

The scope of a Regional Transport Strategy is clearly set out and established within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. The RTS is required to provide the transport strategy covering the whole established region, to which partner Transport authorities (those of the eight constituent member Councils) must then perform their local transport functions in a manner consistent with the RTS.

The Regional Transport Strategy must therefore include provision for the respects in which transport in the region needs to be provided, developed or improved having regard to, among other things:

- future needs including those occasioned by demographic and land use changes; and what can be done, taking account of cost, funding and practicability;
- meeting the needs of all inhabited places, in particular, those which the Partnership considers different from the remainder of the region by reason of their remoteness or the sparsity of their populations;
- meeting the need for efficient transport links between heavily populated places;
- how transport in the region will be provided, developed, improved and operated so as:-
    - (i)   to enhance social and economic well-being;

(ii)   to promote public safety, including road safety and the safety of users of public transport;

(iii) to be consistent with the principle of sustainable development and to conserve and enhance the environment;

(iv)   to promote social inclusion;

(v)   to encourage equal opportunities and, in particular, the observance of the equal opportunities requirements;

(vi)   to facilitate access to hospitals, clinics, surgeries and other places where a health service is provided;

(vii) to integrate with transport elsewhere.

SEStran Delivery Aims and Objectives

The new RTS development process must, in addition to the statutory scope outlined above:-

- respond to issues identified in the Main Issues Report;
- follow a number of statutory stages and requirements (including ample consultation and appraisal), prior to completion, and be developed in accordance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance;
- take into account and help inform and support local transport policy and interventions, and other regional partnership and sub-regional partnership aims;
- align to the new National Transport Strategy, and other relevant national policy and legislation covering planning, social, economy and environment / climate undertakings;
- be completed by the end of 2021 for consideration by Scottish Ministers.

Expert technical support and resourcing will be secured through competitively procured consultancy support services. All procurement will be conducted through Public Contracts Scotland, to ensure full compliance with current procurement rules and legislation.

Project Management Arrangements

The delivery of the new RTS will be overseen and managed by internal SEStran.

Key roles with specific RTS responsibilities are outlined here:

Partnership Director:
- Responsible for overall oversight of project management and delivery;
- Review escalated risks and agree remedial actions when required.

Senior Partnership Manager:
- Provide strategic direction for the development of the RTS ensuring strategic alignment;
- Oversee RTS progress, resource allocation, risk management and approved budget;
- Convene regular meetings of the Project Management Team;
- Review Risk Register and further escalate any risks as necessary;
- Review draft RTS material and reports;
- Ensure RTS processes are fully compliant with all statutory requirements.

Strategy and Projects Officer:
- Communicate with partners representatives regularly on RTS development;
- Provide technical overview of consultancy services and quality;
- Manage consultancy support service providers;
- Draft consultancy brief and agree procurement processes for RTS;
- Manage consultancy support services;
- Escalate all performance issues and risks to Senior Partnership Manager;
- Maintain RTS Risk Register and RAID logs, reporting at Project Management Team;
- Initiate and carry out integral SEA and EQIA assessments for the RTS;
- Prepare Project reports to Partnership Board, liaison committees and RTS Steering Group a as appropriate.

RTS Project Management Team Remit

An internal Project Management Team (previously termed Officer Delivery and Working Group), as agreed at the June 2019 meeting, will ensure the delivery of the RTS functions meets agreed objectives. The SEStran RTS Project Management Team will provide the day to day management of delivery of the RTS. (The work within each of the key stages of the RTS, including statutory and good practice consultation, technical appraisal, any modelling, report drafting will be largely be delivered through procured consultancy support). The RTS Project Management Team will meet separately, in addition to weekly SEStran Team Meetings.

The core RTS Project Management Team includes the Senior Partnership Manager, Strategy and Projects Officer, supported as required by the Partnership Director, Programmes Manager or Projects Officers as required. Membership may draw on any or all staff expertise at any appropriate stage, and attendance at meetings will reflect the stage of RTS development.

RTS Steering Group Remit

Whilst the final sign-off of the RTS rests with Scottish Ministers, and the governance of the RTS is a requirement of the SEStran Board, the establishment of a special RTS Steering Group, made up of SEStran Board members, was agreed in June 2019 to help challenge, and provide scrutiny to support the development of the Strategy prior to reporting key stages of RTS development to the Board.

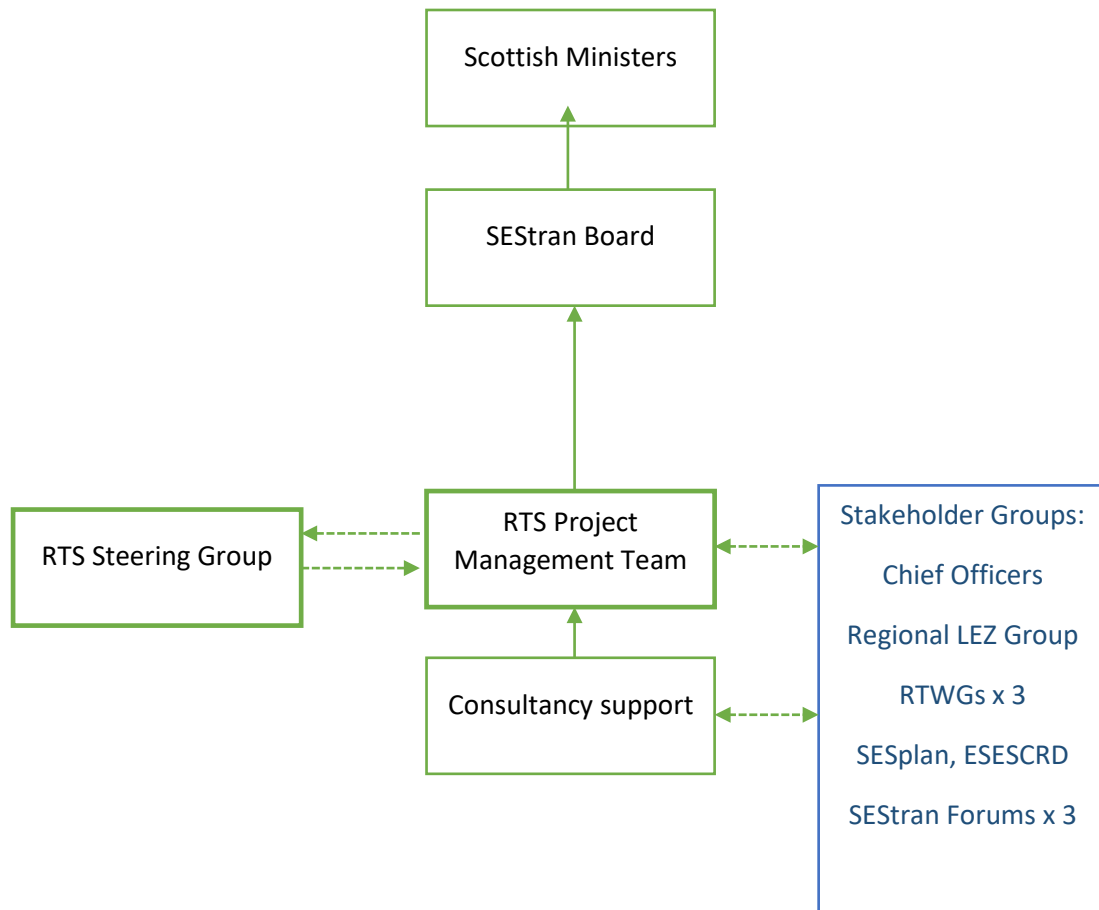Membership: 2 x Councillor Board Members, 2 x Non Councillor Board Members, SEStran Partnership Director.
Attendees: Transport Scotland Transport Partnerships Manager, in attendance as RTP advisory officer.
Support: Senior Partnership Manager, Strategy and Projects Officer, Administration Officer

Project Governance Arrangements

The RTS Project Management Team will report RTS project progress and outcomes to the SEStran Board.

The relationships with key interface / partner / stakeholder groupings are included here for clarity, as the project moves to the next stage of RTS development.

```
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │  Scottish Ministers │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▲
                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │    SEStran Board    │
                        └─────────────────────┘
                                   ▲
┌──────────────────┐    ┌─────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────┐
│                  │◄---│    RTS Project      │◄--►│ Stakeholder Groups:  │
│ RTS Steering     │    │  Management Team    │    │                      │
│ Group            │--->│                     │    │ Chief Officers       │
│                  │    └─────────────────────┘    │                      │
└──────────────────┘              ▲                │ Regional LEZ Group   │
                        ┌─────────────────────┐    │                      │
                        │ Consultancy support │◄--►│ RTWGs x 3            │
                        └─────────────────────┘    │                      │
                                                   │ SESplan, ESESCRD     │
                                                   │                      │
                                                   │ SEStran Forums x 3   │
                                                   └──────────────────────┘
```

RTS Delivery Programme Timeline and Key Work Stages

		2019/20 (J A S O N D J F M A M J)	2020/21 (J F M A M J J A S O N D)	2021/22 (J F M A M J J A S O N D)	2022/23 (J F M A M J J A S O N D)
Preliminary Stage					
Stage 1	Procurement				
	Main Issues and scoping				
	Stakeholder Engagement				
	RTP Board Meeting	x			
	Objectives Vision				
	RTP Board Meeting [*]	x			
	Confirmation of RTP funding for 2020/21^				
Stage 2	Consultation Key Stakeholders				
	Procure Consultancy Support				
	Option Generation High level Assessment				
	High Level Transport Options				
	RTP Board Meeting [**]	x			
	Scoping Report to SEA Gateway	x			
RTS Development					
Stage 1	Consultation				
	(SEA Scoping 5 weeks)				
	(Key Stakeholders 5 weeks)				
	Procure Consultancy Support				
	Detailed Options Appraisal [+]				
	RTP Board Meeting		x		
	Writing Draft Strategy				
	RTP Board Meeting ***		x		
Stage 2	Consultation				
	RTA Public Consultation (8 weeks)				
	SEA Consultation (8 weeks)				
	Procure Consultancy Support				
	Refining estimates and costs				
	RTP Board Meeting		x		
	Comple and refine FINAL RTS				
	RTP Board Meeting****			x	
	Final RTS			x	
Stage 3	Approval by Ministers				
SEA	Procure Consultancy Support				
	Scoping Report to SEA Gateway	x			
	Environmental Report		x		
EQIA					

CA's	Consultation Authorities
*	Board Approval of main issues and objectives
**	Board Approval of options report along supported by high level assessment (STAG case for change evidence). Decision to proceed to full RTS.
***	Board Approval of Draft RTS
****	Board Approval of Final RTS
+	Preparing reports e.g STAGs ASTs cots estimates etc
^	Confirmation of funding and implementation of Transport (Scotland) Act 2019

Key Work Stages

Prelim Stage	Main Issues and report	Review the following existing RTS areas: • Objectives • Policies • Monitoring • Delivery • Current Strategy objectives • Vision Engage and discuss with local authority chief officers/transport officers. Undertake technical analysis of multiple datasets. Develop Transport Planning Objectives. Summarise findings and develop report for consultation stage. Embark upon SEA and EQIA processes. Identify high level options
RTS Development		
1	RTS Consultation Transport Options	Full and wide engagement and consultation on findings of the main issues report. Detailed development of transport options, following a sifting and preliminary assessment based on the evidence gathered and reviewed as part of Stage 1.
2	Consultation Appraisal Draft Strategy	Stakeholder consultation on transport options report. Detailed appraisal of options and development of transport options, policies and regional and national context. Development of implementation, monitoring and evaluation plan. Prepare and write draft strategy seek board approval for formal final consultation.
	Consultation Final RTS	Analysis of consultation feedback and responses, prior to final strategy approval and then publication. Completion of EQIA and SEA work.