

Introduction

SEStran is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) formed from the eight local authorities in the east and south of Scotland. The RTP has a duty in law to prepare a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for their area.

In 2021 SEStran undertook work to identify key issues that would be relevant to the ongoing development of a new RTS. The report identified main issues in the SEStran area which were aligned closely with issues identified in the National Transport Strategy 2 which was published in February 2020.



New Regional Transport Strategy - SEStran 2035

New legislation and strategies in Scotland, rapid societal shift and advances in technology are bringing forward significant changes for transport, economy and land use. In response, SEStran is developing a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) that sets out a clear framework for how transport and mobility will be provided, developed and improved in our region, to meet the aspirations for a sustainable and economically active growth area over the next 10 years and beyond.

Stantec UK Ltd consultants have been appointed by SEStran to support in the process of engagement, development and completion of necessary statutory assessments to create a new RTS for the South East of Scotland.

Further information and how you can be involved in the process to develop and inform our new RTS is available on our website page [SEStran 2035](#).

The key issues to be tackled in the new RTS will be focussed around the four national priorities defined in the Scottish Government's National Transport Strategy 2 published in February 2020. In short, this centres around:

- *Reducing Inequality*: Many of the region's people (especially those that are older, have mobility and accessibility challenges, are women, are on low incomes, or live in rural areas) lack appropriate, affordable transport to meet their needs or enable them to take up new opportunities
- *Taking Climate Action*: Current action is not delivering a reduction in carbon emissions from transport in the region. There is a need to act quickly if targets for reduction are to be met including net zero emissions by 2045 and a 20% reduction in car km by 2030 as set out in the recent [Scottish Government Climate Change Plan Update](#), and to minimise risks of transport disruption from more extreme climate events.
- *Delivering Inclusive Economic Growth*: Some parts of the region's transport network lack capacity to enable growth in sustainable peak hour travel, especially on the rail network and, on the road network, where buses and goods are delayed by congestion.
- *Improving Our Health and Wellbeing*: There are good examples of initiatives promoting healthier and more sustainable modes in the region, but they are yet to make a significant difference to levels of car use. The proportion of journeys in the region undertaken by car/taxi increased in the decade to 2018.

The future is increasingly uncertain, due to both potential changes in technology (e.g. for autonomous vehicles) and in societal attitudes (e.g. changes in employment and shopping). In addition, the RTS needs to respond to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic which is likely to have permanent impacts on travel behaviour including increased working from home leading to less commuting (particularly that focussed on city centres and business parks), more car use and less use of public transport, more active travel as well as more online shopping creating more home deliveries. So, these issues will be at the forefront as we develop the new strategy.

We must also ensure more integrated planning between land-use, transport and economic growth, along with the most effective transport governance arrangements and models for coordination and delivery of wider regional transport priorities.