

Regional Transport Strategy 2035: Update Report

1 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on progress with the ongoing work to develop the new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), including the following:

- Finalised Case for Change (CfC)
- Ongoing Statutory Assessments
- Preliminary Option Appraisal Report: and
- The revised delivery programme.

1.2 This report also gives an update on progress, following discussion with the steering group on the development of priorities for regional mobility that will shape the content of the RTS and outlines the next steps in the process. In addition, the relationship of the emerging RTS to the ongoing development of the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) is also considered.

2 Background

2.1 Members will be aware of the ongoing progress for the development of the RTS and that the consultants were appointed late 2020 and began work in January, with the draft Case for Change reported to last Board following consultation, engagement and publication of the statutory assessments that support the RTS development.

3 Progress

3.1 Case for Change and Statutory Assessments.

The RTS Case for Change was published on the SEStran website at the end of June 2021 along with the SEStran RTS Case for Change Equalities Duties Report and the SEStran RTS Case for Change SEA Environmental Report. [Link to Reports on SEStran website](#). The Case for Change was informed by an extensive review of policy documentation and data analysis, in addition to stakeholder and public consultation. Utilising this evidence-based approach, the Case for Change set out the latest understanding of the problems and issues in the SEStran region and also reflected travel behaviour changes which have arisen since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 These documents were subject to a 4-week consultation period with an accompanying survey (between the 29th of June and the 26th of July 2021). A technical note summarises the results gathered from this consultation which is available on the SEStran website.

<https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SEStran-RTS-Case-for-Change-Consultation-Summary-of-Results-Technical-Note-v1.pdf>. The comments provided during the consultation period supplement the evidence base and did not raise any fundamental new issues. The consultation comments will be fully considered in the detailed drafting of the RTS.

3.3 Preliminary Options Appraisal

Having identified the problems to be addressed in the new RTS along with associated options to resolve them from the Case for Change, the next step in the process is to appraise the long list of options against the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria and Strategy Objectives. The findings from this appraisal are set out in the draft STAG Preliminary Options Appraisal report where each of the original 71 options has been appraised.

3.4 An example of an Appraisal Summary Table (AST) from the draft Preliminary Options Appraisal Report is included as Appendix 1 to this report. The AST comments on relevant issues such as deliverability/implementability and acceptability of the option and how it performs against the five STAG criteria, the Strategy Objectives and how the impact of COVID-19 related behaviour changes impact on the performance of the option. Finally, a recommendation is made to accept or reject the option.

3.5 The next stage of the RTS development involves considering the 62 accepted options selected through the Preliminary Options Appraisal process and using them as the foundation for the creation of a draft RTS. The options which have been demonstrated to contribute to the strategy objectives and the STAG criteria have therefore been collated into several 'Regional Priorities' which are proposed to form the basis for the RTS. It is expected that each of these will have a chapter within the RTS and policies and actions identified.

3.6 There is no intended priority to the list developed in the draft Regional Priorities shown below. Therefore, it is proposed that they are referred to as Regional Mobility Themes instead. The table below shows the draft Regional Priorities beside a slightly adjusted list of Regional Mobility Themes. The changes were suggested during discussions at the latest steering group meeting. Paragraph 3.7 below outlines these discussions.

Draft Preliminary Options Appraisal Report	Steering Group Review
Regional Priorities	Regional Mobility Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping development and place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaping development and place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decarbonising the fleet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating safe active travel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating safe active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reallocating road-space on the regional network
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing 'avoidable' car kilometres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving integration between modes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reallocation of road-space on the regional network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing car kilometres *
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing access to public transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing access to public transport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing and extending the rail network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing and extending the rail network

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing and extending the bus service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing and extending the bus service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving integration between modes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating efficient passenger travel and freight movement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating efficient passenger travel and freight movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalising on opportunities arising from new technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating safe motorised travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating safe motorised travel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalising on opportunities arising from new technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decarbonising the fleet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to the post-Covid world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to the post-Covid world*

The Board is asked to discuss and consider the relevance of these suggested Regional Mobility Themes

- 3.7 At the steering group discussion it was considered that the list should reflect the National Transport Strategy 2 sustainable travel hierarchy which is a key principle within NTS 2.

The two areas marked by * above were also discussed at the steering group meeting. The reduction of car mileage, in particular the differences between rural and urban areas, mean that “avoidable” may not best reflect the varying needs of these different communities. Mileage reduction and reduced car use is desirable throughout the SEStran region, and it must be acknowledged that this will be different between different areas.

There was discussion around the need for “responding to a post-COVID world”. The primary role of the RTS is to identify robust sustainable transport for the future. The purpose of the RTS is not to solve immediate or short term COVID issues but it must take account of the learning from the pandemic impacts in considering and developing policies and actions and may best be delivered through all elements of the RTS rather than as an individual issue.

- 3.8 The issue of deliverability, powers, roles and responsibilities of various partners continues to be highlighted most recently in the Appraisal, Summary Tables. The Statutory role of SEStran is to produce an RTS for the SEStran area. The RTS will direct partner authorities and stakeholders on their transport investment priorities to support sustainable growth in the region. As the new RTS is further developed, recommendations on the most appropriate governance arrangements to most effectively facilitate delivery of the RTS will be made.
- 3.9 Partnership working and supporting partners with whom the necessary statutory powers are currently vested is an essential element of SEStran’s role within the current Model 1 RTP arrangements.
- 3.10 It is helpful to set the Regional Priorities where appropriate within a broad spatial context. To this end, a set of new regional ‘corridors’ has been established based on an analysis of regional travel patterns. This approach supports more effective alignment with land use planning processes at local and regional level. This

alignment is vitally important as there must be accord between the RTS and the developing Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Prosperity Framework across the SEStran region. Although a strategic transport strategy does not tend to set out detailed or individual interventions (as they would each be subject to a STAG-based appraisal), work is also underway to establish the need for regional interventions (types of intervention required) based on the range of problems and issues identified. This will be fully incorporated into the draft RTS.

- 3.11 The preparation of the new SEStran RTS including the development of the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report is also being informed by Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) processes, each of which has already identified (at Scoping stage) relevant baseline conditions and key environmental and equalities issues which need to be addressed in the new RTS.

4 Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR 2) and RTS programme

- 4.1 There is a large number of options identified in the draft Preliminary Options Appraisal Report and the need to fully consider and assess these has resulted in a short delay in delivering the final draft RTS and this allows some additional time to refine the policies and actions currently being developed for the RTS. This delay of one month in bringing the final draft to the Board requires that a special meeting of the Board is held on 29 October. The revised programme is included at Appendix 2.

- 4.2 Furthermore, as reported to previous Partnership Board meetings there is a need for the RTS to give due consideration to the priorities being developed through the STPR 2 work of Transport Scotland. This will develop national investment priorities that will help deliver the national vision, priorities and outcomes for transport identified in the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS 2). Work on STPR 2 continues and the final report with detailed options will not be delivered until the end of 2021 given the volume of options under consideration. However, discussions in August with the Regional Transport Working Groups engaged in the STPR 2 process has given an indication of the key areas developing through STPR 2

- 4.3 The delay in the completion of the draft RTS and the timing of this recent STPR 2 engagement has therefore been beneficial. Given the position it has been possible and was considered prudent to carry out a sense check of the emerging draft RTS and the RTS Steering Group were advised of this.

- 4.4 Whilst the specific details are not yet identified within STPR 2 to indicate which packages will be funded in the future, the discussions in August have given an indication of the key areas developing through STPR 2. The emerging RTS Regional Mobility Themes are consistent with and relate to the likely outcomes of STPR2 and have sufficient flexibility to ensure appropriate National and Regional interfaces.

5 New RTS – next steps

- 5.1 The draft RTS will be presented to the Partnership Board at a special meeting on 29 October 2021 and subject to approval, the formal 12-week consultation will begin on 1 November and complete on 4 February 2022.

5.2 Comments made during the consultation period will be considered and any amendments to the RTS will be made prior to the presentation of the final version of the RTS to the March 2022 Partnership Board meeting. However, this timescale may be affected by the subject and nature of comments made and the number received.

6 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- 6.1 notes the continuing progress to deliver a new SEStran Regional Transport Strategy 2035;
- 6.2 notes the role of the STAG Preliminary Options Appraisal, in the development of the RTS;
- 6.3 agrees with the Priorities for Regional Mobility as the basis for the draft RTS document; and
- 6.4 notes that the next stage of the process will be consideration of the draft RTS on 24 October 2021; and
- 6.5 notes that the proposed statutory consultation period for the RTS is from 1 November until 4 February 2022.

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 24th September 2021

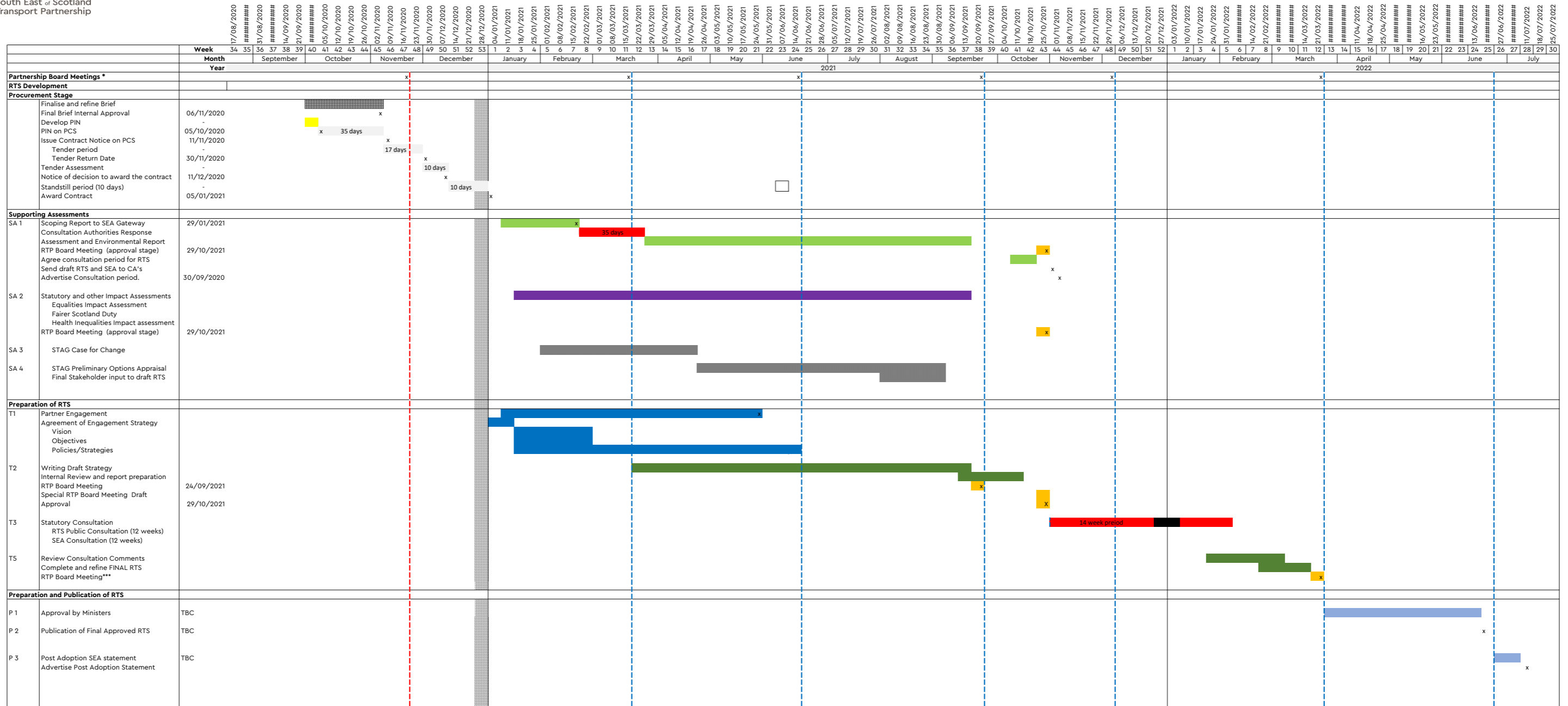
Appendix 1: Example of an Appraisal Summary Table
Appendix 2: Programme

Policy Implications	A new RTS will impact on future strategy development and local transport authorities' plans and strategies.
Financial Implications	Sufficient funds are contained within the projects budget for delivery of the RTS
Equalities Implications	The new RTS is subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) which is being carried out by Stantec as an integral part of the RTS development
Climate Change Implications	The new RTS is subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Example Appraisal Summary Table Appendix 2 – Revised Programme

Appendix 1: Example of an Appraisal Summary Table

Option 12: Bus priority measures

Option 12		Bus Priority Measures	
Summary	Public transport journey times can often be long and slow, resulting in people choosing to travel by car instead. However, bus priority can speed up public transport journey times and make it competitive with travelling by car. Bus priority measures include priority signalling, dedicated bus only routes, bus advance areas, bus lanes and gates, and bus only corridors. These enhancements would be prioritised on along existing routes that experience particularly slow journey times, at junctions or at P&R sites to increase the efficiency of bus services across the region as well as on new corridors where high quality bus services are required (e.g., as part of a new land-use development).		
Type of Option	Capital (e.g., infrastructure)	✓	Revenue (e.g., bus subsidies)
Focus	Region Wide		Network Measures
Implementability	Potential barriers include a lack of legislative control as SEStran will rely on constituent local authorities to implement bus priority measures in a coordinated manner. There may be budgeting issues concerning funding the implementation of the measures and to add to that, there would have to be political will as, in some instances, they are likely to receive public opposition. If priority measures were to be implement, bus operators would have to be consulted.		
Public Acceptability	There may be some opposition to implementing bus priority measures as they are likely to increase car journey times in some instances.		
STAG Criteria	Environment	✓✓	Bus priority measures may encourage more people to use bus services due to reduced journey times. There is scope for this to help reduce emissions produced from private cars whilst also minimising the emissions created by buses by ensuring their efficient movement. This would also have benefits for local air quality as well.
	Economy	✓	Cost of implementation of measures is dependent on how extensive the measures are. However, this is likely to be mitigated by the increased efficiency opportunities, a result of decreased journey times.
	Integration	✓✓	This option is in line with established policy as it seeks to enhance public transport provision. Additionally, it involves land-use planning integration as bus priority measures could be integrated into new developments.
	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	✓✓	People may opt to use the bus due to increased efficiency of the service. This could be particularly impactful for who do not have access to a car and vulnerable groups like the young, elderly, ethnic minorities, etc. who are most dependent upon public transport.
	Safety & Security	✓	Some bus priority measures could increase safety for all road users with fewer potential collisions due to being segregated from cars and more vulnerable road users like cyclists and pedestrians.
Strategy Objective 1: Transitioning to a sustainable, post-carbon transport system		✓✓	
Implementing bus priority measures encourages public transport use and the transition to a sustainable, post-carbon transport system.			
Strategy Objective 2: Facilitating greater physical activity		○	
Bus priority measures are unlikely to facilitate greater physical activity.			
Strategy Objective 3: Widening public transport connectivity and access across the region		○ - ✓	
Bus priority measures have the potential to widen public transport connectivity if they result in new services being offered however priority measures primarily concern improving the efficiency of current services and therefore are unlikely to have an impact on widening public transport connectivity			
Strategy Objective 4: Supporting safe, sustainable, and efficient movement of people and freight across the region		✓✓	
Implementing bus priority measures significantly improves the efficiency of bus travel which supports sustainable movement across the region.			
Impact of COVID Related Behaviour Change Scenario			
This option could be impacted by the reduction in public transport use during COVID-19. Reduced patronage and services may undermine the justification for priority measures. However, increased car use will lead to increased congestion negatively impacting bus journey times. As a result, there may be even more justification for bus priority measures.			
Rationale for Selection or Rejection			
Despite the impact of COVID-19 on public transport use, this option meets the majority of the STAG criteria and therefore should be considered within the RTS.			



* 2022 Dates are indicative
 CA's Consultation Authorities

KEY

- Develop SEA Scoping and Assessment
- Statutory Consultation stages
- x Approval stages of SEStran Board
- Statutory and other Impact Assessments
- STAG Appraisal
- Consultation and Engagement
- RTS Drafting and report writing
- Final Report and publishing