





Projects Performance Report

1 Introduction






- 1.1 This report and its Appendix track progress over the last quarter across SEStran's projects and key work streams. Impacts on progress or delivery are explained, including those deriving from Covid-19. A report addendum is included in the Appendix, as suggested at the September Performance and Audit Committee, summarising the role of SEStran during the Covid-19 pandemic and response.

2 Performance Report

- 2.1 Progress against milestones and timescale is indicated in the report template through a high level 'RAG' (Red-Amber-Green) status. Once completed, projects are reported with a 'Blue' status, and then removed from future reports.

RAG Status	Meaning:
	Complete
	Progressing to plan
	Some issues or delays encountered
	Severe issues or delays

- 2.2 The alignment of project work to SEStran's Strategic Objectives is indicated using the following symbols.

	Economy
	Accessibility
	Environment
	Safety and health
	Corporate

- 2.3 The template indicates start dates, and also initial and expected completion where these apply, to help indicate progress within timescales. This discharges an action from the March 2021 Committee meeting. Where decisions have been taken by a funder or Lead Partner to extend a project's completion date (for instance, in response to Covid-19) this is explained.

3 European Project Extensions

3.1 The last report on 4th June updated the Board that a time-based only extension had been approved for Share North. Since June, PriMaaS and Connect have also time-based extensions approved and BLING and Surflogh have had funding and time extensions agreed. Additionally, the Lead Partner for Regio-Mob, has confirmed that the Joint Secretariat has approved a funded, twelve-month long extension to consider the effects of Covid-19. The project's activities initially concluded in 2019, and the renewed Regio-Mob project work is likely to commence within the next quarter. SEStran's ongoing involvement in EU projects remains secure to the projects' completion dates, within the terms of the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

4 Recommendations.

4.1 The Board is asked to note the following:

- progress outlined in the Performance Report (Appendix 1) including impacts and delays recorded in relation to Covid-19;
- the agreed time extension to the PriMaaS and Connect projects and time and funding extensions to the BLING, Surflogh and Regio-Mob projects;
- the work and role of SEStran during the pandemic, as summarised in the Addendum to the report.

Anna Herriman
Senior Partnership Manager
September 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1 Performance Report September 2021, including Addendum.

Policy Implications	Outlined project work contributes to the objectives identified within SEStran Regional Transport Strategy
Financial Implications	All project work is delivered from within confirmed budgets.
Equalities Implications	There are no adverse equalities implications arising from SEStran projects. A number of projects actively work to reduce inequalities.
Climate Change Implications	There are no negative climate change implications arising from SEStran projects. A number of projects actively work to tackle climate change through creation of more sustainable transport options.

SEStran Projects Performance September 2021

Table of Contents

1. STRATEGY	4
1.1 Regional Transport Strategy	4
2. STRATEGIC ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS.....	5
2.1 GO e-Bike	5
2.2 Regional Cycle Network Grant Scheme	6
2.3 Regional Active Travel Development Fund – Transport Scotland	6
2.4 Cycle Training and Development – Cycling Scotland.....	8
3. STRATEGIC PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS.....	9
3.1 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	9
3.2 Thistle Assistance Programme	10
3.3 Newburgh Train Station Study	11
3.4 South East Scotland Transport Transition Group	12
3.5 Bus Service Improvement Partnerships	12
4. FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS PROJECTS	13
4.1 Forth Freight Study	13
5. EUROPEAN-FUNDED PROJECTS	14
5.1 SHARE-North	14
5.2 SURFLOGH.....	15
5.3 BLING	16
5.4 PriMaaS.....	17
5.5 CONNECT	18
6. SESTRAN FORUMS AND UPCOMING EVENTS.....	19

1. Strategy

1.1 Regional Transport Strategy



Start date: November 2020

Initial completion date: March 2022

Expected completion date: March 2022

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: A new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the SEStran region is under development, to cover the period up to 2035. It will align to national level policies and strategies including the National Transport Strategy 2, the National Planning Framework 4, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019, as well as regional spatial and economic strategies under development across the SEStran area.

SEStran’s original RTS was approved in March 2007 to cover the period from 2008 until 2023. The strategy was refreshed in August 2015 to cover the period until 2025. The new RTS takes account of potential impacts for future travel demand, behaviour and the transport system resulting from Covid-19.

Current status:

- **RTS Development**

In progress

The development of the RTS is being delivered through consultancy support, provided by Stantec following an open procurement exercise. The process is developed in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance and includes carrying out statutory assessments including a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment.

- The proposed final completion date of early 2022 has not changed.
- The original delivery timescales were revised in November 2020, to remain in line with the development of other, linked strategies such as the Second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2).
- A further revision to the RTS delivery programme will now be reported to the Board at its meeting on 25 September 2021, to report that an additional 4 weeks is being built into the programme to extend the appraisal stage.
- The draft RTS is due to be presented to the Partnership Board on 29 October 2021.

2. Strategic Active Travel Projects

2.1 GO e-Bike



Start date: April 2018

Initial completion date: ongoing programme

Expected completion date: ongoing programme subject to funding

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: GO e-Bike is the regional bike-sharing scheme funded by SEStran. It was launched in 2018 with a contribution from the SHARE-North project to the first four GO e-Bike hubs in St Andrews, Buckhaven, West Lothian and Falkirk. These hubs remain active and operational. In August 2018 SEStran secured funding from the Low Carbon Travel and Transport (LCTT) Fund and Transport Scotland (TS) to expand the GO e-Bike scheme through six further hubs / locations, with the Bewegen GO e-Bike hire stations in East Lothian and Midlothian operational since April 2021. Expansion into e-cargo bikes is the latest phase of the project.

Current status:

- **GO e-Bike expansion with LCTT and TS funding**

In progress

- Cargo Bike Movement (CBM) is now operating from a facility in Tollcross, shared with another cargo bike courier Farr Out Deliveries. CBM has renovated the space to make it fit for purpose. CBM cargo bikes are being used for the collection and redistribution of surplus food from supermarkets in Edinburgh. CBM is recruiting volunteers to increase their capacity for food collections. Volunteers are currently being trained by Cycling Scotland but there are plans to support CBM to be able to deliver training themselves. CBM are also exploring the potential for hiring out the cargo bikes.
- Rider numbers across the Bewegen stations continue to show growing interest in the system.
- Measures have been introduced to protect the assets with a security deposit and system curfew. There has been a reduction in vandalism with these measures but there remains an element of malicious damage which is being reviewed with bike placement and opportunities for further surveillance coverage.
- The "[Do The Ride Thing](#)" campaign is entering phase two after a successful phase one with a large reach and initial engagement. Phase two launches a campaign of on street advertising across the region and some focussed social media campaigning with a series with a number of social media influencers.

2.2 Regional Cycle Network Grant Scheme



Start date: April 2014

Initial completion date: ongoing programme

Expected completion date: ongoing programme subject to funding

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: Provided through a partnership between Sustrans Scotland and SEStran, the Regional Cycle Network Grant Scheme delivers improvements to the cross-boundary utility routes.

Current status:

- **Kirkliston to Cramond Brig Pathway** Complete
 - SEStran are supporting Edinburgh Lothian Greenspace Trust with a feasibility for the upgrade of a pathway along the Almond River.
 - A final report has now been completed with ELGT now considering further funding streams to progress work along the route.
- **Edinburgh BioQuarter** Delayed
 - Work on this route remains on hold while a review is completed of national funding for active travel projects. Additional design work is required prior to a final bid for construction funding from Sustrans.
- **SEStran Strategic Network** In progress
 - In order to maximise the investment possible in the Strategic Network, the funding will be combined with the Regional Active Travel Fund as described below.

2.3 Regional Active Travel Development Fund – Transport Scotland



Start date: Financial year 2021/22

Initial completion date: March 2022

Expected completion date: March 2022

Overall project progress:

In Progress

Project description: The Regional Active Travel Development Fund was established between Transport Scotland and the Regional Transport Partnerships in 2018/19 and allows for an annual award for delivery of agreed project work. SEStran's proposal for projects in 2021/22 to Transport Scotland has been awarded up to £250,000 for this fourth year of funding. With agreement of Transport Scotland, a number of 2020/21 projects have been continued into 2021/22 as a result of COVID-19.

Current status:

- **Project 1: Attitudinal Survey** In progress
 - “The Lines Between” continue to carry out research into travel attitudes and behaviours and currently are preparing for the next phase of quantitative population surveying followed by the qualitative panel survey.
 - Panellists were engaged through the summer in a pulse survey on attitudes to travel associated to holidays.
 - Initial analysis of the quantitative results was shared with the City Region Transport Working Group in June with a request made for a national report on conclusion of the project.
 - **Total award £62,000**

- **Project 2: ‘Do The Ride Thing’ Awareness Campaign** In progress
 - As reported with GO e-Bike.
 - SEStran has created an awareness campaign for the use of e-bikes across the region to complement the launch of a number of e-bike hubs. Do The Ride Thing seeks to create an environment where individuals look out for others and create good habits while riding a bike.
 - Procurement was completed in March 2021 with a successful contract awarded to the Media Shop Scotland.
 - **Total award £90,000**

- **Project 3: SEStran Strategic Network** In progress
 - Following on from the publication of the SEStran Strategic Network in 2020, this project will take forward a series of feasibility studies with agreement from partners to develop proposals in preparation for community engagement.
 - ARUP Ltd have been procured to take forward a series of studies and co-design workshops through an interactive engagement platform.
 - Agreement has been reached to take forward studies in West Lothian and Falkirk with remaining routes to be agreed.
 - **Total award £270,000 (£170,000 RATDF + £100,000 Sustrans)**

- **Project 4: East Fife Mobility Hub Integration and Last Mile Logistics Feasibility** In progress
 - The study will establish how Mobility Hubs could be delivered in conjunction with key rail and bus interchanges at Leven and Cameron Bridge (proposed), Leuchars and St Andrews and link into existing and proposed active travel routes.
 - Supporting active travel is a core element of a Mobility Hub. Key to this is the provision of secure cycle parking facilities and a safe, well designed public realm. Additional elements can include e-bike charging facilities, public transport information, secure

parcel pick up, and in appropriate locations, space reallocated from private car parking for car share operators to use.

- In addition to this will be the business case feasibility of last mile logistics operations on cargo bike in East Fife, tying into mobility hubs and interchanges.
- Steer in partnership with Jacobs and ComoUK were awarded this work in July and outputs are expected by the end of September 2021. Stakeholder engagement, site visits and modelling are being undertaken to develop a feasibility study and business case for the proposed sites.
- **Total award £80,000**

2.4 Cycle Training and Development – Cycling Scotland



Start date: core workstream

Initial completion date: ongoing

Expected completion date: ongoing

Overall progress:

In Progress

Project description: This workstream is made possible through a partnership arrangement with Cycling Scotland, and supports the delivery of Bikeability Scotland National Standard cycle training delivered by local authority Bikeability coordinators. It promotes, encourages and develops cycle training opportunities across SEStran projects.

Current status:

- **Bikeability Scotland**

In progress

- Delivery across the region has picked up with schools back full-time, however there are areas where capacity to support delivery is limited. Some areas still have restrictions in place around external staff delivering training for schools. There has been a significant increase in demand for instructors due to compressed delivery period.
- Staff and volunteer training is increasing to enable them to support Bikeability Scotland delivery.
- Support Plus Funding expressions of interest have been received from all relevant LAs and applications have been approved for most in the region to enable delivery to continue in the year ahead.

- **GO e-Bike cycle training**

In progress

- Training is offered to all hubs as they are completed and as part of ongoing development plans. West Lothian Bike Library has accessed training to enable them to deliver Family cycling sessions.
- There are plans to provide the Tweeddale BID with Cycle Ride Leader training to support them with utilising the e-bike fleet.

- **Adult and Family Cycle Training**

In progress

- Cargo Bike training is now being delivered in the region. Sessions have been run for volunteer groups as well as for NHS staff with access to cargo bikes for work trips. More tutors are being trained to support an increase in capacity across the region and nationally.

3. Strategic Public Transport Projects

3.1 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)



Start date: 2010

Initial completion date: ongoing workstream

Expected completion date: ongoing workstream

Overall progress:

In Progress

Project description: SEStran began implementing a region wide network of RTPI screens supplying bus timetable information feeds in 2010, to help tackle declining bus patronage and make bus travel more predictable and reliable. Since 2010, SEStran has built up a comprehensive network with information screens in key travel hubs such as railway stations, park and choose / ride sites, hospitals, colleges, universities, shopping centres and large employer hubs. More recently SEStran has worked with the City of Edinburgh Council to support a move towards a new, common Content Management System that will improve the information provided in the public facing regional screen network incorporating Lothian Buses information.

Current status:

- **New Content Management System and hardware upgrades**

Delayed

- The new system is currently undergoing silent running and Sight Acceptance Testing with issues being highlighted and addressed. The contractor (21st Century/Journeo) is expected to hand over the system in September.
- There has been a delay to organising the training workshops with Local Authority officers on the Novus FX system as the key person from Trapeze contracted COVID-19, it is hoped that this can be organised over the next quarter.
- SEStran & City of Edinburgh will be organising the next meeting in September with Operators and Local Authority officers to discuss data input and system management.

Public Transport Capacity Information

In progress

- In response to Covid-19, SEStran is working alongside Transport Scotland and Trapeze to test the feasibility of incorporating bus capacity information on public transport for use by Traveline Scotland.
- This new feed will be integrated into the new SEStran regional RTPI system with the layouts adapted to display the new information.
- This will 'go live' when the new RTPI feed is operational, estimate October to December 2021.

New RTPI Screens Network

- Web based layouts have been successfully developed for partners such as ScotRail, that have the capacity to use this format, which will further increase the flexibility and reach of the system.
- Installation of the new screens in Fife, Clackmannanshire and at the Livingston Centre is underway with several now operational.
- Fife Council & West Lothian Council are funding additional screens at sights and will be procuring these via the SEStran/CEC framework.

3.2 Thistle Assistance Programme



Start date: 2005

Initial completion date: ongoing workstream

Expected completion date: ongoing workstream

Overall project progress:

In Progress

Project description: SEStran has developed the Thistle Assistance Card and App to make using public transport easier for older people and those with disabilities, illness or mobility issues. SEStran is currently working to evolve the journey planning aspect of the scheme.

Current status:

Journey Planner App - Phase Two

In progress

- The successful developer Sentireal began work on the project in June and is making good progress.
- SEStran has invited officers from Hitrans, ZetTrans & Nestrans to work on the project steering group which will expand the reach and efficiency of the project as it progresses.

Thistle Assistance Programme Update

In progress

- The Covid-19 update SEStran to the Thistle card and App is still live and relevant. Mask exemption messaging is available for print, social media and on the website¹.

¹ <https://www.thistleassistance.com/travel-safety/>

- Thistle Assistance continues to be advertised in key publications such as Inspire Magazine and Enable ([Enable Sep/Oct 21](#)).
- To date over 70,000 cards and leaflets have been distributed and there have been over 10,000 downloads of the App.
- **SEStran Website** *Delayed*
 - In order to comply with legislation ([Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\)\(No. 2\) Accessibility Regulations 2018](#)) SEStran updated the Partnership website in 2020.
 - Work has begun on the new website with Hillside Agency being appointed to do the work. The new site should be live by the end of October.

3.3 Newburgh Train Station Study



Start date: December 2019

Initial completion date: March 2020

Expected completion date: March 2022

Overall project progress:

In Progress

Project description: SEStran is carrying out a transport options study for Newburgh, with work being delivered by consultants Systra appointed to work on behalf of SEStran. This study is funded by the [Local Rail Development Fund](#) that was introduced by the Scottish Government in February 2018, with the aim of providing funding to develop community led options to improve local rail connections.

Current status:

- **Initial Options Appraisal** *In Progress*
 - Phase 3 work 'Detailed Options Appraisal' is progressing with further stakeholder engagement and the development of modelling scenarios around the various options being developed.
 - This work will continue up to the end of the year with the final report due in March 2022.
 - SEStran continues to engage with Tactran so that the work is aligned with the appraisal at Bridge of Earn.
 - £37,834 of the £82,000 budget has been claimed for the work to date.

3.4 South East Scotland Transport Transition Group



Start date: June 2020

Initial completion date: subject to ongoing need for group to meet in response to Covid-19 crisis.

Expected completion date: as above.

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: The South East Scotland Transport Transition Group was established in June 2020 to jointly plan for the management of transport related measures during and following Covid-19 related restrictions. The work of the Group, made up of local, regional and national partners, is now moving out of transition phase.

Current status:

- **Close out of South East Scotland Transport Transition Plan** *In progress*
 - SEStran is coordinating the drafting of an evaluation and close out report to record the findings and reflections on the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Plan (the Plan).
- **Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund** *Complete*
 - Temporary bus priority measures were implemented across the SEStran local authorities, with funding from Transport Scotland's Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund and monitoring and evaluation of those in place is ongoing.

3.5 Bus Service Improvement Partnerships



Start date: May 2020

Initial completion date: ongoing area of work

Expected completion date: March 2026

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: The Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) is a £0.5Bn Transport Scotland capital fund for the development of permanent bus priority infrastructure. Bids can be made by partnerships working towards a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status. BSIPs must be collaborative, involving bus operators and other relevant partners. SEStran has been supporting the development of emerging BSIPs and BPF bids with the intention to maximise investment in bus priority infrastructure into the SEStran region, and ensure that bids are complementary.

Current status:

- **Fife Bus Partnership BPF bid development** *In Progress*

- The West Fife bid to the BPF, led by Fife Council was successful with £750,000 awarded for further development. The outcome of the Central and East Fife bid is still awaited.
- **Edinburgh and south east of Scotland BPF bid development** In progress
 - The ‘corridors’ bid submitted by City of Edinburgh Council was successful, with £3M awarded implementing quick wins and for further development.
- **Forth Valley Bus Alliance BPF bid development** In progress
 - A Forth Valley bid submitted by Falkirk on behalf of Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils was successful, with £500,000 awarded for further development work. SEStran procured initial consultancy support on behalf of partner Councils.
- **Midlothian Bus Alliance** In progress
 - A bid led by Midlothian Council is being developed for submission to the October 2021 BPF round. The Alliance is focussing on east-west bus priority across East Lothian and Midlothian council areas, and connections through bus transport to the west. SEStran procured initial consultancy support on behalf of Midlothian Council.
- **West Lothian Bus Alliance** In progress
 - A bid focussed on bus priority measures in the West Lothian area is being developed for submission to the October 2021 BPF round.

4. Freight and Logistics Projects

4.1 Forth Freight Study



Start date: May 2020

Initial completion date: December 2021

Expected completion date: June 2022 (end date revised by funder, Transport Scotland)

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: This study, delivered by SEStran in partnership with Forth Ports, explores the potential in the region, particularly around the Forth, for developing sustainable, multimodal freight gateways. It aims to identify key locations for potential freight consolidation centres that would maximise the sustainable movement of freight at national, regional, and local levels. The study is being carried out for SEStran by appointed consultants Aecom. The study is funded by the [Local Rail Development Fund](#) that was introduced by the Scottish Government in February 2018.

Current status:

- **Case for Change** In progress
 - Transport Scotland advised in April 2021 that the evidence and analysis made available through the Case for Change has been incorporated into Transport Scotland’s STPR2 process and Case for Change.

- SEStran is in discussion with Transport Scotland Rail Directorate (LRDF funders) to understand how the study work to date can be moved forward as STPR2 progresses.

5. European-funded Projects

5.1 SHARE-North

Interreg North Sea Region, ERDF



Start date: January 2016

Initial completion date: December 2019

Expected completion date: June 2022 (following successful extension application and 6-month Covid-19 extension)

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: SHARE-North focuses on shared mobility and its potential to address sustainable transport challenges in the North Sea region. This includes developing, implementing, promoting and assessing car, bike and ride sharing and other forms of shared mobility in urban and rural areas and employment clusters. One example is the establishment of Mobility Hubs. A Mobility Hub seeks to raise the profile of shared mobility (car club, bike-sharing, carsharing), by integrating these modes of transport with existing public transport provision. Following the completion of the Mobility Hub Strategic Study in 2020 SEStran has been working with partners to identify potential opportunities to plan for Mobility Hubs.

Current status:

- **Mobility Hubs**

In progress

- SEStran has committed funding to the region's first mobility hub in Musselburgh, East Lothian, to be called a 'Journey Hub' and this hub is now complete.
- SEStran is supporting Fife Council to carry out feasibility and business case development for Mobility Hubs at east Fife railway stations at Leven, Cameron Bridge, St Andrews and Leuchars. An application to Transport Scotland for funding was successful and SEStran is working with Fife Council to procure consultants.

- **Project activities and partner meetings**

Delayed

- Due to Covid-19 various project activities and physical meetings have been cancelled. Whilst some activities have moved online, through teleconferences, other activities have been delayed. The project consortium successfully applied for a 6-month extension to the project, to allow extra time to complete project activities.

- **Tripshare SEStran**

Reduced service

- Due to the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and Scottish Government guidance on carsharing only where necessary, SEStran continue to be unable to actively promote the Tripshare SEStran platform. The Partnership Board agreed on 18 June 2021 not to renew the contract

or make further award to Liftshare and the SEStran Tripshare platform will cease this month. Individual members will still be able to access Liftshare's own system directly.

- **Future lift sharing**

In progress

- Options for procuring and providing future trip sharing opportunities are being explored with other RTPs and Transport Scotland, recognising that (subject to public health guidelines) trip-sharing is likely to have a role within a more sustainable transport system.

5.2 SURFLOGH

Interreg North Sea Region, ERDF



Start date: June 2017

Initial completion date: October 2020

Expected completion date: June 2023

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: SURFLOGH aims to enhance the role of sustainable logistics in urban logistics networks in the North Sea Region. SURFLOGH has created a trans-national network of 'city hubs' promoting innovation in city logistics. These hubs bring together different partners to exchange knowledge and work on innovative pilot projects and business models that can work in real world urban logistics systems. SEStran's Edinburgh pilot operating near Haymarket has now been running successfully since 2018, and the study is in an advanced stage.

Current status:

- **Development of business models with Edinburgh Napier University**

In progress

- An extension proposal for the project was approved by the Organising Committee of the EU Joint Secretariat in June.
- SEStran will be exploring the planning and the development of a logistics consolidation centre as part of the West Perth Tay Cities project and will be working with Tactran on this.
- SEStran will be also exploring with the Province of Drenthe options for the development of drones for use in urban logistics.
- The next mini-conference will be held on September the 16th online hosted by the City of Mechelen. Registration is available vis the following link: <https://www.duurzame-mobiliteit.be/online-register>

- **Edinburgh Pilot – ZEDIFY**

In progress

- The new Leith hub started operations in March 2021.
- Funding from SEStran has supported the recruitment of additional couriers as the new hub expands its business.

- A new relationship with FEDEX UK will see 2 bikes completing routes in the city with the aim of increasing to 4 bikes by mid-autumn. This will equate to over 250 parcel deliveries per day.
- Increased demand for Freddie’s Flowers will increase deliveries from 140 to approximately 200 split over two days.
- A working relationship with the Energy Saving Trust has developed to enable any e-bike loans to be delivered by cargo bike and also the promotion of cycle logistics for businesses seeking sustainability advice.
- **Expansion of Edinburgh Cargo-Bike delivery** In progress
 - SEStran has been working with Transport Scotland to support Cargo Bike Movement (CBM).
 - CBM are developing a community hub in south Edinburgh to promote the use of cargo bikes as a fairer, healthier and greener alternative to carbon-emitting vehicles in the delivery of goods and for individuals and families.
 - This new hub approach will share information that contributes to SURFLOGH research.
 - Work on the new hub has progressed and the space is now in use by CBM and a small courier company.

5.3 BLING

Interreg North Sea Region, ERDF



Start date: January 2019

Initial completion date: June 2022

Expected completion date: June 2023

Overall project progress:

In progress

Project description: Blockchain is a key enabling technology that will underpin efforts to deliver innovative services under the Digital Agenda for Europe. The BLockchain IN Government (BLING) project focuses on providing one of the first dedicated platforms to bring these tools and approaches into local and regional services. SEStran’s role is to develop a pilot with the University of Edinburgh, which will showcase innovative use of the technology in a transport environment.

Current status:

- **Development of Edinburgh Pilot** In progress
 - An extension proposal for the project was approved by the EU Joint Secretariat in June 2021.
 - SEStran will be exploring with stakeholders how blockchain technologies can be applied in the logistics sector.

- SEStran officers will be helping manage a hackathon with students from Universities across the partnership in November. This work will help inform further project work.

5.4 PriMaaS

Interreg Europe, ERDF



Start date: August 2019

Initial completion date: January 2023

Expected completion date: July 2023 (following 6-month extension due to Covid-19 impacts)

Overall project progress:

Delayed

Project description: Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) is a concept that changes the way people travel and pay for mobility services. The main vision of PriMaaS is to promote MaaS and incorporate wider societal goals through interregional collaboration, sharing best practices, and policy development.

Current status:

▪ 'GO SEStran' MaaS/DRT in the SEStran region

Delayed

- SEStran lodged a bid to the MaaS Investment Fund for an ambitious project exploring potential uses of MaaS and DRT throughout the region. SEStran is lead partner in a consortium of tech providers and East Lothian and Fife Councils. The bid aimed to attract funding of c. £600K to an overall project of £1.6m.
- Transport Scotland fed back in July that the SEStran bid was third placed in a competitive environment of fifteen bids overall. This meant that not all of the elements of the bid could be funded through the MaaS Investment Fund. However, Transport Scotland were keen to co-create a viable pilot with the available funding and details will be reported once the scale and nature of the activity is agreed with Transport Scotland.
- It has been provisionally agreed that the scaled-down project will focus on the Journey Hub being developed in Musselburgh, using existing partnerships to develop a MaaS app for the public to use, to enable planning, booking and payment across travel modes (bus, rail, bike hire, car club, taxi) in the Musselburgh area initially. It is intended that the East Lothian pilot will also include a tech-enabled DRT bus service.
- Meantime SEStran is actively pursuing other opportunities for DRT elsewhere in the region, using other funding sources where these are available.

▪ Project activities and partner meetings

Delayed

- Project activities have taken place in an online format. SEStran presented the 'GO SEStran' MaaS/DRT project during the Next Generation Mobility Conference Turin, which was an online conference organised by the Italian project partners. SEStran also presented during the 5th Capacity Building Workshop, hosted by the project partners from Erfurt University, Germany.
- In June, SEStran organised a Regional Stakeholder workshop focusing on DRT in the South East of Scotland, and lessons from further afield. Two guest speakers, from Transport for Wales and the Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) presented on the Welsh 'Fflecsi' DRT platform, which is hosted by Via. Five other presenters, from within the SEStran region, presented their DRT experiences. The event, being held on Microsoft Teams, was well attended by a wide range of stakeholders.
- The funding programme secretariat has approved a 6-month extension to the PriMaaS project to allow additional time to complete project activities, where these have been delayed by the impacts of Covid-19. The official end-date of the project is now July 2023.

5.5 CONNECT

Interreg North Sea Region



Start date: October 2019

Initial completion date: March 2022

Expected completion date: December 2023

Overall project progress:

Delayed

Project description: [CONNECT's](#) overall objective is to support the growth of 'smart inter-modality' in the North Sea Region, through smart efficiency enhancements within freight movement. It looks at connecting the North Sea Region's TEN-T nodes, focusing on implementing new smart processes and working tools (smart inter-modality) and development of strategies for smart efficiency enhancements (smart involvement). <https://northsearegion.eu/north-sea-connect>

Current status:

- **Project Development** *Delayed*
 - The partnership meets online on a monthly basis, but Covid-19 travel restrictions are impacting on progress.
 - Project pilots are being developed and a workshop will be run in May 2021 to develop concepts further.
 - SEStran will be leading on a work package based (WP3) focussed on sharing of best practice.

6. SEStran forums and upcoming events

6.1 SEStran Forum Meetings



SEStran hosts three different forum groups, the Integrated Mobility Forum, the Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum and the Logistics and Freight Forum. The aim of the forums is to provide a platform for interested parties to come together and to formulate a regional voice in various transport-related matters.

Latest Forum meetings:

- **Logistics and Freight Forum**
 - The forum last met on the 19 May 2021 and provided feedback to the draft Case for Change report produced for the Forth Freight Study and also on the Regional Transport Strategy.
 - The forum had presentations from the University of Edinburgh on the BLING GeoPact² logistics pilot, Fife Council on their use of drones and from Rail Operations Ltd on an innovative UK pilot for rail freight using converted electric passenger trains.
 - The next forum will take place in November 2021.
- **Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum**
 - The forum last met on 31 March 2021 and covered agenda items including an RTS update and equalities impact assessment update, MaaS/DRT update, Thistle Assistance, the Hate Crime Charter, and the Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Report.
 - The next forum will take place on 30 September 2021.
- **Integrated Mobility Forum**
 - The forum last met on 27 April and was well attended. The agenda included a presentation from Minze Walvius at Advier, a Dutch consultancy also involved in the SHARE-North project; a presentation from Cycling Scotland on the Cycle Friendly Programme; a presentation from Stantec on the RTS; an update on DRT/MaaS project; an update on the Regional Transport Transition Group; and an update on the Bus Partnership Fund.
 - The next forum meeting will take place on 7 October 2021.

² <https://northsearegion.eu/bling/use-cases/use-case-2-university-of-edinburgh/>

ADDENDUM to Projects Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report reflects on the significant role of SEStran as an RTP in the response to Covid-19-related transport measures in the South East of Scotland since the start of the global pandemic.

2. SEStran's role in the Covid-19 response in the South East of Scotland

- 2.1** In May 2020, SEStran became involved in discussions with Transport Scotland, and local authorities in the SEStran region, to identify what regional transport issues were arising as a result of Covid-19, and to help guide the transport sector back to normal as the nation emerged from the lockdown. The aim was to provide a regional focus to help with the implementation of the National Transport Transition Plan published by Transport Scotland at the time.

SEStran led on a paper that provided a regional perspective on the scale of the impact of physical distancing on the capability of public transport on each of the main transport corridors into Edinburgh to meet the demand. This study helped with an understanding of what measures could be effective in supporting non-car-based travel.

Following initial discussions, the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Group (the Group) was established to coordinate a regional response to the impacts of Covid-19 and Covid-related Government measures on transport. SEStran took on a leadership role to develop the South East of Scotland Transport Transition Plan, which laid the foundation for the Group's establishment and its activities. SEStran also ensured that all eight local authorities of the SEStran region were invited as members of this Group, along with Transport Scotland.

The Group first met on 3rd June 2020, to coordinate temporary or transitional responses in the SEStran region in response to Covid-19 related impacts for transport. At that time, many impacts and detail around transmission of Covid-19 were still coming to light. It was not envisaged that restrictions applying to physical access to activities and human interaction would be required for nearly 18 months. The overall length of time that Covid-19 restrictions were in place at various levels led to a prolonged period of unpredictable transport demand and travel behaviours, with clear impact on all aspects of the transport network and particularly public transport operations.

The plan set out the group structure comprised a main group involving all eight SEStran area Councils, SEStran and Transport Scotland. It was jointly chaired by Transport Scotland and Midlothian Council. The workstreams coalesced around three corridor groupings focussed on measures to support bus-based journeys into Edinburgh, with additional subgroups established for Finance and Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications, Travel Demand Management and wider regional measures). SEStran was represented at all three corridor groupings, and actively participated in the Monitoring & Evaluation and Finance sub-groups.

SEStran coordinated the wider regional measures on behalf of the Group. This involved working with Transport Scotland to coordinate and implement capacity information trials on public transport in partnership with Trapeze and the integration with the existing Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system.

SEStran also rapidly deployed the Thistle Assistance design team to develop a functionality in the App to add a face covering exemption option. This allowed those who are exempt from wearing a face covering to easily communicate this to others such as on public transport, or within the wider public realm.

Furthermore, SEStran led the coordination of temporary bus interventions out-with the three corridor groupings and were submitted to the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund as part of the second tranche of interventions. These interventions particularly benefitted Fife and Clackmannanshire, for the implementation of non-corridor related bus priority measures.

SEStran took a leadership role initiating discussions around DRT and trialling DRT tech in the region. This led to the development of a MaaS/DRT project bid to the Transport Scotland MaaS Investment Fund Round 2 (MIF2) in February 2021. Furthermore, this led to an exchange of learning and best practices across the region and beyond, such as during a DRT seminar which SEStran organised in June 2021. Potential DRT trials have been identified in East Lothian (as part of the MIF2 project proposal), Scottish Borders, Fife, and West Lothian, subject to funding. SEStran has been partially successful in its bid to the MaaS Investment Fund and is currently co-creating a project with Transport Scotland for the SEStran region.

Finally, SEStran played a key role in the development of bus alliances and the development of bids to the Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). SEStran was involved in the development of bids for the Fife Bus Partnership, the Edinburgh and South East of Scotland, the Forth Valley Bus Alliance, the Midlothian Bus Alliance and the West Lothian Bus Alliance.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1** On 9th August 2021, the Level Zero restrictions were lifted by the Scottish Government, with requirements for mask wearing in shops, on public transport being some of the only remaining controls. In August 2021, in keeping with the SG move to emphasise 'business as usual' across all industries and spheres of life, the Group agreed to conclude the temporary 'transition' focus of the group.

SEStran is now developing a close out report seeking to record the findings and reflections on the Plan, determine its legacy, and highlight the lessons learned.

Julie Vinders
Project Officer
14 September 2021