

Regional Transport Strategy 2035: Update Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the completion of the draft Regional Transport Strategy, in advance of wide consultation. The draft RTS concludes a period of preparatory consultations, statutory assessments and engagement. Approval by the Board is sought to allow the full consultation period to commence on the draft RTS Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The report also provides a short update on the STPR2 process, which contains 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 considered.

2 Background and context

- 2.1 A report to the Board on 24 September 2021 ([Report Link](#)), members were updated members on completion of all preceding stages of RTS development:-
 - Main Issues Report
 - Case for Change (CfC)
 - Statutory Assessments (completed to stage)
 - Preliminary Option Appraisal Report
- 2.2 The development of the RTS over the past year, in conforming to Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) processes, has involved a number of defined development stages, some with public consultation elements. The process has been supported and supplemented by a range of engagement activities and opportunities, appropriate to the relevant stages of the RTS. A summary of the process including engagement and consultation activity is provided at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 Board members are reminded that the context for the RTS has ensured very close alignment with national priorities as expressed in NTS2 of reducing inequalities; taking climate action; helping to deliver inclusive economic growth; and improving health and wellbeing.

3 RTS draft finalisation

- 3.1 The work to finalise the draft RTS has been continuing since the last meeting of the Board. This has included finalising the work on the Spatial elements of the policy Strategy and taking the Regional Mobility Themes and developing a number of actions and policies for each one.
- 3.2 There were thirteen Regional Mobility Themes discussed at the Board meeting on 24 September. In finalising and completing a review of the draft RTS It was considered that the Regional Mobility Theme identified as *“capitalising on*

opportunities from new technology” was a common thread in most of the policies and would have led to unnecessary duplication. Therefore, it was not considered necessary to include this specific individual theme. Following some minor textual adjustments for clarification, the titles but not the intent of the themes has been adjusted and the final draft RTS has the following 12 Mobility Themes;

- Shaping Development and Place
- Delivering Safe Active Travel
- Enhancing Access to Public Transport
- Enhancing and Extending the Bus Service
- Enhancing and Extending the Train Service
- Reallocating Roadspace on The Regional and Local Network
- Improving Integration Between Modes
- Decarbonising Transport
- Facilitating Efficient Freight Movement and Passenger Travel
- Working Towards Zero Road Deaths and Serious Injuries
- Reducing Car Kilometres
- Responding To the Post Covid World

3.3 The vision for the RTS is now included in section 4.0 of the RTS and the vision and aim are repeated below.

Vision

A South-East of Scotland integrated transport system that will be connected and safe, creating inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable places to live, work and visit, affordable and accessible to all, enabling people to be healthier and delivering the region’s contribution to net zero emissions targets.

SEStran’s aim as an organisation is to make sustainable modes of transport easier, more appealing to use and more accessible.

3.4 Policies and Actions have now been developed to provide a framework for delivering the vision to meet the Regional Mobility Themes identified for the region. There are 74 policies with associated actions which are included within the document. Partnership working is key to the delivery of many of the desired outcomes.

3.5 It is considered that the strategy and all associated policies and policy actions establish a positive framework which will allow more detailed interventions to be designed and fits well with the aims of the National Transport Strategy.

3.6 The RTS sets out a range of policies and actions which will shape investment in transport in the region for the next 10-15 years. Crucially, in response to the Climate Emergency the Scottish Government has set a target to reduce car traffic levels (car km) by 20% by 2030. This is a fundamental point for the RTS to address and it is therefore important to understand car-based travel in the SEStran area in order to appropriately focus initiatives aimed at reducing car-km.

3.7 The spatial element of transport and development is fundamental to the RTS and is covered in section 17.0. Whilst providing a framework for all travel and transport in the region, the RTS has a particular focus on regional travel, i.e., travel between local authorities as opposed to travel wholly within local authority areas. To understand

this, although now dated, the census of 2011 provides the most comprehensive and detailed picture of (pre COVID-19) commuting travel in the SEStran region and is consistent with data underpinning the development of STPR2, – this is taken as a proxy for all travel for the purposes of analysis here. Typically, commuting sees a higher share of public transport than for other travel so if anything this may underestimate the scale of the ‘problem’

- 3.8 The Statutory Assessments are integral to the development of the draft RTS. The Environmental Report (ER) Appendix 3 has documented the findings of the SEA carried out in respect of the Draft SEStran Regional Transport Strategy. The high-level nature of the strategy and all associated policies and actions precludes the identification of any specific impacts.
- 3.9 However, in general, the proposed RTS Objectives provide an appropriate high-level platform from which to develop specific schemes, policies, and proposals to address a range of key environmental (as well as socio-economic and wider) issues. Specific individual measures e.g. major infrastructure may require to undertake more comprehensive SEA to fully meet their statutory requirements.
- 3.10 As a result, the consultation version of the Draft RTS is considered to be more robust and effective in terms of addressing relevant environmental issues. This has made the SEA reporting process more efficient and improved the environmental performance of the Draft RTS. In particular, the consultation version of the Draft RTS is now predicted to generate a range of likely significant beneficial effects on the environment and in relation to identified key environmental issues, with no residual significant adverse effects considered likely.
- 3.11 There is a statutory requirement to advertise the publication of the SEA and approval of the SEA is recommended at paragraph 6.3
- 3.12 The Equalities Impact Assessment report (EqIA) and associated reports detail how the draft RTS has been developed and serves to meet the statutory Public Sector Equality Duty, the Fairer Scotland Duty and the Child Rights and Wellbeing Duties. This ensures that equalities issues are integral to the draft RTS. The various reports are appendices 4, 5 6 and 7. The high-level nature of the strategy and all associated policies and actions precludes the identification of any specific impacts.
- 3.13 The objective of these reports is to assess:
- the coverage of key equalities issues, previously consulted upon through the RTS EqIA Assessment Framing Note (Stantec, 2021); and
 - the extent to which the proposed RTS strategy objectives, regional mobility themes, policies and spatial strategy themes address identified key equalities issues.
- 3.14 The high-level assessment provided in the reports demonstrates that in general the proposed RTS Objectives provide an appropriate high-level platform from which to develop specific schemes, policies, and proposals to address identified key equalities issues. This indicates that the RTS Objectives, Policies and Actions are generally compliant with the requirements of applicable equalities duties. Specific

individual measures may be required for more comprehensive Equalities Assessment to fully meet their statutory requirements.

- 3.15 The last Board report noted that the matters regarding deliverability, including powers, roles and responsibilities associated with the RTP role and 'Model 1' status, had been identified within the appraisal process. The report noted these matters would be examined further and proposal(s) prepared on the appropriate governance arrangements to be included in the draft RTS. The proposals outlined in paragraphs 3.16 and 3.17 below acknowledge SEStran's position as a 'Level 1' Regional Transport Partnership and the limited range of statutory functions this conveys coupled with a lack of dedicated funding to support delivery of the RTS, has compromised the delivery of cross-boundary schemes and interventions in the existing RTS.
- 3.16 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 allows for arrangements and associated functions that could be developed for cross boundary or multi partner RTS schemes which can be agreed and brought into effect through the provisions of sections 10 and 14 of the 2005 Act. It is proposed that in accordance with these provisions, SEStran should, as appropriate, carry out future consultation with its constituent authorities, to consider use of these powers in order that particular projects or schemes could be taken forward.
- 3.17 This could involve SEStran evolving beyond a model 1 partnership with enhanced and shared powers and functions to effectively deliver interventions; particularly those associated with bus services. Equally it could be that specific projects or schemes could be accomplished by means of SEStran taking on powers and functions under section 14 by agreement with some or all of the constituent authorities to deliver specific projects on their behalf.

4 Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR 2)

- 4.1 As frequently reported to Partnership Board meetings, there is a need for the RTS to give due consideration to the finalising of STPR2, which will set out national investment priorities in support of the National Transport Strategy (NTS2). Although it is still the case that STPR2 will not be delivered until the end of 2021 ongoing discussions at a national level with the Regional Reference Group, at specific sub-regional workshops and through Regional Transport Working Group meetings there is a clear indication of the key areas developing through STPR 2. A further round of Regional Transport Working Group meetings in the region will allow close engagement between the draft RTS and the finalised STPR2 priorities.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to approval by the Board, the draft RTS will be issued for formal consultation. The normal 12 week period is being extended by 2 weeks to take account of the Christmas holiday period. The consultation period will run from 1 November until 2021 until 4 February 2022. There is also a statutory requirement to advertise the Strategic Environmental Report along side the draft RTS in a local newspaper.

- 5.2 A virtual engagement hub is prepared which will allow on line participation and the opportunity to comment on the draft RTS and take part in a survey. A link will be available on the SEStran web site. It is also proposed to engage further with partners and stakeholders to support them as they consider further the policies and proposals in the RTS.
- 5.3 Social media, the SEStran website, the SEStran forums and contacting previous consultees will ensure that stakeholders and public are aware that the draft RTS has been published and that there is an opportunity to comment.

6 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- 6.1 Consider the terms of the draft new RTS 2035, and offer comment, as appropriate;
- 6.2 Approve the draft RTS for further consultation and engagement, as set out in this report, all in terms of section 6 of the Transport (Scotland) Act, 2005;
- 6.3 approve the SEA and EqIA for publication alongside the draft RTS;
- 6.4 Delegate to the Partnership Director any minor or non-substantive amendments necessary prior to its publication; and
- 6.5 Note that, following full consultation and engagement, the RTS will be brought back to the Board with recommendations for any changes arising from the consultation and engagement process, prior to onward transmission to the Scottish Ministers.

Jim Stewart
Strategy and Projects Officer
 22nd October 2021

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 has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) which is one of the attached papers.
Climate Change Implications	The new RTS has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is an attached paper.
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SEStran Draft RTS 2022 – 2035 2. Record of RTS development including consultation and engagement to date <p style="text-align: right;">/(Cont.)</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report4. Equalities Duties Summary Report5. Equalities Impact Assessment Record Report6. Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment7. Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment
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