Projects Performance – Actions from previous meeting

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report responds to the questions raised at the Performance and Audit Committee meeting of 13 September 2022 in relation to Item A7, 'Project Performance Report'. The information provided addresses the following questions:

    a) further details to be provided on SEStran Strategic Network, and
    b) more performance and take-up metrics on the GO SEStran app.

2 MAIN REPORT

SEStran Strategic network

2.1 SEStran's Strategic network, published in 2020, is a strategic plan for a regional active travel network that connects people and places across the region. Whilst partner Councils continue to progress local active travel proposals and plans, the Strategic network joints up routes in the region that cross boundaries and enable longer journeys by active travel. SEStran provides an ongoing coordination role in developing the routes identified to point of delivery, in partnership with all Councils.

2.2 The Strategic network originated in SEStran's cross-boundary study of active travel routes in 2015, which through the sustained partnership with Sustrans Scotland allowed for studies to be carried out on an ad hoc basis. The Strategic Network routes identified reflect detailed input from councils as well as being subject to a bespoke 'multi-criteria assessment' to determine suitability and deliverability. To date, SEStran has invested £2.3M in the development of the network plan and route development.

2.3 SEStran's contribution to the active travel network includes the following:
- A costed, prioritised and detailed project pipeline;
- Ongoing coordination of route development with partner Councils;
- Completion of feasibility studies for 15 routes in the region;
- Completion of outline design for five routes in the region (following consultation with partners and stakeholders);
- A web resource for partners to implement supporting measures in the development and delivery of routes.

2.4 SEStran's Strategic network is highly regarded nationally, and used as a case study internationally. It is the first network of its kind in Scotland and is used as a model by other Regional Transport Partnerships looking to develop a regional approach to active travel networks.

Go SEStran

2.5 At its meeting of 3 December 2021, the Board delegated powers to the Partnership Director to enter necessary agreements to deliver the GO

SEStran project and to reach agreement with Transport Scotland on the terms of a grant from the MaaS Investment Fund, as well as agreeing to officers pursuing further funding for both this project and other stand-alone DRT projects in the region.

2.6   A key aim within the MaaS concept is to provide people with easy, digital access to travel information so they can be better informed as to the different ways to undertake their journey. This includes solutions to gather personalised travel requirements into a single travel app and solutions that enable journey planning and booking in a single place. The GO SEStran app is designed to help promote sustainable travel choices and facilitate multi-modal journeys.

2.7   GO SEStran addresses a gap in the journey planning app market. While there are several basic commercial journey planner tools available, none provide coverage of all available modes in the SEStran area, and none of these generic journey planning tools (Like Google maps or CityMapper) link into new transport services such as demand responsive bus services, GO e-Bikes, etc. The unique functionality and benefits of the GO SEStran app are the subject of a detailed report to the SEStran Board scheduled for 2 December 2022.

2.8   The GO SEStran app went live on 15 August 2022, as a 'soft launch'. At point of going live, therefore, not all functionality on the app was operational, however given the short timescales for Transport Scotland funded MIF Round two projects, the benefit of releasing the app early has been the ability to test aspects of the app with live user feedback outweighed the risk of any initial comparison to generic online journey planners. Most smart phone users are familiar with apps that continually deliver improvements to functionality. Marketing of the app began on 19 September 2022 with SEStran staff attending events, such as Freshers events at QMU. Since the beginning of November adverts have been published in the East Lothian Courier and played on East Coast FM radio.

2.9   Metrics.
        User statistics for the GO SEStran app on 15 November are as follows:

Measure	Current number
App downloads (required for journey planning)	483
Number of journeys planned on the app	956
Percentage of returning users (%)	47.9
Percentage of Journeys via sustainable modes – walk, bike / e-bike, bus, train	86%

An interim NPS survey was conducted at the start of November and 62% of those who completed the survey stated that the GO SEStran platform has made it more likely that they will use sustainable transport, instead of driving.

2.10 **Next Steps**

The next phase of the project is to launch a DRT bus service to run alongside the GO SEStran app, to test the interaction between MaaS and DRT in the East Lothian area. Discussions are at an early stage with neighbouring Councils about extending the reach of GO SEStran. Funding bids are also being pursued with partners to extend both MaaS and DRT pilots to EU Horizons and Michelin Innovation Parc. Discussions are also ongoing via MaaS Scotland with Transport Scotland for future funding of all of the 5 MaaS pilots in Scotland.

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23 November 2022

Policy Implications	None
Financial Implications	None
Equalities Implications	None
Climate Change Implications	None