

Sent by e-mail to Consultation@stpr2surveys.co.uk

13 April 2022

Dear Sirs

Consultation on the draft second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) for Scotland

STPR2 – REGIONAL RESPONSE FROM SESTRAN

SEStran is the Regional Transport Partnership of the Councils of City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian.

This response, provided in addition to the consultation survey response submitted by SEStran presents a regional perspective on key aspects of the STPR2 report and technical appendices, and relates to the whole of the SEStran region.

1. SEStran regional perspective on STPR2 report and technical appendices.

1. The commitment to develop an STPR2 Delivery Plan following consultation stage is welcomed.

The delivery plan should prioritise interventions that make the most significant *and early* impacts on accessibility and carbon reduction in order to support achievement of national targets.

Ongoing input of RTWGs into the development of the delivery plan is essential, however, to ensure good coordination of delivery plans at local, regional and national level.

2. The future scenarios underpinning STPR2 are understandably broad, but are subject to significant uncertainty.

It would be useful to review scenarios once newer patterns of hybrid working are more established and the impact of global events are better understood, as these have implications for the assumptions behind the scenarios.

- 3. South-East Scotland mass transit proposals are welcomed in principle, as is the commitment to involve regional and local partners in the development of the proposals. The extent to which the proposals will meet the unmet need of many regional journeys across wider corridors needs to be understood before detailed comment is provided.**

It's important that the wording of the final recommendation adds clarity, to explain:

- how it will increase access to public transport in the region's car dependent areas,
- how it will add to measures to reduce car kilometres in the region - the RTS shows that c. 60% of car journeys in the region are unrelated to the city centre,
- how it relates to Bus Partnership funded initiatives
- how it can help to build an integrated public transport network for the region.

- 4. The benefit of splitting active travel routes into sub-categories ('active freeways', 'village to town', 'connecting towns'. 'long distance') is unclear, and is not considered to be appropriate by SEStran.**

Given the significance of the period covered by STPR2 for evolving the transport network, SEStran proposes that completing utilitarian active travel networks is the utmost priority for this period. The emphasis of active travel recommendations in STPR 2 should reflect this as well as the emphasis on connected networks rather than types of routes.

The creation of multiple route types could add complexity into the system of active travel funding applications. The proposals for long distance routes are appealing in some parts of Scotland in particular but where these are more leisure based, their priority should come after utilitarian cycling.

The SEStran Strategic Network should be included as a regional recommendation. There is no assessment in the appendices that explains its exclusion - it meets a number of TPOs and is deliverable.

- 5. The recommendations for rail station upgrades, rail corridor enhancements, and the note confirming funding for appraising the Borders Railway Extension are all welcomed in principle. However, their inclusion raises a question around other rail investment programmes, e.g. those within CP6 investment programme which runs until 2024.**

Much of the region needs access to an integrated sustainable transport network in which heavy passenger rail will continue to play a vital role, and STPR2 would benefit from clarifying through what mechanism capacity issues in the regional network will be enhanced, such as:

- Addressing the lack of network capacity to incorporate service from Winchburgh an area where high levels of car use originate.

- The capacity needed for increased service from Perth and Clackmannanshire to Edinburgh
- the capacity needed on East Coast Main Line to meet the scale of development on the rail corridor and growing need at new stations,
- network capacity at Portobello junction, to accommodate new service as well as meet ambitions for transfer of road freight to rail should be explained in the context of STPR2,

6. The recommendations for Grangemouth are welcomed in principle, including strengthening strategic connections and improving sustainable connections, as is the commitment to support greater levels of sustainable freight by rail and more sustainable travel.

The transport issues for the area are complex, and SEStran notes that transport investment around Grangemouth will require very close integration with a wide range of other partner interventions. Success may depend upon a range of non-transport interventions being realised or even funded to ensure the outcomes envisaged can be achieved. For example, these may after appraisal, include provision of freight consolidation facilities, land acquisition, water side freight facilities, and may prove to be enablers for sustainable freight and sustainable travel recommendations.

7. SEStran welcomes generic recommendations around DRT, MaaS, passenger interchange facilities and integrated ticketing in principle.

Given the 20-year horizon for STPR2, the document and vision benefit from some specific recommendations for bus service enhancements, and greater clarity is needed on how these work in tandem with bus priority infrastructure investment through the five-year bus Partnership Fund. This will ensure the longevity and relevance of STPR2 beyond 2026.

Key areas of public transport will require ongoing investment beyond the Phase 1 STPR2 recovery period, and in tandem with bus priority measures will help to transform public transport usage levels, include clarity on the role of the public sector in:

- Investment in the technology and data management systems to support MaaS, DRT,
- Integration of ticketing systems and cross boundary ticket pricing structures to encourage bus travel

Overall, STPR2 provide a broad framework of intervention types which are appraised against relevant policy. The clarity that the delivery plan should provide regarding the scope, nature or specifics of interventions and recommendations is much needed, and will require further input and also consultation, from RTWGs.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James P. Grieve', written in a cursive style.

Jim Grieve

Partnership Director