

Regional Transport Strategy 2035 – Communications Plan Outline

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At their meeting on 23 September the Partnership Board approved the final draft of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for submission to Scottish Ministers for approval. There was discussion at the meeting about the importance of communicating the Strategy to stakeholders and partners and it was agreed that “*the proposed Communications Plan for the Strategy be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership Board for consideration*”.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to suggest a proposal for the aims and outcomes of a communications plan which will promote and ensure engagement of stakeholders and partners in achieving the aims and objectives of the SEStran 2035 Strategy and to seek agreement from the Board to develop this into more detailed communications plan with associated actions.

2 Background

- 2.1 The draft RTS was submitted to the Transport Minister on the 3rd of October seeking approval to publish a final version in accordance with statutory requirements. The draft RTS is currently being considered by officials in Transport Scotland and their target response period is 3 months. Some preliminary feedback has been made and engagement continues to seek to ensure that the Minister can formally approve the RTS without delay.
- 2.2 Local authority partners and stakeholders are aware of the current situation with respect to the RTS. However, until approved by the Scottish Minister the draft SEStran RTS has no formal status and communicating the plan cannot commence in earnest until this stage is reached.
- 2.3 The importance of the RTS regionally and the roles SEStran can play to help make it happen must be one of the key outcomes from the engagement enhancing the role of the RTP in helping regional delivery. The plan should not just be advertising and circulating the finished product but must promote what SEStran do and could deliver directly and in partnership with other stakeholders.

3 Communications Plan Background

- 3.1 The RTS is a key strategic document and promoting its role and the need for stakeholders and partners to support its vision and objectives is important. Furthermore, the role SEStran can play to engage, support, deliver and add value across the region should be widely promoted. Therefore, a clear vision of what the aims and outcomes of the Communication plan are essential to determine the most effective plan to support and deliver the vision, policies and actions of the plan across all stakeholders and partners.
- 3.2 It is proposed that this will have four key elements.
 - Increasing awareness of the RTS and its key mobility themes when it is published and approved.
 - Engagement and support for partners, stakeholders, key agencies and others on the important role the RTS plays in delivering wider national policy objectives and how it might support and influence local strategies and delivery plans to benefit regional transport; and
 - Promotion of how RTPs can deliver and add value to the role of integrated cross boundary and regional transport needs that are fully supported in the RTS

- Programmed Investment Plan - Promotional event to clarify the role of the to guide investment strategies.

The following paragraphs outline possible key actions areas to be further developed.

3.3 Increasing awareness would involve:

- Direct contact with partners, stakeholders and key agencies.
- Website links and the executive summary distributed widely across the Region.
- Social media advertising of publication (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc).
- Using partner websites and social media to spread the message.
- Board members supporting regional issues within their individual council.
- Board members and staff promote the RTS and its role at every opportunity.

3.4 Engagement and support would involve:

- Ongoing engagement with LA partners to support the delivery of sustainable transport development throughout the region
- Supporting partners in developing regionally important projects
- Developing common taskforces for region wide mobility issues.

3.5 Promotion would involve:

- Developing marketing resources for dissemination and presenting to key stakeholders
- Undertaking presentations to key influencers and stakeholders
- Developing a programme of engagement meetings
- Hosting specific conferences/ meetings focussed on the RTS mobility themes

3.6 Programmed Investment Plan - Promotional event would involve:

- Bespoke meetings to present the PIP and its role in helping to guide investment and priorities in transport

4 Resources

4.1 Development of a plan will require both staff and financial resources to be identified to deliver this programme and may require external specialist support to develop the programme. There is funding within the RTS budget to allocate to this proposed project.

The requirements need to be fully developed and options costed dependant on the level of commitment agreed to develop this further.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

- 3.1 Note the proposed approach to communicating the RTS following its approval;
- 3.2 Approves the development of a communications plan supported by external expertise and based on the approach outlined in the report.

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Policy Implications	None
Financial Implications	Sufficient funds are contained within the RTS projects budget for delivery of a communications plan and funding is identified in the three year budget plan.
Equalities Implications	None
Climate Change Implications	None
Appendices	None