

**Progress Update 2023: Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Report**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Forum members a draft copy of the Progress Update 2023: Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Report for review and comment.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 SEStran is listed under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (“the 2012 Regulations”) and as such has an obligation to publish a report on the progress it has made in integrating the general equality duty into the exercise of its functions, so as to better perform that duty. Reports are required to be published at intervals of not more than two years.
- 2.2 The Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Report was approved by the Partnership Board in March 2021 and this draft report provides an update on the mainstreaming activities that SEStran has undertaken in the last two years and the progress being made towards achieving its Equalities Outcomes.

**3. MAIN REPORT**

- 3.1 Some examples of how SEStran have mainstreamed the equalities issues into its day to day business are set out in the report. These include:
- The Thistle Assistance Programme
  - Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) project
  - Reviewing and updating our Corporate Procurement Strategy
  - Providing refresher training to staff on Equality Impact Assessments
- 3.2 This report, however, looks for input from the Forum as a key stakeholder. For example:
- Provide comment on the current content of the report
  - Make suggestions on any other activities that SEStran could incorporate into its mainstreaming pursuits
  - Make suggestions on any activities that SEStran could undertake in achieving its Equalities Outcomes
  - Provide feedback on the presentation style and accessibility of the document
- 3.3 The Forum is asked to note that the figures for the equalities monitoring of Board Members at section 1, paragraph 8 of the appendix will be completed for inclusion in the final report before publication in April 2023.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Forum is asked to review and comment as appropriate, and;
- 4.2 Note that the report will be presented to the March meeting of the Partnership Board for approval.

Angela Chambers  
**Business Manager**

#### **Appendix 1: Progress Update 2023: Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025 and Mainstreaming Report**

Policy Implications	None.
Financial Implications	Any expenditure has been accounted for within approved budgets.
Equalities Implications	Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and advancement in achieving our Equality Outcomes by progressing the actions outlined in the report.
Climate Change Implications	None.



South East of Scotland  
Transport Partnership

**DRAFT** Progress Update Report  
2023:  
Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025  
and Mainstreaming Report

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## About SEStran – Role & Function

SEStran is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP's) in Scotland. The partnership area covers 8 local authorities, including City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Fife, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Scottish Borders. This covers an area of 3180sq miles and is home to 28% of Scotland's population. SEStran aims to develop a sustainable transportation system for the South East of Scotland that will enable business to function effectively and provide everyone living in the region with improved access to healthcare, education, public services and employment opportunities. SEStran is a Model 1 RTP, as defined under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, with a main function to deliver a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the area. SEStran's RTS is the cornerstone of its work, it lays out the vision for the strategic development of transport in South East Scotland up to 2028 (in the current version) and includes a focus on links to and from Edinburgh, as the economic hub of the region. SEStran has completed the development of a new RTS for the period up to 2035, prompted by a new National Transport Strategy (NTS 2), the climate emergency, new technology and by the impact of COVID 19. The draft RTS SEStran 2035 was approved by the SEStran Partnership Board in September 2021 and is awaiting final approval from Scottish Minister prior to its formal adoption. It is expected that an approved version will be published in April 2023. SEStran currently has a staff complement of 9.

## Legal Context

### **The Equality Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”)**

Part 3 of Schedule 19 to the 2010 Act sets out that a Regional Transport Partnership established by Section 1(1) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 (“the 2005 Act”) falls within the definition of a public authority for the purposes of the 2010 Act.

### **The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (“the 2012 Regulations”)**

Para. 1 of Schedule 1 to the 2012 Regulations sets out that a Regional Transport Partnership established by Section 1(1) of the 2005 Act falls within the definition of a public authority for the purposes of the 2012 Regulations.

The Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005, which was made under Section 1(1) of the 2005 Act, established SEStran, meaning SEStran is covered by both the 2010 Act and the 2012 Regulations.

This means SEStran is covered by the public sector equality duty (PSED), as set out in the 2010 Act. The PSED requires that SEStran must, when exercising its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act;

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The 2010 Act explains that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics under the 2010 Act are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

## About this report

This report sets out how SEStran is addressing its responsibilities under the 2010 Act. It summarises the progress made in mainstreaming equality and sets out the progress SEStran has made towards achieving its Equalities Outcomes for the reporting period 2021-2025. It demonstrates the continued commitment to developing and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in culture and behaviours and as a fundamental part of our day to day business and decision making.

# Section 1: Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming is a specific requirement for public bodies in relation to implementing the Equality Duty. It means integrating equality into the day to day working of the organisation.

Over the period 2021 – 2023, SEStran has sought to mainstream Equality into its core functions as outlined below.

## 1. How SEStran Assesses Impact on Equality

SEStran is committed in ensuring that the needs of people with protected characteristics are taken in to account during the development and implementation of a new policy or service, or when a change is made to a current policy or service. SEStran aims to consult with relevant groups from the start of discussions on any new proposals, policies, or projects, before progressing on to a more structured assessment in any subsequent stages.

Working with our legal advisers, SEStran has developed an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) template. SEStran is keen to ensure that staff have a comprehensive knowledge of its obligations under the equalities legislation and has provided a variety of staff training courses and workshops to support and enhance this knowledge and awareness. In addition, EQIA's are published on the SEStran website.

## 2. Procurement

Equality is considered throughout the procurement and tender procedures and use is made of Public Contracts Scotland, Scottish Government Procurement Frameworks and Scotland Excel, which is the Centre of Procurement Expertise for the local government sector in Scotland.

SEStran's Corporate Procurement Strategy [Governance Scheme](#) was updated in December 2022 and takes account of the Scottish Government's Public Services Reform Agenda and the subsequent Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, the associated Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016, and the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015. Following Board member input, the strategy has further been amended to include specific reference to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This is still in draft stage, awaiting Board agreement.

In addition, SEStran's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract, which apply to all consultancy contracts, clauses 20.1 and 20.2 require consultants to demonstrate that they will comply with the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

### 3. HR Policies

Equality and diversity are fundamental principles in all HR policies and procedures and are actively promoted in SEStran. All policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation and best practice. This is done in consultation with HR advisers, stakeholders and staff, before finally being presented to the Performance and Audit Committee for further scrutiny and feedback.

SEStran will continue to review all policies and procedures to ensure they reflect SEStran's commitment to ensuring that it promotes an equitable and inclusive workplace.

All our policies can be found here: <https://sestran.gov.uk/publication-category/policy/>

### 4. Corporate Planning and Reporting

SEStran has established a matrix for reporting on any equality implications within our formal reporting procedures and continues to include a series of icons throughout the Business Plan and projects reports, which easily identifies where equalities feature in the organisational objectives.

### 5. Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum

SEStran hosts the Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum twice a year, with membership comprising of a variety of equalities groups, healthcare representatives, Board members, and stakeholders. This forum is an important way for SEStran to co-design projects and policies and gain input from individuals with protected characteristics or from groups representing the interests of those with protected characteristics.

In spring 2022 non-councillor member Dr Doreen Steele became Chair of the forum. She initiated a new Terms of Reference (TORs) which refreshed the remit, governance and membership arrangements of the forum and has been looking at ways in which to establish better collaboration with NHS counterparts.

Over the course of the reporting period, the forum has provided input into a selection of SEStran workstreams including the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), Thistle Assistance, Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), Mobility as a service (MaaS) and Demand Responsive Transport projects.



## 6. Disability Confident Scheme

In 2017 SEStran became a Disability Committed Employer and progressed to the higher-level Disability Confident Employer in 2018. This is the level that we continue to retain. The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. SEStran employs the Disability Confident logo to demonstrate that applicants with disabilities are encouraged and welcome.

## 7. Living Wage Employer

In 2017 Living Wage accreditation was achieved and SEStran continue to uphold this commitment. The living wage is currently £10.90ph and is based on cost of living. Research has shown that paying the living wage helps organisations recruit, retain better staff, reduce absenteeism and encourage higher productivity.

## 8. Board Diversity

SEStran is committed to continuing to make progress on improving the diversity of its Board to encourage new and innovative thinking and maximise the use of talent, leading to better decision making and governance.

Our Board membership information is available here:

<https://sestran.gov.uk/the-board/>

Two thirds of the SEStran Partnership Board is made up of elected members and their appointments are made by their respective councils alone. However, SEStran took steps to encourage diversity by writing to councils to request that they take this into account when making their appointments to the SEStran Board, prior to the local government elections in May 2022.

SEStran undertook an inclusive application process for the non-councillor members who were appointed in 2022. Their appointments are legislated by the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 and the purpose of the Act is to improve the representation of women on the boards of Scottish public authorities. The Act sets a gender representation objective for the non-executive member component of public boards. The objective is that 50% of non-executive members are women.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 set out that Scottish Ministers are required from time to time, to gather information about members' protected characteristics and that the Ministers will forward those to the public bodies covered by the duties. In order to regularise data collection, SEStran has developed its own equalities monitoring procedure and will publish the current

gender balance of the Partnership Board. No other data on protected characteristics will be made available.

The gender of SEStran's members is as follows:  
Identified as MaleXX ; Identified as Female XX Didn't Answer XX

The Succession Planning Committee and the Board Diversity Succession Plan<sup>1</sup> sets out the process to help deliver a more diverse Board. New appointments were made to the Succession Planning Committee in June 2022 when the Board for the 2022-2027 term was established. The role of the SEStran Succession Planning Committee is to: lead on meeting the Board's responsibilities in relation to planning for succession through appointments and Board member development; offer advice to the Board on future appointments and reappointments; review and evaluate the skills, knowledge, expertise, diversity (including protected characteristics) of current Board members, and requirements of future members and monitor the development and continuous improvement of a succession plan that can be presented to the Board.

A skills audit and an equalities monitoring exercise has been undertaken for Board members and the results will identify key areas of expertise and where development opportunities lie. A key commitment made in our Equalities Outcomes is to increase the diversity of the board by appointing Observers. The data obtained from monitoring exercise will identify the areas where there is a gap in representation and allow recruitment to be tailored appropriately. A meeting of the Succession Planning Committee will be called by summer 2023 to coordinate this exercise.

## 9. Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) Charter

SEStran demonstrated a commitment to the diversity and inclusion agenda by signing the Chartered Institute of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) Diversity and Inclusion Charter in September 2016 and we continue to adhere to principles of this Charter.

## 10. Staff Engagement

At the start of the COVID pandemic, all the SEStran staff worked from home. The IT infrastructure was already in place to support remote working, therefore the transition, from a technical perspective, was relatively straightforward. Staff have now transitioned to a hybrid working arrangement, whereby the full team spend two days working together from the SEStran office. They have been supported through this process by a range of policies, including the introduction of a Home Working

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Board-Diversity-Succession-Plan-2.pdf>

Policy and Hybrid Working Policy. The hybrid arrangements will be kept under review to allow for a flexible and supportive working environment.

The mental health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount and SEStran has supported its staff through the issuing of relevant guidance on topics ranging from homeworking, managing mental wellbeing, eating well and staying active. Regular engagement activities are arranged through a variety of mediums, including staff meetings, 1:1s and a few social events.

## 11. Policy and Procedure Reviews for Staff

SEStran includes policy review sessions as part of staff team meetings, where policies are reviewed on rotation to provide staff with the opportunity to refresh their knowledge, understanding and ask questions.

## 12. Training

As part of the induction training programme for the new Board, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) delivered a session on equality and public boards. The objectives of the session were to provide members with an improved awareness and understanding of the public sector equality duties, how the duties apply to members responsibilities and how they can become more inclusive leaders. The session was tailored to also look at the issues of poverty, inequalities and transport.

In January 2023 staff attended a refresher training session provided by our legal advisers Anderson Strathern LLP on Equalities Impact Assessments. Anderson Strathern also worked with staff to develop the SEStran EqIA template.

Also in January 2023, the Mental Health Foundation delivered a training session to staff on how the most marginalised groups in society can be supported to feed into processes to improve community services. This included how refugee and asylum seekers needs and views can be better represented or heard in transport.

Staff can access Equalities and Diversity Training Modules via Falkirk Council's e-learning portal. This training aims to raise awareness and covers the legislation and is designed so that staff are encouraged to think about, reflect and challenge their perceptions. It includes examples, quizzes and a test at the end of the training which aims to help staff understand equality and diversity issues.

## 13. Thistle Assistance Programme

SEStran has operated the Thistle Assistance Programme<sup>2</sup> since 2011. This has been an extremely successful scheme that aims to give those with mobility challenges, disabled and elderly transport users more confidence in using public transport.

Thistle Assistance is part of the Scottish Government's Accessible Travel Framework and is a key priority in the current delivery plan<sup>3</sup>.

Since its launch SEStran has distributed over 100,000 cards and had over 15,000 downloads of the App. SEStran will seek to continue to promote the programme. SEStran also made the decision to make the Thistle Card design freely available, in order that it could be easily used in other areas of Scotland. Other RTP's have launched the Card in their regions, allowing more people to utilise the Card and increasing accessibility to public transport across Scotland.

In 2016, SEStran developed the Thistle Assistance app, which replicates the original card. The app is not a replacement for the card but seeks to increase use and awareness of the Thistle Card scheme. The app is free to download and SEStran are in discussions with developers to further the potential of this technology. By promoting the use of the Thistle Card & app, SEStran looks to reduce barriers to accessing public transport for all and promote social inclusion for those who have no other means of transport. In 2015, SEStran's work with the Thistle Card was recognised by the Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) with an achievement award in recognition of outstanding achievement in facilitating transport services for disabled people. More recently the SEStran Thistle Card has been nominated for the Scottish Transport Awards Accessibility Project of the Year and the CIHT Inclusive Transportation Award.

In December 2019 SEStran launched a new Thistle Assistance dedicated website and promotional campaign to engage with the public and generate more awareness of the benefits of the program.

## 14. Journey Assistance Planner App

SEStran, through the development and implementation of two key projects, Real Time Passenger Information and the Thistle Assistance<sup>4</sup> Programme, has identified a need to improve the door-to-door journey for people with mobility challenges allowing them to access the public transport network more easily and with confidence – combining journey planning, wayfinding and disability awareness into

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thistleassistance.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/accessible-travel-delivery-plan-progress-report-20192020/>

<sup>4</sup> [www.thistleassistance.com](http://www.thistleassistance.com)

one easy to use and versatile platform. The platform would deliver in two key areas which respond to passengers needs as identified by the Campaign for Better Transport<sup>5</sup>:

1. improving availability of information.
2. making connections between different steps in the journey, and different modes of transport, easier.

People rely on public transport to access jobs, services, facilities, family and friends. While many of the barriers identified by disabled people and non-disabled people in undertaking journeys are the same, the impact can be different<sup>6</sup>.

In 2018 SEStran made a successful application to the Scottish Enterprises “CanDo” Innovation fund for funding to develop the concept through a two-phase approach.

Phase one of the project identified and described in detail the barriers faced by disabled people when travelling (contributing to existing knowledge). SEStran also explored the extent to which these barriers affect disabled peoples’ travel plans and modal choices for travelling and looked to develop door to door journey planning solutions that help alleviate these barriers.

Phase one delivered five ‘proof of concept’ (POC) for a door to door journey planning platform that showed relevant route information in a clear way, provided information about which travel option to use, where to get on and where and when to get off, provided information about what to do if lost and also enabling a carer to monitor where the person is and communicate with them.

The POCs showed various options for developing a multiuser interface that adapts to various disabilities, for example, sight impairment, hearing impairment, mobility issues and Dementia. Specific features/requirements included:

- ✓ incorporate journey planning and way-finding features.
- ✓ allow third parties (family, emergency services and transport providers) to track the user in case of difficulty.
- ✓ Have a feature that allows the user to ask for help.
- ✓ focus on the door-to-door journey and include multi-model transport options.

Phase Two: SEStran are currently working with Sentireal (a specialist software developer) on the development and testing of a fully developed working prototype which will be tested in the public realm. This work is due to be completed in March 2023.

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<sup>5</sup> Transport Research Laboratory (2011) – *Door to Door Journeys* [www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/door-to-door-journeys-full-report.pdf](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/files/door-to-door-journeys-full-report.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/706248/accessibility-action-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706248/accessibility-action-plan.pdf)

## 15. Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)

Building on a substantial investment over the past 10 years by SEStran, the major bus operators have now modernised their ticketing and RTPI technology and are now providing their own RTPI to Traveline and, directly, to the travelling public.

SEStran has worked with the City of Edinburgh Council and Journeo to develop and launch a new, common regional RTPI system that will improve the information provided on the public-facing regional screen network incorporating multiple transport operators (bus, rail & tram) data and scheduled information.

The new system went live in December 2021 with operator data being integrated over the following months. SEStran received funding from Transport Scotland to update the existing RTPI screen system with new PCs so that the new system will operate and integrate with other systems more efficiently. The rollout of these new PCs with the new software started in February 2022.

SEStran is also working with partner local authorities to place new on street signage across the region, again working with the contractor Journeo.

## 16. Hate Crime Charter

SEStran has been involved in the Transport Scotland Hate Crime Working Group. This working group, which is being led by Disability Equality Scotland, has been working on a programme aimed at tackling hate crime on public transport by raising awareness and encouraging people to report incidents of hate crime. Following a series of public consultations on the topic, the group developed a Hate Crime Charter, which was piloted in partnership with Stagecoach East, First Bus, and ScotRail. The pilot reached over 1.2 million people in an eight-week period. Awareness was raised amongst transport staff who felt better equipped to recognise and report hate crime. 70% of bus staff said they felt the Charter would make a difference. Furthermore, the post-pilot survey indicated that 79% of transport staff would welcome more training on hate crime, which is being taken forward by Disability Equality Scotland and Police Scotland. Based on the feedback from the pilot, the working group agreed the final design of the Charter which was officially launched on 23 March 2021. SEStran have since been involved in conversations with the Transport Scotland Hate Crime Working Group to see how we can assist in promotion of the campaign and key messages.

## 17. Regional Transport Strategy

SEStran has completed work to develop a new (draft) Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) 2035. This was approved by the Partnership Board in September 2022. Equalities matters were considered throughout the development of the RTS including an initial Equalities Duties Assessment Framing Note at the Case for Change stage

and in support of the final draft strategy published for statutory consultation in November 2021. The following reports can be found on the SEStran website.

[Equalities-Duties-Summary-Report.pdf \(sestran.gov.uk\)](#)

[Equality Impact Assessment \(EQIA\) record \(sestran.gov.uk\)](#)

[Fairer Scotland Duty summary template \(sestran.gov.uk\)](#)

[2021-10-22-Draft-SEStran-RTS-CRWIA\\_FINAL.pdf](#)

## 18. Go e-Bike

GO e-Bike is a regional e-bike share programme with locations across the South East of Scotland, which launched in April 2017, supporting the then Programme for Government. It aims to increase the awareness, accessibility to and usage of power-assisted cycling across the region and beyond. The programme supports community outreach charities, sustainability organisations, tourism and hospitality outlets, healthcare practitioners, and academic institutions. The programme also incorporates a public hire scheme at sites in East Lothian and Midlothian. By enabling further distances to be travelled, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes supplied through Go e-Bike can expand the reach of the organisations involved. E-bikes have the potential to help widen access to cycling to a much greater audience. Due to their power assist they can allow people to take up or continue cycling into later life, so supporting improving health into older age. They can also enable those with reduced mobility or injury to be able to use a bike.

### **Phase 1 – Community Hubs**

Phase 1 of the project, involved setting up a series of community e-bike hubs across the region. Each hub is unique and tailored to its community to support long term sustainability. Ongoing support is provided for each GO e-Bike hub. SEStran also offers cycle training in association with Cycling Scotland. Each hub supports the sustainability of the program by helping to promote GO e-Bike and contributing to ongoing research. Alongside the hubs, an Employer Roadshow scheme ran from May to October 2019, offering short term trials of e-bike fleets to employers to promote active travel. Phase 1 of the project has involved hubs at West Lothian Bike Library, Transition St Andrews, CLEAR Buckhaven, Social Bite Village, Walkerburn Community Development Trust and Cargo Bike Movement.

### **Phase 2 – Public Hire Scheme**

The public hire scheme is designed to promote short and long-cycle trips within core communities, where clusters of residents, students, tourist destinations and services can readily be connected in East Lothian and Midlothian.

During March 2021 final construction of the public hire scheme was completed with the installation of four bike charging hire points across Midlothian and East Lothian, linking Eskbank and Musselburgh with their respective town centres. The system

was launched in April 2021. The Equality Impact statement for the project can be found here: [EQIA-Go-e-bike](#)

### **Phase 3 – Supporting Marketing Campaign**

The '[Do The Ride Thing](#)' behaviour change media campaign, focussed on the sharing of outdoor spaces with all users, continued throughout 2021. Using a mixed media approach of radio and podcast adverts, social media, online adverts, and public hoardings allowed for targeted contact across the region. The campaign ended with near 11 million views on social media and a reach of just under 2 million social media users. This resulted in the project achieving more than twice the usual rate of 'clicks' on campaign adverts.

## **19. Demand Responsive Transport**

SEStran worked with a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, other public bodies (i.e. higher education), shortlisted specialist technology providers (including both Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)), shared and public transport operators, the Open Transport Initiative, community councils and Mott MacDonald's MaaS Advisory team, to prepare a Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) project proposal for the Transport Scotland MaaS Investment Fund Round 2. MaaS can be described as a digital platform which allows users to plan, book and pay for all the various transport modes for a particular journey. Part of SEStran's plans to develop a region-wide MaaS platform is to integrate new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) routes to support bus services and introduce DRT in rural areas experiencing transport poverty. SEStran's bid was successful and the GoSEStran MaaS integrated journey planning app launched in August 2022 and continues to grow in popularity. A new DRT service will launch in March 2023 in partnership with Prentice Coaches and The Routing Company in East Lothian.

The SEStran DRT Strategic Study, which was carried out by SYSTRA in March 2020, considered the strengths and weaknesses of the current DRT (including community transport) sector, and identified digital innovation as an opportunity to optimise the DRT services in the SEStran region. Furthermore, it is recognised that bus patronage has dropped over the last decade. Increasing fares, longer journey times, and discontinued rural services are some of the causes of a falling patronage and Covid-19 is putting additional pressure on the viability of bus services across the region. SEStran sees DRT technology as a way of optimising and supporting transport services, particularly in areas where traditional fixed-line bus services are not commercially viable.



## 20. SEStran Strategic Network

In 2020 SEStran published the Strategic Network<sup>i</sup>, which was the culmination of partnership working to develop cross boundary active travel routes across the region, ensuring the connection of people to places. The network was developed on the basis of a quality standard which would provide access to all users to a route that was physically separated from motor traffic and be safe and comfortable. From the outset the project looked to establish small high quality routes that would link to create a wider network that could be used for longer travel.

Since its publication SEStran have started the process of designing routes and through the prioritisation set out in the SSN, routes are undergoing various stages of development dependant on funding availability. Key criteria in the assessment of routes look to address transport poverty and opportunities for greater active travel. This has been reflected in the routes taken forward to date.

A review of the multi criteria assessment is under in 2023 to ensure the most update information is being used for the pipeline of projects being taken forward in the coming years.

## Employee Data

SEStran collects information at recruitment stage and from current employees but is not required to publish information about the workforce for data protection reasons owing to the small number of staff employed. SEStran uses the data it collects in order to better perform the equality duty, and to better understand the recruitment and workforce profile, enabling it to identify areas of improvement and eliminate any adverse impact on equality.

This allows the targeting of support for areas of under-representation within the workforce, enables us to take positive action and produce a dataset to inform long-term workforce planning and assess current policies and procedures. To be effective in assessing equality data, data from staff is relied upon to provide the widest possible analysis. SEStran is committed to undertaking effective monitoring of equality data relative to the workforce.

## Equal Pay and Gender Pay Gap

SEStran is not covered by legal obligations in respect of publishing a Statement on Equal Pay or Gender Pay Gap information.

SEStran is committed to providing a flexible working culture and there are a range of policies which enable staff to work flexibly. Our commitment to mainstreaming equality throughout our functions is demonstrated through this report.

## Section 2: Equality Outcomes 2021-2025

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, as amended, requires SEStran to publish equality outcomes. Our equality outcomes specify a result that we aim to achieve to further one or more of the needs of the general equality duty, which are to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

To help inform our equality outcomes, SEStran gathered and considered relevant evidence. Evidence was obtained through:

- Engagement with SEStran's Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum who represent the interests of people with the relevant protected characteristics
- An analysis of reports and evidence finder tools published by the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, third sector organisations that represent the interests of people with the relevant protected characteristics, public bodies and other organisations
- An analysis of our workforce data
- An analysis of our public involvement data
- Staff engagement
- Engagement with and attending workshops run by the EHRC
- Engagement with the other RTPs

The Equality Outcomes which we have set primarily relate to the relevant protected characteristics of age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We have not included the protected characteristics of marriage and civil partnerships in our Equality Outcomes. After analysis of equalities monitoring data there was no evidence of inequalities relating to this characteristic. This data will be monitored, however, and actions relating to these protected characteristics are being achieved through mainstreaming activities.

## Progress Update on our Equalities Outcomes 2021-2025

SEStran's Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 build on the progress made since the implementation of our original Equality Outcomes in 2017.

1. Increase diversity of the Partnership Board	
Inequality	The representation of women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people serving on public boards is disproportionate to population levels.
Equality outcome	Increase the representation of ethnic minorities and disabled people on the SEStran Partnership Board, whilst retaining the gender balance of the non-councillor members.
General equality duty	Will help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for women, disabled people, and people from ethnic minorities.
Link to strategic priority	Links to the Gender Representation on Public Boards Act, Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework, the EHRC Is Scotland Fairer.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The barriers facing women, disabled people and people from ethnic minorities identified.</li> <li>- Recruitment channels widened.</li> <li>- Application process simplified.</li> <li>- Use positive action to appoint Observers with relevant protected characteristics to the board.</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage with relevant equalities groups and third sector organisations.</li> <li>- Review application process for Non-Councillor Member and Board Observer recruitment.</li> <li>- Collect equalities monitoring data from board members.</li> <li>- Write to partner authorities to consider diversity when appointing Elected Members to the SEStran Board at the next Local Government elections in May 2022.</li> <li>- Arrange meetings of the Succession Planning Committee.</li> <li>- Host meetings virtually to reduce barriers in relation to travelling and access to physical meetings.</li> </ul>
Measuring progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify base line evidence.</li> <li>- Monitor progress using equalities monitoring data collected from the Board members.</li> </ul>
2023 Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement with Equate Scotland and Mental Health Foundation.</li> <li>- Application process for Non-Councillor Members reviewed.</li> <li>- Consider positive action for appointment of Board Observers, following collection of equalities monitoring data from Members</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councils were contacted prior to the Local Government elections in May 2022, resulting in an increased balance in gender representation on the board.</li> <li>- The Succession Planning Committee met November 2021 and will meet in mid-2023 following completion of skills audit and equalities monitoring exercise.</li> <li>- All SEStran meetings are held as hybrid meetings or exclusively online.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Facilitate access to Active Travel facilities for disabled people</b>	
Inequality	There are insufficient opportunities for disabled people to take part in active travel, due to, for example, insufficient space and access to specialised equipment such as adapted bikes.
Equality outcome	To ensure design and development of all active travel initiatives deliver increased opportunities for disabled people to access active travel initiatives.
General equality duty	Will help to eliminate inequality between able bodied and disabled people in developing healthier lifestyles.
Link to strategic priority	The encouragement of and provision of active travel facilities is now the highest priority in NTS2 and will be in the emerging Regional Transport Strategy.
Outputs	Policy within the RTS that will guide development of active travel facilities to ensure that any new facilities should be inclusive by design and include sufficient available provision for disabled people to both access and use active travel provision, safely.
Activities	<p>Consult with appropriate bodies to establish appropriate guidance and the types of provision required.</p> <p>Ensure policy refers to appropriate design guidance and requires facilities to make appropriate provision.</p> <p>Ensure LA's partners who are required to deliver RTS policies and other delivery bodies are aware of the policy requirement.</p>
Measuring progress	<p>Establish baseline statistics</p> <p>Survey use</p>
2023 Update	<p>The existing e-bike provider advised SEStran in late 2022 that their intention to bring into production an e-trike that could be integrated into the existing Go-eBike hire system will not now progress.</p> <p>Officers from SEStran had been in discussion with the provider for a period of 18 months previous to this notice, on the understanding that the system could be improved to provide an e-trike style bike.</p> <p>Information provided to SEStran indicates the provider's decision was due to lower-than-expected market demand for the more</p>

	accessible bike within the system. This has been reflected in an update to the Go eBike EqIA.
3. Increased Access to public transport in rural areas for disabled people, the elderly and young people.	
Inequality	A lack of access to public transport in rural areas disadvantages disabled people, the elderly and reduces opportunities for young people to access education, training and employment. Many more opportunities to access public transport exist in urban areas. This is particularly relevant to people using concessionary travel cards.
Equality outcome	Increased opportunities to access public transport in rural areas for ensuring the benefits of concessionary travel are available to relevant groups, mainly disabled people, elderly and young people.
General equality duty	Will help to improve outcomes for individuals, communities and society and narrow or remove the biggest inequalities experienced by the identified groups.
Link to strategic priority	The encouragement of promoting increased public transport use is now a high priority in NTS2 and will be in the emerging Regional Transport Strategy. To ensure that the RTS policies and specific actions and projects creates a framework and actions to deliver change.
Outputs	RTS policies that promote and facilitate alternative public transport solutions. Commercial bus operators encouraged to provide demand responsive bus services in areas where timetabled services are not commercially viable.
Activities	Regional implementation needed and lead role for SEStran in seeking consistent approaches across the Region. Partnership working with tech companies and bus operators to introduce services, initially on a trial basis that increase access to services in these rural areas. Co- ordination with other Community Transport Services to maximise opportunities.
Measuring progress	Number of services introduced and or narrative on progress.
2023 Update	RTS draft has been submitted to Scottish Ministers with one of the twelve new Regional Mobility Theme focussing exclusively on Enhancing the Accessibility of Public Transport. Early progress on delivery of new RTS action under this theme includes, - Completion of deployment of upgraded Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) screen computers,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purchase of new RTPI screens to extend the number of passengers able to access information,</li> </ul> <p>A trial DRT style service being implemented in semi-rural parts of East Lothian and is planned to commence on 6 March 2023, with learning and results shared across the region's partners.</p>
<h4>4. Develop and Promote the Thistle Assistance Programme</h4>	
Inequality	People with disabilities (seen/unseen) and mobility challenges often face difficulties when trying to access and use public transport.
Equality outcome	Develop a Thistle Assistance Journey and Wayfinding solution to help disabled people, older people, vulnerable people and women access public transport and plan their journeys more easily.
General equality duty	SEStran will help develop and promote an accessible and safer public transport system for disabled people, older people, and women, which will help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.
Link to strategic priority	Scotland's ten-year Accessible Travel Framework and These aims assist with delivering on the pledges within Scotland's first ever <a href="#">National Accessible Travel Framework published in 2016 (Going Further)</a> .
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journey planning and Wayfinding tool to help with the door to door journey</li> <li>- Community/Equalities platform established to assist in journey planning</li> <li>- Continue promotion of Thistle Assistance (<a href="http://www.thistleassistance.com">www.thistleassistance.com</a>)</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stakeholder engagement</li> <li>- Marketing activity – online/print</li> <li>- App development and review</li> </ul>
Measuring progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey</li> <li>- Workshop feedback</li> <li>- Successful wayfinding solution developed</li> <li>- Thistle Assistance leaflets sent out &amp; app downloads</li> </ul>
2023 Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Test (and if successful) launch VoyagAR the wayfinding and journey planning application.</li> <li>- Develop an updated survey</li> <li>- Continue to promote programme with stakeholders and public</li> <li>- Work with transport operators using new training tools for staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Progress to date:</b> Thistle Assistance leaflet and poster produced and circulated to all Scottish public transport operators – this helps train staff to</p>

	<p>support public transport that have any additional assistance needs,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SEStran continues to support and promote awareness of the Thistle Assistance Scheme to potential operators and transport users, through communications, marketing and awareness raising activities.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Expansion of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Network and promotion of Hate Crime Charter.</p>	
Inequality	Disabled people, older and vulnerable people, people from ethnic minorities, LGBT people and women do not always feel safe using public transport and experience difficulty accessing information.
Equality outcome	Expand the RTPI network and continue to promote the Hate Crime Charter to improve safety and accessibility to public transport within the region.
General equality duty	This outcome will help to eliminate discrimination, foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity.
Link to strategic priority	This links to the NTS focus on reducing inequalities, the SEStran RTS and the Accessible Travel Framework.
Outputs	Availability of travel information to allow for better journey planning. Promotion of Hate Crime Charter with commercial bus operators.
Activities	Financial commitment to new Content Management System (CMS). Meetings with bus operators. Meetings with RTPI group. Engage with Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum.
Measuring progress	Increase in the number of RTPI screens installed. Increased awareness of Hate Crime Charter.
2023 Update	<p>Continue to work with Local Authority partners and transport operators to expand and develop the network. Further utilise the functionality of the new system to disseminate information to the public. Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion of deployment of upgraded Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) screen computers,</li> <li>- Purchase of new RTPI screens to extend the number of passengers able to access information,</li> </ul>

## Performance Reporting

SEStran will publish a Mainstreaming Report and new set of Equalities Outcomes Report before the end of the next period, i.e. 30 April 2025.

The Partnership will also continue to monitor all Partnership Board reports for any implications arising from them that may affect any equalities issues.

## Providing Information in Various Formats

Information is provided in a variety of formats, including: reports provided in PDF and RTF format but can also be provided in alternative formats and/or languages such as large print or Braille.

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