GO SEStran
South East of Scotland Transport Partnership

Annual Report
2022–23

Annual Report **2022–23**

Contents

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this Report as the Chair of South-East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) by marking a significant milestone in our journey. In March 2023, following approval by the Scottish Ministers, the SEStran Partnership Board officially embraced the new Regional Transport Strategy for the South-East of Scotland, SEStran 2035.

This Strategy is the guiding framework for the future of transportation in the South-East of Scotland, covering the eight partner local authorities: The City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, the Scottish Borders, and West Lothian.

SEStran 2035 fulfils SEStran's fundamental statutory obligation to publish an RTS under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005.

The realisation of SEStran 2035 owes much to the close collaboration and engagement of our valued stakeholders. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions.

The transportation challenges in the SEStran region are diverse, ranging from urban congestion to rural public transport issues, declining bus services and ridership, and the need to foster integrated mobility, sustainable logistics, and freight hubs. Geographically and socio-economically, the region has significant diversity.

To reduce emissions from car-based transportation in the SEStran area, we will need affordable and sustainable travel options connecting all regions, a goal that SEStran and our stakeholders are committed to achieving.

Foreword Cont'd

In the wake of several years marked by lockdowns and travel restrictions, enhancing public transport services within the region has emerged as a shared priority across the transportation landscape. SEStran has engaged proactively with rail and bus operators, addressing regional concerns, from adjusting rail timetables to enhancing accessibility for passengers. Furthermore, SEStran has actively endorsed new initiatives aimed at improving the reliability and viability of public transportation services.

As we move into a "post-pandemic" travel landscape, SEStran 2035 will play a pivotal role by supporting interventions that promote behavioural change, modal shift, and the adoption of more sustainable modes of transport for essential journeys. The urgent focus on the climate crisis will significantly influence transportation and its

infrastructure in the decades ahead, with a drive to achieve a net-zero carbon future.

We now share the duty across the South-East of Scotland and beyond to build on our collective efforts and work collaboratively to implement the new regional transport strategy, tackling the diverse challenges with optimism and innovation.

Over the past year, the Partnership has undergone notable changes. After 9 years of dedicated service, Jim Grieve retired in December 2022, and Brian Butler took on the role as his successor. We are thrilled to have Brian on board, as he brings a wealth of experience to the position, making him a valuable addition to the Partnership.

In addition, Jim Stewart retired in March, and Anna Herriman moved to a new role with Midlothian Council. I extend my

gratitude to both "the Jims" and Anna for their dedication and enthusiasm, and I also wish Anna the very best in her new role.

Cllr. Colin Davidson

Councillor Colin Davidson
Chair, SEStran
March 2023

Who We Are

SEStran is the South-East of Scotland Transport Partnership. We are one of seven statutory Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland established under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. SEStran encompasses eight local authorities.

SEStran's Vision:

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

Who we are
Our Objectives

SEStran participates in a diverse range of transport projects and events on a local, national, and international scale. All our work is focused on delivering against our core strategic objective areas:

Objective 1: Transitioning to a sustainable, post-carbon transport system

- Climate Change and Net Zero
- Air Quality Transformed
- Equitable Access to Transport

Objective 2: Facilitating healthier travel options

- Improved Physical & Mental Health and Activity
- Increased Wellbeing
- Transformed, Liveable Neighbourhoods

Objective 3: Transforming public transport connectivity and access across the region

- Greater Equality of Opportunity
- Travel Barriers Removed
- Reduced Social Isolation

Objective 4: Supporting safe, sustainable and efficient movement of people and freight across the region

- Reduced Road Casualties
- A Just Transition in Inclusive Economic Growth
- Improved Regional Competitiveness
- Climate Change Adaptation

Who we are

SEStran Team

**SEStran has a staff of 9, and 1 Cycling Scotland embedded officer, as of March 2023:**

- Partnership Director
Brian Butler

- Senior Partnership Manager
Anna Herriman (Feb 2023)

- Programmes Manager
Keith Fisken

- Strategy and Projects Officer
Jim Stewart

- Project Officer
Hattie James

- Active Travel Officer
Peter Jackson

- Business Manager
Angela Chambers

- Business Support Officer
Cheryl Fergie

- Business Support Assistant
Nikki Boath

- Regional Cycle Training and
Development Officer (RCTDO)
Beth Harley-Jepson

Local Authority Partners

City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian.

Headquarters

SEStran's operational and administrative premises are based in Edinburgh at Victoria Quay.
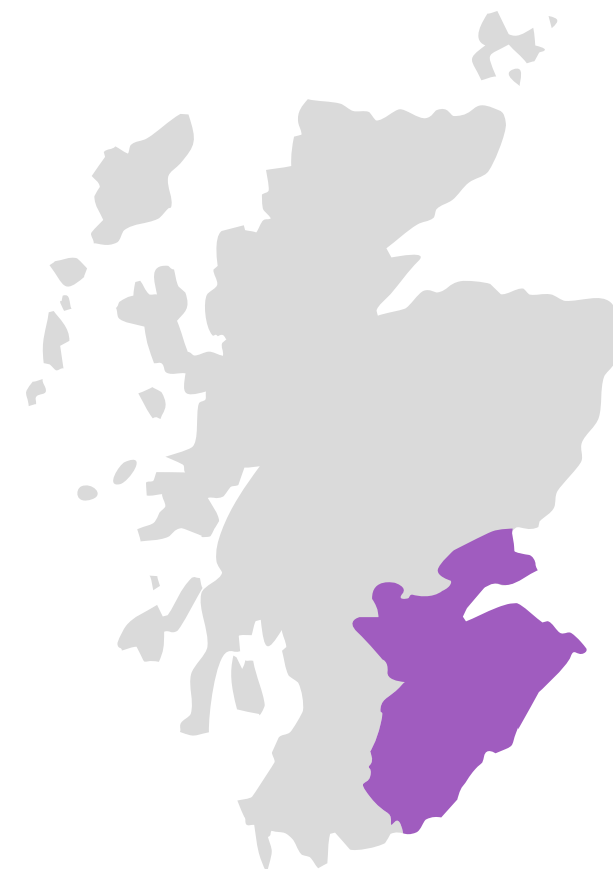
Who We Are
Governance

Decision Making Structure

SEStran's main policy and budgetary decisions are taken by the Partnership Board, which consists of 20 Councillor and nine Non-Councillor members. Operational decisions are taken by the Partnership Director and other officers in accordance with the List of Officer Powers which forms part of SEStran's **Governance Scheme**. The Scheme is reviewed regularly and was last updated in March 2023.

The Partnership Board delegates some decisions to Committees in accordance with the Governance Scheme. The Performance and Audit Committee remit covers scrutiny of performance, staffing, standards and audit. It comprises a Councillor member from each constituent authority, and four non-Councillor members. It is currently chaired by Councillor Russell Imrie.

The Succession Planning Committee remit covers matters related to

succession planning and Board appointments. Its membership consists of the Partnership Chair, two Board members, the Partnership Director, the Partnership Secretary and a Human Resources adviser.

Equalities Duty

SEStran is a listed public body under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations, and as such have a duty to publish a biennial Equalities Mainstreaming Report and a set of Equality Outcomes to enable the organisation to better perform the equality duty.

SEStran published a new set of **Equality Outcomes** 2021–2025 in April 2021 and will publish a **biennial progress report** in April 2023.

The draft outcomes went out to consultation in February 2021. Analysis of the data indicated broad support and agreement for all the outcomes. Key comments included that SEStran statutory meetings should remain being

hosted remotely, to remove barriers facing disabled people travelling to physical meetings.

The final report and new Equalities Outcomes were approved by the Board in March 2021 and the Progress Update 2023 in March 2023.

Cyber Security

In order to comply with the Scottish Government's Public Sector Cyber Security Action Plan, SEStran carried out a robust review of its IT provision. Under the scheme, an independent cyber security consultant was appointed in 2018 and audited the partnership's IT environment. The outcome of this audit was SEStran being awarded Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation. SEStran were re-audited in 2023 and retained the award. This accreditation will be kept under review to ensure compliance is maintained, before the next planned audit in 2024.

Who We Are

Partnership Board

The board consists of 20 elected members from the partnership local authorities and 9 appointed non-councillor members, meeting quarterly, and includes the following members.

2017 – May 2022

Cllr Donald Balsillie	Cllr Fiona Collie	Laura Alexander
Cllr Mike Watson	Cllr Ian Ferguson	Doreen Steele
Cllr John McMillan	Cllr Colin Davidson (Deputy-Chair)	Vivienne Gray
Cllr Lachlan Bruce	Cllr Dave Dempsey	Callum Hay
Cllr Lesley Macinnes (Deputy-Chair)	Cllr Peter Smaill	Simon Hindshaw
Cllr Karen Doran	Cllr Russell Imrie	Richard Llewellyn
Cllr David Key	Cllr Gordon Edgar (Chair)	Catherine Thomson
Cllr Claire Miller	Cllr Jim Fullarton	Barry Turner
Cllr Cameron Rose	Cllr Chris Horne	Paul White
Cllr Laura Murtagh	Cllr Cathy Muldoon	

Who We Are

Board Members

SEStran's main policy and budgetary decisions are taken by the Partnership Board, consisting of 20 councillor and 9 non-councillor members.

May 2022 – 2027

Cllr Colin Davidson (Chair)

Cllr Robin Lawson (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Sally Pattle (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Russell Imrie (Chair of Performance and Audit Committee and Deputy Chair of The Board)

Cllr Margaret Anslow

Cllr Jenny Linehan

Cllr Jane Cox

Cllr Paul Garner

Cllr Tom Conn

Cllr Colin Cassidy

Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie

Cllr Marie-Clair Munro

Cllr Danny Aston

Cllr Fiona Law

Cllr Derek Glen

Cllr Ruaridh Bennett

Cllr John McMillan

Cllr Denis Coyne

Cllr Scott Arthur

Cllr Jule Bandel

Alastair Couper

Dr Doreen Steele

Kate Sherry

Linda Bamford

Paul White

Simon Hindshaw

Callum Hay

Geoff Duke

John Scott

What We Do

SEStran Regional Transport Strategy

In March 2023 Scottish Ministers approved and the SEStran Partnership Board formally adopted the new Regional Transport Strategy for the South-East of Scotland, SEStran 2035.

The Strategy provides the framework and a direction for transport in the South-East of Scotland area covered by the eight partner local authorities: The City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, the Scottish Borders and West Lothian.

SEStran 2035 fulfils the key statutory duty of the South-East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SEStran) which was set up under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. This Act also set the requirement to produce a statutory RTS to provide a strategic framework for transport management and investment for the Partnership area.

The RTS has been prepared to replace the Regional Transport Strategy 2015 – 2025. The refresh RTS was published in July 2015, replacing the original SEStran Regional Transport Strategy 2008–2023 published in November 2008.

It is essential that the RTS addresses the transport problems and issues being experienced in the SEStran area. The purpose of this RTS is to set out these challenges and how SEStran proposes to respond to them.

This RTS has been prepared in accordance with RTS development guidance (Transport Scotland, 2006), the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and all relevant legislative and policy requirements. It is supported by a suite of evidence drawn from published policy documents, data analysis as well as stakeholder and public consultation. This has been set out in the documentation accompanying the development of the RTS. This includes a STAG Case for Change report which details the problems and issues that need to be considered by the RTS as well as defining options to address them along with the strategy objectives. The options which emerged from the Case for Change also underwent appraisal with the findings outlined in the STAG Preliminary Options Appraisal report.

What We Do
SEStran Regional Transport Strategy Cont'd

Ambitions for the Regional Transport Strategy – SEStran 2035

SEStran 2035 supports interventions to promote behaviour change, modal shift, and the use of more sustainable modes of transport for journeys that need to be undertaken. There is an ever-increasing focus on the climate crisis we are currently facing and working towards a net zero carbon future will be a major influence on transport and its infrastructure in the decades to come.

The SEStran area's transport challenges range from urban congestion to rural public transport and declining bus services and patronage, and from the need to deliver more integrated mobility, to sustainable logistics and freight hubs. The region is highly diverse from both a geographic and socio-economic perspective. While Edinburgh is expected to play a major role in the economic recovery post-Covid, even before the pandemic many communities in the region including parts of Edinburgh were severely affected by social and economic deprivation, further impacted by limited access to sustainable and affordable travel choices. However, the spatial analysis work undertaken to support the draft RTS very clearly shows the dominance of car use for commuting to jobs anywhere other than Edinburgh city centre and it is important to acknowledge that a 'whole region' approach is required if car traffic reduction targets are to be met.

Affordable, sustainable travel options between all regions will be needed to effectively meet targets for the reduction in car-based transport emissions and for the SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy to be delivered. Furthermore, the revised draft NPF4 has a major focus on development that reflects the sustainable travel and investment hierarchies by making best use of existing infrastructure and services. This emphasis on Liveable Places and a place-based approach to communities will support the reduction of car dominance.

What We Do
SEStran Regional Transport Strategy Cont'd

The Regional Transport Strategy – regional monitoring

It is of paramount importance to closely monitor the progress of the recently introduced Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in order to comprehensively evaluate its effectiveness in achieving the Strategy Objectives and Vision. To facilitate this assessment, a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been devised, all of which are directly aligned with the Strategy Objectives. These KPIs have been outlined below, drawing strong parallels to the KPIs previously formulated for the monitoring of the National Transport Strategy 2.

These will serve as vital instruments for gauging the transformation in the performance of the regional transportation system. This assessment will be undertaken in comparison to a well-established baseline, initially established through the STAG Case for

Change report. This baseline has been set before the RTS implementation took effect.

Monitoring reports, outlining the notable trends pertaining to regional transport and behavioural patterns, will be produced

every two years. Any identified trends will be analysed in relation to the defined KPIs. Moreover, these periodic monitoring reports will present an inclusive overview of the advancements made in pursuit of the actions outlined for each of the 12 Regional Mobility Themes[1] as detailed in section 4.3 of the new RTS.

This approach will ensure that the evaluation of the RTS is a well-informed process, offering insights into the RTS' impact on the regional transport landscape and its alignment with the strategic goals.

1   SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy- Section 4.3

What We Do
Formal Partnership Meetings and Forums

The Partnership Board met four times during the reporting period. At its meetings, in addition to dealing with standard business, the Board considers relevant topics, with in-depth presentations and discussion. Topics in this period included the new Regional Transport Strategy, rail schedules and improvement updates from ScotRail, and the national rollout of the Thistle Assistance programme. These topics generated considerable insight which was shared in SEStran forum groups described below.

SEStran's quarterly **Performance and Audit Committee** meets two weeks before each board meeting to scutinise the running of the Partnership and to suggest improvements.

The Succession Planning Committee meets biennially. The last meeting took place in November 2021, where the Committee approved a revised version of the Board Diversity Succession Plan and a meeting will be held in 2024 to consider increasing the diversity of the Board by appointing Board Observers.

Chief Officer Liaison Group: the remit of the group is to provide a forum for discussion of transport matters between officers of the constituent councils and officers of SEStran.

Integrated Mobility Forum: aims to develop a better understanding of the opportunities to improve implementation and understanding of integrated mobility in the region. The primary focus is to facilitate discussions between stakeholders to make progress in reducing the number of single occupancy car journeys, maximise the use of public transport and maximise active travel opportunities.

Logistics and Freight Forum: aims to support economic growth and resilience across the region by developing, promoting and implementing sustainable business and distribution solutions. The forum supports constructive partnership between local authorities, government agencies, business and representative groups. The forum aims to provide a unified, regional voice in working with organisations such as Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ports authorities.

Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum: aims to deliver our Equality Outcomes and legislative requirement to consult Health Boards and those who represent those with or who share a protected characteristic. The forum covers how equality issues should be considered and "built in" to future transport strategy development.

More information on SEStran's decisionmaking structures is provided at Governance, on page 8.

What We Do
Public Transport Support

Following several years marked by lockdowns and travel restrictions, the need to bolster public transport services within the region has emerged as a shared priority across all layers of the transportation landscape. SEStran has taken a proactive stance on this, maintaining consistent communication with both rail and bus operators. These ongoing discussions encompass various regional concerns, ranging from adjustments to rail timetables to tackling accessibility issues for passengers. Beyond this, SEStran has taken on an active role in endorsing novel initiatives aimed at enhancing the reliability and viability of public transportation offerings.

Throughout 2022–23, SEStran further expanded its engagement within regional Bus Alliances. In parallel with this, the organisation played a pivotal role in facilitating applications to Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). This fund is designed to encourage innovative strategies that combat congestion and improve journey time

reliability for bus services. The successful outcome of these efforts is evident through the funds awarded to bids from the preceding year, with an additional two new Alliances' bids, supported by Midlothian and West Lothian Councils, securing substantial awards. This collective success raises the total BPF awarded within the region to an impressive £6.57 million.

SEStran's influence extends to shaping the operational foundation of emerging Bus Alliances. The organisation has contributed to the formulation and dissemination of

model terms of reference and governance structures for these Alliances. This involvement serves as a stepping stone towards cultivating more structured Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs). A key factor in this achievement has been the collaborative and positive engagement with bus operators and public sector stakeholders.

In parallel, SEStran has achieved significant progress with Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI). Through partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, a new system has been delivered for the region. This system brings about an enhancement in the quality of bus arrival data throughout the region. This collaboration has been secured for five years with potential for growth. The interconnected nature of these efforts collectively contributes to a cumulative impact across the region, helping to improve public transport provision and customer experience.

What We Do

Thistle Assistance Programme

The Thistle Assistance Programme stands as a pioneering initiative, dedicated to delivering support to individuals with disabilities. This programme goes beyond conventional assistance by actively recognising and addressing the unique needs of each individual, while also ensuring that transportation personnel are well-informed and responsive to those needs. The stewardship and administration of Thistle Assistance is undertaken by SEStran, acting on behalf of Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs). The programme's inclusion in Transport Scotland's 'Going Further: Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework' is an acknowledgment of its significance.

Throughout the fiscal year 2022-23, SEStran has engaged in close collaboration with various transport providers, members of our communities facing mobility challenges and disabilities, as well as members of the SEStran Equalities and Access to Healthcare Forum. This concerted effort was aimed at gaining deeper insights into the obstacles and concerns that individuals encounter while using public transport. The knowledge gleaned from these interactions has played a pivotal role in shaping the evolution and expansion of the Thistle Assistance Programme.

SEStran and the other RTPs continue to foster productive partnerships with notable entities such as ScotRail,

Lothian Buses/Trams, Stagecoach, McGill's Buses, Transport Scotland, Traveline Scotland, the Confederation

What We Do
Thistle Assistance Programme Cont'd

of Passenger Transport, and Bus Users Scotland. This collaborative effort seeks to seamlessly integrate the innovative Thistle Assistance approach into existing operational frameworks. The objective is to heighten awareness among transportation service providers regarding the challenges faced by customers, equip them with the ability to identify these challenges, and empower them to engage with and aid these individuals effectively.

SEStran works tirelessly to promote the Thistle Assistance across Scotland. This is achieved through a twofold approach: increasing overall awareness of the programme's existence and purpose and providing comprehensive training

tools to transport providers. As part of this effort, the programme has partnered with operators to craft informative posters and leaflets. These materials are designed to generate awareness among staff members and facilitate their training, thus enhancing their capacity to cater to the needs of individuals requiring assistance.

https://www.thistleassistance.com/

What We Do

Thistle Assistance VoyagAR – Journey Planning and Wayfinding

SEStran, through the development and implementation of two key projects, Real Time Passenger Information, and the Thistle Assistance 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 one easy to use and versatile platform.

The VoyagAR platform will deliver in two key areas which respond to passengers needs as identified by the Campaign for Better Transport[1]:

• improving availability of information.

• 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[2].

In May 2021 after a successful competition Sentireal was appointed by SEStran to take the project forward from Phase 1 to Phase 2 with £150,000 of funding from Scottish Enterprises Can Do Innovation fund.

The overall system architecture for VoyagAR has been defined, consisting of three cooperating software applications:

• A mobile application that the Traveller uses to plan journeys, perform journey wayfinding, and message an authorised Carer or emergency contact.

• A web application, that executes on all modern web browsers, that an authorised Carer uses to message the Traveller and track their journeys. The Carer can also use the web application to plan journeys on the Traveller's behalf, if necessary.

• A web service, hosted in the cloud, that provides the mobile and web applications with various cloud-based services, including geographical mapping and directions, public transport scheduling and user account management.

Work will continue next year with the testing and launching of a prototype scheduled for late Summer 2023.

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1   Transport Research Laboratory (2011) – Door to Door Journeys (PDF document)

2   Accessibility Action Plan: summary of responses (PDF document)

What We Do
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)

SEStran embarked on an ambitious initiative aimed at enhancing the predictability and reliability of bus travel through the implementation of a comprehensive network of Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI) screens across the entire region. Commencing in 2010, this involved collaborative efforts with various partners to establish a robust network comprising more than 200 screens strategically positioned at key travel hubs. These hubs encompass a diverse range of locations, including railway stations, park and ride facilities, hospitals, educational institutions such as colleges and universities, shopping centres, and major employment centres.

As part of its ongoing commitment to innovation and service improvement, SEStran recently engaged in a collaborative venture with the City of Edinburgh Council and Journeo. The objective of this partnership was to conceive and introduce a unified regional RTPI system, tailored to cater to the diverse transportation modes, namely buses, trains, and trams. This system aims to revolutionise the quality of information delivered through the public-facing regional screen network. By seamlessly integrating data from various transport operators and incorporating scheduled information, the new system strives to offer passengers an enhanced level of insight and convenience.

The system went live in December 2021, followed by the phased integration of operator data in the subsequent months. This milestone marked a significant leap forward in empowering passengers with real-time information, thereby enabling them to make informed decisions and experience a more seamless journey.

SEStran's dedication to enhancing the transportation experience extends beyond the realm of digital screens.

In collaboration with partner local authorities, the organisation is actively involved in an initiative to introduce new on-street signage across the entire region. This ongoing work, again executed in partnership with the experienced contractor Journeo, aims to provide clear and concise information to passengers at key points along their journeys throughout the region. This comprehensive approach, combining digital displays and physical signage, is poised to revolutionise the way individuals navigate the regional transportation landscape.
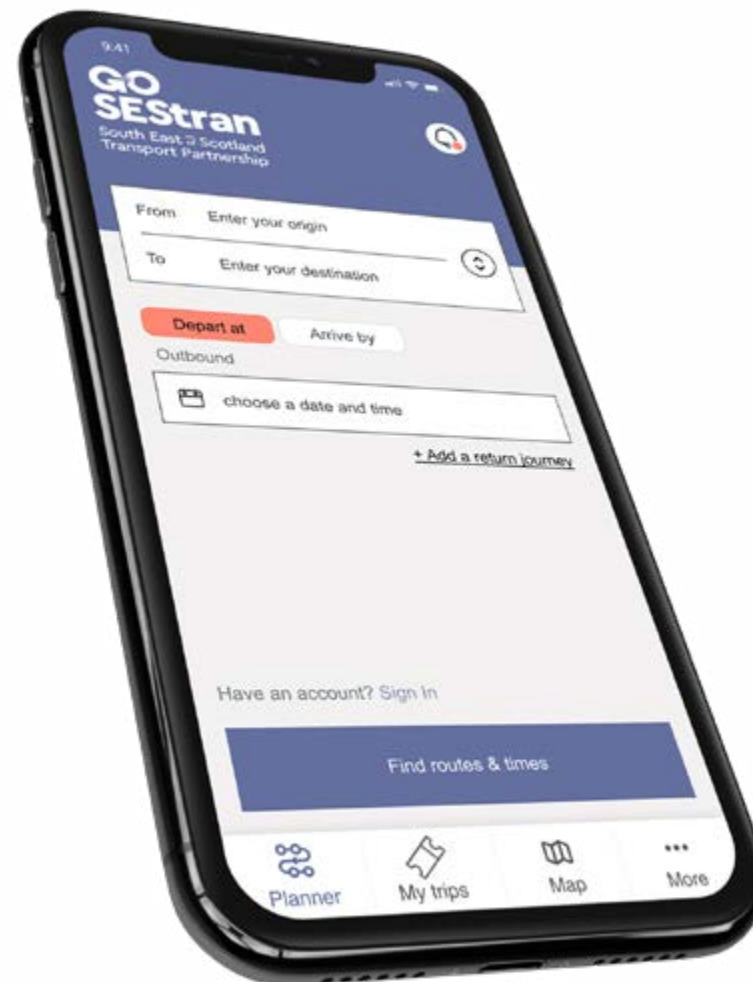
What We Do
GO SEStran project

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) seeks to unify all modes of transport in a digital environment, meaning that people can plan, book and pay for their journey using a single app.

SEStran were successful with a bid to Transport Scotland for the Maas Investment Fund and received £212,440 in September 2021. This was a third of the original bid, so led to an innovative approach of sharing the MaaS platform licence with Tactran. The GoSEStran app launched in July 2022, powered by Fuse Mobility. The app included integrations to various transport modes such as trains, buses, taxis, community transport and e-bikes. The GoSEStran app also has access to real time passenger information and a map to show the users the locations of park & ride, electric vehicle charging and journey hubs. The pilot was initially focused on East Lothian, and has over 1000 users on the app.

One objective in SEStran's bid was to test how Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and MaaS influence each other. After going out to procurement, SEStran awarded a contract to The Routing Company to work in partnership with Prentice Coaches to create a new DRT route in East Lothian which went live in March 2023. This new DRT service will also be integrated into the GoSEStran app.

SEStran were successful with a joint bid with Tactran to Smarter Choices Smarter Places to fund the licence and continued work on the GoSEStran pilot up to March 2024.

What We Do

SEStran Strategic Network Review

Cross Boundary Active Travel Routes, connecting people and places.

2022–23 saw the end of the partnership funding between Sustrans Scotland and SEStran, with a final allocation to the BioQuarter Active Travel Corridor project within the City of Edinburgh. The partnership with Sustrans has been very successful over nearly a decade – delivering a catalogue of projects over the years, resulting in on the ground improvements for active travel. While no formal partnership will exist in future, SEStran will continue to work with Sustrans and other active travel partners.

SEStran secured further funding from Transport Scotland for the development of routes across the Strategic Network, continuing development of routes in Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and West Lothian with detailed utilities and topographical survey work. These routes included Addiewell-Livingston; Larbert-

Falkirk, and Falkirk-Polmont. These detailed surveys will form part of the next phases of consultation and detailed design.

To enhance the understanding of strategic active travel movements across the region, a successful bid was made to secure multi-modal monitoring sensors.

These 'smart' sensors will distinguish between differing modes of travel and offer an informed picture to the suitability and design considerations for routes across the region. The sensors will be in place for up to 5 years to inform and monitor against planned infrastructure changes as they progress.

What We Do
GO e-Bike

GO e-Bike is a regional e-bike share programme with a growing number of locations across the South-East of Scotland. Launched in April 2017 with the aim of increasing usage and awareness 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 four sites in East Lothian and Midlothian.

Our community Go e-bike hubs were supported with refreshed e-bike fleets to continue to enable them to offer

e-bikes hires and trials to their local communities. As well as standard e-bikes, an adaptive e-bike which can be used by people with a range of disabilities and three e-cargo bikes were also provided to hubs.

What We Do

Working in Partnership with Cycling Scotland

SEStran's Regional Cycle Training and Development Officer (RCTDO) continued to support Bikeability Scotland Local Authority Co-ordinators. Delivery rates of Bikeability Scotland demonstrated an increase from the previous year. As at March 2023 three of the eight SEStran Local Authorities were on target to reaching delivery of Bikeability Scotland at 100% of their primary schools.

Capacity to deliver adult cycle training and Bikeability Scotland is being supported nationally with the provision of grant funding direct to delivery organisations and instructors.

Cycling Scotland

What We Do
Regional Rail Liaison Meeting

SEStran, along with Transport Scotland, Network Rail, ScotRail and Cross Border Train Operating Companies (TOCs) continued to engage via the quarterly South-East Scotland Regional Rail liaison meeting. The meetings centred on the key rail issues (timetabling, infrastructure development, accessibility and integration with other transport modes) within the SEStran region and are an opportunity to share information with key stakeholders to better understand problems, identify challenges and opportunities, and improve the delivery of rail services across the South-East of Scotland.

What We Do

East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA)

The Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA) works to secure investment, improve the passenger experience, improve capacity and reliability and shorten journey times on the East Coast Main Line.

ECMA is a cross-party group of Councils, Combined Authorities and Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships throughout the area served by the East Coast Main Line. Each has a responsibility for enabling economic growth in their own sections of the line – the backbone of the UK economy. The Consortium allows members to speak with a single voice.

The East Coast Main Line is one of the UK's most strategic rail routes. Stretching more than 500 miles, from Inverness and Aberdeen, through key stops at Edinburgh, Newcastle and York to London. A third of the UK population lives within 20 minutes of an East Coast Main Line station and together they deliver

41% of the UK's GDP[1].

Both SEStran's Chair and Partnership Director continue to represent the Regional Transport Partnerships (Tactran, Nestrans and Hitrans) with an interest in the east coast mainline as ECMA Vice Chair and Officer Group representative, respectively. Over the year, based on data from studies funded by the Consortium, the organisation has made a number of approaches to both governments to encourage increased investment in the line.

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1   The case for investment in the East Coast Main Line (PDF document)

What we do

The GO Forth Freight Strategy

The GO Forth Freight Strategy has been funded by Transport Scotland through the Local Rail Development Fund. The SEStran region is of significant economic value to the Scottish economy and is a major generator of freight movements.

This study looks to investigate existing freight movements, the barriers faced by multimodal freight terminals when trying to target and encourage customers to switch transport modes, and to evaluate the potential environmental benefits and commercial viability of sustainable freight/goods movements. It also acknowledges the key role that road freight plays and how it supports other modes such as rail freight. Therefore, interventions to support a more efficient road freight sector will also be explored.

This study has been delivered on behalf of SEStran and Forth Ports by consultants AECOM Ltd.

What We Do
The GO Forth Freight Strategy Cont'd

Using STAG principles, the aim of the study is to explore the development of sustainable multimodal freight gateways and potential for freight consolidation centres at key locations to maximise the sustainable movement of freight over regional, national and local movements.

The completed Case for Change was approved by Transport Scotland in December 2021 and work began on the Options Appraisal and sifting in February 2022. This work will continue over the next 6 months.

The Preliminary Appraisal will examine Individual Options and Packaged Options associated with helping promote more sustainable, efficient, and reliable freight movements for the SEStran area, whilst helping promote the region as a competitive international freight hub. In line with Transport Scotland's Guidance on Transport Appraisal (STAG) as well as being informed by best practice, each identified intervention will be robustly appraised against the identified Transport Planning Objectives (in the Case for Change), its perceived Strategic Fit, the latest STAG criteria as well as against Feasibility, Affordability and Public Acceptability.

In addition to the detailed evidence base as set out within the Case for Change, informing the appraisal process are the outcomes of a significant engagement process that has been undertaken with a variety of stakeholders. The outcomes from this stakeholder engagement have been invaluable in informing the appraisal of the deliverability of possible interventions. But also, in helping with the selection of interventions for the next stage of the Detailed Appraisal.

What We Do
Newburgh Transport Appraisal

The Newburgh Train Station Group (NTSG), SEStran and Fife Council, with the support of SYSTRA Ltd, are working together to develop proposals to improve sustainable transport to and from Newburgh.

The project builds on work already undertaken by the NTSG and focusses on improving links to and from Perth, Edinburgh and Fife. It follows the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG).

The first stage in the process was to prepare an evidence-based 'Pre-Appraisal' (Case for Change). This collated relevant socio-demographic and transport information for the study area, developed specific Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) for the wider study, and collated an initial list of potential interventions that might address the identified problems and opportunities.

The next stage of the STAG process the 'Initial Appraisal', which was completed in December 2020. This evaluated the potential interventions in more detail by qualitatively assessing them against the five STAG criteria of Environments, Economy, Safety, Integration and Accessibility/Social Inclusion. The appraisal also considers the options in the context of Feasibility, Affordability, and Public Acceptability.

The outcomes and conclusions of the third and final stage of the study, the 'Detailed Options Appraisal', are currently under consideration by Transport Scotland. The Detailed Appraisal Report assessed the interventions in greater detail against the STAG criteria of Environment, Economy, Safety, Integration and Accessibility/Social Inclusion and also considered the options in the context of Cost to Government and Risk and Uncertainty. The Detailed Options Appraisal Report and Executive Summary can be viewed on the project website below.

The Newburgh Train Station Campaign

What We Do
Levenmouth Rail Link

SEStran has supported the Levenmouth Reconnected project, which guides the development of the new Levenmouth rail link and associated bus and active travel transport linkages. The Levenmouth rail extension, involving a new stop and station at Cameron Bridge as well as the new station at Leven, is due to be operational in 2023. SEStran' has been involved in the project since the initial Sustainable Transport Study was undertaken by Transport Scotland.

During 2020–21, SEStran commissioned work, in partnership with Fife Council, to identify funding for a feasibility study for Mobility Hubs within the Levenmouth Reconnected project, following on from the publication of SEStran's Mobility Hubs Strategic Study published in Spring 2020.

Parts of the Levenmouth area are currently ranked amongst the most deprived in Scotland (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – SIMD 2020).

Simpler and more sustainable travel options will make it easier for people to reach hospitals, schools and visit other areas of the country as well as giving better access to Levenmouth, and SEStran's involvement over the past year has focussed on ensuring that connections between different transport modes are maximised.

Construction is well underway with the new line due to be opened in spring 2024.

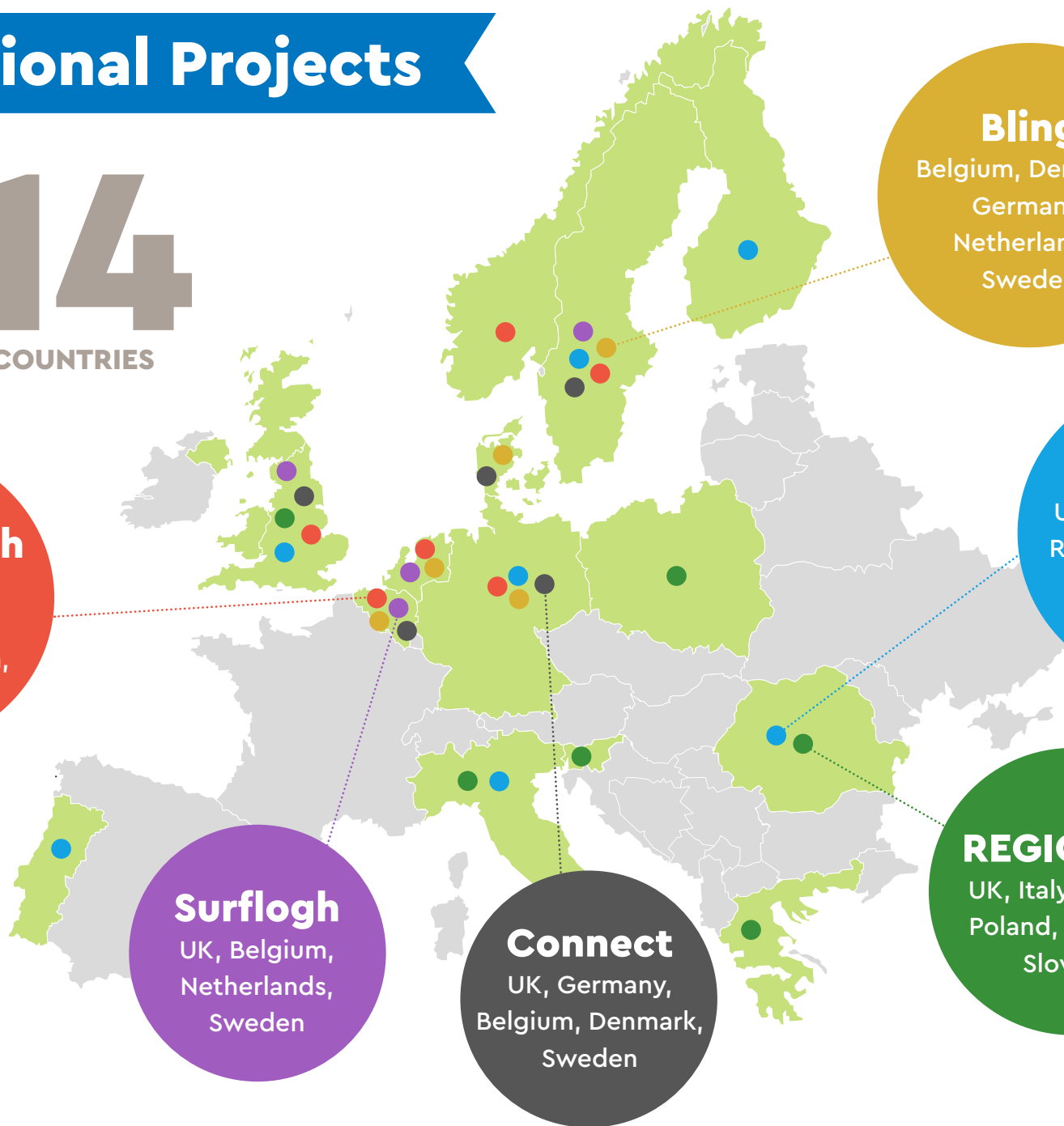Transport Scotland – Levenmouth on track for rail investment

International Projects

6 PROJECTS

14 COUNTRIES

Bling
Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden

PriMaaS
UK, Portugal, Italy, Romania, Germany, Finland, Sweden

SHARE-North
UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Norway

Surflogh
UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden

Connect
UK, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden

REGIO-Mob
UK, Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, Slovenia

International Projects

Throughout 2022/23, SEStran continued to participate in EU funded projects, progressing and testing innovative solutions for Mobility as a Service, shared mobility, last mile / urban freight, smart and secure freight consolidation, as well as reviewing the effectiveness of regional transport policies implemented during Covid-19 travel restrictions. Working closely with European partners and contributing gained knowledge and ideas is of immeasurable benefit to the delivery of the RTS and the transport system in the region. SEStran's involvement in EU funded activity is agreed until project conclusion (by mid 2023) and funding is underwritten by UK Treasury.

PriMaaS: Prioritising Mobility-as-a-Service

(an Interreg Europe project)

The PriMaaS project focuses on 'prioritising low carbon mobility services to improve accessibility of citizens. SEStran is representing the region in a consortium of ten European transport partners to promote Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) through policy development.

SEStran hosted a meeting of the PriMaaS partners in Edinburgh, between 4th and 6th April 2022. The event was very successful in continuing the exchange of experience and knowledge between SEStran and European partners on MaaS and related topics such as DRT.

In addition, in the current year SEStran completed, with the assistance of consultants IBI Group, one of the key deliverables of the Project, which was an Action Plan showing how lessons learned

from other partners' experience had contributed to policy changes on MaaS in the SEStran area.

More information can be found on PriMaaS – Interreg Europe project website

International Projects Cont'd

CONNECT: Connecting North Sea Region's TEN-T nodes and supporting intermodal freight movement in the North Sea Region through smart efficiency enhancements.

As a key milestone within the scope of Work Package 3 of the Interreg North Sea CONNECT project, SEStran proudly announced the successful completion of the comprehensive report titled 'Bottlenecks in intermodal networks of the North Sea Region'.

This comprehensive report is an integral component of the project's objectives, aiming to foster enhanced connectivity and efficiency within intermodal networks across the North Sea Region. The efforts of SEStran, in collaboration with project partners, have culminated in this report, which presents a thorough analysis of bottlenecks and challenges that impede the fluidity of transport networks within the region.

Interreg
North Sea Region
North Sea CONNECT
European Regional Development Fund

EUROPEAN UNION

International Projects Cont'd

This report takes on an additional role, serving as a complement to the 'Forth Inland Waterway Freight Study: Preliminary Options Appraisal.' This strategic linkage is designed to offer an improved spatial context and an understanding of the political landscape, which is amplified by the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. This relationship between spatial context and political dynamics provides an interesting backdrop against which the proposed measures can be evaluated.

At the heart of this endeavour lies the intention to facilitate sustainable intermodal freight and logistics movements within South-East Scotland. The 'Forth Inland Waterway Freight Study' offers a comprehensive examination of potential pathways for the freight sector to transition toward more sustainable models. This transition is executed with a keen awareness of the existing road freight infrastructure's

significance, not only within the bounds of Scotland but across the broader expanse of the United Kingdom.

In essence, these collaborative efforts undertaken by SEStran, as part of the Interreg North Sea CONNECT project, are instrumental in paving the way for improved regional connectivity, efficiency, and sustainability. The completion of the 'Bottlenecks in intermodal networks of the North Sea Region' report and its harmonious partnership with the 'Forth Inland Waterway Freight Study' reflect SEStran's dedication to informed decision-making and transformative solutions in the ever-evolving landscape of transportation and logistics.

More information can be found on the About page of the Interreg North Sea CONNECT webiste.

International Projects Cont'd

SURFLOGH: Sustainable Urban Logistics Hubs

As part of the SURFLOGH project, Edinburgh Napier University and SEStran have collaborated to delve into the realm of urban sustainable logistics. This collaborative effort encompasses an in-depth exploration of strategies aimed at establishing sustainable solutions for both the first and last mile in urban freight movement. These strategies encompass a range of innovative approaches, including consolidation depots, locker systems, and dynamic mobile consolidation options that leverage a diverse array of transportation methods such as cycle logistics, drones, automated vehicles, and electric vans.

The burgeoning trend of macro-online shopping and internet-driven commerce has led to a surge in smaller volume and shorter distance freight movements. These movements have

acquired greater significance within the logistics landscape, largely as a result of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures. It's evident that the volume of these smaller-scale movements has increased significantly, underscoring the need for tailored and sustainable approaches to address the challenges they pose.

Maintaining a reliance on traditional heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and conventional internal combustion engine-powered 'white vans' for urban logistics can lead to a compounding of negative externalities, notably congestion and emissions. As business volume continues to escalate, so too do these adverse effects. This compels a shift toward more sustainable modes of freight transportation to curb these impacts and forge a path towards a more environmentally conscious future.

To establish a truly sustainable transport ecosystem, it is crucial to comprehend the triggers and strategies that can

prompt businesses and consumers to transition to more environmentally friendly freight transport methods. This entails not only concentrating on the last mile of the logistics chain but also seizing the opportunity to influence modal shift earlier in the supply chain. Thus, transforming the first mile into the sole mile becomes an innovative and potent approach to sustainable urban logistics.

The collaborative efforts between Edinburgh Napier University and SEStran within the SURFLOGH project signal a proactive approach toward tackling the complexities of urban sustainable logistics. By exploring diverse solutions, optimising the first and last mile, and instigating a shift towards greener transportation modalities, this work is aligned with the RTS aims of constructing a more sustainable and resilient transport system for urban freight movements.

The next stage of SURFLOGH will look at combining the first phase outputs

International Projects Cont'd

based on the project pilots and research, building on ideas of consolidation centres, locker systems, delivery vehicles and locally/community focused networks and linking up local businesses with a wider community focused clientele, and local government with the ability to offer a range of local produce combined with 'out of area goods' consolidated and delivered in one package. This work is due to be complete by May 2023.

The development site at Perth West[1] will be used as a location for this work. Stage one of Perth West includes a city consolidation/last mile delivery centre and a mobility hub. These will be connected physically and digitally to an active travel programme leading to a series of established communities and the city centre. An extension of the Broxden Business Park and a new housing neighbourhood also form part of stage one.

The aim is to connect all these uses to a smart renewable energy network. This will be Scotland's first green, city 'living lab'.

More information can be found on the [About page](#) of the SURFLOGH website.

BLING: Blockchain in Government

In 2018 SEStran entered the EU Interreg North Sea Region (NSR) project BLockchain IN Government (BLING). BLING builds upon the substantial investments by the EU, national governments, corporations, SMEs and wider networks to provide one of the first dedicated platforms to bring blockchain into local and regional services. BLING provides a unique combination of public authorities, knowledge institutions and SMEs who will work to accelerate the adoption and

deployment of blockchain across the NSR to enable the creation and delivery of the next generation of smart services for citizens, governments, and SMEs.

SEStran collaborated with the Centre for Design Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, exploring opportunities for practical transport focused applications for the technology with the development of a pilot project in the South-East of Scotland. The pilot project, GeoPact, used prototyping to create Location Based Smart Contracts – agreements about the location and relations of smart objects in space that allow conditions such as proximity or co-location to trigger actions like financial transfers or opening physical locks. These systems are backed with blockchains, to explore new techniques for making location data secure without being invasive. The pilot ran a series of tests looking at the possible use of technology in the logistics sector.

In collaboration with its BLING partners, SEStran has successfully produced a

International Projects Cont'd

comprehensive report assessing the usefulness of Blockchain technology.

One of the most prominent opportunities lies in Scotland's ability to showcase its commitment and aspirations by formulating a dedicated Blockchain Strategy, akin to the existing digital strategy and AI strategy. This strategic move would effectively demonstrate the inherent value and untapped potential of blockchain technology, not just within the public sector but across various sectors. This concerted effort would raise awareness, fostering adoption and inspiring real-world use cases.

The development of an adoption-focused strategy also carries the potential to yield policy effects over the long term. Blockchain technology holds the promise of generating positive social impacts by acting as a catalyst for equality and inclusivity within society. By enabling initiatives like free or subsidised transportation, and the creation of loyalty programmes, and grants, blockchain

can significantly benefit marginalised populations. Additionally, these incentives could extend their positive influence on realms such as health and well-being by promoting modes of transportation that encourage active travel, such as Bike Share schemes.

A pivotal aspect of blockchain's potential lies in its capacity to bridge the gap toward integrated transportation solutions. This technology offers a foundation for the creation of multi-modal transport networks, facilitating coordinated planning, scheduling, and passenger movement across various transportation modes. This, in turn, opens the door to opportunities like multi-operator ticketing systems and seamless integration of services.

In the wake of this insightful report, SEStran is poised to capitalise on its findings. Building upon this foundation, SEStran will delve into the untapped potential of Blockchain technology, envisioning projects that present

compelling business cases. The organisation aims to craft proposals that explore proof of concepts and pilot projects, with the goal of securing further funding to drive these initiatives forward.

In essence, the completion of this report, in partnership with BLING, signifies SEStran's forward-thinking approach to harnessing the potential of Blockchain technology. By leveraging the outlined opportunities, the organisation is primed to steer Scotland toward a future enriched by innovative strategies, inclusive policies, and advanced transportation solutions.

More information can be found on the BLING website.

International Projects Cont'd

REGIO-Mob (Extension): (an Interreg Europe project)

REGIO-Mob is an Interreg Europe project that ran from April 2016 to March 2020. In September 2021, funding was approved funding for additional activities (under Interreg Europe's 5th call for additional activities) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The REGIO-Mob extension seeks to exchange best practices around sustainable mobility measures that were adopted across the partners' regions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2021 meetings were held online to identify sustainable mobility good practices implemented in response to COVID-19 across all the project partners.

5 good practices in the SEStran region have been identified and were submitted to the lead partner:

- Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund
- Spaces for People programme
- DRT proposed trial
- South East of Scotland Transport Transition Group
- Thistle Assistance mask exemption sticker

To facilitate exchange of good practice knowledge three meetings are arranged to allow presentations on these good practices. Partners from Poland and Romania shared their experiences in March 2022 and further exchange events in Slovenia and Edinburgh were planned.

Appendix: Annual Accounts and Reports

Annual Accounts

SEStran's Annual Accounts can be accessed online here:

Annual Accounts 2022–23 (PDF document)

Climate Change Report

Part four of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on public bodies to act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets, to help deliver any statutory climate change adaptation programme, and in a way that they consider is most sustainable. The act came into force on 1 January 2011. Following the introduction of an Order by Scottish Government in 2015, all 151 public bodies that appear on the 'Major Player' list must submit an annual report to the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN), detailing their compliance with the climate change duties.

Cimate Change Report 2022 (PDF document)

Public Services Reform Act

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (Sections 31 and 32) imposes duties on Scottish public bodies to publish financial information as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year. This statement is produced annually by the South-East of SEStran to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act. It can be accessed online here:

Public Services Reform Act 2023

Community Empowerment Act

SEStran is a listed public authority under the Community Empowerment Act and one of our duties under the Act is to consider requests from the community. Participation Requests can help groups from the local community (a community-controlled body) to liaise with SEStran and other listed authorities on improving issues in an area. We welcome requests from groups that can aid SEStran in delivering its strategic functions in the

South-East of Scotland. To gain more information on how to place a request, please follow the link:

Participation Requests page – SEStran website

Public Records Act

SEStran is required under the terms of Section 1 of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 to produce a Records Management Plan, setting out proper arrangements for the management of its records and to submit this to the Keeper of the Records for approval. SEStran submitted its RMP in January 2011 and it is available here:

Records Management Plan (PDF document)

GO SEStran

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