

# SEStran Partnership Board Minutes

10.00am, Friday, 14 March 2025

Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, Edinburgh, and Microsoft Teams

<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organisation Title</u></b>
	Cllr Sally Pattle (Chair)	West Lothian Council
	Cllr Russell Imrie (Vice Chair)	Midlothian Council
	Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie (Vice Chair)	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Fiona Law	Clackmannanshire Council
	Cllr Kayleigh O'Neill	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Stephen Jenkinson	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Margaret Anslow	Falkirk Council
	Cllr James Leslie	Fife Council
	Cllr Jenny Linehan	Scottish Borders Council
	Simon Hindshaw	Non-Councillor Member
	Doreen Steele	Non-Councillor Member
	Alistair Couper	Non-Councillor Member
	Linda Bamford	Non-Councillor Member
	John Scott	Non-Councillor Member
	Geoff Duke	Non-Councillor Member
<b><u>In Attendance</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organisation Title</u></b>
	Andrew Rose (Clerk)	City of Edinburgh Council
	Iain Shaw	City of Edinburgh Council
	Jamie Robertson	City of Edinburgh Council
	Deborah Paton	City of Edinburgh Council
	Peter Forsyth	East Lothian Council
	Ian King	East Lothian Council
	John Mitchell	Fife Council
	Anna Herriman	Midlothian Council
	Graeme Johnstone	Scottish Borders Council
	Nicola Gill	West Lothian Council
	Brian Butler	SEStran
	Alisdair Brown	SEStran
	Jess Carey	SEStran
	Angela Chambers	SEStran
	Cheryl Fergie	SEStran
	Andrew Ferguson	SEStran
	Sarah Junik	SEStran
	Sandra Lavergne	SEStran

	Beth Harley-Jepson	SEStran
	Michael Melton	SEStran
	Rachael Murphy	SEStran
	Rebecca Smith	SEStran
<b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organisation Title</u></b>
	Cllr John McMillan (Vice Chair)	East Lothian Council
	Cllr Ian Cameron	Fife Council
	Cllr Jane Cox	Scottish Borders Council
	Cllr Tom Conn	West Lothian Council
	Kate Sherry	Non-Councillor Member
	Callum Hay	Non-Councillor Member

## 1. Order of Business

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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and indicated that the order of business would be as listed in the circulated agenda.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

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The Clerk read out the apologies which had been received, as detailed above.

## 3. Declarations of Interest

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There were no declarations of interest.

## A1. Minutes

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The Chair highlighted that, at the meeting of the Partnership Board held on 6 December 2024, Board Member attendance had, during the meeting, fallen below that required for a quorum as detailed in Standing Order 6.6. The consequence of this was that no further decisions could be taken by the Board thereafter. The Chair further added that the only item of business which had required a decision to be made following the point at which a quorum was not present related to the Timetable of Meetings. To avoid a delay in setting meeting dates, the Partnership Director had used his delegated authority, in accordance with Standing Order 40, to approve and set these dates.

Councillor Imrie wished to place on record his thanks to Councillor John McMillan for standing in at a very late stage to Chair the SEStran Performance and Audit Committee of 28 February 2025.

### Decision

- 1) That the minute of the SEStran Partnership Board of 6 December 2024 be approved as a correct record;
- 2) That the minute of the SEStran Performance and Audit Committee of 28 February 2025 be approved as a correct record, and
- 3) That it be noted that the Partnership Director had used his delegated authority, in accordance with Standing Order 40, to approve the Timetable of Meetings for 2025.

## **A2(a). Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Indicative Financial Plan 2026/27**

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The Board considered a report by the Treasurer seeking approval of the revenue budget for 2025/26 and presenting, for information, an indicative financial plan for 2026/27.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Iain Shaw and all other officers who continued to support the Board.

### **Decision**

- 1) That the proposed Core budget of £852,000 for 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- 2) That the proposed Projects budget for 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 2(a) of the report, be approved;
- 3) That it be noted that financial planning for 2026/27 will be developed throughout 2025 for review by the Partnership Board in December 2025, and
- 4) That it be noted that the proposed budget is subject to a number of risks, and that all income and expenditure will be monitored, with updates reported to each Partnership meeting.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted.)

## **A2(b). Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26**

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The Board considered a report by the Treasurer which presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26.

### **Decision**

That the continuation of the current arrangements, as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted.)

## **A2(c). Finance Officer's Report**

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The Board considered a report by the Treasurer which presented the third update on the financial performance of the Partnership's Core Budgets for 2024/25, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Partnership. The report also presented an analysis of financial performance to the end of January 2025.

### **Decision**

- 1) That the forecast of a balanced Core revenue budget for 2024/25 be noted, and
- 2) That the forecast underspend on the Projects budget of £83,000, after future lease commitments are met, be noted and that the actual underspend will be confirmed at the financial year-end and carried forward to 2025/26.

(Reference – report by the Treasurer, submitted.)

### **A3. GO SESTRAN**

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Prior to consideration of this item of business, the Chair ruled that, in accordance with Standing Order 20, in her view there had been a material change in circumstance since the decision made by the Board on this matter on 22 September 2024.

The Board considered a joint report by the Project Officer and the SEStran Consultant detailing the background to decisions which the Board had made in respect of GoSEStran, most recently in March and September 2024, and further detailing that confirmation had not been received on the availability of long-term funding for the project, which had been a criteria which the Board had determined should be met for the project to continue. The report also provided a timeline of activity that had been completed on the project to date.

#### **Decision**

- 1) That, as the Chair had ruled that there had been a material change in circumstances since the decision made by the Board at its meeting held on 22 September 2024, in accordance with Standing Order 20, the GoSEStran project and associated app be discontinued from 31 March 2025, and
- 2) That a review of the project be carried out at Performance and Audit Strategy and Delivery Oversight Sub-Group.

(Reference – Joint report by the Project Officer and the SEStran Consultant Manager, submitted)

### **A4. Partnership Director's Update**

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The Partnership Director gave a presentation to the Board on (a) Equalities Outcomes, (b) Council Requisitions, (c) a Cross-Forth Ferry project, and (d) ongoing national conversations.

In reference to Equalities Outcomes, the Business Manager informed the Board that there was a statutory duty upon it to formally approve its Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Equalities report and that, this required to be completed by 30 April 2025. The report was not yet available for consideration by the Board and there was not another scheduled meeting before the statutory deadline, therefore, it was proposed to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, 23 April at 2pm, to consider and, if appropriate, approve the report. The Business Manager also outlined the consultation that would take place prior to the Board's consideration.

#### **Decision**

- (1) That the Partnership Director's Update Presentation be noted, and
- (2) That a special meeting of the Board be held on 23 April 2025 at 2pm to consider the Board's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Equalities Report which required to be submitted by the statutory deadline of 30 April 2025.

(Reference – Presentation by Partnership Director, and oral update by the Business Manager, submitted)

## **A5. Business Plan and Annual Report**

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The Board considered a joint report by the Strategy Manager and the Communications and Marketing Officer informing the Board on progress of the Annual Report for financial year 2024/25 and the Business Plan for 2025/26 to 2027/28.

The Strategy Manager gave a presentation of the online tool that was available for the development of the Business Plan and confirmed that assistance was available to Board Members following the meeting if they required help with navigating the tool.

### **Decision**

- (1) That any comments or questions which individual Board Members may have on the Annual Report could be directed to the Communications and Marketing Officer;
- (2) That any comments or questions which individual Board Members may have on the Business Plan could be directed to the Strategy Manager;
- (3) That, following publication, Board Members are encouraged to share and circulate the Annual Report to their network and contacts to help raise awareness of the work of SEStran;
- (4) That preparation work be undertaken on the presentation of information to external audiences on “SEStran @ 20” to mark the twentieth anniversary of the creation of SEStran.

(Reference – Joint report by the Strategy Manager and the Communications and Marketing Officer, submitted)

## **A6. Appointments to the Performance and Audit Committee and Sub-Committee**

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The Board considered a report by the Programme Manager seeking approval for the appointment to the Performance and Audit Committee and the Project and Strategy Delivery Oversight Group, of Councillor Tom Conn, West Lothian Council, and Councillor Stephen Jenkins, City of Edinburgh Council, following nominations from each respective council in that regards.

### **Decision**

- 1) That Councillors Conn and Jenkinson be appointed to the Performance and Audit Committee, and
- 2) That the membership and remit of the Project and Strategy Delivery Oversight Group be noted.

(Reference – report by the Programme Manager, submitted.)

## **A7. 20% Reduction in Car Use**

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The Board considered a report by the Partnership Director providing an update to the Board on developments since its last meeting and providing assurance that a revised timetable would allow interested parties to express their views as part of a future consultation process.

### **Decision**

- 1) That it be noted that the 20% Reduction in Car Use by 2030 target was being reviewed;
- 2) That it be noted that the Route Map would now not be published until Spring 2026, and
- 3) That it be noted that local authorities, CoSLA, Scottish Collaboration of Transportation Specialists (SCOTS) and Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) would be consulted prior to the Route Map being finalised.

(Reference – report by the Programme Director, submitted.)

## **A8. Asset Management Strategy**

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The Board considered a report by the Partnership Director seeking approval of the draft Asset Management Strategy and explaining that, as part of its External Audit of SEStran's accounts for financial year 23/24, Audit Scotland had recommended that SEStran should undertake a full review of its asset management procedures, ensuring that the asset register fully reflects the assets in use.

### **Decision**

- 1) That the Asset Management Strategy be approved;
- 2) That the proposed Revised Asset Accounting Policy, detailed at paragraph 3.5 of the report, be approved, and
- 3) That it be noted that any further update to Accounting Policies required for adoption of International Financial Reporting Standard 16 (IFRS16) would be reported to the Board when the unaudited Annual Accounts were presented in June 2025.

(Reference – report by the Programme Director, submitted.)

## **B1. Communications Strategy**

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The Board received an update presentation from the Communications and Marketing Officer.

### **Decision**

That the presentation by the Communications and Marketing Officer be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

## **B2. People and Place 2025/26 Update**

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The Board received a report from the Programme Manager on the progress of the grant funds approved by it at its meeting held on 6 December 2024 and the updates made to the scoring and eligibility criteria as delegated to the Partnership Director by the Board at that meeting.

### **Decision**

That the content of the report, including the changes made to the grant fund criteria under delegated authority, as detailed in Section 3 of the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

## **B3. Climate Change Duties Report**

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The Board received a report from the Project Officer providing a summary of SEStran's carbon emissions for 2023/24, explaining any changes to the levels for the previous year, and providing a summary of the targets for 2024/25.

### **Decision**

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Project Officer, submitted)

## **B4. Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan**

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The Board received a report from the Strategy Manager informing it of progress of the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan.

### **Decision**

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Strategy Manager, submitted)

## **B5. People and Place Grant Awards**

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The Board received a report from the Programme Manager informing it of variations to the SEStran People and Place grant awards.

### **Decision**

That the contents of the report, and the variations to the SEStran People and Place grant awards, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

## **B6. Contracts Register**

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The Board received a report from the Programme Manager presenting the Partnership's Contract Register for noting, in line with a commitment to transparency in procurement and as per Contract Standing Orders.

### **Decision**

That the Contract Register, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

## **B7. Risk Register**

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The Board received a report from the Business Manager providing the quarterly update on SEStran's strategic risk register.

### **Decision**

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Business Manager, submitted)

## **B8. Projects and Strategy Performance**

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The Board received a report from the Programme Manager, which had been previously considered by the Performance and Audit Committee at its meeting held on 28 February 2025, providing an update on the future reporting plans, as well as performance of the Partnership's strategy and project workstreams in quarter 4 to date.

### **Decision**

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

## **B9. External Audit – Annual Audit Plan 2024/25**

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The Board received a report from the Treasurer presenting the External Auditor's Annual Audit Plan for 2024/25.

### **Decision**

That the External Audit Annual Audit Plan 2024/25, attached as an appendix to the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Treasurer, submitted)

At the conclusion of business, the Chair informed the Board that this meeting would be the last one which Councillor Law would be attending as she had changed her portfolio at Clackmannanshire Council. The Chair thanked Councillor Law for her attendance and support during her time on the Board.



The Chair also introduced Alistair Brown and Jess Caley who had recently been recruited as officers to SEStran.