SEStran Partnership Board Meeting

10am, Friday 20 June 2025
Dunedin Room, City Chambers, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ
& Microsoft Teams

Agenda

1. **ORDER OF BUSINESS**
2. **APOLOGIES**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4. **PRESENTATION**
   People and Place – 24/25 Programme Evaluation – by Claire Colquhoun, Julia Allard and Oliver Harte of Urban Foresight

AGENDA A – POINTS FOR DECISION

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:
The date of the next meeting is **Friday 26 September 2025**

1. **Order of Business**

2. **Apologies**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

SEStran People and Place Programme

Monitoring and evaluation findings

Urban Foresight

Urban Foresight is the UK's leading place-based innovation consultancy.

We work on projects across Scotland and the UK that aim to improve sustainability, wellbeing, and prosperity.

We worked with SEStran to evaluate their People and Place Programme for 2024/25.

What is the SEStran People and Place Programme?

Promoting active travel behaviour change across the South-East of Scotland

- ✓ Delivers measures that encourage and enable more people to walk, wheel, cycle and use other sustainable transport modes more often
- ✓ Raises awareness of the benefits of active travel to many other people, making them more likely to change in future
- ✓ Covers the region's communities, schools, workplaces, and residential settings

- → Contributes to delivering the Regional Transport Strategy
- → Targets four themes: Schools and Young People, Workplaces, Accessibility and Inclusion, Capacity and Capability Building within public sector and community organisations

2024/25 was a transition year

urbanforesight.com
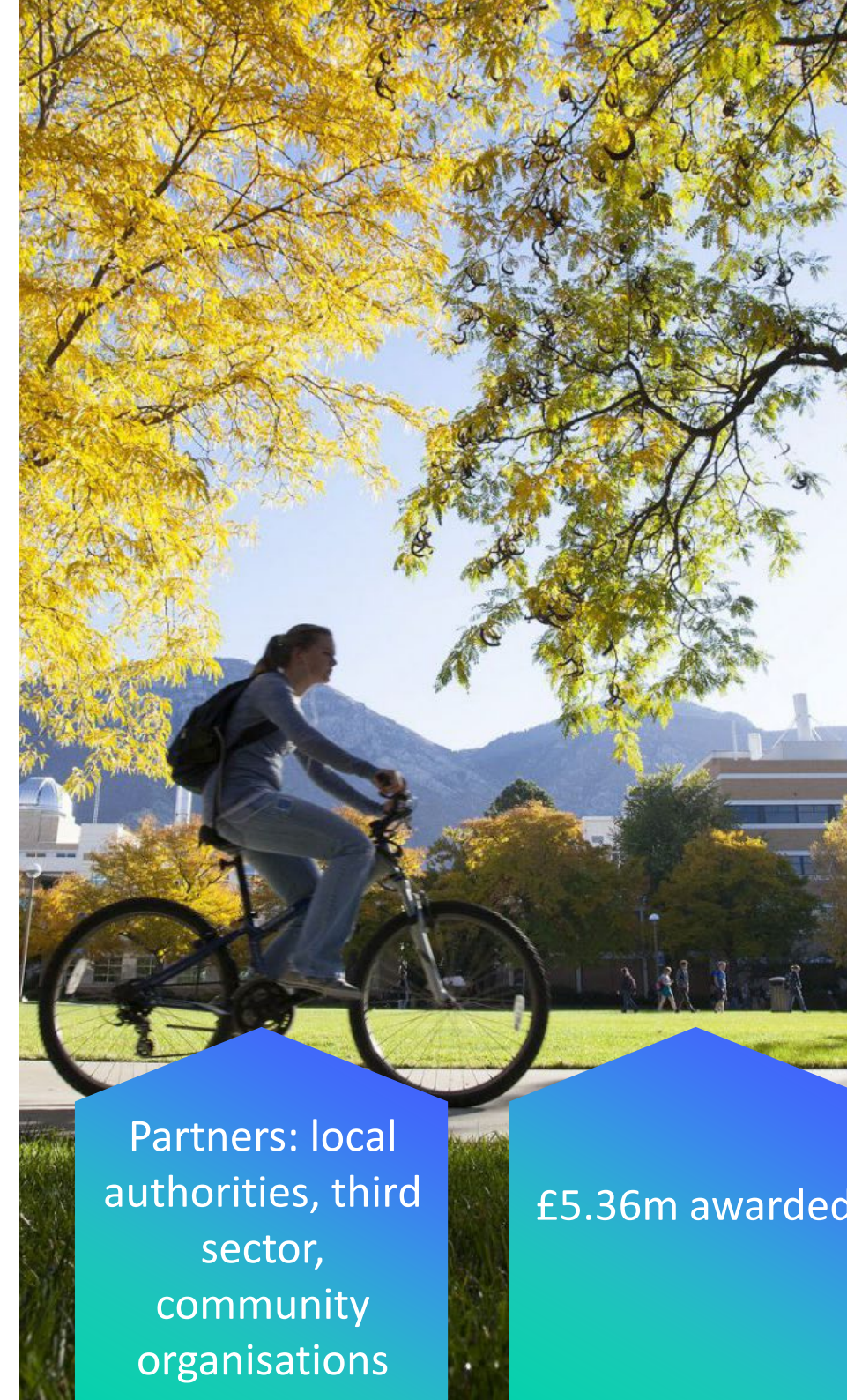
Partners: local authorities, third sector, community organisations

£5.36m awarded

> There is a young person who lives at home with their mum. They are a young carer and 'school refuser', travelling on the bus was too daunting for them, and walking was too far, especially on dark mornings.
>
> Through FEL, they received a bike, helmet, and lock, giving them the independence to support at home, travel to school, and participate in other school activities. Since receiving the bike, they report feeling much healthier and confident.
>
> They have joined the school drama group and now support younger learners with complex needs! They are now more engaged in school daily, thanks to their own travel plan."

Our role in the Programme Evaluation of the SEStran People and Place Plan

Analyse SEStran's grant management role, including:

→ The alignment of funding with the People and Place Plan objectives.

→ The efficiency of the grant distribution process.

→ The effectiveness of SEStran's new approach to funding.

Evaluate the outcomes and impacts of the funded projects by:

→ Developing a formal Theory of Change and logic models for measuring project impacts and outcomes.

→ Identifying successful project delivery in line with the programme's objectives and opportunities for future funding.

→ Identifying opportunities to improving future monitoring approaches.

Carry out an audit of delivered projects against the grant conditions, assuring that:

→ Financial agreements and T&Cs have been met.

→ Funding has been spent in line with original proposals.

→ Project delivery complies with the scope of the Plan and wider strategic aims (e.g. Regional Transport Strategy).

Programme evaluation

Methodology

1/ Develop theories of change

2/ Collect and gather data

3/ Analyse data

How does theory of change support our work?

There are three questions to consider when developing an evaluation approach:

1/ What needs to be measured?

2/ What types of data need to be collected?

3/ How can data be collected?

Theory of change helps us understand what should be assessed

INPUTS

ACTIVITIES

OUTPUTS

Inputs, activities and outputs should be monitored to keep a record of how the project is progressing / has progressed.

OUTCOMES

IMPACTS

Outcomes and impacts should be converted into appropriate indicators and measured.

Data collection

Project monitoring data:

In addition to quarterly reports, received range of data including:

→ Participant questionnaire results

→ Marketing content and press releases

→ The reach of online content

→ Financial and spending information

Stories of change:

30-minute semi structured interviews with partner project leads:

→ Discussed the impacts they have seen firsthand

→ Focused on impacts not visible in the monitoring data

→ Gathered feedback on challenges of current monitoring approach

Findings – Active Travel Framework indicators

✅ Positive change

→ Proportion of short everyday journeys by walking, wheeling, and cycling

→ Attitudes towards/propensity to walk, cycle, or wheel

→ Proportion of journeys to school by active modes

→ Frequency of walking and cycling for pleasure/exercise

→ Perceptions of safety when walking, wheeling, or cycling

⚠️ Insufficient data

→ Proportion of people identifying barriers to active travel

Findings – Capacity and Capability Building

🔍 Observed change:

→ Development of strategic planning and behaviour change frameworks

→ Dedicated staffing and increased organisational capacity

→ Community empowerment and local delivery

→ Sustained behaviour changes in workplaces

→ Increased cross-departmental and community engagement

Recommendations – MUST DO

1/
Standardise data collection tools and templates and capability

2/
Introduce outcomes and indicators to measure capacity and capability

Recommendations – SHOULD DO

3/
Require equality, diversity, inclusion and follow-up data collection

4/
Improve data quality through training and support

5/
Implement a change control and audit trail

6/
Develop case studies (testimonials)

Recommendations – COULD DO

7/
Introduce a centralised digital reporting portal

8/
Expand indicator coverage to capture wider impacts

9/
Facilitate peer learning and data sharing

10/
Value for Money comparison

Grant management

Grant management findings 1/2

SEStran's first year administering the People and Place Programme marked a significant change in how active travel behaviour change funding was distributed by Transport Scotland.

→ Organisations were extremely positive about their working relationships with SEStran.

→ Quarterly reports are easy to complete and effectively demonstrated project's progress and challenges.

→ The quarterly claims process is manageable, though sometimes administratively burdensome.

→ Delays in receiving grant offer letters and payments created challenges for some

"We've been able to discuss changes in our work or plans in an open and supportive manner with SEStran and adapt our budget or approach where needed within the scope of the funding."

"They have it right in terms of meetings to discuss things- other RTPs don't do this. SEStran keeps up to date. It means we can be nimble and make the most of the money. There is a good trust between us and them as a funder, so we can adapt the programme to deliver, but take into account what has changed."

Grant management findings 2/2

- Quarterly reporting requirements are proportionate and useful.

- Flexible and pragmatic approach to managing changes.

- More opportunities for knowledge sharing and networking in the programme.

Grant management: Recommendations

1/ Implement a change control form, especially for more complex changes, such as capital to revenue

2/ Include a 'running total' column in claims form and provide clearer guidance on submission requirements

3/ Knowledge sharing and networking events for local authorities and funded organisations

4/ Provide feedback on level of detail required for quarterly reports

5/ Investigate the use of a portal, or other online grant management system

Part III:

Audit

Approach

→ This was not a formal financial audit. The aim was to provide a high-level assessment of whether grant funds were used appropriately and activities aligned with grant agreements.

→ 10 projects were randomly selected for the assessment, ensuring that there was good geographical spread, projects of varying costs, delivery partners, and at least one project from each theme.

→ Assessed information provided by SEStran, including quarterly reports, claims forms, email correspondence, grant agreements.

→ Where necessary, additional information was requested from projects.

Audit: Recommendations

1/ Track cumulative spend by project and overall spend across the Programme

2/ Implement change control

3/ Introduce a means of demonstrating staff time

4/ Request additional data for more robust assurances

5/ Require confirmation of why any VAT claimed is irrecoverable

For more information, please contact:

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Annex I:

Methodologies

Grant management: Methodology

We used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the grant management processes:

Introduction session

Survey with funded organisations

SEStran staff focus group

Interviews with funded organisations

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Quantitative analysis:

Statistical analysis of participation rates, modal shifts, and other measurable outcomes shaped by Active Travel Framework Indicators.

All SEStran Primary Schools 2023 (HUSS) vs SEStran WOW Participating Primary Schools (2024/25)
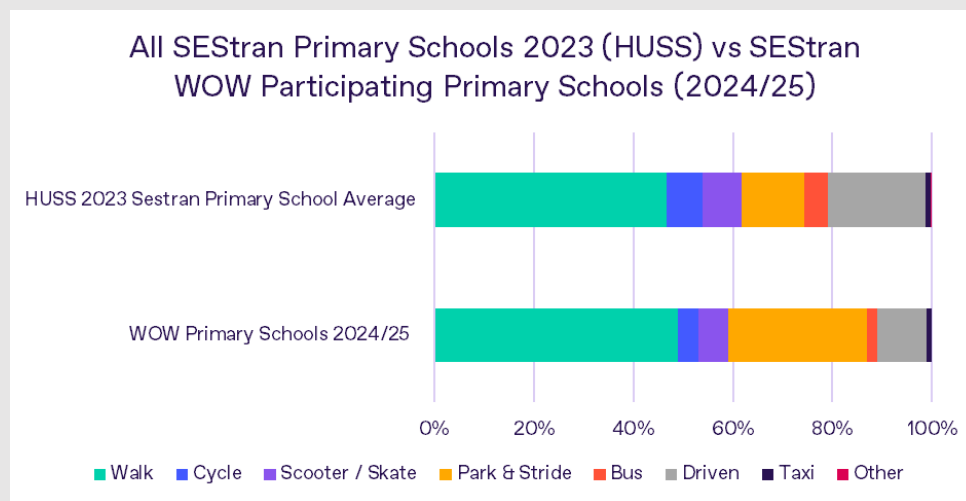
Qualitative analysis:

Thematic analysis of case studies and stakeholder feedback to surface best practices, contextual factors, and areas for improvement.

"[a member of staff] has given me a very similar [weight loss] story since he started step count in Edinburgh two years ago... He's so much more fit and between each challenge he's carried on counting his steps."

Unaudited Annual Accounts 2024/25

- Unaudited Annual Accounts presented to the Partnership in accordance with the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

  ➢ Core budget - underspend of £86,000 – *costs recharged to Projects budget;*

  ➢ Projects budget – underspend of £264,000 – principally *Bus Strategy Development £0.122m; MaaS £34,000; Go e-Bike £26,000; Sustainable Travel £25,000.*

- Subject to confirmation of the audited outturn position, the Partnership will be asked to approve carry forward of £86,000 of the Core budget underspend. This will increase the unallocated reserve to £221,000.

- Project underspend of £264,000 will be carried forward to 2025/26 per Reserves Policy.

- Annual Accounts will now be audited by Audit Scotland. It is anticipated the audited Annual Accounts, will be presented to Performance and Audit Committee and Partnership Board in September 2025.

- Partnership is recommended to note the unaudited Annual Accounts.

Treasury Management report 2024/25

- Treasury Management annual report prepared for the Partnership, in line with Partnership's Treasury Management Policy.

- Partnership maintains its bank account as part of the City of Edinburgh Council's group of bank accounts.

- Month-end balances for 2024/25 noted - interest received by the Partnership was £44,197.

- Partnership is recommended to note the annual Treasury Management report for 2024/25.

Covered in this update...

- Regional Bus Strategy
- Financial Planning Procedure
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Council Requisitions
- SEStran Quarterly Stakeholder Liaison Group
- Strategy Work
- Potential Railway Stations at Newburgh and Winchburgh
- People and Place visits
- Flat Fare Pilot
- Reduction in Car Use

Governance Scheme Update Report

Brian Butler

Governance Scheme

- Mainly clarifications

- Following Partnership Director limits increased from £1k to £5k

    - Write off debts

    - Settle actions

Background

2024: Scottish Government Transport to Health Delivery Plan

Relevant commitments from the delivery plan include:

- NHS boards to consider Transport to Health and collaborate with Regional Transport Partnerships

- RTPs to have TtH stakeholder groups with NHS boards and others

- RTPs to develop regional TtH strategies

Literature review

- Methodology

- Baseline data

- Key findings

Travelling to health appointments

A literature review

www.sestran.gov.uk

Literature review - journeys

2% of journeys in the SEStran region are to hospitals or other healthcare services.

This is around **18-20 million journeys** each year

Literature review - modes

Most journeys to GPs and hospitals are by car.

Bus is the most common form of public transport for these journeys.

There is a lack of data about travel to other types of healthcare, like pharmacies and dental practices.

Literature review - appointments

Transport is a frequent reason for people missing healthcare appointments

Around **130,000** hospital appointments are missed in the SEStran region each year.

It is difficult to say how many missed appointments directly relate to poor transport options.

Challenges

- **Transport connectivity**

- **Cost of transport**

- **Additional barriers faced by disabled people**

- **Organisational and policy-related barriers**

Opportunities

- **Policy changes**

- **Digital transport technologies**

- **Virtual provision of some services**
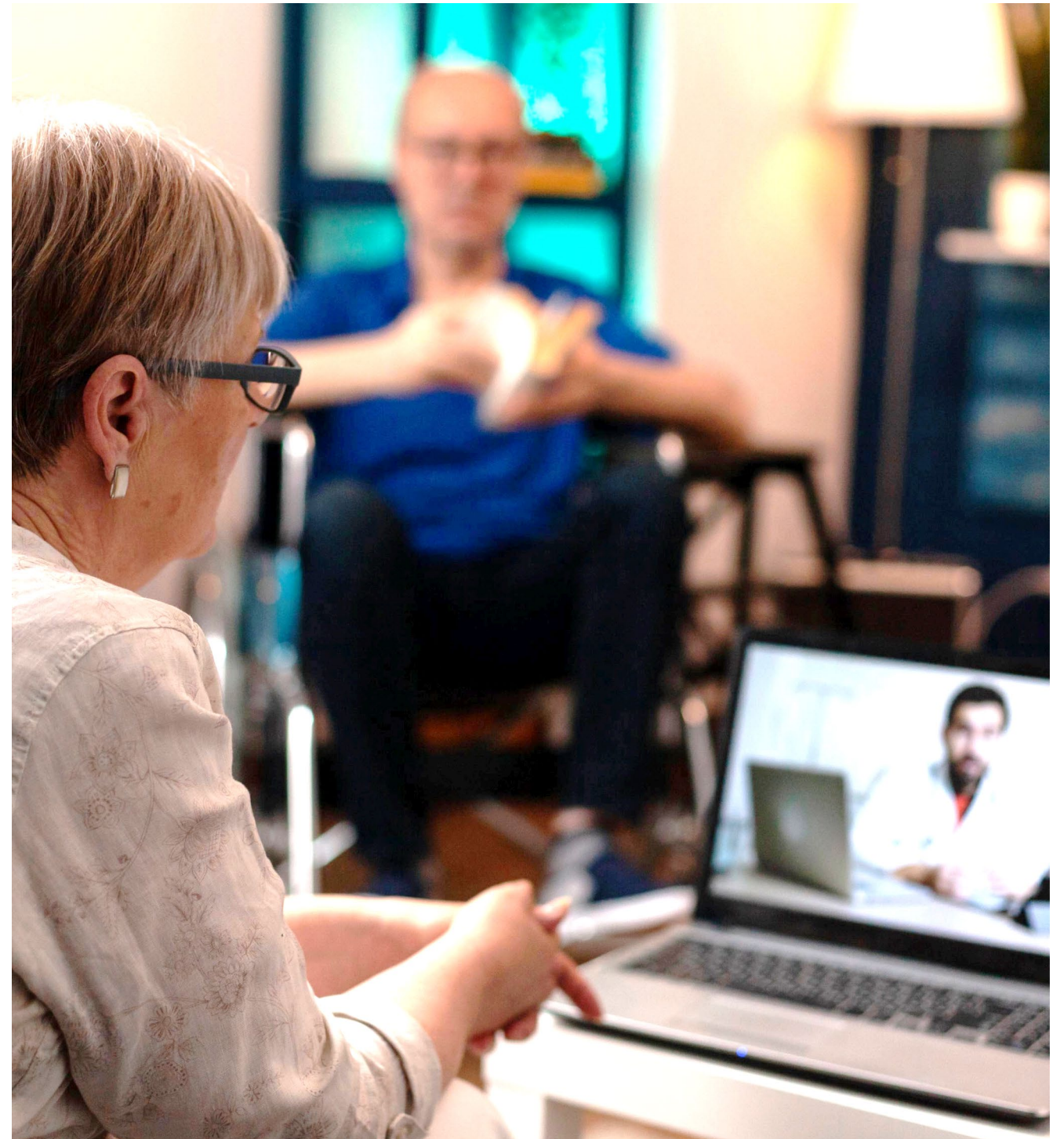
Research gaps

- Transport mode share for journeys to healthcare services in the SEStran region

- Car and public transport distances to other types of primary care (e.g. pharmacies)

- Quantifying the scale of the parking problem at hospital sites

- Transport cost barriers to accessing healthcare services

- The cost to the NHS of transport-related missed appointments in the SEStran region

- The number of people who avoid booking healthcare appointments altogether due to poor transport options

Public engagement can seek to address some of these gaps.

Next steps

Communications and Marketing Update

Sarah Junik

Comms and marketing

Oct 2024 – June 2025

- **SEStran wide activity**
- **Project focussed activity**

LinkedIn

- **Primary social media channel**

- **Post 3 x week**

- **Audience grown by 62%**

- **Reaching 315% more people**

- **475% increase in clicks**
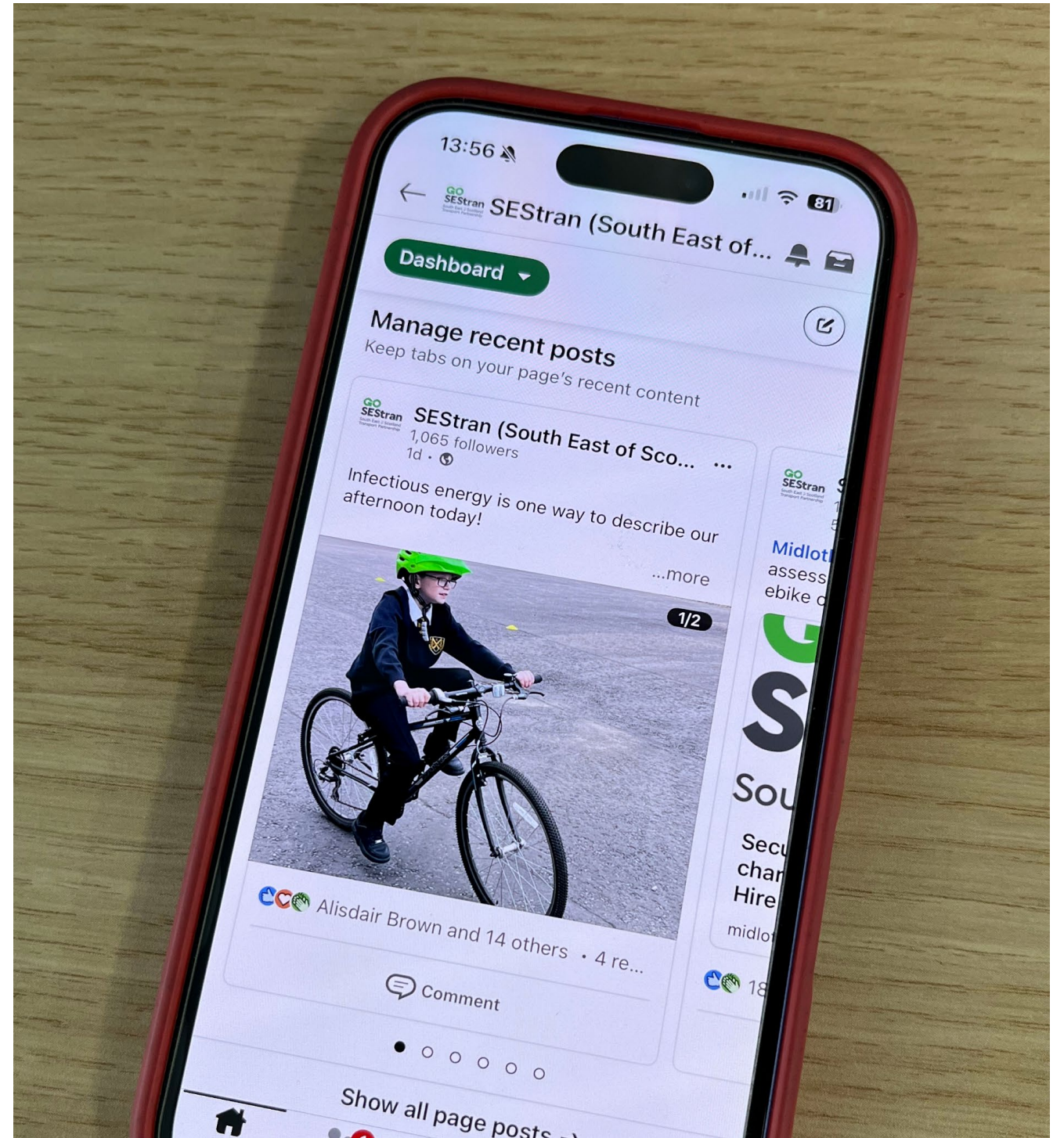
Newsletter

- **Launched in December**

- **Monthly**

- **Short articles**

- **Links to website**

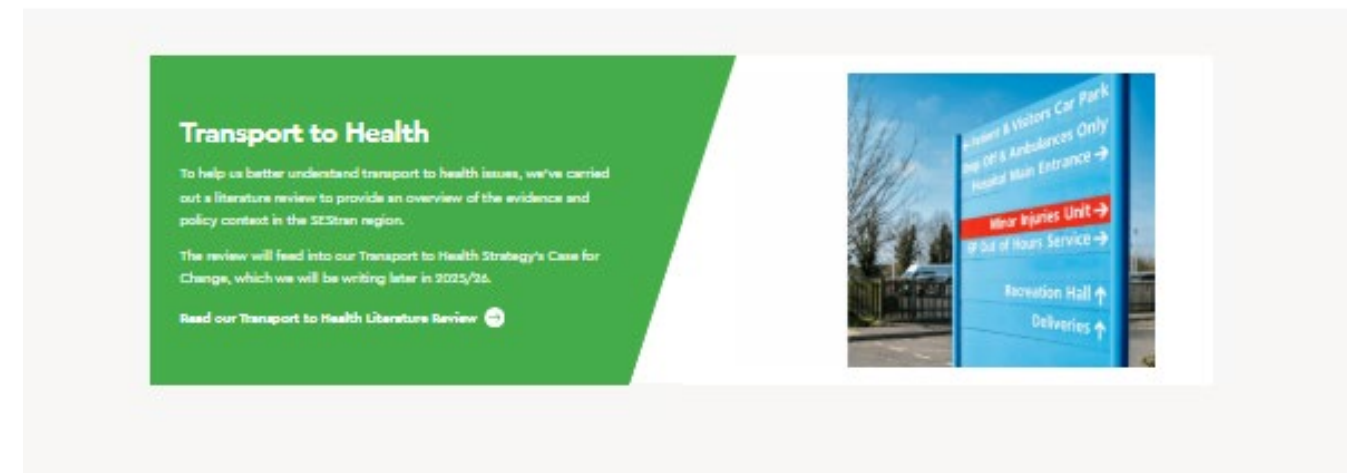- **Promoting on LinkedIn**

- **41% click rate**

Website

- **New People and Place pages**

- **Improved top menu navigation**

- **Homepage changes**

- **Search engine rankings**

- **New page layout options**
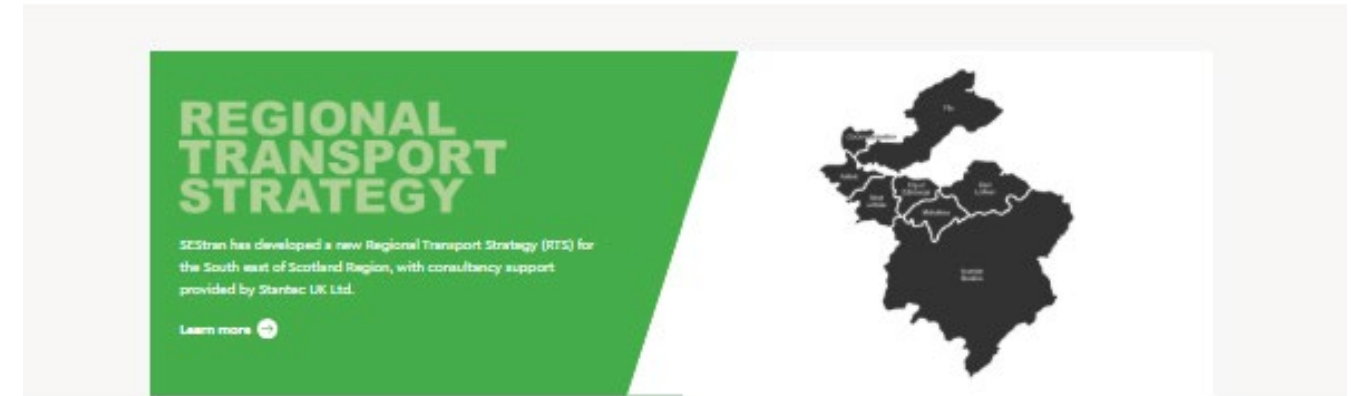
Blogs and factsheets

So far…

- **Five blogs**

- **Two factsheets**

More to come

Annual Report 2024/25
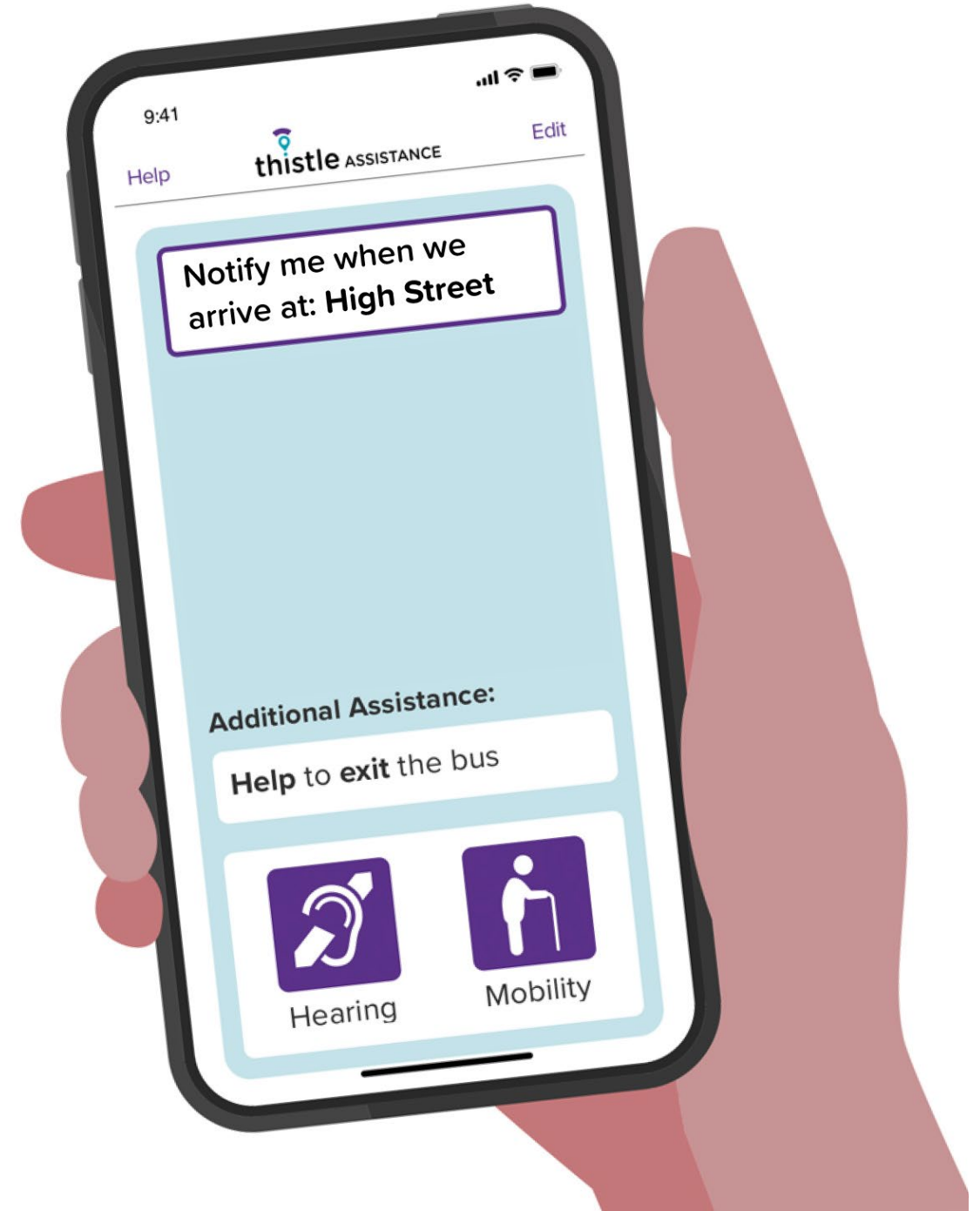
Will be published shortly

Promotion across:

- ✓ **Social media**
- ✓ **Newsletter**
- ✓ **Website**

Annual Report

2024/25

www.sestran.gov.uk

Thistle Assistance

Digital media advertising:

- **Meta (Facebook and Instagram)**

- **Newspaper website ads**

- **Apple app store ads**

- **Google search results**

Results

Card requests: 3,376 - up 2,477%

App downloads: 1,784 - up 5,147%

Web page views:
- **Get the card - up 3,472%**
- **Get the app - up 2,644%**
- **Card request complete - up 3,665%**

People and Place case study films

Four films:

- **People and Place intro**

- **Scottish Borders: Walk It**

- **East Lothian: Folding bike hire**

- **City of Edinburgh: Thistle Outdoors**

Almost 3,000 views so far on LinkedIn

build their cycling skills and once they felt confident enough then they

Appointments to the Performance & Audit Committee

Brian Butler

Appointments to Performance and Audit Committee

➤ **Councillor Scott Harrison Clackmannanshire Council**