

SEStran Partnership Board Meeting

10am, Friday 26 September 2025
Dean of Guild Room, City Chambers, Edinburgh, EH1
1YJ
& Microsoft Teams

Agenda

- A1. MINUTES (For Approval)**
(a) Partnership Board – 25th June 2025
(b) Performance and Audit Committee – 12th September 2025
- A2. **FINANCE REPORTS** - Report by Richard Lloyd-Bithell, Treasurer/Iain Shaw**
(a) **ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2024/25 AND ANNUAL AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2024/25**
(b) **FINANCE OFFICER’S REPORT**
- A3. **PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR’S UPDATE** – Report by Brian Butler**
- A4. **PROJECT SESTRANSIT** – Report by Brian Butler**
- A5. **REGIONAL BUS STRATEGY - PUBLIC CONSULTATION** – Report by Rachael Murphy**
- A6. **NON-COUNCILLOR MEMBER APPOINTMENTS** – Report by Angela Chambers**
- A7. **THISTLE ASSISTANCE UPDATE** – Report by Sandra Lavergne**
- A8. **SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT SUMMIT** – Report by Rachael Murphy**
- A9. **PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME MONITORING AND EVALUATION UPDATE** – Report by Michael Melton**
- A10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:****
The date of the next meeting is **10:00am on Friday 5 December 2025.**
In person at Dean of Guild Room, Edinburgh City Chambers and online via Microsoft Teams

1. Order of Business

2. Apologies

3. Declarations of Interest

Minutes For Approval

- (a) Partnership Board - 25 June 2025
- (b) Performance and Audit Committee – 12
September 2025

Finance Report

(a) Annual Audit Report
2024/25 & Annual Audited
Accounts 2024/25
(b) Finance Officer's Report

Iain Shaw

Annual Audit Report and Audited Annual Accounts 2024/25

The Annual Audit Report states the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Partnership as at 31 March 2025 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with UK adopted international accounting standards, as interpreted and adapted by the 2024/25 Code; and;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

It is recommended that the Partnership Board:

- note the Annual Audit Report to members of South East of Scotland Transport Partnership and the Controller of Audit;
- authorise the Audited Annual Accounts for signature.

Finance Officer's report

Report presents an update on the Partnership's Core and Projects budgets for 2025/26, based on financial performance to the end of July 2025.

Partnership's General Fund Reserve balance of £221,000 at 1st April 2025 confirmed.

- Report recommends the Partnership:
- approves the allocation of £20,000 from the General Fund Reserve for the proposed ICT technology refresh in 2025/26.
- approves the allocation of £119,000 from the General Fund Reserve for the following projects:
 - Data Strategy £50,000
 - Multi Modal Interchanges £51,000
 - SEStran conference £18,000.
- approves the re-alignment of the 2025/26 Projects budget to reflect planned activity.

Based on the proposed drawdowns, the Partnership's unallocated General Fund Reserve will be reduced to £82,000 at 31 March 2026. (9% of the core revenue budget).

Partnership Director's Update

Brian Butler

Covered in this update...

- Flat Bus Fare Pilot
- COSLA White Paper on Population Balance
- Scottish Government Consultation on Regional Economic Partnerships
- Council Requisitions and Financial Planning Procedure
- Potential Changes to the Business Plan for 2025/26



Flat Bus Fares pilot

Report to City-Region Directors' meeting expressing interest in "bus flat fares pilot for an area-based scheme to provide flat fares on bus travel, or reduced fares on zonal integrated travel for consideration in future budgets"

Council Requisitions – the problem

- Transport Scotland Grant and Council Requisitions not increased for 12+ years
- Requisitions reduced by 10% in that period
- TS grant reduced by 5% in 2024/25
- Inflation over 40% in that period
- Impact on SEStran's ability to deliver the Regional Transport Strategy

Council Requisitions - proposal

- Total Requisitions £190k
(breakdown on next slide)
- Multiplier enjoyed by partner
Councils
- Reasons for and impact of
underspends since 2020/21
- SEStran reserves
- Proposal to increase
Requisitions in 2026/27
- Potential requirement to
recalculate share based on
population changes

Council Requisitions – current levels

Council	Annual payment (£)
City of Edinburgh	61,389
Clackmannanshire	6,094
East Lothian	13,344
Falkirk	18,610
Fife	43,786
Midlothian	11,528
Scottish Borders	13,683
West Lothian	21,565
Total	190,000

Project SEStransit

Brian Butler

Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan - Mass Transit Programme

- Report to update the Board on the above
- RTSDP Mass Transit Theme / STPR2 recommendation 12
- South East Scotland equivalent to Clyde Metro / Aberdeen Rapid Transit
- Review STPR2/r12 Strategic Business Case (programme level SBC)
- Update for geography, recent strategic developments, and links to transport corridors
- As a minimum, the SBC will comprise the Strategic and Socio-Economic dimensions of the 5-dimension business case model
- Those elements of the Commercial, Management or Financial dimensions, which could influence the decision to proceed, will also need to be included in the SBC
- Transport Scotland has agreed to fund initial stages – potentially update of SBC and development of detailed programme documentation
- There will need to be a clear governance structure as it is likely that programme and project level business cases will be developed in tandem
- All partner Councils have been asked to indicate support for this programme, and to nominate officers for proposed governance structure (this should be agreed w/c 25/8/25)

Regional Bus Strategy – Public Consultation

Rachael Murphy

Regional Bus Strategy – the work so far

- Case for Change completed and shared with Transport Scotland
- Options considered with LAs, operators, SEStran board and stakeholders via RAG review process
- Public consultation undertaken throughout August

Regional Bus Strategy – Public Consultation

- We received 5,359 responses throughout the month
- Gender and disability response levels were closely aligned to bus usership
- Over 1,600 open text responses, so challenge to work through the detail



Regional Bus Strategy – Next Steps

- We'll work through public responses and come to authorities and operators with any queries
- We'll work up the final strategy to consider those results
- There will be a final opportunity to respond to the document for collaborating organisations
- The draft strategy will be launched in December



Regional Bus Strategy – Next Steps Timeline

3/11-14/11

Share with board/ LAs/ operators for
final comment

21/11

Share final draft with board

28/11

Extraordinary board meeting for final
sign off

4/12

Presentation of the strategy at the
Summit



Non-Councillor Members Appointments

Angela Chambers

Recruitment Process

- Re-appointments exercise
- Advertise vacancies
- Recruitment exercise
- Seek Ministerial approval
- Board ratify Ministerial decision at March 2026 meeting



Thistle Assistance Update

Sandra Lavergne

Background

- Free app and card to support people who might need additional assistance while taking public transport.
- In line with regional priorities.
- National scheme, supported and recognised by Transport Scotland via the Accessible Travel Framework Delivery Plan 24/26.



24/25 key highlights

- Review of comms and promotion
- User survey distributed
- Delivery of a digital marketing campaign (6 weeks)
 - Cards requested: 3,376 (2,477% increase compared to the preceding period)
 - Apps downloaded: 1,784 (5,147% increase compared to preceding period).

Shortlisted in the 'Campaign of the Year' category of the National Transport Awards 2025.



25/26 project plans

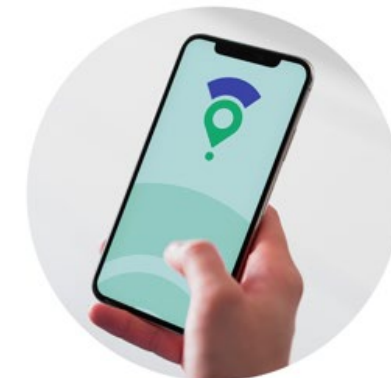
- Continuous improvement of the scheme
- Promotion / marketing
- Stakeholder engagement
- Monitoring / evaluation

**It's a no-fuss way
to ask for a little
extra help.**


thistle ASSISTANCE

25/26 – work to date

- Supplier for card printing and distribution appointed
- Engagement with key stakeholders (RTPs, TS, etc.)
- Privacy notice and collection of data
- Preparation work for the next digital campaign

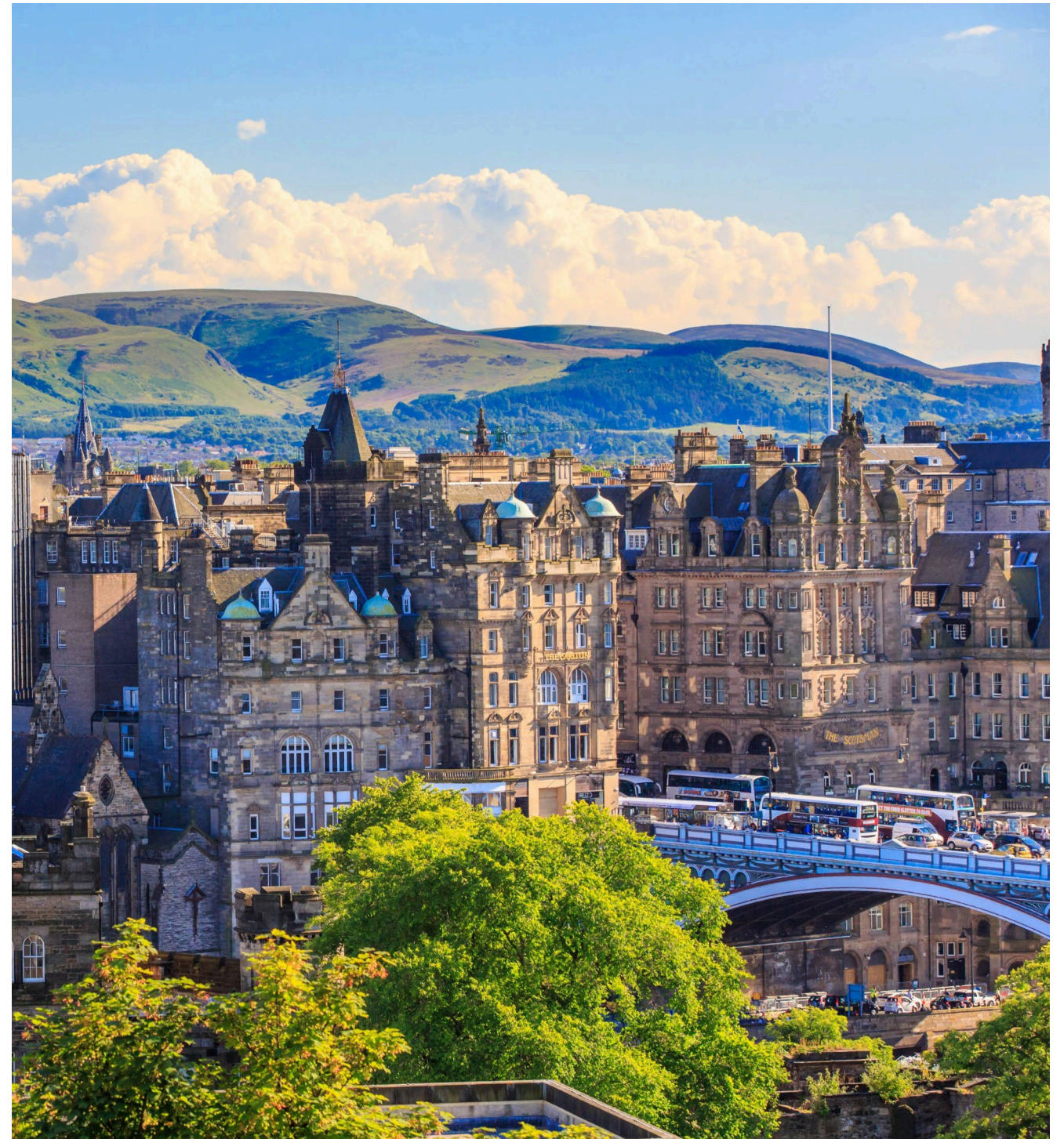


South East Scotland Transport Summit

Rachael Murphy

South East Scotland Transport Summit - main details

- 4th December
- Surgeon's Quarter in Edinburgh
- In attendance: MPs, MSPs, Council Leaders, key influencers, mix of local, regional, national government Directors and Officers, politicians and colleagues including City Region Deal and third sector partners



South East Scotland Transport Summit – agenda

- **Celebrating** twenty years of RTPs
- **Sharing** highlights of past and present SEStran work
- **Launching** our regional bus strategy
- **Refocusing** with ten years left of SEStran's RTS
- **Defining** the opportunities available to the next Holyrood government



People & Place M&E Update

Michael Melton



3019

Cycles provided



2487

for young people



21

adapted cycles



76

scooters provided



21

Cycle maintenance
stands installed



5

Active travel
counters installed



109

Schools with cycle and/or
scooter parking installed

38%



Projects took place in **38% of
schools** in the region

People and Place 24/25 in numbers

“Across all themes, there is evidence in the year of:

- Increased active travel for both utility and leisure journeys**
- Positive shifts in attitudes and confidence**
- Early signs of cultural and organisational change**
- Strong alignment with national policy goals (e.g. net-zero, Just Transition)”**



Next Steps

- Detailed project by project guidance
- 25/26 programme evaluation commission
- Action on the 10 recommendations

Date of The Next Meeting

Friday 5 December 2025

