

PEOPLE AND PLACE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on planning for People and Place in 2026/27 alongside reporting on grant variances for 2025/26 that have arisen since the last Board meeting.

2 2025/26 GRANT VARIANCES

- 2.1 In line with the Standing Orders, changes to grant awards within the year are required to be reported to the Board. Appendix 1 presents a list of grant award variances that have been approved since the previous Board meeting, along with the reasons for these. All variances are within the delegated authority of the Partnership Director and are within the overall programme budget.

3 2026/27 PEOPLE AND PLACE PROGRAMME

- 3.1 On the 5th December 2025, the Board approved the following in relation to the 2026/27 People and Place grant rounds:
- Delegate to the Partnership Director the setting of the fund values for Grants to Local Authorities, Grants to Third Parties, and the Community Grant Fund
 - Approve the eligibility and assessment criteria for grants to third parties, and delegate to the Partnership Director the ability to vary the project section of the eligibility criteria
 - Approve the eligibility and assessment criteria for the community grant fund and delegate to the Partnership Director the ability to vary these criteria to support joint working with other RTPs
- 3.2 In line with the last two points above, the People and Place grant round opened in January 2026 and closed on 6th February 2026. Following this, all projects were scored by three members against the approved scoring criteria as set out in the Grant Standing Orders, with recommendations made. Subsequent to this, the funding panel, chaired by the Partnership Director, met to agree the recommendations and make the grant awards, subject to funding confirmation by Transport Scotland and Board approval of the 2026/27 Partnership budget.
- 3.3 The overall programme budget is set out within the 'Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Indicative Financial Plan 2027/28 to 2028/29' paper elsewhere on this agenda. In line with the delegation on setting the fund values noted above, these have been set as follows:
- For grants to local authorities the total fund value was set at £2,833,502, or 45% of the programme funds, which is identical to the proposal (45%) reported to the Board

- For grants to third parties the total fund value was set at £2,544,184, or 40% of the programme funds, which is slightly less than the proposal (45%) reported to the Board
- For the community grant fund the total fund value was set at £534,377, or 8% of the programme funds, which is higher than previously reported to Board (£400,000)

4 2026/27 GRANT AWARD FOR BOARD APPROVAL

- 4.1 Following discussion over the past several months, a proposal has been developed in partnership with FEL Scotland to pilot a small community grant fund in Falkirk and Clackmannanshire, drawing on FELs experience in operating similar grants from the Scottish Government in their role as the Forth Valley Climate Hub. This will include £40,000 to be distributed as small grants (around £1000-£5000 each) and £15,000 for FEL to provide support to these organisations and evaluate the impact of the funding. It should be noted that the management cost is a relatively high proportion of the grant funds in this case as SEStran has specifically requested additional evaluation be carried out to support the decision making on expanding the pilot in future years.
- 4.2 This proposal closely meets the aims of the People and Place programme. In concentrating on smaller grants, it provides a route for projects to develop into the larger community grant fund run by SEStran. It also addresses a geographical gap in the community grant fund, with a lack of current projects in these two local authority areas. If successful, it is hoped that this model can be rolled out more widely from 2027/28, potentially supported by the wider network of climate hubs, building on their existing grant programmes and knowledge of local groups and funding demand.
- 4.3 As this is a pilot project, it does not fit neatly within the existing grant processes. It is therefore proposed to award this grant under section 2.4 of the Grant Standing Orders:

Subject to Board approval, SEStran may use arms-length bodies or other appropriate organisations or community networks to carry out grant disbursement activities on its behalf. SEStran should have an agreement in place with such bodies that sets out the nature of the relationship, the form of accountability, how the assessment panel will be constituted, how the organisation or network is funded or will be funded, and details of the activities they will engage in. Such bodies will be subject to the standards set out in these Grant Standing Orders unless expressly agreed by the Partnership Board.

FEL have confirmed in writing that they will comply with the requirements set out within this section. They have shared a proposal for how they will do so, and this will be incorporated into the funding agreement. It should be noted that, due to the size of these grants, the Standing Orders do not require a funding panel to be formed, and so this will not be required.

- 4.4 In line with the Standing Orders, Board approval is therefore sought to award a grant of £55,000 to FEL Scotland to deliver a small community grant pilot across Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Board is asked to:

- Note the 2025/6 grant award variances as shown in Appendix 1
- Note the setting of the grant fund values by the Partnership Director as set out at paragraph 3.3
- Note the proposed 2026/27 grant awards as shown in Appendix 2
- Approve the grant award of £55,000 to FEL Scotland as set out in section 4

Michael Melton
Programme Manager
13th March 2026

Appendix 1: 2025/26 Grant award variations

Appendix 2: 2026/27 Grant awards

Policy Implications	The People and Place Delivery Plan aligns with the objectives of the RTS and therefore will help deliver on SEStran's policy objectives
Financial Implications	Project management costs for 2026/27 will be included in the overall Plan budget, so there is no anticipated financial impact.
Equalities Implications	In supporting people to travel actively, this Plan should have a positive impact on equalities. Specific elements of the Plan have been designed to further support the accessibility of active and sustainable travel, with an objective include around this to ensure that this is measured. A programme wide IIA has been produced and will be shared, and all projects will be expected to implement the recommendations of this where appropriate.
Climate Change Implications	In promoting behaviour change from private cars to active and sustainable travel, the People and Place Plan will support the transition to net zero.

SEStran People and Place Plan 2025/26 – variations to grant awards

Local Authorities grant award variations

<u>Local Authority</u>	<u>Previous Award</u>	<u>New Award</u>	<u>Reason for change</u>
West Lothian	£121,900	£122,695.64	Grant increased following update on expected spend in 2025/26.
Fife Council	£619,485	£569,486	Grant reduced following update on expected spend in 2025/26.
East Lothian Council	£216,324	£211,474	Grant reduced following one project no longer being deliverable.
Scottish Borders Council	£411,280	£461,280	Additional funding awarded to support additional project work including promotional campaign work and access to cycles and cycle storage utilising underspend in other projects.

Third Party organisations grant award variations

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Previous Award</u>	<u>New Award</u>	<u>Reason for change</u>
Transition University of St Andrews	Transitioning to the Active Way	£52,195	£64,970	Additional funding to cover delivery costs to end of academic year.
Sustrans	I Bike	£262,490	£347,437	Additional funding to cover delivery costs to end of academic year.
Sea the Change	Cycle for Change	£22,580	£30,080	Grant increased to support additional staff time.
Living Streets	Walking Nation 2025/26	£96,727	£110,604	Grant increased following update on expected spend in 2025/26.
Forth Valley College	Forth Valley College Active and Sustainable Travel	£77,966	£89,745	Additional funding to cover delivery costs to end of academic year.

University of Edinburgh	Edinburgh BioQuarter Sustainable Travel	£91,327	£78,258.30	Grant reduced due to delays on one project and efficiency savings in another.
Recyke-a-Bike	Falkirk Schools Cycle Smart	£10,195	£12,743.75	Additional funding to cover delivery costs to end of academic year.
Paths for All (now known as Walking Scotland)	Walking Schools	£56,250	£85,000	Additional funding to cover delivery costs to end of academic year.
Parents for Future Scotland	Air Pollution and Active Travel in Schools	£31,656.60	£41,720	Additional funding to cover delivery costs to end of academic year.
Cycling UK	Connecting Communities (Mid)	£119,177	£123,952.32	Additional funding to support cycle purchase for the project utilising underspend in other projects.
Cycling UK	Cycle Access Fund	£400,000	£412,224.68	Additional funding to support additional grants for cycles and cycle storage utilising underspend in other projects.
The Bike Station	Wee Bike Library	£127,107	£143,408	Additional funding to support additional grants for children's cycles.

SEStran People and Place Plan 2026/2027 – new grant awards

<u>Project</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>Total Award</u>
Forth Valley College	Forth Valley College	£85,478*
Rock Up & Ride Inclusive Communities (Fife)	Scottish Cycling	£65,000
Rock Up & Ride Inclusive Communities (Edinburgh)	Scottish Cycling	£65,000
Kids Bike Life	The Bike Station	£185,000
Wee Bike Library	The Bike Station	£110,000
Linlithgow Schools	FEL Scotland	£125,000
FEL Community	FEL Scotland	£119,000
FEL Schools	FEL Scotland	£410,000
BioQuarter Sustainable Travel	The University of Edinburgh	£88,352
A More Active Way St Andrews	Transition University of St Andrews	£63,047
I Bike	Walk Wheel Cycle Trust	£342,343
Cycle Access Fund	Cycling UK	£300,000
Connecting Communities (ELC)	Cycling UK	£120,000
Connecting Communities (Mid)	Cycling UK	£120,000
Play Together on Pedals	Cycling UK	£40,000
Healthy & Active Ways to Work	Greener Kirkcaldy	£135,000
Fife Access to Cycles	Greener Kirkcaldy	£115,000
Pop-up Hub	CoMoUK	£65,700
Walking Nation	Living Streets	£53,362
Wester Hailes Walk, Pedal & Thrive 2026/27	Strengthening Communities for Race Equality Scotland (SCOREscotland)	£39,633
Prestonpans Walking Bus	The Pennypit Community Development Trust	£10,169
Porty Community Energy bike library and Equal Footing project	Porty Community Energy	£50,000
Clackmannan Active Travel Hub	Clackmannan Development Trust (CDT)	£20,060
Stow Cycle Hub CIC	Stow Cycle Hub CIC	£23,478
Just Cycle community hub expansion pilot	Just Cycle Ltd	£20,804.62
Hike & Bike Hub Expansion	Hike & Bike Hub Galashiels	£21,460
E-bikes for Borderers (EB4B)	A Greener Melrose SCIO	£20,000
Hope on Wheels – Fife	Hope in Place	£36,840
Community on the Move	Bridgend Farmhouse	£33,921.80
Expanding Participation through Cycling	In-Tandem East Lothian	£31,124
North Edinburgh Active Travel	North Edinburgh Arts	£31,520
Clean Air In Edinburgh Schools	Parents For Future Scotland	£43,050
Toll Bike Project	Toll Community Centre	£15,315

APPENDIX 2

Indoor Walking	Borders Wheels	£35,432.86
Wee Spoke Hub	SHRUB Cooperative	£10,000
Move For Good 2627 - LCDT Active Travel programme	Linlithgow Community Development Trust	£25,667
Edinburgh New Scots Cycling Inclusion Project	Bikes for Refugees (Scotland) SCIO	£36,371
Walking and Biking Levenmouth	CLEAR Buckhaven and Methil	£29,480

*Forth Valley College grant is split across SEStran (£51,287) and Tactran (£34,191).