SESTRANSIT

1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   SEStran is continuing to work with partner authorities, the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region team, Transport Scotland and Network Rail to develop a Programme Strategic Business Case (SBC) for an integrated regional transport network, which has the working title of SEStransit.

1.2   The SBC will take forward elements of the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan (RTSDP) and recommendations from Transport Scotland's 2nd Strategic Transport Projects Review, principally Recommendation 12, for the East of Scotland Mass Transit System

2.   PROJECT UPDATE (to end February)

2.1   Defining Strategic Context:

- Strategic Context Final Report Completed

Connectivity and Demand Analysis:

- CEC Procurement of BT Mobile Data

- In-depth demand analysis based on further datasets as available (mobile data)

- Identify areas where poor connectivity intersects with deprivation and other socio-economic indicators

Scoping for 2026/27:

- Task Order, Programme and Costs drafted for the next stage of the business case development

- SEStransit business case outline costs submitted to Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF) pipeline and shared with Transport Scotland

- Engagement with Transport Scotland over the next stage of the business case

2.2   The strategic context report has highlighted the need to enhance the regional public transport network to cater for the growing demand. It has also identified key economic connections where the ratio of public transport to car travel time is more than double.

2.3   The technical analysis has focused on reviewing the level of current and future demand, public transport connectivity, by comparison to car, between key attractors and generators. This analysis has taken account of future strategic development sites as well as existing generators of demand.

Whilst this analysis is still ongoing, the emerging findings from this work have shown:

- Large demand between Edinburgh and the other 7 SEStran partner local authorities

- Suppressed demand between the other 7 SEStran partner local authorities (not including Edinburgh)

- Economic growth areas around the Forth estuary, which are underserved by public transport

- A benchmark for public transport journey times between key destinations within the region:

  - Anything with a public transport:car travel time ratio of 1-1.5 has a mode share of between 20- 50%

  - Above 1.5-2.0 the public transport mode share drops sharply

2.4   The focus over the next month will be on developing the Case for Investment:

- Identification of Problems and Opportunities

- Definition of Transport Planning Objectives

- Case for Investment Draft Report – This will build on the Case for Change outlined in STPR2 and expand on why enhanced regional connectivity is required and what social, economic and environmental outcomes are expected. This work will identify the strategic corridors, feeder networks and orbital links that can support improved access to key destinations, reduce inequalities and enable modal shift

- Developing the Vision and Governance: Agreeing a shared vision, based on future ambitions for the region, and setting out the governance structures that will enable this vision to be realised. This will form part of the preliminary scoping of the Financial, Commercial and Management dimensions of the SBC

3.   PROPOSED FUTURE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

3.1   It is important to recognise that this particular workstream, whilst reporting in March/April 2026, is part of a longer-term project to deliver the Programme level SBC and potentially beyond. Therefore when establishing the overall governance structure it was sensible to create a plan for both this short-term task and the longer-term project.

3.2   The project is currently being led by SEStran. Weekly meetings are held between the project consultants (Stantec) and a Working Group comprising of SEStran, Workforce Mobility Project (WMP) and City of Edinburgh Council (as recipient of the funding). Regular updates (normally monthly) are provided to a Steering Group comprising of senior managers from SEStran and each local authority, WMP, Transport Scotland and Network Rail. Regular project updates are also provided to CRD Directors, the CRD Transport Appraisal Board and the SEStran Partnership Board.

3.3   Looking beyond this initial funding, Transport Scotland has indicated that it is supportive of the project and is confident of providing additional funding towards the completion of the SBC. We are currently identifying the costs to complete the SBC, which has a target completion date of late 2026/early 2027. It is unlikely that any funding from Transport Scotland will cover the remaining costs in their entirety. As a result, and as has been discussed previously at the Steering Group, all local authority partners who wish to be involved in the project will be required to contribute a portion of the balance. The total amount required and the basis of apportionment across partners have both still to be agreed (e.g. population, area etc).

3.4   In parallel with confirming the funding to complete the SBC it is necessary to set out the proposed governance of the project moving forward. A Project Board has been formed, consisting of senior officials (e.g. Head of Service) from the local authority partners, and Transport Scotland. A copy of the Term of Reference is attached as Project Board Terms of Reference **Background Paper 1**. The main remit of the Board is to:

- Approve the output from Stage One of the SEStransit Programme Level Strategic Business Case (SBC) to be completed by the end of March 2026

- Approve the scope for completing the Programme Level SBC

- Confirm the ongoing support of their respective organisation as the project develops, by ensuring senior officer representation and elected representative buy in

- Make applications (or joint applications where appropriate) for external funding to assist the Project, with SEStran taking the co-ordination lead

- Approve the Programme Level SBC, subject to funding

3.5   In addition to the Project Board, it is proposed that the Project Team continues to provide regular updates to CRD Directors, the CRD Transport Appraisal Board and the SEStran Partnership Board.

4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   It is recommended that the Partnership Board endorses:

- the proposal to seek funding from local authority partners to complete the SBC

- The proposed governance structure

Stuart Turnbull
Consultant
13 March 2026

Background Papers:
1. Project Board Terms of Reference
2. Project Initiation Document
3. Methodology Statement

Policy Implications	The implementation of the SEStran RTSDP project, as described in the Project Initiation Document, may influence future policy, especially concerning regional transport governance, prioritisation of mass transit, and the integration of new corridors and strategic sites. As the business case for STPR2 recommendation 12 develops, further policy considerations regarding cross-boundary travel and network integration may emerge
Financial Implications	A grant of £250,000 from the Bus Infrastructure Fund has been secured to support the review and development of the Strategic Business Case, which must be utilised by March 2026. Additional financial requirements will depend on the outcomes of technical work and subsequent programme development as outlined in the Project Initiation Document **Background Paper 2**
Equalities Implications	The project will undergo assessment against equality criteria throughout the appraisal and business case process. The Project Initiation Document methodology **Background Paper 3** ensures that inclusivity and access for all users are considered and that any equality impacts are identified and addressed as the project advances
Climate Change Implications	Climate change impacts will be evaluated as part of the project's appraisal process, in line with the Project Initiation Document. This includes assessing how the proposed mass transit system and related interventions will contribute to climate targets, such as reducing carbon emissions and enhancing sustainability across the region

TERMS OF REFERENCE – SEStransit Project Board

Title

The Project Board shall be called the "SEStransit Project Board".

Purpose

The purpose of the Board is to:

- Approve the output from Stage One of the SEStransit Programme Level Strategic Business Case (SBC) to be completed by the end of March 2026
- Approve the scope for completing the Programme Level SBC
- Confirm the ongoing support of their respective organisation as the project develops, by ensuring senior officer representation and elected representative buy in
- Make applications (or joint applications where appropriate) for external funding to assist the Project, with SEStran taking the co-ordination lead
- Approval of the Programme Level SBC, subject to funding.

In the interests of delivering at pace, any decisions / notes taken at a meeting will be considered final and will only be revisited at the discretion at the Chair, and only then if new information becomes available.

Membership

The membership of the Board shall be

Name	Organisation	Email Address
Brian Butler	SEStran	brian.butler@sestran.gov.uk
Stuart Cullen	Clackmannanshire Council	scullen@clacks.gov.uk
Gareth Barwell	City of Edinburgh Council	Gareth.barwell@edinburgh.gov.uk
Tom Reid	East Lothian Council	treid@eastlothian.gov.uk
Douglas Gardiner	Falkirk Council	Douglas.Gardiner@falkirk.gov.uk
John Mitchell	Fife Council	john.mitchell@fife.gov.uk
Kevin Anderson	Midlothian Council	Kevin.anderson@midlothian.gov.uk
John Curry	Scottish Borders Council	Jcurry@scotborders.gov.uk
David Maule	West Lothian Council	David.maule@westlothian.gov.uk
Fiona Brown	Transport Scotland (in observer/advisory capacity only)	fiona.brown@transport.gov.scot

In the event of any of the above members being unable to attend a Board meeting, they may delegate authority to an appropriate colleague, giving prior notice to the Secretariat wherever feasible.

The Board shall allow observers from other organisations to attend as agreed.

Supporting the Board will be the following Technical Advisors as appropriate:

- Transport Scotland: Transport Scotland's role will be to provide guidance in relation to alignment with national policy including STPR2, technical aspects of business case preparation and in relation to its responsibilities on behalf of Ministers in relation to the trunk road and rail networks. Given the above, it should be taken that Programme Board approval only relates to Regional Partners unless explicitly stated that Transport Scotland approval has been granted.
- Project Manager
- Consultants

Chairing arrangements

The Board shall be chaired by Brian Butler

The Board will initially identify a depute/election of chair in absence of Chair

Frequency of meetings

Meetings shall be held every 4-8 weeks, with the initial meetings schedule to be agreed at the first Board meeting, and subsequently as required.

Subject to reporting and funding requirements there is a provision for special meetings for urgent matters to be considered.

A minimum of 2 weeks notice will be provided for the date and timing of a Board meeting, unless there is a reason to meet more urgently, in which case the maximum amount of notice will be given.

Quorum

A minimum of the greater of 6 or 66% of the organisations must be represented to constitute a meeting.

Secretariat

SEStran will provide the secretariat support to the Board.

Agenda and Board papers will be issued 5 working days prior to the Board Meetings.

Minutes of Board Meetings will be issued within 5 working days of the meetings and will be approved for accuracy at the next meeting.

Agenda formation

Standing Items

- Previous Notes and Actions
- Progress Report from the Project Management Team/Consultants
- Approvals
- Budget and Risk

The Chair shall have discretion to include additional agenda items

Sub-groups/working groups

A Steering Group has been formed that consists of senior officials from the constituent Local Authorities, Transport Scotland and Network Rail. This Group will meet approximately every 4-6 weeks during the course of the Programme Level SBC. The role of this group is to provide technical input and comments on the work carried out and act as a conduit to wider input required from the constituent organisations . Notes of the Steering Group meetings will be circulated to the Project Board, along with a status report in advance of each Board Meeting.

It is not expected that any Sub-Groups will be required, although the Board will have the authority to do this if felt necessary.

Voting mechanism

General provision that is that a consensus will be reached on all pertinent decision points.

If required a voting system will be deployed, where each organisation will receive one vote. In the case of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote.

As outlined above. Transport Scotland's advisory role will not include taking part in any votes.

Confidentiality/publication of documents

The general operation of the Project Board could be the subject of a Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Regulation request, and the organisations shall notify each other of any relevant FOI/EIR requests.

All organisations will comply with data protection requirements in their dealings with the subject matter of the Board.

Any confidential documents will be clearly identified and noted during the course of discussion and minuting of the Board Meetings, and all Members undertake to respect any requirement for confidentiality, subject to FOI/EIR obligations.

Review

To be kept under review at least every 6 months to ensure fit for purpose.

Exit Strategy

At the first Board Meeting the Members will agree the terms of membership and the requirement for any exit strategy.

Project Initiation Document	
Project Name	SEStransit - Programme SBC Preparation
SRO	Brian Butler
Date	07/11/25
Version	6.0

Introduction and Vision

The second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) recommended a mass transit system for Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland (Recommendation 12). The SEStran and City Region Deal's Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan (RTSDP) was originally envisaged to dovetail with the STPR2 to support the delivery of a transport network that:

- Takes climate action;
- Addresses inequalities & accessibility;
- Improves health & wellbeing;
- Supports sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- Improving safety & resilience; and
- Is equitable and inclusive

Transport Scotland confirmed in 2025 that regional partners in partnership with Transport Scotland would be best placed to deliver STPR2 recommendation (12), so the purpose of this project is to combine the workstream of Mass Transit within the RTS Delivery Plan with STPR2 recommendation (12). We will deliver the Strategic Business Case (SBC) for a regional connectivity investment programme across the South East of Scotland. This current work referred to as Stage 1 (up to March 2026) will focus on the Strategic and the Socio-Economic dimensions.

The context of this work is provided by the draft vision.

South East Scotland's vision is an integrated, accessible and affordable transformative public transport system that delivers both seamless connectivity and supports inclusive economic growth across the South East Scotland.

This draft vision will be reviewed and finalised over the course of the next 2-3 months as this stage one workstream develops up to March 2026.

Project Background

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

In 2019 Transport Scotland commenced the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) to help inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years. The STPR2 Final Technical Report and recommendations was published in 2022.

The STPR2 process was guided by National Transport Strategy (NTS2) and aligned with other national plans such as the Climate Change Plan Update , the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and the Revised Draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4).

One of the 45 recommendations in STPR2 relates to Edinburgh & South East Scotland mass transit (Recommendation 12). The review recommends that Transport Scotland works with regional partners to develop and enhance the cross-boundary public transport system for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland region, potentially comprising tram and bus-based transit modes including bus rapid transit (BRT) and bus priority measures. This would complement and integrate with the region's current bus, tram and heavy rail networks, to provide improved connectivity between Edinburgh and the surrounding communities in the region, as well as more direct connections between communities outside Edinburgh.

STPR2 also included a number of other relevant recommendations that will inform and link to this workstream.

Regional Transport Strategy

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) was developed by SEStran in partnership with the 8 local authorities in south east Scotland. The purpose is to outline the transport related problems and opportunities, and how the region should respond to them. It is supported by a suite of evidence drawn from published policy documents and data analysis, as well as stakeholder and public consultation.

The RTS identified four objectives, and seven key themes, each underpinned by policy recommendations and relevant actions.

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

Strategy Objective 2: Facilitating healthier travel options

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

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

For more information about the work of SEStran please visit: https://sestran.gov.uk

Regional Prosperity Framework & RTS Delivery Plan

The Regional Prosperity Framework, published in September 2021, provides a blueprint for regional economic recovery post-pandemic and provides future direction for major projects and investment that support inclusive growth and the transition to a net zero economy over the next 20 years.

The Implementation plan was published in March 2023 and identified four priority areas:

• Green Regeneration

• Infrastructure for Recovery & Prosperity

• Visitor Economy & Culture

• Data Driven Innovation Economy

A priority project identified under the theme 'Infrastructure for Recovery & Prosperity' is the Regional Transport Masterplan. The Masterplan was identified to support the Regional Transport Strategy as a delivery plan to deliver the objectives of the strategy at a regional scale. It was important to differentiate the Regional Transport Masterplan from the National Transport Strategy 2 – Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) process, where the Masterplan focused on regional scale projects that were not contained in the STPR2 recommendations, but are identified as regionally important to facilitate the economic and net-zero ambitions of the region. It was agreed in September 2023 that the Regional Transport Masterplan would be incorporated within the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan.

The development of the programme-level Strategic Business Case (SBC) for a regional connectivity investment programme will be managed in parallel, and be integrated with the process of taking forward the remaining themes within the RTSDP, thereby ensuring a truly integrated transport system for the region. It is therefore important to consider this PID within the overall umbrella of the RTSDP PID.

The SEStran & City Deal Concordat

In Summer 2023 a Concordat was agreed between SEStran and ESESCRD to work together in support of further integrating economic development, transport and land-use planning and delivery in the Edinburgh & South East Scotland city region.

It sets out how both bodies will align their activities to ensure that regional plans can deliver shared outcomes through targeted transport interventions. It also describes how new transport interventions will progress, from strategy to delivery, through the appropriate governance structure(s), depending on the activity.

SEStran and ESESCRD believe that an integrated approach to economic development, land-use and transport planning, provision and delivery plays a vital role in creating a prosperous, successful, accessible and sustainable city region.

Progressing the Business Case for a Regional Connectivity Investment Programme

Given the above it has been agreed that the next stage in the development of a regional connectivity investment programme is the need to complete a Programme Level Strategic Business Case (SBC) in line with the with H.M. Treasury Green Book and Transport Scotland's Guidance on the Development of Business Cases (broadly reflecting Green Book principles). It is essential that this Programme SBC follows a structured and evidence-based approach. Following this process is a critical enabler of good governance, value for money and long-term deliverability, providing a credible foundation for future investment decisions.

The Programme Level SBC will build upon STPR2 recommendation 12 and incorporate the additional regional dimension contained within the RTSDP.

For clarity, the figure below sets the requirements of the SBC aligned to those within the STAG process.

Objectives

For the purposes of the Programme level SBC a series of SMART TPOs will be developed, that will align to the outcomes/outputs of the SEStransit system. The TPOs should also align to the national TPOs established through STPR2 and the Strategy Objectives presented in the RTS and RPF to provide regional dimension.

Stage One Scope

The technical work will be carried by Stantec, and will be procured through the City of Edinburgh Council's Transport Planning and Modelling Services commission. The attached document contains a draft of the scope/methodology for this workstream. The high level tasks are outlined below.

Task 0 – Stakeholder Engagement Plan- A Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be developed that will outline the key elements of the Programme Level SBC that the team will engage on (see later for more details).

CASE FOR INVESTMENT

Task 1 – Define the strategic context - The work will build on the existing, solid case made by STPR2 Recommendation 12. This task will involve working with regional partners to identify an overarching purpose, whist also rooting decision making in evidence. The initial focus will be on setting out the socio-economic context, establishing patterns of demand and travel and identifying key connectivity gaps across the South East of Scotland and focusing on cross-boundary connectivity. This task will also establish a working/draft vision for the project.

Task 2 – Connectivity and demand analysis – This will involve a detailed connectivity analysis at postcode level to identify spatial disparities in access to key destinations across the ESES region.

Task 3 – Problems and opportunities - Building on the work undertaken as part of STPR2 and the RTSDP, as well as the outputs of Tasks 1 and 2, this task will look to confirm why improved connectivity is required across the ESES region, focusing on several key themes at systems level.

Task 4 – Case for Investment - This task will synthetise the outputs of Tasks 1 to 4 into a coherent and compelling narrative that sets out the case for any future investment.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Task 5 – Establish the strategic framework for regional connectivity - Defining what we mean by a regional connectivity programme in the context of the South East of Scotland region is a critical decision point in the development of the Programme SBC and a solid first step toward defining an integrated set of solutions.

Task 6 – Define and agree priority investment areas - This task will define and agree the priority corridors (including orbital/cross boundary routes) for improved connectivity investment across the South East of Scotland, forming the spatial and operational basis of the future regional network.

Task 7 – Set out the strategic approach to network development - In parallel to the identification of priority investment areas, this task will establish a strategic framework for network development. The aim is to provide a coherent, regionally integrated approach that is not overly-process heavy and balances ambition with deliverability.

Task 8 – Scoping of remainder of the Programmatic Strategic Business Case - Recognising that it will not be possible to complete all components of the Programme Level SBC within this timeframe this task will scope out the remaining elements and associated timescales required to complete the Programme SBC.

Definition of SEStransit for the South East Scotland Region

One of the early tasks is to define what a truly integrated regional transport system would mean for the region. Local Authority partners will provide input to this task through the structured workshop in mid September. A working draft is shown below:

The collective movement of people across all regional areas using an integrated and affordable shared transport system such as buses, trains, trams, and other connecting modes It is designed to provide efficient, high-capacity, and sustainable mobility, supported by interchanges and integrating ticketing, data and digital solutions, that provide passengers with the ability to seamlessly transfer between different modes and access strategic housing, employment, health and education sites

In developing the above, the following criteria (as adopted during the RTSDP) will be used to define what is in scope, where a transport intervention(s) is required:

1.It enables existing and future priorities of the Regional Prosperity Framework, Clackmannanshire & Falkirk economic strategies (this could be a project in a single or multiple authority area as long as it supports the regional spatial and economic priorities)

2.Supports more than one local authority area to deliver regional economic or spatial planning ambitions.

3. Fills an 'internal gap' in one local authority area to enable completion of a larger, 'cross-boundary' network or linkage to deliver regional economic or spatial planning ambition.

4. Have 'points of delivery' in more than one local authority (e.g., trials of bus services in multiple different towns across the SEStran area or MaaS solution development).

5. Follows one of the 18 SEStran 'regional corridors' to deliver regional economic or spatial planning ambition.

6. Enables access to regional corridors or networks.

7. Enables the coordination of transport infrastructure, services to support integrated mobility, economic integration, and environmental sustainability across other RTP or national networks to deliver regional economic and spatial planning ambition.

Note: At least one of the above should apply.

Project Governance and Project Team

It is important to recognise that this particular workstream, whilst reporting in March/April 2026, is part of a longer-term project to deliver the Programme level SBC and potentially beyond. Therefore when establishing the overall governance structure it is sensible to create a plan for both this short-term task and the longer-term project.

Appendix 1 outlines the principles of the governance, including the role of various groups. It is also recognised that elements of this will be fully developed over the course of October to March. In summary:

The project will be managed on a day-to-day basis by SEStran. Weekly meetings will be held between the project team and a Working Group comprising of SEStran, Workforce Mobility Project and City of Edinburgh Council (as recipient of the funding).

Regular updates will be provided to the Steering Group: comprising of senior managers from SEStran and each local authority, Transport Scotland, and Network Rail.

Regular project updates will also be provided to ESESCRD Directors and TAB and the SEStran Board.

A Project Board, comprising of Directors from the various local authorities and Transport Scotland will be established by the end of 2025 and it is expected that this Board will approve the output from this initial task.

Deliverables & Timeline

Deliverables - The workstream will deliver a Technical Report that will cover elements of the Programme level SBC for the regional connectivity investment programme (SEStransit).

This draft programme provides an indicative timeline for the completion of the tasks outlined above.

Month		Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Task	Name						
1	Defining Strategic Context						
2	Connectivity and Demand Analysis						
3	Problems and Opportunities						
4	Case for Investment						
5	Strategic Framework for Regional Connectivity						
6	Priority Investment Areas						
7	Network Development						
8	Scoping the remainder of the Programme SBC						

Budget

Delivery Cost Estimates

This workstream will be funded through Transport Scotland's Bus Infrastructure Fund.

The estimated Consultant fee for completing the tasks outlined in the scope is £250,000. We have not quantified partner cost inputs into this stage of work.

Additional Workstreams

Should any additional budget become available, consideration will be given to incorporating supplementary tasks, providing that they are aligned to the overall production of the Programme level SBC.

Stakeholder engagement

Recognising the short timescales involved within this particular workstream, the engagement will primarily focus on the organisations that are part of the governance structure. We will also investigate whether a more focused engagement exercise can be carried out with a few external organisations.

Updates will be given to support political engagement for all eight SEStran regional authorities.

Risks and Opportunities

1. **Risks**
- **Scope Creep –** There is a risk that if the definition of SEStransit is not clear and easily understood, the scope of the project could be extended to include areas of the region that are not of a

regional/strategic significance. This can be managed through the careful definition of what is included within the integrated transport system for the region, taking cognisance of the definition adopted in the RTSDP and recognition that other interventions can be progressed through the remaining RTSDP themes.
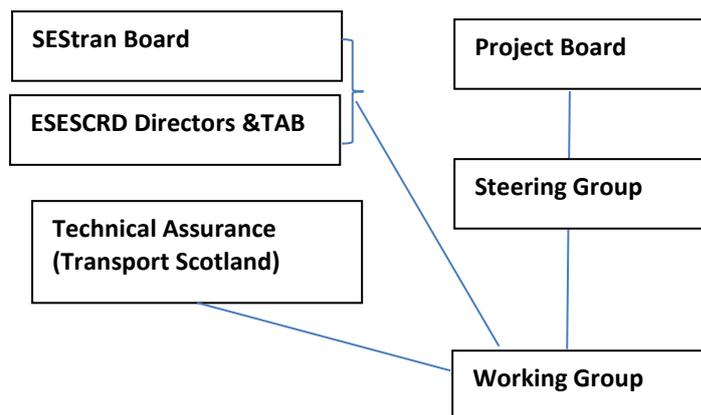
- **Lack of capacity within LA Partners** – This commission will require a significant amount of work within a relatively short timescale. It will be important to ensure that the local authority partners have sufficient resources to provide input in a timely manner. To assist with this, the consultants and client project management team will outline the requirements from all partners during the project with clearly defined timescales and expectations.

- **Local approval of the SEStransit vision before this commission progresses too far** – there is a risk that parties will want to explore potential solutions before the problems and opportunities are defined. Given the short timescale involved, analysis task will run in parallel with discussions around defining mass transit to allow partners to ensure this doesn't become a solution led exercise.

- **Timely Approval Process** - There is a risk that if an overly complex governance process is established the resultant approval process will impact on the study programme, resulting in the deadlines not being met. The consultants and client Working Group will tackle this task in a collaborative manner to ensure that all partners have appropriate time and authority to take the necessary decisions in a timely manner.

- **Gaining Partner Approvals/Commitments** – There is a risk that there is in sufficient time for the regional partners to report to Committee to secure commitment/funding for 2025/26. To address this the team will need to liaise regularly with the Steering Group and work with members to provide necessary reports/briefings to assist with internal approvals.

2. **Opportunities**
- **Securing additional funding –** in parallel with the core work, the Steering Group will investigate opportunities to secure additional funding to expedite the completion of the Programme Level SBC

- **Framing the Project within the wider regional growth strategy –** recognising the role that a regional integrated transport system has in relation to facilitating economic growth, the Steering Group will liaise with the ESESCRD team to explore opportunities for delivery through City Region Deal 2.

Note: Detailed Risk & Issues log will be developed, monitored and managed by the Working Group and transferred as appropriate to later stages.

Appendix A - Project Governance

Group	Role Frequency of Engagement	
	Oct 24 – Mar 26	Post Mar 26
SEStran Board	For information only Quarterly meetings	For information only Quarterly meetings
ESESCRD TAB	For information only Monthly meetings	For information only
Project Board	Form Board by end 2025 Meet in early 2026 Confirm support of project, sign-off this output from this task	Approval of outputs Meet every 6-8 weeks Approval of outputs
Technical Assurance (Transport Scotland)	Approval of methodology Fortnightly call with project team	To be reviewed
Steering Group	Providing input to process and reviewing technical outputs Workshop every 4-6 weeks	Providing input to process and reviewing technical outputs Workshop every 6-8 weeks
Working Group	Monitoring of project programme and tasks Weekly progress calls	To be reviewed

Membership of Governance Groups

Members of the Working Group

Name	Organisation	Email Address
Brian Butler	SEStran	brian.butler@sestran.gov.uk
Keith Fisken	SEStran	Keith.Fisken@sestran.gov.uk
Rachael Murphy	SEStran	rachael.murphy@sestran.gov.uk
Stuart Turnbull	Strategic Transport Consulting (on behalf of SEStran)	stuart@stcconsulting.co.uk
Ewan Doyle	Workforce Mobility Project	edoyle@scotborders.gov.uk
Jamie Robertson	City of Edinburgh Council	jamie.robertson@edinburgh.gov.uk

Members of the Steering Group (Bold indicates principal point of contact)

Name	Organisation	Email Address
Brian Butler	SEStran	brian.butler@sestran.gov.uk
Keith Fisken	SEStran	Keith.Fisken@sestran.gov.uk
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John Lauder	Network Rail	John.Lauder@networkrail.co.uk
Richard Malloy	Network Rail	Richard.Malloy@networkrail.co.uk

Name	Organisation	Email Address
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Paul Junik	Transport Scotland	Paul.Junik@transport.gov.scot
Adam Priestley	Transport Scotland	adam.priestley@transport.gov.scot
Nicola Gill	West Lothian Council	nicola.gill@westlothian.gov.uk
Gordon Brown	West Lothian Council	Gordon.Brown@westlothian.gov.uk
Ewan Doyle	Workforce Mobility Project	edoyle@scotborders.gov.uk
Kevin Gillette	Workforce Mobility Project	kevingillette2@outlook.com

Members of the Project Board

We are seeking nominations for the Project Board, ideally at a Director/Head of Service level. The recommendation is that we will invite the EV Board to take on the remit of the Project Board, but this may mean a change in personnel from the current Board make-up.

Name	Organisation	Email Address
Brian Butler	SEStran	brian.butler@sestran.gov.uk
	Clackmannanshire Council	
	City of Edinburgh Council	
	East Lothian Council	
	Falkirk Council	
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This note provides an outline methodology to develop the **Strategic and the Socio-Economic dimensions** of a **programme-level Strategic Business Case (SBC) for a regional connectivity investment programme across the South East of Scotland**. This initial work will be developed with funding from the Scottish Government administered by Transport Scotland under the Bus Infrastructure Fund (BIF), available until 31st March 2026.

The programme will adopt a **region-wide approach, aim to improve connectivity between strategic locations, and will seek to improve provision for cross-boundary connections** within the SEStran area. Building on the case initially articulated by STPR2 Recommendation 12[1], the project will be vision-led and will represent a step-up, rather than an incremental change in transport provision across the region.

There are two key strands to the current stage of work, which together will seek to enable funding to progress beyond the current commitment up to March 2026. These are:

- **Setting out the Case for Investment (CfI):** This will build on the Case for Change outlined in STPR2 and expand on why enhanced regional connectivity is required and what social, economic and environmental outcomes are expected. This work will identify the strategic corridors, feeder networks and orbital links that can support improved access to key destinations, reduce inequalities and enable modal shift.

- **Developing the Vision and Governance:** Agreeing a shared vision, based on future ambitions for the region, and setting out the governance structures that will enable this vision to be realised. This will form part of the preliminary scoping of the Financial, Commercial and Management dimensions of the SBC.

In line with H.M. Treasury *Green Book* and Transport Scotland's *Guidance on the Development of Business Cases* (broadly reflecting *Green Book* principles), it is essential that this Programme SBC follows a structured and **evidence-based approach**. Following this process is a critical enabler of good governance, value for money and long-term deliverability, providing a credible foundation for future investment decisions.

Importantly, the Programme SBC – when complete with the Financial, Commercial and Management dimensions – will **act as a strategic gateway and define the pathway forwards**, identifying a sequence of potential individual investment propositions, e.g., specific corridors, enhancements to existing infrastructure, etc. These can then be taken forward, as separate projects under the umbrella of the investment programme, through the next stages of business case development: the Outline Business Case (to identify the 'preferred option') and the Full Business Case (to facilitate procurement and delivery of the 'preferred option'). This approach allows for a natural flow of projects **from programme-level vision and outcomes to project-level delivery**, ensuring coherence, integration and alignment with regional transport and development strategies.

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[1] Recommendation 12 in STPR2 relates to Edinburgh & South East Scotland Mass Transit – *A mass transit system for the region which would provide more public transport options for cross-boundary travel. The system would focus on key corridors of demand and disadvantaged areas with greatest dependence on public transport.*

A key principle underpinning this programme is the recognition that investment in connectivity has the potential to shape long-term land-use patterns, rather than merely responding to them. This marks a shift away from a reactive model – where transport infrastructure follows dispersed, car-dependent development towards a proactive (*Vision and Verify*) – approach that supports compact, mixed-use and well-connected places.

The Programme SBC will consider several factors that will influence the Value for Money (i.e., the social and economic outcomes the system may deliver across the region), feasibility and affordability of the proposed connectivity programme:

- Evidence-based identification of candidate corridors for enhanced connectivity, including those suitable for high-capacity public transport and those requiring 'feeder' or orbital solutions, which represents a step-change in provision from that currently in place across the South East of Scotland
- The role, hierarchy and integration of different modes – bus, BRT, tram, light rail and heavy rail – including existing networks and infrastructure
- potential capacity trade-offs in terms of any roadspace re allocation
- Links to existing demand (and challenges) and growth areas

The tasks proposed below are considered to be deliverable this financial year and will be completed within the allocated funding envelope.

Task 0 – Stakeholder Engagement

We will develop a limited Stakeholder Engagement Plan, in collaboration with SEStran and regional partners. The plan will outline the key elements of the Programme SBC that we will be engaging on at this initial stage and key messages, specifying with whom and when we will engage. Engagement will be limited and focused at this stage, with the aim of ensuring buy-in to the process from key project partners, so that the programme can progress into the next funding period.

Whilst a budget allocation has been set aside to facilitate stakeholder engagement, recognising the short timescales involved within this particular workstream, the engagement will primarily focus on the organisations that are part of the governance structure, as outlined in the Project Initiation Document.

Task 0 Output: Draft and Final Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the current stage of the Programme SBC

1 Case for Investment

Task 1 – Define the strategic context

The work proposed under this Programme SBC will build on the existing Case for Change made in STPR2 in relation to Recommendation 12. By adopting a *Vision and Verify* **approach** we will work with regional partners to identify an overarching purpose, whist also rooting decision making in evidence.

Our initial work will focus on setting out the socio-economic context, establishing patterns of demand, focusing on identifying cross-boundary connectivity gaps across the South East of Scotland. Building on

the extensive work carried out by SEStran and the local authority partners, we propose to perform a review of the changes or additions to the evidence base since the publication of STPR2, including:

- SEStran's RTS and associated Delivery Plan
- National Developments in NPF4
- ESES City Region Deal's Strategic Sites Programme
- Local development plans and transport strategies across local authority partners
- Current and future strategic development sites across several sectors
- Travel data (including travel to work) and travel patterns (including a matrix showing travel volumes between discrete areas in the region to capture orbital movement)
- Demographic and socio-economic trends
- Changing operational models (e.g., no peak fares)
- A review of existing and planned infrastructure across the region including the status, impact and data from projects recently delivered or currently underway, e.g., BPRDF, Trams to Newhaven, Workforce Mobility, Levenmouth Rail Link, the trial of 7/7/7 Bus Lanes, WETIP, bus services and fleet improvements and others

This review will allow us to establish how the strategic context has evolved across the South East of Scotland since STPR2 was published in 2022. A **Strategic Context Report** will provide a summary of the above, setting out the strategic rationale and articulating where the project sits within the regional and national context, and against local priorities in terms of economic growth and spatial planning.

We will develop a reporting **PowerBI dashboard** including the combined mapping of strategic development sites, existing transport corridors and infrastructure, areas of deprivation and travel data.

Task 1 Output: Strategic Context Report and PowerBI dashboard

Task 2 – Connectivity and demand analysis

We will undertake detailed connectivity work at postcode level to identify spatial disparities in access to key destinations across the South East of Scotland. For example:
- Regional employment centres
- Education hubs
- Healthcare
- Strategic transport nodes
- Shopping centres
- Regional tourism hotspots

By overlaying the outputs of the connectivity analysis with socio-economic and travel data, we will be able to:
- Identify areas where poor connectivity intersects with deprivation and other socio-economic indicators
- Identify regional OD movements where there is significant demand for travel and relatively poor public transport connectivity.

Task 2 Output: Connectivity and demand *inputs* to Case for Investment

Task 3 – Problems and opportunities

Using the outputs of Tasks 1 and 2, we will identify problems and opportunities for regional connectivity, drawing together:

- limitations of current provision though existing modes, e.g., fragmentation, journey times, cross-boundary connectivity, lack of integrated ticketing etc. We will work with partners to understand what work has been carried out to this effect and analyse where data gaps exist
- opportunities for using existing heavy rail infrastructure, space availability along wider roads in the network etc.
- key strategic risks such as funding uncertainty, technological disruption, cross-boundary governance and policy shifts
- the opportunities that enhanced connectivity could unlock, framing the investment as a catalyst for wider benefits, i.e., what are the societal and economic outcomes that a truly integrated network would deliver?

Task 3 Output: Problem and opportunity *inputs* to Case for Investment

Task 4 – Case for Investment

The Case for Investment (CfI) is a central component of the Programme SBC and forms the foundation of the strategic dimension. It sets out the rationale for intervention, the alignment with strategic objectives and the expected societal and economic outcomes of improved connectivity across the region. This task will synthesise the outputs of Tasks 1 to 4 into **a coherent and compelling narrative that sets out the case for future investment**.

We will produce a concise and purposeful CfI with agreed network development principles, bringing together:

- **Strategic Rationale**, clearly articulating what it is that we are trying to deliver, i.e., the approach to regional connectivity, the role of different modes and the expected societal and economic outcomes
- **Vision and Objectives**, developing a statement for improved regional connectivity and setting the context for the outcomes-based Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) aligned with regional priorities
- **Network Development Principles**, agreeing a set or principles for how the network may evolve, including modal hierarchy and integration, streetscape and routing principles (e.g., roadspace prioritisation, segregation levels, etc) and the role of different radial and orbital corridors
- **Governance and Delivery Considerations**, providing initial thinking on how partners might come together to deliver an integrated transport system that improves connectivity across the region, exploring potential governance models, delivery mechanisms and timescales

Task 4 Output: Case for Investment Draft and Final Reports

Task 5 – Establish the strategic framework for regional connectivity

Defining what local authority partners in the SEStran region require of a *regional connectivity programme* , and what the shared vision for this is, is a critical decision point in the development of the Programme SBC, and a solid step toward defining an integrated set of solutions.

To inform this decision point, we will undertake targeted preparatory analysis across several key themes. This analysis will not only help clarify the strategic ambition of the programme but will also further define the measurable outcomes that derive from the TPOs – the key parameters that must be met for any future regional solution to be considered effective, inclusive and deliverable. Our analysis will include:

- **Operational Governance:** We will explore the future governance arrangements required to deliver and manage a truly integrated regional transport system. This will include consideration of cross-boundary coordination, the role of existing transport authorities and potential models for oversight and delivery, particularly in relation to potential mass transit corridors, 'feeder' services and orbital links
- **Integration:** We will examine how any potential solutions can be integrated with existing and planned transport networks (bus, rail and active travel), as well as land-use. This will include assessing interchange opportunities, land-use patterns and the role of improved connectivity in supporting inclusive growth and sustainable development
- **Functional Geography:** We will analyse the economic geography of the region to understand how improved connectivity can contribute to the development of the South East of Scotland. This will include the identification of the spatial extent of any potential solutions, defining the functional reach of different modes
- **Scoping of mode options**

The output of this stage will be a concise statement outlining the dimensions listed above.

Task 5 Output: Strategic Framework for Regional Connectivity Statement

2   Outline the Socio-Economic Dimension

Tasks 6 and 7 will form the backbone of the Socio-Economic Dimension of the Programme SBC. Building on the CfI, these tasks will begin to translate the regional vision into spatial and modal priorities.

Task 6 – Define and agree priority investment areas

We will define and agree the priority areas for improved connectivity across the South East of Scotland, forming the spatial and operational basis of the future regional network. Prioritisation will be guided by a combination of:

- **Existing and Planned Infrastructure**, considering the role of existing rail infrastructure and corridors, and other transport-related development across the region and nationally
- **High-Volume Corridors**, identifying corridors with significant existing or projected demand

- **Supporting networks and modal hierarchy**, serving and complementing the fastest and highest capacity services
- **Development and Land-Use**, linking to existing and future strategic development sites across several sectors, e.g., employment, housing, education, healthcare etc.
- **Socio-Economic**, prioritising corridors serving areas of deprivation and deliver on equity outcomes

Task 6 Output: Priority Investment Areas Technical Note

Task 7 – Set out the strategic approach to network development

In parallel to the identification of priority investment areas, we will establish a strategic framework for network development. The aim is to provide a coherent, regionally integrated approach that is not overly-process heavy and balances ambition with deliverability. Key components will include:

- **Prioritisation Methodology**, developing a transparent, evidence-based and comprehensive methodology for prioritising radial and orbital corridors
- **Edge Strategy**, defining how areas at the edge of the core functional geography will connect into the regional network including 'feeder' and orbital movement, P&R and interchange and active travel
- **Commercial and Operational Integration**, exploring the likely steps we will need to take in future stages to come up with an integrated network that delivers the expected outcomes while making commercial sense for operators
- **Terminus Strategy**, assessing whether any future services should terminate at interchange points or extend into town centres, balancing operational efficiency with accessibility. As part of this, we will consider whether a framework similar to Edinburgh's Circulation Plan is needed for towns such as Livingston, Musselburgh or Dalkeith, thus supporting integration and modal shift
- **Modal Hierarchy**, establishing a clear hierarchy of modes based on corridor characteristics, demand and strategic role

Task 7 Output: Network Development Approach Technical Note

Task 8 – Scoping of remainder of the Programme Strategic Business Case

Recognising that it will not be possible to complete all components of the Programme SBC within this timeframe, we will scope out the remaining tasks and associated timescales required to complete the Programme SBC.

Output: Draft Scope for Programme Strategic Business Case

3 Programme

The following programme provides an indicative timeline for the completion of the tasks outlined above.

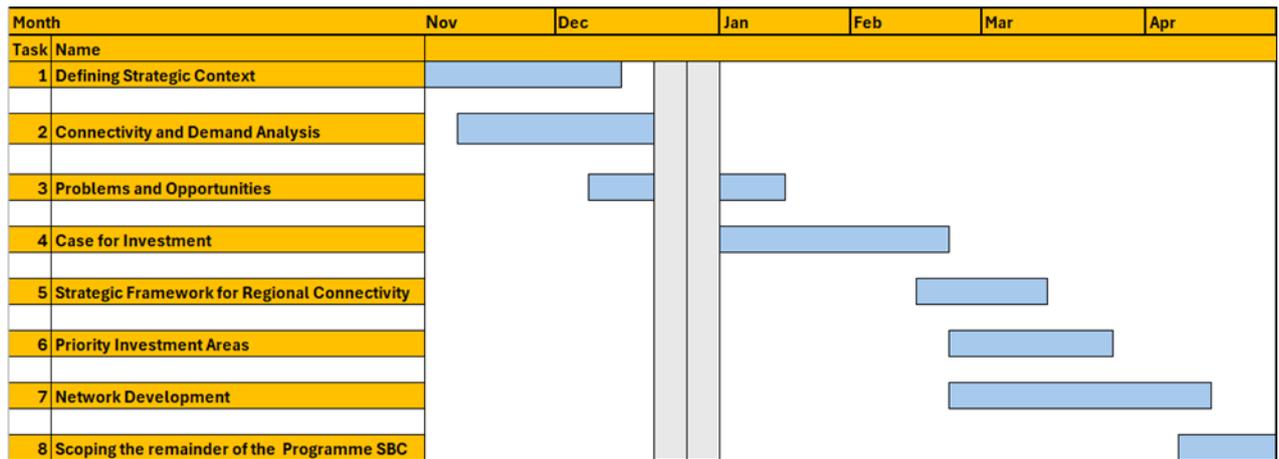| Month		Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Task	Name						
1	Defining Strategic Context						
2	Connectivity and Demand Analysis						
3	Problems and Opportunities						
4	Case for Investment						
5	Strategic Framework for Regional Connectivity						
6	Priority Investment Areas						
7	Network Development						
8	Scoping the remainder of the Programme SBC						

Figure 3-1 Indicative timeline for financial year 2025/26