

PaSDOS AND FUTURE REPORTING

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper updates the Board on discussions around the future role of the Project and Strategy Delivery Oversight Subgroup (PaSDOS) and future reporting resulting from this and the 2026/27 Business Plan. The recommendation in this paper was approved by the Performance and Audit Committee on 6th June, subject to approval by the Board.

2 PaSDOS

- 2.1 PaSDOS was established in early 2025 to strengthen governance, oversight, and strategic alignment of SEStran's project delivery, ensuring that projects are effectively scrutinised, coordinated, and delivered in line with the Regional Transport Strategy and business plan priorities.
- 2.2 As the Subgroup had been in place for 12 months, it was felt timely to review its terms of reference (ToRs) and overall function, which the Subgroup did in an additional meeting on 6th March 2026. Subsequent to this, the terms of reference were redrafted and agreed, subject to final amendments, by the Subgroup at their last meeting on 24th April 2026. The final draft is attached as appendix 1.
- 2.3 Key changes proposed to the ToRs are as follows:
- The scrutiny/audit function of existing projects to be passed back to this Committee – this will include the project dashboard report and risk register in a more streamlined format
 - Instead of reporting to this Committee, PaSDOS will instead report to Board and provide advice and guidance on project delivery alignment with overall strategy (as strategic direction is a core remit of the Board)
 - In doing this, PaSDOS will be reframed around ensuring project delivery against the RTS and national strategies
 - A core role will be to support development of the business plan for the next year and evaluation of the previous year's business plan
 - The Subgroup will continue to support ongoing project development with meetings focusing on specific projects, with project leads attending and discussion focused around the groups input on specific project challenges and project development
 - As part of the business plan process, the group will set a 'work plan' for the year based on the milestones within the business plan – this will include setting meeting dates that align with project development to facilitate the above role
 - Membership will look to increase to up to 7 with an ongoing focus on the right skills mix to support the role of the committee

3 BUSINESS PLAN 2026/27 AND PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH

3.1 The final Business Plan is attached at appendix 2. The 2026/27 Business Plan sets out a programme-led delivery model to implement the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), aligning transport investment with national priorities, regional economic ambitions, and local authority outcomes. Collectively, the portfolio is designed to improve everyday journeys, expand access to opportunity, and support long-term regional prosperity and wellbeing. The plan is built around six core programmes, forming a coherent and mutually reinforcing portfolio:

- People and Place
- Regional Bus Action Plan
- Transport to Health
- Transport to Employment
- Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan
- SEStransit (mass transit programme)

3.2 The 2026/27 Business Plan adopts a fully programmatic approach, moving away from the previous model of delivering numerous, often discrete projects. Instead of funding individually scoped interventions with some coordination, delivery is now structured around a small number of strategic programmes that group related activities, align partners, and manage delivery collectively at a regional level. This enables improved prioritisation, stronger governance and oversight, and a clearer line of sight from investment to outcomes.

4 PROPOSED 2026/27 PROGRAMME REPORTING

4.1 Further to the above, it is proposed that programme reporting for 2026/27 take a different format than in previous years, both to reflect the change in approach and to ensure it has the easily accessible information it needs to scrutinise this new approach.

4.2 As such, it is proposed that future reporting is as follows:

- A quarterly update focusing on the progress of each programme, consisting of a dashboard overview for each project giving high level updates since the last meeting plus progress to milestones. Whilst this will include some budget information, the separate budget report will be the main source of reporting and scrutiny for the project budget.
- A six monthly report on projects risks and issues, to alternate with the existing corporate risk report.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Board is asked to:

- approve the proposed changes set out in section 2, and
- note and comment on sections 3 and 4.

Michael Melton
Programme Manager

19th June 2026

Appendix 1: Final Draft PaSDOS Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: SEStran Business Plan 2026/27

Policy Implications	Outlined project work contributes to the objectives identified within the SEStran Regional Transport Strategy.
Financial Implications	All project work is delivered within confirmed budgets.
Equalities Implications	There are no adverse equalities implications arising from SEStran projects. Several projects actively work to reduce inequalities.
Climate Change Implications	There are no negative climate change implications arising from SEStran projects. Several projects actively work to tackle climate change through the creation of, or support for more sustainable transport options.

SEStran Project and Strategy Delivery Oversight Subgroup (PaSDOS) Terms of Reference

Version History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Approved Date</i>	<i>Approved By</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1	24/04/2025	PaSDOS	First issue
2			Revisions as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgroup to report to Partnership Board and not P&A Committee • Clarity on Subgroup size • Meeting schedule to be agreed by the Subgroup rather than quarterly • Remit and reports section revised in full

Title

The subgroup shall be called the Project and Strategy Delivery Oversight Subgroup (PaSDOS)

Purpose

PaSDOS is a Subgroup of the Partnership Board. The Subgroup will provide advice and guidance on project and strategy delivery alignment with the Regional Transport Strategy, any other relevant strategy, and individual Business Plans on behalf of the Partnership Board. It will also advise on relative priority of workstreams, value for money, and the management and control of project and strategy work.

Membership

Membership of the Subgroup shall be made up of at least two Councillor Members and two non-Councillor Members. Membership will be by invitation, at the direction of the Partnership Chair, in order that Members with specific skillsets can be targeted. These skillsets may include audit, accounts, programme or project management, change management, risk management or legal knowledge. Membership will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the membership of the Committee is aligned with annual Business Plans.

The minimum membership of the Subgroup is five members, with a maximum of eight members.

Chair

The Chair will be elected by Members at the first meeting for the Subgroup, and thereafter if the Chair becomes vacant at the following Subgroup meeting.

Meetings

There will be a minimum of four meetings per year, with scheduling agreed for each financial year in advance based on the agreed annual workplan.

Papers will be issued one week in advance of the meeting via email.

The secretariat will be provided by SEStran.

The quorum for meetings shall be a minimum of three members. If this cannot be reached, the meeting should be rearranged for an alternative time when the quorum can be met.

Officer Attendance

The Senior Partnership Manager, Strategy Manager, and Programme Manager will normally attend meetings of the Subgroup. Depending on items on the agenda, the Partnership Director will attend, as will other SEStran officers where items for discussion will benefit from their input and support.

Governance

The names of the attendees present at the meeting will be recorded in the minute of the meeting. The names of other persons in attendance will also be recorded.

SEStran will appoint an employee to prepare the minutes.

The agenda will be drawn up by partnership officers and discussed with the Chair. Items can be suggested by other Members.

Minutes will be presented to the Partnership Board.

The Subgroup will operate on the basis of consensus. In the event of an issue arising on which consensus cannot be achieved, the matter will be reported to the Partnership Board for a view.

All Members appreciate that some of the information discussed at the Subgroup will be confidential in nature, and by participating agree to comply with any requirement for confidentiality advised by the Chair.

Delegated Authority

The forum has the delegated authority from the Partnership Board to discuss and consider any matters within its remit.

Remit

The Subgroup acts on behalf of the Board to provide advice and guidance on project and strategy delivery alignment with the Regional Transport Strategy, any other relevant strategy, and individual Business Plans. To perform this function, the Subgroup will:

- Support in the process of the development of the next year's Business Plan, including through the review of Project Initiation Documents and the setting of objectives, outcomes, milestones and deliverables.

- Support the evaluation of the current and previous year's Business Plan(s), including through the review of project closure reports and lessons learned, and through review of progress against set outcomes and RTS objectives
- Support ongoing (in year) project development, with project leads attending and discussion focused around the groups input on specific project challenges and project development
- Review and advise on relative priority of workstreams, the development of value for money measures, and the management and control of project and strategy work.

In order to fulfil this function, the Subgroup will agree an annual workplan for each financial year, based on the content of the Business Plan, which should set out:

- Dates for meetings for the year
- The main focus for each meeting

The Subgroup will report to the Partnership Board by exception only where this has been agreed within a meeting. This will take the form of a verbal report from the Subgroup Chair (or other nominated Member) or a written report produced by SEStran Officers as directed by the Subgroup. In addition, all Subgroup minutes will be reported to the subsequent Partnership Board.

For the avoidance of doubt, the remit of this group does not replace the Partnership Director's operational responsibilities as set out in the Partnership's Standing Orders.



SEStran 2026/27 Business Plan

GO
SEStran
South East of Scotland
Transport Partnership

ON
OUR
WAY

**We're better
connected.**

We are the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran). We are a partnership of eight local authorities, working collaboratively with each other, and with government, transport and infrastructure operators, businesses and communities across our region to revolutionise our transport system by delivering the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

This business plan outlines six key programmes designed to deliver key planks of the RTS. These programmes will enhance transport connectivity, accessibility, and sustainability across the region. Each programme is summarised below, with intended outcomes and objectives clearly stated to demonstrate our strategic approach to improving everyday journeys, supporting local communities, driving economic growth and fostering social wellbeing.

- **People and Place programme (P&P):** We know that car use has a number of significant negative consequences, including emissions that add to climate change, deaths and injuries through road collisions, illness and fatalities caused by pollution, major loss of economic productivity through congestion, and negative impacts on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. P&P supports delivery partners to encourage people to replace car journeys with active and sustainable travel for daily journeys, with particular emphasis on schools, workplaces, inclusion, accessibility and building local capacity.
- **Regional Bus Action Plan (RBAP):** Across the region, more journeys are made by bus than by any other form of public transport, but bus use has been falling consistently for a number of years. Tackling this and encouraging people to use the bus instead of driving will be essential to reducing the negative impacts of car use. The Regional Bus Strategy sets out a shared vision to deliver the regular, reliable and affordable bus services that people tell us are essential to persuading them to make the switch. These improved bus services will also allow people in communities across the region to access jobs, education, healthcare and leisure activities. Informed by extensive public feedback, the strategy drives improvements in service quality, fares, ticketing, information and governance, with objectives focused on enhancing connectivity, affordability, and overall service standards.
- **Transport to Health (TtH):** Imagine not being able to access essential healthcare appointments simply due to a lack of transport options. This is reality for many people, and it can contribute to people becoming increasingly unwell before they receive care, and additional costs and lost capacity for healthcare services through missed appointments. Working closely with health boards and partners, this programme seeks to remove the transport barriers that prevent people from accessing the healthcare they need, when and where they need it. The programme will improve health outcomes for people across the region, enhance patient experiences, create operational efficiencies and cost savings across NHS Primary Care activities, and improve integration with other transport services.
- **Transport to Employment (TtE):** Many factors contribute to child poverty, which the First Minister of Scotland has pledged to eradicate. These include a lack of transport options for parents to reach the jobs, education or training they need to increase household income. This programme will deliver a number of targeted interventions, in partnership with local authorities and third sector organisations, which aim to reduce child poverty by supporting employment and education opportunities. The programme focuses on increasing employment and training rates, lowering transport costs, and supporting integrated ticketing and bus network enhancements.

- **Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan:** Guided by the 'Infrastructure First' principles set out in National Planning Framework 4 and the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy, the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan will define the medium- to long-term transport interventions required to maximise the region's economic ambitions, as articulated in the Regional Prosperity Framework and partner economic strategies. The Delivery Plan will be developed in close alignment with emerging regional land use planning, ensuring that future transport investment supports the safe, sustainable and efficient movement of people and freight across the region, and provides the foundations for inclusive and sustainable economic growth
- **SEStransit:** A lack of transport options to get people to jobs, healthcare, education or leisure, and the congestion caused by car use, are both already significant problems throughout much of the region. Southeast Scotland is the fastest growing part of Scotland, with the 3 fastest growing local authorities, so these problems will become much worse unless we can significantly improve the transport network over the next few years. SEStransit is the working name for a Mass Transit programme that will deliver many of the improvements targeted by the RTS and a key theme of the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan. It is committed to providing faster, greener and more reliable transport connections. The initiative will develop integrated, high-capacity and sustainable mobility solutions, enabling seamless travel across the region and improving access to strategic housing, employment, health and education sites.

In addition to the exciting programme portfolio, we will continue to manage and deliver two pieces of ongoing operational work – each of which underpins key facets of our vision.

- **Thistle Assistance and Realtime Passenger Information (RTPI):** Thistle Assistance provides support to people who find using public challenging, and we manage this initiative on behalf of all RTPs across Scotland. The scheme has exceeded all expectations in 2025/26, with usage ballooning from previous levels due to the excellent efforts of the team. And we continue to support the rollout of RTPI screens across the region. These play a crucial role in journey planning and in improving the perception of safety when using public transport – because people know exactly when a bus will arrive at their stop.

Complementing all of our work, our communications and marketing strategy includes a refreshed SEStran website, designed to increase engagement and provide accessible information for all users. Together, these efforts form a comprehensive business plan aimed at delivering effective transport solutions and supporting the region's long-term growth and prosperity.

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Introduction

This is an incredibly exciting period for SEStran.

On 28 November 2025, at the State of the City Conference in Glasgow, the First Minister in his [speech](#) indicated his administration's intention to introduce enabling legislation to allow regional partnerships to seek legal status, unlock new powers, and design delivery models tailored to local priorities.

The details have yet to be worked out but – when considered together with Transport Scotland's impending review of the split of responsibilities between national, regional and local levels – it presents a generational opportunity to align economic development, land use planning and transport to drive economic growth.

And SEStran will be in the middle of these discussions.

We will work with the economic partnerships, growth deals and local authorities in our region to outline and define the crucial role of transport in enabling and driving economic growth and land use planning in our region.

And we will work with Transport Scotland to build on the initiatives devolved to Regional Transport Partnerships over the past few years, such as the People and Place active travel behaviour change programme, which has demonstrated that RTPs are key to tailoring national policy to suit regional circumstances.

Our project portfolio for 2026/27 is designed to support these discussions and further demonstrate the role that SEStran can play in delivering and managing a world class regional transport network.

Although the block grant received from Transport Scotland has reduced by 5% in recent years, having stayed at the same level for many years beforehand, the total level of funding we receive from TS has increased considerably over the past 3 years, taking account of the devolved initiatives, and will increase significantly again in 2026/27.

In fact, our total guaranteed external funding for 2026/27 is likely to be just under £9m - around nine times the level in 2023/24 – another demonstration of the level of confidence Transport Scotland has in us. Although the majority of this additional funding is ring-fenced for specific pieces of work, primarily People and Place and the new Transport to Employment programme, internal project team costs to support partners with the allocation and monitoring of budgets, progress monitoring and reporting are covered within this funding.

From 2026/27 forward, we will aim to deliver an increased percentage of our work in-house by upskilling our fantastic team to cover more of the initiatives that we would routinely put out to consultants. We will ensure that we can cover most of the broad range of skills that we need by developing a unique delivery programme, with development tailored to the individual needs of each member of the team. This work is already underway and will be introduced during the year.

How we will deliver regional impact

Our 2026/27 delivery programmes have been carefully selected and tailored to ensure they support the delivery of national policy outcomes and the Regional Transport Strategy. This section of our Business Plan sets out how our programmes align with the First Minister's priority for government, the National Transport Strategy, and the Regional Transport Strategy. Across all six programmes, SEStran delivers impact by removing transport barriers, supporting modal shift, and strengthening regional connectivity. This improves access to employment, health and education, reduces poverty, drives inclusive economic growth, and accelerates climate action. Investments in active travel, mass transit development, and an equitable bus network ensure the transport system becomes fairer, greener, more reliable, and more efficient.

		People and Place	Regional Bus Action Plan	Transport to Health	Transport to Employment	RTS Delivery Plan	SEStran
First Minister's Priorities	Eradicating Child Poverty	Improves access to safe, low-cost everyday travel options with a focus on inclusion and groups facing barriers to sustainable travel.	Supports affordable, reliable day-to-day mobility, reducing transport poverty and helping families reach jobs, education, childcare and essential services without needing a car.	Reduces barriers to healthcare access, helping to prevent missed appointments and supporting healthier households, reducing the pressures that can exacerbate poverty and inequality.	Explicitly focused on reducing child poverty by improving access to fair work and training for parents, and by targeting transport costs that can make employment unaffordable for them.	Strengthens a prioritised pipeline of interventions to address cross-boundary accessibility gaps, helping ensure future investment targets the places and communities where transport barriers most limit opportunity.	Supports access to strategic employment and education sites at a regional scale, improving connectivity from communities to opportunity over the medium to long term.
	Growing the Economy	Supports a shift to more efficient travel for short and medium-length trips, helping reduce congestion impacts and improving local accessibility to jobs and services.	Improves reliability, journey times and connectivity on the bus network to support workforce mobility, town centre access and productivity.	Supports economic participation by improving access to healthcare and reducing missed appointments, benefiting individuals and system efficiency.	Increases labour market participation by removing transport barriers to jobs, training and apprenticeships for parents.	Aligns transport priorities with regional economic ambitions and emerging spatial planning, helping to unlock housing and employment growth and strengthen the case for investment.	Develops the evidence and delivery pathway for high-capacity, integrated regional connections that support key economic corridors and strategic sites.
	Tackling the Climate Emergency	Drives mode shift by enabling and encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling as normal choices for everyday journeys.	Supports lower-carbon travel by making bus services more attractive through improvements to quality, affordability and reliability.	Supports a reduction in car dependency for healthcare journeys by improving integration, information and accessibility, enabling more people to reach care by sustainable modes where feasible.		Brings together the regional pathway for decarbonisation (including mass transit, active travel, interchange and supporting themes such as data/digital), helping partners coordinate delivery at scale.	Provides a major medium-to long-term decarbonisation lever by developing a high-capacity, integrated public transport network that can reduce reliance on private cars on key corridors.
	Improving Public Services	Builds capacity across local authorities, communities and third sector partners to design and deliver locally-led interventions that improve everyday journeys.	Supports more consistent, user-centred services through coordinated action on fares, ticketing, information, service standards and governance.	Supports more equitable access to care and helps reduce missed appointments by addressing journey time, affordability, accessibility and information barriers, supporting better outcomes and system efficiency.		Strengthens long-term planning, prioritisation and coordination across partners, helping public bodies align investment, reduce duplication and manage interdependencies	Strengthens long-term planning, prioritisation and coordination across partners, helping public bodies align investment, reduce duplication and manage interdependencies.

		People and Place	Regional Bus Action Plan	Transport to Health	Transport to Employment	RTS Delivery Plan	SEStransit
National Transport Strategy Objectives	Reduces inequalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will provide fair access to services we need Will be easy to use for all Will be affordable for all 	Enables inclusive access to affordable, safe and accessible active travel options, specifically targeting communities and groups who face the greatest barriers to sustainable transport.	Improves affordability, reliability and spatial equity of bus services, ensuring communities across the region can access jobs, services and opportunities without reliance on private cars.	Reduces inequalities in healthcare access by addressing transport barriers that disproportionately affect older people, disabled people and those without access to a private vehicle.	Directly tackles child poverty by improving access to fair work and training opportunities, while reducing the financial burden of transport for low-income households.	Provides a region-wide framework to target investment towards areas with the greatest accessibility challenges, ensuring equitable distribution of transport improvements and future infrastructure.	Improves strategic regional connectivity, enabling communities across urban and rural areas to access employment, education and healthcare opportunities through an integrated transport system
	Takes climate action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will delivery our net zero target Will adapt to the effects of climate change Will promote greener, cleaner choices 	Drives sustained behaviour change by enabling walking, wheeling and cycling as the preferred option for short daily journeys, significantly reducing dependence on private car travel.	Supports modal shift by improving the quality, reliability and affordability of bus services, making public transport a more attractive and lower-carbon alternative to private cars.	Encourages more sustainable healthcare journeys by improving integration, information and accessibility, enabling patients and staff to reduce reliance on private car use where appropriate.		Establishes a coordinated regional pathway towards net zero, aligning investment in active travel, public transport and infrastructure to deliver long-term transport decarbonisation outcomes.	Delivers a high-capacity, integrated public transport system that provides a viable alternative to private car use, reducing emissions on key regional travel corridors over time.
	Helps delivery inclusive economic growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will get people and goods where they need to get to Will be reliable, efficient and high quality Will use beneficial innovation 	Improves local connectivity and accessibility, enabling more efficient everyday journeys and supporting access to employment, education and essential services at a neighbourhood and community level.	Enhances workforce mobility, connectivity and reliability across the region, supporting productivity, access to labour markets and the economic vitality of town centres and key destinations.	Supports economic participation by improving access to healthcare and reducing missed appointments, helping maintain a healthier workforce and improving system efficiency across public services.	Increases labour market participation by removing transport barriers to work, apprenticeships and training, enabling more people to access and sustain fair, well-paid employment opportunities.	Aligns transport interventions with regional economic and spatial priorities, unlocking housing and employment growth while strengthening the case for coordinated long-term investment.	Strengthens regional economic corridors by delivering high-capacity, reliable connections between key population centres and strategic employment, education and development sites across South East Scotland.
	Improves our health and well being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be safe and secure for all Will enable us to make healthy travel choices Will help make our communities great places to live 	Promotes physical activity and healthier lifestyles by increasing walking, wheeling and cycling, while improving local environments and reducing the negative impacts of car dependency on communities.	Improves access to essential services and social opportunities, helping reduce isolation and supporting wellbeing through a more connected, accessible and user-focused public transport system.	Improves patient outcomes and wellbeing by ensuring reliable, affordable access to healthcare, reducing missed appointments and addressing barriers faced by vulnerable populations across the region.	Enhances wellbeing by improving financial security and reducing stress associated with accessing work and training, particularly for low-income families.	Supports the creation of healthier places by integrating transport, land use and planning decisions, encouraging sustainable travel and reducing exposure to congestion and pollution.	Contributes to improved public health by reducing congestion, emissions and journey stress, while enabling more reliable and comfortable regional travel for residents and visitors alike.

		People and Place	Regional Bus Action Plan	Transport to Health	Transport to Employment	RTS Delivery Plan	SEStransit
Regional Transport Strategy Objectives	Reduces inequalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will provide fair access to the services we need Will be easy to use for all Will be affordable for all 	Expands access to active and sustainable travel opportunities, focusing on inclusion and ensuring underrepresented groups can participate more fully in everyday journeys.	Delivers a more equitable regional bus network, improving connectivity and service levels to ensure consistent access to opportunities regardless of geography or income.	Addresses inequalities in access to healthcare services by removing transport barriers that prevent people reaching essential appointments and treatment across the region.	Improves access to employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups, supporting households to overcome transport barriers and improve long-term economic outcomes.	Identifies and prioritises interventions that address cross-boundary accessibility gaps, ensuring improvements are targeted at communities where connectivity most limits opportunity.	Provides enhanced regional connectivity to strategic sites, reducing spatial inequalities and ensuring more communities benefit from access to key destinations and services.
	Takes climate action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will help deliver our net zero target Will adapt to the effects of climate change Will promote greener, cleaner choices 	Enables behaviour change at scale by embedding active travel as a normal choice for everyday journeys, supporting regional objectives to reduce emissions and reliance on private cars.	Supports a shift to lower-carbon travel by improving bus reliability, affordability and customer experience, making public transport more competitive with private car use.	Reduces transport-related emissions by improving sustainable access to healthcare, enabling more people to travel by public or shared transport rather than private car.		Provides the strategic framework for coordinated regional decarbonisation, aligning transport, land use and investment decisions to deliver net zero outcomes efficiently and at scale.	Delivers a transformational shift towards high-capacity, low-carbon transport, significantly reducing private car use on key regional corridors and supporting long-term decarbonisation targets.
	Helps deliver inclusive economic growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will get people and goods to where they need to be Will be reliable, efficient and high quality Will use beneficial innovation 	Improves local accessibility and connectivity, supporting participation in employment, education and community life while strengthening the economic resilience of neighbourhoods and local centres.	Strengthens regional connectivity and service reliability, supporting labour market access, business productivity and economic activity across urban, rural and cross-boundary travel patterns.	Enhances workforce productivity and participation by improving access to healthcare, reducing disruption from missed appointments and supporting a healthier, more economically active population.	Directly supports inclusive growth by increasing access to fair work and training, enabling more people to contribute to and benefit from the regional economy.	Aligns infrastructure investment with economic and spatial priorities, supporting sustainable growth and enabling housing and employment development across the region.	Enhances economic connectivity by linking key employment, housing and education sites through high-capacity public transport, supporting growth across strategic regional corridors.
	Improves our health and wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be safe and secure for all Will enable us to make healthy travel choices Will help make our communities great places to live 	Improves health outcomes by embedding active travel in daily life, supporting physical and mental wellbeing and creating safer, cleaner and more attractive local environments.	Enhances wellbeing by improving access to services, reducing isolation and providing a safe, reliable and accessible public transport system for all users.	Improves health outcomes by ensuring timely, equitable access to healthcare services, reducing missed appointments and addressing transport-related barriers to care.	Supports wellbeing by reducing financial stress and improving access to employment, training and services that contribute to improved quality of life.	Promotes healthier communities by integrating sustainable transport into planning decisions, reducing pollution, congestion and barriers to active and public travel.	Improves regional health and wellbeing by reducing congestion and emissions, while providing a smoother, more reliable and accessible travel experience across the network.

How we will deliver local impact

Alongside the alignment of our programmes to national policy outcomes, they also support the delivery of local priorities for each of our 8 partner local authorities.

City of Edinburgh Council

The activities that SEStran will undertake in 2026/27 relate directly to the Priorities of the City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan 2023-2027:

Priority: Create good places to live and work in Edinburgh

- People and Place supports safer, healthier neighbourhoods by enabling more sustainable travel and reducing the negative impacts of car use.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan and Transport to Health make it easier for people to move around the city and wider region without a car - supporting access to jobs, education, healthcare and leisure.
- Transport to Employment improves access to jobs and training and targets affordability barriers that can prevent people taking up or sustaining employment.
- The RTS Delivery Plan Supports good growth and 20-minute neighbourhood delivery through alignment with land-use planning to ensure new housing/employment areas are planned with sustainable transport provision “built in”
- SEStran focuses on high-capacity, integrated regional connections to strategic housing, employment, health and education sites - supporting Edinburgh’s growth while improving reliability and reducing congestion pressures.

Priority: Take all the local actions needed to end poverty in Edinburgh

- Transport to Employment is explicitly designed to reduce child poverty by increasing access to fair, well-paid jobs and training and reducing the cost burden of travel.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan reduces transport poverty by improving affordability and service levels so people can reliably reach opportunities and essential services.
- Transport to Health tackles inequality of access to care - reducing missed appointments and improving access for people without private transport.

Priority: Work to deliver a net zero city by 2030

- People and Place drives modal shift away from car use by making active and sustainable travel more normal and accessible for everyday journeys
- The Regional Bus Action Plan encourages mode shift from car to bus by improving journey times, customer experience, and affordability—reducing car dependency and associated emissions.
- The RTS Delivery Plan (and SEStran as part of this) is a major net-zero enabler through development of an integrated transport system at a regional, reducing congestion and supporting sustainable travel to key destinations at scale.=

Clackmannanshire

The strategic objectives of Clackmannanshire Council's Wellbeing Economy Local Outcomes Improvement Plan align well with work being carried out by SEStran:

Strategic outcome: Wellbeing

- People and Place supports healthier lives by enabling more sustainable transport for everyday journeys, and by improving inclusion and accessibility for groups who face barriers to sustainable travel.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan improves access to essential services and social participation by working toward a more reliable, affordable and equitable bus network.
- Transport to Health reduces health inequalities by removing transport barriers to appointments.
- Transport to Employment supports wellbeing by helping families improve financial security and by reducing the stress and cost burden of travelling to work, training and key services.

Strategic outcome: Economy & Skills

- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports labour market access by improving reliability, fares and ticketing, and cross-boundary connectivity—helping residents reach employment, colleges and training providers without needing a car.
- Transport to Health can support the economy by improving access to healthcare sites (including as major employers) and by reducing missed appointments—helping maintain a healthier workforce and improving system efficiency.
- Transport to Employment is directly aligned to helping people access fair work, learning and training, by improving connectivity to jobs and skills pathways
- The RTS Delivery Plan strengthens cross-boundary connectivity and access to regional opportunities - a regional pipeline helps prioritise interventions that improve access to jobs, education, healthcare and key centres across local authority boundaries
- SEStran supports a stronger local and regional economy by developing the evidence and delivery pathway for integrated, high-capacity connections to strategic employment and education sites, reducing congestion and improving journey reliability.

Strategic outcome: Places

- People and Place helps create sustainable, thriving places by supporting locally designed projects (often delivered with community and third sector partners) that improve everyday journeys, strengthen local connection and reduce the impacts of car dependency.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports connected places by improving access between settlements and key destinations, helping communities remain linked to services, opportunities and each other.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStran support long-term place-based planning by improving connectivity to housing, employment, health and education sites, enabling growth that is better aligned with sustainable transport.

East Lothian Council

SEStran's 2026/27 delivery programmes support the East Lothian Council Plan 2022-27 vision and objectives as follows:

Overarching objective: Recovery and Renewal

- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports recovery by improving the reliability and affordability of bus services that connect people to town centres, services and employment—helping local economies to function better day to day.
- Transport to Health and Transport to Employment support recovery by reducing practical barriers to accessing healthcare, training and jobs - helping residents participate in the economy and sustain wellbeing.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStran supports long-term renewal by developing the evidence and delivery pathway for integrated, sustainable regional connections

Overarching objective: Reduce poverty and inequality

- People and Place supports inclusion by widening access to active and sustainable travel especially for underrepresented groups and by building local capacity to deliver community-based solutions.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan reduces transport poverty by working toward a more equitable, reliable and affordable bus network.
- Transport to Health tackles inequalities of access to care by reducing transport barriers, improving services for people, and reducing missed or delayed appointments.
- Transport to Employment is designed to reduce child poverty by improving access to fair, well-paid work and training, and by reducing the cost burden of travel for parents.
- The RTS Delivery Plan provides a region-wide prioritisation framework that can target accessibility gaps and helps coordinate equitable service and interchange improvements so people can reach jobs, education and services more reliably and affordably.
- SEStran supports inclusive growth by improving strategic connectivity across East Lothian and the wider region, helping more communities access key destinations and opportunities through an integrated transport system.

Overarching objective: Respond to the Climate Emergency

- People and Place supports modal shift away from private car use by making sustainable travel more accessible for everyday journeys
- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports net zero by making bus travel more competitive with the car through improved journey times, customer experience and affordability.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStran are major net-zero enablers by developing an integrated, regional transport system that reduces congestion and supports sustainable travel to key destinations at scale.

Falkirk Council

SEStran's 2026/27 delivery programmes support the vision and three priorities of the Falkirk Council Plan:

Vision: Strong communities where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved

- People & Place removes barriers for under-represented groups, widens access to active and sustainable modes, and works with the partners to strengthen local delivery capacity.
- Transport to Employment reduces child poverty by supporting access to fair, well-paid jobs, training and skills pathways, particularly for low-income families and rural communities.
- Transport to Health improves access to healthcare, impacting health outcomes and reducing inequalities caused by missed appointments and delayed treatment.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan and SEStran improve regional connectivity, affordability and service reliability, ensuring communities across Falkirk have fair access to services

Priority: Supporting stronger and healthier communities

- People & Place increases walking, wheeling and cycling, improves travel confidence, and embeds healthier behaviours in schools, workplaces and communities.
- Transport to Health strengthens access to preventative and routine care, improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities.
- The Regional Bus Action and RTS Delivery Plans support cleaner air, reduce congestion and promote safe, accessible public transport, contributing to healthier local environments.

Priority: Promoting opportunities and educational attainment, and reducing inequalities

- People & Place enables safer, more sustainable school journeys and increases access to cycles, travel training and community-based mobility solutions.
- Transport to Employment will support people to access further education, apprenticeships and skills training, ensuring that transport is not a barrier to participation.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan delivers more reliable, affordable regional bus services, simplifying journeys to colleges, training centres and major employers.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStran improve longer-distance access to key destinations for learning and skills.

Priority: Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

- People & Place helps shift short and medium-length journeys to active and sustainable modes, lowering emissions and supporting local productivity.
- Transport to Health reduces avoidable demand on healthcare services, supporting a more resilient, sustainable regional economy.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan strengthens the regional bus network, supporting labour mobility, reducing car dependency and contributing to net-zero goals.
- SEStran supports strategic economic sites across Falkirk by improving mass transit connections, reducing congestion to increase productivity and help drive economic growth.

Fife Council

The Plan for Fife 2017-2027 identifies four key themes, each of which ties in closely with the aims of this Business Plan for SEStran:

Theme: Opportunities for all

- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports equal access to opportunity by working toward a more reliable, affordable and equitable regional bus network, improving connectivity between communities and key services.
- Transport to Health and Transport to Employment support access to healthcare, training and fair work by improving transport options to key destinations and reducing the cost burden of travel, especially for parents and households experiencing low incomes.
- The RTS Delivery Plan delivers region-wide prioritisation of accessibility gaps helping target investment where lack of transport most limits access to jobs, education, healthcare and services.

Theme: Thriving places

- People and Place helps create healthier, safer and more attractive places by supporting a shift to sustainable modes for local journeys, reducing negative impacts of car dependency.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports thriving places by improving access to town centres and facilities through better bus services.
- SEStran enables place-based growth by improving strategic connectivity to housing, employment and education in a way that supports sustainable travel, reducing congestion.

Theme: Inclusive growth and jobs

- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports business and labour market connectivity by improving service quality and cross-settlement links, helping employers access staff and customers and helping residents access jobs across Fife and the wider region.
- Transport to Employment supports inclusive growth by enabling more parents to access fair, well-paid work, improving household incomes and participation in the local economy.
- Transport to Health supports economic participation by improving access to healthcare, reducing missed appointments and supporting a healthier workforce.
- The RTS Delivery Plan Creates a coordinated regional investment pipeline, strengthening the case for external funding and via SEStran helps deliver strategic corridors that support labour market access and business connectivity.

Theme: Community led services

- People and Place is delivered through local authorities, third sector partners and community groups, supporting community-led design and delivery of projects that respond to local needs and build local capacity.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan is shaped by extensive public feedback and depends on coordinated partnership working with local authorities and operators to support more consistent, user-centred services.

Midlothian

The delivery programmes set out in the Business Plan support the Single Midlothian Plan 2023-27 vision and four of its seven themes as follows:

Theme: Midlothian will be healthier

- People and Place supports healthier lives by enabling more active travel for everyday journeys and by building confidence and skills to support this.
- Transport to Health improves access to healthcare by reducing journey time, complexity and affordability barriers, supporting better health outcomes.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStransit support long-term, integrated connectivity to health sites and population centres, improving reliability and reducing car dependency.

Theme: Midlothian will work towards reducing poverty

- People and Place supports inclusion by widening access to active and sustainable travel for underrepresented groups and by building local capacity to deliver solutions.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan reduces transport poverty by working toward simpler, more affordable fares and a more equitable, reliable network to support access to jobs
- Transport to Employment is designed to reduce child poverty by improving access to fair, well-paid jobs, education and training, and by reducing the cost burden of travel for parents
- The RTS Delivery Plan provides a region-wide prioritisation framework to target accessibility gaps, supporting access to opportunity for people without a car.

Theme: Midlothian will have a wellbeing economy and be better connected

- The Regional Bus Action Plan improves everyday connectivity within and beyond Midlothian through action on service quality, fares and ticketing, information and governance helping people and businesses rely on public transport.
- The RTS Delivery Plan Creates a coordinated regional investment pipeline, strengthening Midlothian's ability to progress priorities that depend on cross-boundary connectivity and to secure national investment.
- SEStransit supports a stronger wellbeing economy by developing the pathway for integrated, high-capacity regional connections to strategic employment, housing, education and health sites, improving journey reliability and reducing congestion.

Theme: Midlothian will be greener

- People and Place drives modal shift away from car use by making sustainable transport more accessible, reducing emissions while improving local environments.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports net zero by making bus travel more competitive with the car, supporting a shift to lower-carbon travel.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStransit are major net-zero enablers through development of an integrated, regional transport system, reducing congestion and supporting sustainable travel to key destinations.

Scottish Borders

SEStran's 2026/27 delivery programmes help to deliver on the main focus and five outcomes of the Scottish Borders Council Plan for 2026/27 as follows:

Outcome: Clean, green future

- People and Place drives modal shift from car to sustainable transport reducing emissions and improving local environments.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan makes bus services more reliable, affordable and attractive, supporting a shift from private car use and cutting congestion and emissions.
- The RTS Delivery Plan supports the business cases for integrated, low-carbon regional transport, enabling longer-term prioritised decarbonisation at scale.

Outcome: Fulfilling our potential

- The Regional Bus Action Plan alongside Transport to Health and Employment improves access to education, work, and healthcare for those who have no access to a private car.
- The RTS Delivery Plan helps address rural accessibility by using a region-wide prioritisation to target gaps in access, particularly where trips are cross-boundary and multi-modal

Outcome: Strong inclusive economy, transport and infrastructure

- The Regional Bus Action Plan improves labour market access and day-to-day economic functioning by improving bus services.
- Transport to Employment tackles transport barriers that prevent parents from accessing fair work and training, supporting inclusive growth and household income.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStran directly contributes to stronger regional infrastructure by progressing strategic cross-boundary interventions, improving reliability for commuters, businesses and servicing

Outcome: Empowered, vibrant communities

- The Regional Bus Action Plan strengthens connection between settlements and essential services, reducing isolation (especially for rural communities).
- People and Place funds and supports the design and delivery of local initiatives, building community capacity, inclusion and resilience.
- Transport to Health and Employment reduces social exclusion by removing transport barriers to essential opportunities and services.
- SEStran supports longer term place based planning and better regional connectivity between communities and key destinations.

Outcome: Good health and wellbeing

- People and Place increases physical activity through more active travel, supporting both physical and mental wellbeing and safer local environments.
- Transport to Health directly targets access to healthcare by reducing journey complexity and affordability barriers, improving equity of access and reducing missed and delayed appointments.

West Lothian Council

The delivery planned by SEStran for Corporate Plan for 2023/24 – 2027/28

Priority: Raising educational attainment

- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports access to schools, colleges and training providers by improving bus services and making journeys simpler and more affordable.
- The RTS Delivery Plan and SEStran improve longer-term connectivity to education sites, widening the realistic catchment for learning opportunities.

Priority: Strengthening care and support for children, adults and older people

- The Regional Bus Action Plan supports access to GP practices, hospitals, community services and care settings through a more reliable and inclusive bus network.
- Transport to Health directly addresses barriers to appointments and treatment by reducing journey complexity and improving affordability, supporting equitable access to healthcare

Priority: Investing in skills and jobs

- The Regional Bus Action Plan improves access to employment areas and training providers by strengthening service quality, fares, ticketing and cross-boundary connectivity.
- Transport to Employment focuses on improving access for parents to work and training, helping parents enter and sustain employment.
- SEStran develops the pathway for larger-scale, integrated regional connections to strategic employment sites, supporting the local and regional economy.

Priority: Helping to create strong and sustainable communities

- People and Place funds locally designed projects, building local capacity, improving inclusion and supporting healthier, more liveable places.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan: supports connected communities by improving access between settlements and destinations, reducing isolation and supporting participation.
- Transport to Health and Employment reduces exclusion by removing transport barriers to essential healthcare, work and training
- SEStran supports longer-term sustainable growth and resilience through integrated regional connectivity and reduced congestion and car dependency.

Priority: Tackling homelessness, poverty and inequality

- People and Place targets inclusion and accessibility barriers for underrepresented groups, supporting more equitable access to local opportunities through sustainable travel.
- The Regional Bus Action Plan and Transport to Health and Employment tackles transport poverty by improving affordability and strengthening service levels so everyone can reliably reach essential services.
- The RTS Delivery Plan provides a region-wide prioritisation framework that can target accessibility and affordability gaps, supporting equitable access to opportunity and essential services for households without access to a car.

Our 2026/27 Delivery Programmes

This business plan outlines six key programmes designed to deliver across the Regional Transport Strategy, whilst also aligning with national, regional, and local priorities. They will enhance transport connectivity, accessibility, and sustainability across the region. Complementing these programmes, our communications and marketing strategy includes a refreshed SEStran website, designed to increase engagement and provide accessible information for all users.

Taken together, this delivery portfolio demonstrates our strategic approach to improving everyday journeys, supporting local communities, social wellbeing, and the region's long-term growth and prosperity.

People and Place

The People & Place Programme is a region-shaping initiative designed to reshape how communities move, connect and thrive. We will fund over 100 projects across the region, delivering multi-million targeted investment in the local authorities, third sector delivery partners, and community groups that support making active and sustainable travel not just possible, but the preferred choice for everyday journeys. By empowering schools, workplaces, communities and local authorities, the programme drives a fundamental shift away from car dependency and towards healthier, fairer and cleaner daily journeys for everyone.

At its core, this programme unlocks real behaviour change at scale—removing barriers to access, widening participation, and embedding the skills, systems and confidence needed to create lasting change. It will see expanded access to cycles across the region, increased active journeys to schools through projects such as walking buses and cycle training, supporting increased use of public transport through provision of mobility hubs and enhanced bus stop information, and working with community groups to deliver change at a local level to achieve regional impact.

Coordinated at a regional level to achieve maximum impact through concentrated investment, it will advance inclusion, enhance accessibility, and strengthen local capability, while supporting the shift to net zero and Scotland's wider climate, health and economic ambitions.

Programme objectives

- Increase the proportion of active and sustainable journeys in the region
- Increase awareness of the benefits of active and sustainable travel to encourage future behaviour change
- Increase the use of active and sustainable travel modes among underrepresented groups in the region who might face additional barriers
- Collaborate with local authorities and third-sector partners to strengthen capacity and capability in active and sustainable travel

Regional Bus Action Plan

Building on the Regional Bus Strategy, we will deliver an ambitious transformation of bus services in South East of Scotland - turning years of public frustration, fragmented services and inconsistent access into a unified, modern, and equitable regional network designed around people, not modes or boundaries.

Grounded in our 2025/26 consultation that heard from thousands of voices from across our communities and driven by a clear vision for affordable, reliable, inclusive mobility, this programme will reshape how the region moves - strengthening opportunities, reducing inequalities, and positioning public transport as the natural first choice for everyday travel.

Through a coordinated Regional Bus Action Plan, we are building a system that delivers consistently, connects communities fairly, and competes confidently with private car travel. Our work will unlock faster and more dependable journeys through targeted bus priority measures; simplified and integrated fares and ticketing; moving toward a clear and trusted network identity; and ensuring all users benefit from high-quality information, infrastructure, and customer experience.

By improving access to jobs, services, education, and health, it will strengthen local economies, reduce carbon emissions, and support thriving, inclusive communities. Through strong partnerships with operators, local authorities, employers, and national bodies, we are creating a collaborative system that works better for everyone.

Together, we are building a future where using the bus is seamless, affordable, reliable and safe - where every community, regardless of geography or income, has a level of service they can depend on.

Programme objectives

- Move towards a regionally equitable and guaranteed level of service in terms of connectivity by settlement type that recognises the resource limitations and topographical challenges of local authorities, while accounting for the specific needs of communities.
- Improve affordability by ensuring that public transport fares across the region are simple, accessible, consistent, and equitable - providing fair, affordable options that prioritise those in transport poverty and make bus travel more competitive than car use.
- Improve service quality across the region to deliver a high-performing and user-centred regional bus network - through consistent network identity, efficient operations, integrated ticketing, high-quality infrastructure, strong customer experience, accessible information, decarbonised and well-maintained fleets, robust safety standards, and data-driven continuous improvement.

Transport to Employment

Directly supporting the First Minister's key priority for government of reducing child poverty, the Transport to Employment programme is a targeted, outcomes-driven intervention designed to break the link between low income, poor transport access, and child poverty. It will increase household incomes for parents across the region by enabling access to fair, well-paid employment and training, while simultaneously reducing the financial burden of travel that can make work unaffordable or unsustainable.

Rather than operating in isolation, the programme maximises the impact of the Regional Transport Strategy by accelerating and shaping its delivery through a child-poverty lens. Every improvement to public and sustainable transport - whether reduced journey times, simpler networks, or lower fares - strengthens access to work and training and reduces reliance on private car ownership. This programme ensures those benefits are intentionally directed towards parents and communities most in need.

A core ambition is to turn short-term funding into long-term change. The programme will build regional capacity, deepen partnerships with Local Employability Partnerships, local authorities, NHS boards, and operators, and pilot scalable interventions that can be sustained beyond 2026/27. A strong emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, and learning will ensure that successful approaches are evidenced, refined, and ready for future expansion.

Delivery will focus on four strategic areas: supporting journeys to further education and training opportunities; improving transport access to large and strategically important workplaces, including healthcare sites; addressing the unique challenges of rural access to work and further education; and delivering targeted fare interventions that reduce travel costs for parents who currently fall outside existing concessionary schemes. Together, these actions will unlock opportunity, improve financial resilience, and support families to move sustainably out of child poverty.

Programme Objectives

- Reduce current levels of child poverty by improving the availability of transport options for parents to access employment and training
- Reduce current levels of child poverty by increasing household incomes for families by reducing transport costs to employment and training
- Reduce current levels of child poverty by supporting access to NHS sites as one of the region's major employers and to support access to health services to reduce health inequalities that impact on ability to work
- Make best use of the one year funding to build capacity in future years to deliver further action to reduce child poverty

Transport to Health

SEStran will lead a step change in how people across South East Scotland access healthcare, switching transport from a barrier into an enabler of health, wellbeing and equity. Working in close partnership with our four NHS Boards, NHS Scotland Assure, local authorities and national partners, we are developing a bold, region-wide Transport to Health Strategy grounded in a clear Case for Change.

Across South East Scotland, too many people face delayed treatment, missed appointments and deteriorating health simply because the journey to care is too complex, unreliable or unaffordable. This programme will tackle entrenched inequalities in access to hospitals, clinics and specialist care - particularly for people without access to a car, disabled people, older people and those with long-term conditions. Through a coordinated, programmatic approach, we will reduce journey times, complexity and missed appointments; integrate public, community and demand-responsive transport; and cut unnecessary car dependency in healthcare travel.

The programme will deliver measurable improvements in patient outcomes, system efficiency and value for money, while ensuring fair access to healthcare in both urban and rural communities. Transport to Health will be a cornerstone of a more inclusive, efficient and resilient regional health and transport system.

Programme Objectives

- Reduce journey time, interchange complexity and uncertainty for secondary and tertiary healthcare trips
- Improve reliable and affordable access to healthcare for people without access to a private car
- Improve the accessibility and usability of transport for disabled people, older people and those with long-term conditions
- Reduce transport-related missed and delayed healthcare appointments
- Improve clarity, coordination and accessibility of transport information and support
- Integrate and enhance community and demand-responsive transport to support healthcare access
- Reduce unnecessary car dependency and improve system efficiency in healthcare travel

Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan

The Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan will provide a mechanism to identify, assess, prioritise and coordinate all regional transport projects that are required over the medium to long term, to realise the ambitions of the Regional Transport Strategy to support the economic and net-zero ambitions of the Regional Prosperity Framework and local authority economic priorities.

The Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan will dovetail with the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 to support the delivery of a transport network that:

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

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 region.

Ensuring appropriate sustainable transport provision will make a positive contribution to many national, regional and local priorities, including:

- 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.

Through strengthened collaboration, joint working, co-production and engagement, we will seek to ensure a robust basis for integrated regional economic development, land-use and transport planning, provision and delivery, maximising the opportunities for our region. The six theme of the RTS Deliver Plan are:

- 1) Mass Transit (SESTransit)
- 2) Active Travel
- 3) Freight
- 4) Data/Digital
- 5) Decarbonisation
- 6) Interchange

SEStransit

A key theme from the RTS Delivery Plan, SEStransit is a transformational, once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape how people move across South East Scotland. It will deliver a faster, greener and more reliable regional transport system - one that matches the scale of our economic ambition, supports inclusive economic growth, and enables tens of thousands more people to travel sustainably every day.

At its heart, SEStransit imagines a region where buses, trains, trams and other shared modes operate not as fragmented services but as a single, fully integrated, high-capacity mobility system, supported by seamless interchanges, smart ticketing, real-time information and world-class digital tools. This is a bold step toward creating a regional network that is coherent, coordinated and futureproof - a system where passengers can move effortlessly between modes, access employment, housing, healthcare and education sites, and rely on a transport network that works for every community. In doing so, it will accelerate decarbonisation and reduce congestion, expand opportunity and strengthen the resilience, wellbeing and economic opportunity of communities across the region.

Through a Strategic Business Case followed by an Outline Business Case, SEStransit will provide the robust evidence, modelling and delivery pathways required to unlock major investment, drive regional cohesion and support Scotland's climate, modal shift and economic priorities. Once the Business Cases are approved, we will move to a delivery phase so that the region will benefit from a harmonious and joined up plan ready to pursue national investment and implementation.

Programme Objectives

Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including local authorities.. before the end of 2025/26. In advance of confirming the specific objectives, the working definition of the project is:

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.

Our 2026/27 Delivery Programme

To follow

Appendix 1 – Core Delivery Programmes

Programme	People and Place
Project partners	Local authorities, third sector delivery partners, community groups

Programme summary
This initiative funds and supports delivery partners to encourage active and sustainable travel for daily journeys, with particular emphasis on schools, workplaces, inclusion, accessibility and building local capacity. The programme aims to increase journeys by sustainable modes, reduce car trips, improve perceptions of accessibility and enable broader participation in active travel.
RTS actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the provision of bike-sharing initiatives across the region. • Promotional and communication campaigns to highlight the benefits of active travel across the region and encourage people to adopt it where possible. • Improve public transport information in a variety of formats supported by wayfinding infrastructure. • Regional audit to identify stops, stations and interchanges that do not meet accessibility requirement. Develop priority list of interventions.
Programme objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the proportion of active and sustainable journeys in the region • Increase awareness of the benefits of active and sustainable travel to encourage future behaviour change • Increase the use of active and sustainable travel modes among underrepresented groups in the region who might face additional barriers • Collaborate with local authorities and third-sector partners to strengthen capacity and capability in active and sustainable travel
Programme outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of journeys by active and sustainable modes in and around the target community • Reduce number of short trips being made by car • Improve perceptions of accessibility to local goods/services, education and employment by non-car modes • Increase the amount of walking, wheeling and cycling for physical activity • Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so • Increase the number of journeys made by young people by active and sustainable modes to school and for other commonly-made journeys • Increase the number of journeys made by parents/carers by active and sustainable modes to school and for other commonly-made journeys

- Reduce the number of journeys made by car to school and for other commonly-made journeys
- Improve perceptions of accessibility to school by non-car modes
- Enable people that were previously excluded from using active or sustainable modes for some journeys to do so
- Reduce the number of journeys made by car from or to major trip generators
- Increase the number of journeys made by active and sustainable modes from or to major trip generators
- Improve perceptions of accessibility from or to major trip generators by non-car modes
- Increase the use of the new infrastructure or services
- Improve perceptions of active travel and public transport
- Improve perceptions of accessibility to public transport
- Increase the use of public transport
- Improve perceptions of transport integration
- Reduce the number of medium-length and longer trips being made by car
- Local authorities are better able to establish and manage effective behavioural change projects
- Local partner organisations have increased willingness, capacity and skills to establish and implement effective behavioural change projects

Programme milestone / deliverables

Q1

Milestones:

- 2025/26 Q4 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (April)
- 2026/27 Grant award letters circulated and signed (April)
- Inception meetings held with grant recipients (April)
- Training audit carried out with 2026/27 grant recipients (June)
- Q1 reporting meetings held with grant recipients (June)
- 2025/26 Evaluation report completed and presented to June Partnership Board (June)

Deliverables:

- 2025/26 Q4 report and claim
- 2025/26 Evaluation report
- Report on results of 2026/27 training audit
- Schedule of 2026/27 training delivery
- Newsletter
- Updated programme dashboard for 2025/26 with final spend and locations

Q2

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Q1 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (July)
- Knowledge Sharing Event (local events) (Sept)
- Developed approach for 2026/27 programme evaluation (Sept)

Deliverables:

- 2026/27 Q1 report and claim
- Newsletter
- Case studies produced
- Updated programme dashboard with new project locations
- Project plan for 2026/27 programme evaluation

Q3

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Q2 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (October)
- Delivery Plan review process completed
- Draft 2027/28 proposals to Transport Scotland

Deliverables:

- 2026/27 Q2 report and claim
- Newsletter
- Delivery Plan completed for 2027/28 onwards

Q4

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Q3 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (Jan)
- Knowledge Sharing event (local authority event) (Jan)
- Portal application window opens/closes for 2027/28 programme (Dec/Jan)
- Internal assessment and funding panel completed for 2027/28 programme (Feb)
- Decisions in principle issued to successful 2027/28 applicants
- 2027/28 Grant awards reported to the March Partnership Board
- Updated 2027/28 Delivery Plan presented to March Partnership Board
- Final 2027/28 proposals to Transport Scotland

Deliverables:

- 2026/27 Q3 report and claim
- Updated 2027/28 grant funding guidance
- Newsletter
- 2027/28 People and Place funding report

Delivery areas

Main Grant Fund (DP)

This incorporates the Regional Priority Investment Fund (RPIF), Local Authority Delivery Support (LADS) and Access to Cycles and Cycle Storage:

- RPIF: This fund supports the main programme delivery. Projects in this fund are to deliver according to the priority interventions and key outcomes identified in the People and Place Delivery Plan.
- LADS: Provides support Local Authorities to deliver sustainable transport behaviour change projects, to supplement Transport Scotland funding direct to Local Authorities (Local Authority Direct Award).
- Access to Cycles and Cycle Storage: To support access to cycles and cycle storage in the SEStran region. Access to cycles includes the purchase of new cycles, cycle share schemes, recycling of cycles and repair of cycles.

Community Grant Fund (DP)

This is a grant fund to support community organisations looking to deliver sustainable transport projects within the SEStran region. Project outcomes should align with the P&P objectives and should relate to one or more of the three behaviour change People and Place themes: schools and young people, workplaces and accessibility and inclusion. The funding is available to Community groups, CICs and charities delivering within the SEStran region.

P&P knowledge sharing events and training support

A project to support increased capacity and capability in the delivery of active and sustainable travel projects in the region. This will be achieved through delivery of knowledge sharing events, regional skill training, identifying best practice and supporting collaboration.

P&P monitoring and evaluation

Collation of monitoring data and development of an annual evaluation report.

P&P communications

Programme wide comms and marketing including case study development, a quarterly newsletter and ongoing promotion through the SEStran website and social media channels.

P&P regional bike share

Ongoing support for established e-bike libraries operating with SEStran assets including outreach and support for maintenance.

P&P grant management

Ongoing management of the People and Place grants including quarterly meetings, processing claims and monitoring progress and spend.

Programme	Regional Bus Action Plan
Project partners	Local authorities, transport operators

Programme summary

We are delivering our Regional Bus Strategy, which sets a shared vision for affordable, reliable and inclusive services, informed by thousands of public responses from across the region, and backed by actions on service quality, fares, ticketing, information and governance.

RTS actions

- Undertake a Regional Bus Connectivity study for non-Edinburgh travel to identify settlement pairs where travel demand is high and bus services are poor, as a means to promoting new routes and connectivity (in partnership with other policies).
- Undertake a Regional Bus Priority study which will identify regional, cross-boundary, quality bus corridors and key bus priority interventions to reduce bus journey times and improve bus journey time reliability where Edinburgh is likely to be a focus.
- Deliver the bus priority interventions funded by Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund and subsequently identified by the Regional Bus Priority study.
- Review the bus powers detailed in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and identify if they could be implemented across all or parts of the region within an integrated strategy to enhance the bus network.

Programme objectives

- Move towards a regionally equitable and guaranteed level of service in terms of connectivity by settlement type that recognises the resource limitations and topographical challenges of local authorities, while accounting for the specific needs of communities.
- Improve affordability by ensuring that public transport fares across the region are simple, accessible, consistent, and equitable - providing fair, affordable options that prioritise those in transport poverty and make bus travel more competitive than car use.
- Improve service quality across the region to deliver a high-performing and user-centred regional bus network - through consistent network identity, efficient operations, integrated ticketing, high-quality infrastructure, strong customer experience, accessible information, decarbonised and well-maintained fleets, robust safety standards, and data-driven continuous improvement.

Programme Outcomes

A more equitable regional bus network

Communities across the South East of Scotland experience a fairer and more consistent level of bus service, with improved access to employment, education, healthcare and essential services regardless of settlement type, geography or income. Inequalities in connectivity are reduced through a coordinated regional approach that prioritises communities most affected by poor access and limited travel choice.

Improved affordability and reduced transport poverty

Bus travel is simpler, more affordable and easier to understand, with clearer fares, better access to concessionary and discounted products, and reduced financial barriers for people experiencing transport poverty. As a result, public transport plays a stronger role in supporting household affordability, social inclusion and access to opportunity.

A more reliable and user centred bus experience

Passengers benefit from a more reliable, punctual and user focused bus network, with clearer network identity, better information and improved confidence in services. The overall customer experience improves, supporting increased satisfaction and making bus travel a more attractive option for everyday journeys.

Bus services that compete more effectively with the car

Bus services become a credible and competitive alternative to private car use on key corridors and for everyday travel, contributing to reduced congestion, improved journey time reliability and progress towards regional climate and health objectives.

A modern, accessible and decarbonised bus system

The regional bus system is supported by high quality infrastructure, accessible vehicles and a transition towards low and zero emission fleets, improving comfort, safety and environmental performance while supporting national and regional climate ambitions.

Stronger partnership working and coordinated delivery

Local authorities, operators and regional and national partners work more collaboratively and consistently, supported by clear governance, shared priorities and aligned delivery. This enables more effective use of resources, clearer decision making and greater confidence in regional delivery.

Evidence led planning and continuous improvement

Investment and decision making are increasingly detailed and outcome focused, with regular monitoring of service performance, affordability and user experience used to inform priorities, demonstrate progress and drive continuous improvement over time.

Milestones and deliverables

Note – further milestones and deliverables to be added as the action plan is finalised

Q1

Milestones:

Internal approval of Bus Action Plan which will map out work packages – *12 June 2026*

First Board Meeting is held where Terms of Reference, approach, and plan are agreed – *18 May 2026*

- Programme governance, scope and reporting arrangements confirmed – *18 May 2026*

Deliverables:

- Summary document with all LA BIF funding plans mapped out –
- Agreed programme plan, aligned to RTS and NTS outcomes – *12 June 2026*
- Baseline analysis for Current Level of Service by settlement type – *15 May 2026 with working document*
- Promote Bus Strategy outcomes to wider stakeholder through marketing and comm – *30 May 2026*
- Q1 Progress update to the Partnership Board – *19 June 2026*

Q2

Milestones:

- Embedded monitoring questions for all related projects to ensure impact on bus network can be evaluated
- Further milestones are developed based on Bus Action Plan finalised in Q1

Deliverables:

- Based on the Bus Action Plan finalised in Q1

Q3

Milestones:

- Further milestones are developed based on Bus Action Plan finalised in Q1

Deliverables:

- Based on the Bus Action Plan finalised in Q1

Q4

Milestones:

- Further milestones are developed based on Bus Action Plan finalised in Q1
- RBAP year 1 action plan to be reviewed and updated where required

Deliverables:

Based on the Bus Action Plan finalised in Q1

RBAP Action Plan Year 2– updated version based on review milestone – *31 March 2027*

Delivery areas

Advocacy

Advocacy activity will focus on representing the region’s bus priorities clearly and consistently to national partners, funders and stakeholders, making the case for sustained investment, policy alignment and delivery support. Building on the Regional Bus Strategy and Business Plan, SEStran will use evidence from engagement, data and early delivery to advocate for fair and equitable levels of service, simpler and more affordable fares, and the infrastructure and powers required to deliver a high-performing regional bus network. This role will also include sharing best practice, influencing national guidance and ensuring that the needs of diverse communities across the region are reflected in wider decision-making.

Programme Governance

Programme governance will provide clear regional leadership and coordination for delivery of the Regional Bus Action Plan, ensuring activity is aligned with the Regional Transport Strategy and national priorities. SEStran will act as the convener and coordinator, bringing together local authorities, operators and national partners to agree priorities, manage dependencies and monitor progress against agreed outcomes. Governance arrangements will focus on enabling collaboration, providing transparency on decision-making, and ensuring that delivery is evidence-led, proportionate and responsive to emerging challenges, while maintaining regular reporting to the Partnership Board on progress, risks and next steps.

Operator Tasks

Operator-facing activity will centre on collaborative delivery, supporting operators to contribute to a more coherent, reliable and user-centred regional bus network. Working through existing partnerships and alliances, SEStran will support coordination on issues such as network clarity, service quality, fares simplification and passenger information, while recognising the operational realities faced by operators. The emphasis will be on enabling practical improvements that benefit passengers, strengthening trust and consistency across the network, and creating the conditions for bus services to compete more effectively with private car travel across the region.

Programme	Transport to Employment
Project partners	Local authorities, community planning partnerships, third sector delivery partners

Programme summary

This programme of work will reduce levels of child poverty across the region by increasing household income through increasing opportunities to access fair, well-paid jobs and training, and decreasing household expenditure on transport to these. Key focuses will be around improving specific public transport services where these can increase access to employment opportunities, and working with Local Employability Partnerships to roll out targeted measures to reduce the transport cost for parents to access employment.

RTS actions

There are no RTS actions specifically aimed at transport to employment. Rather, the implementation of any and all actions within the RTS will improve opportunities to access employment, reduce the cost of public and sustainable transport options and reliance on the private car.

Programme objectives

- Reduce current levels of child poverty by improving the availability of transport options for parents to access employment and training
- Reduce current levels of child poverty by increasing household incomes for families by reducing transport costs to employment and training
- Reduce current levels of child poverty by supporting access to NHS sites as one of the region’s major employers and to support access to health services to reduce health inequalities that impact on ability to work
- Make best use of the one year funding to build capacity in future years to deliver further action to reduce child poverty

Programme outcomes

- Reduced public transport journey time and complexity when travelling to employment and further education
- Reduced public transport cost when travelling to employment and further education
- Improved access to employment and further education for people without access to a private car
- Strengthened role of demand-responsive transport in supporting access to employment and further education
- Reduced public transport journey time and complexity for staff and patients when travelling to secondary and tertiary healthcare centres
- Reduced public transport cost for staff and patients when travelling to secondary and tertiary healthcare centres
- Increased local capacity and knowledge to deliver action on transports role in addressing child poverty
- Development of self-sustaining programmes beyond the 2026/27 funding

- Evaluation of successful delivery to support future delivery programmes

Milestones and deliverables

Note – further milestones and deliverables to be added as programme develops

Q1

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Grant award letters circulated and signed (April)
- Inception meetings held with grant recipients (April)
- Finalise monitoring guidance (April)
- Q1 reporting meetings held with grant recipients (June)

Deliverables:

- Monitoring guidance

Q2

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Q1 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (July)

Deliverables:

- 2026/27 Q1 report and claim
- Newsletter
- Project plan for programme evaluation

Q3

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Q2 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (October)

Deliverables:

- 2026/27 Q2 report and claim
- Newsletter

Q4

Milestones:

- 2026/27 Q3 reporting and claims to Transport Scotland (Jan)

Deliverables:

- 2026/27 Q3 report and claim
- Newsletter
- Programme completion event/communication

Delivery areas
<p>School to skills pathway</p> <p>This programme will seek to work with school communities, targeting families who experience child poverty and then working with parents and children in those families. In working with parents, projects will support their transport options to work and/or further education. In working with children and young people, it will address what happens after secondary school - while existing funding supports walking, wheeling and cycling behaviours to become established through school-based activity, young people and families from low-income households often struggle to sustain access to skills training, apprenticeships and employment once leaving school</p>
<p>Transport to Large Workplaces</p> <p>Projects in this area will look at improving transport access to large workplaces across the region. They will take an evidence based approach, working with local authority transport team and Local Employability Partnerships, to identify existing gaps in provision and put in place solutions to address these gaps.</p>
<p>Rural transport to work and further education</p> <p>Projects in this area will support the introduction of new services in line with the level of service set out in the new Regional Bus Strategy, focusing providing access to employment for those living in more rural parts of the region.</p>
<p>Targeted action to reduce ticket prices</p> <p>SEStran will partner with a range of organisations to fund an intervention to reduce ticket prices, potentially across multiple operators. This will be targeted based on available data to look at key trip origins and destinations that will have the maximum possible impact on reducing travel costs for low income parents travelling to work. In doing so, it will enable access to opportunities that are currently unaffordable or inaccessible, especially those located outwith specific communities due to travel costs. While existing free or subsidised bus travel for young people provides important support, current eligibility is limited to those aged 22 and under. This creates a significant gap for individuals aged 23 and over, many of whom are supporting families or seeking to increase household income who continue to face expensive travel costs when accessing employment or training. Targeted cost reductions would help address this gap, reduce transport related barriers, and support households to move out of poverty through improved access to employment, increased earnings, and greater financial stability.</p>
<p>Transport to Health pilot projects</p> <p>Access to healthcare is a vital aspect of supporting people into work, and healthcare sites are major employers themselves. Following on from the regional case for change report, this funding area will support a small number of high priority pilot projects that can be used to demonstrate the value of specific interventions. The exact project list will be defined over the next month but will focus both on access to healthcare for patients and employees.</p>

Future development and programme management

This area of work will focus on the administration of this funding, as well as investigating how it can be used strategically to support future work beyond 2026/27

Programme	Transport to Health
Project partners	Local authorities, health boards, transport operators

Programme summary

We lead transport to health work in the region, working closely with health boards and local partners to improve how people get to hospitals and clinics, creating a transport system that actively supports wellbeing and making access to healthcare equitable for all.

Since October 2025, SEStran has been working closely with its four NHS boards and NHS Scotland Assure, as well as with consultancy support from Urban Foresight to produce a Case for Change on Transport to Health in South East Scotland.

There is a clear need to improve transport to health in our region. The issues identified in the Case for Change highlight the inequality of access and subsequent negative impacts.

In 2026/27, the focus will be on moving from the evidence base and objectives to a co-created, prioritised pipeline of interventions, supported by early-stage business case development.

RTS actions

Support the delivery of bus services and infrastructure measures which ensure access to healthcare for all.

Programme objectives

- Reduce journey time, interchange complexity and uncertainty for secondary and tertiary healthcare trips
- Improve reliable and affordable access to healthcare for people without access to a private car
- Improve the accessibility and usability of transport for disabled people, older people and those with long-term conditions
- Reduce transport-related missed and delayed healthcare appointments
- Improve clarity, coordination and accessibility of transport information and support
- Integrate and enhance community and demand-responsive transport to support healthcare access
- Reduce unnecessary car dependency and improve system efficiency in healthcare travel

Programme outcomes

The development of a regional Transport to Health Strategy aims to achieve and/or contribute to the following items:

- Improved access to care
- Enhanced patient outcomes
- Operational efficiency – better coverage, ways of working (reduction in missed appointments etc.)

- Cost savings – for NHS and local authorities
- Equity in rural and urban access
- Better integration with other services (public transport, etc)

Milestones and deliverables

Q1

Q1 will see the publication of our Case for Change report and distribution to our key stakeholders. We'll also lead on engagement initiatives with our four Health Boards at a senior level to agree and finalise the Transport Planning Objectives prior to developing a shared regional Transport to Health vision. To progress on this work, we'll be seeking consultancy support and will go through a procurement exercise as appropriate.

Our NHS Leaders Board will direct future work packages, that will most likely include the delivery of outline business cases, updates from the Transport to Employment trials in 2026/27 that pertain to health journeys and events aimed at engaging the wider stakeholder network.

Milestones:

- Case for Change published and publicised to our key stakeholders
- Engagement plan agreed with stakeholders to review the TPOs
- NHS Leaders Board established and draft Terms of Reference agreed
- Procurement exercise started

Deliverables:

- Revised Project Initiation Document
- Engagement plan
- Terms of Reference for NHS Leaders Board and Shared Learning Network
- Tender brief

Q2

Milestones:

- Consultants appointed to support capacity on the development of the Strategy
- Regional Transport to Health vision developed and agreed
- TPOs agreed

Deliverables:

- Vision
- Final TPOs

Q3

Milestones:

- Engagement activities delivered with key stakeholders to identify potential solutions
- Long list options agreed to feed into the option appraisal

- Short list of options identified based on sifting methodology

Deliverables:

- Long list of options
- Short list of options

Q4

Milestones:

- Outline Business Cases developed based on short list of options (including economic, financial and management viability) – minimum one per TPO

Deliverables:

- Outline Business Cases
- Final report summarising approach, findings and recommendations

Delivery areas

Delivering on our objectives

To address the issues highlighted in the Case for Change, we will take a programmatic approach, building a programme board with whom we will work through a detailed options appraisal, leading a suite of outline business cases, that together will deliver on our objectives for Transport to Health. As ever, this work will be delivered in partnership with our health boards, NHS Assure, Transport Scotland, the Primary Care Directorate, local authorities, our Partnership Board and expert stakeholders.

Transport to Health pilot projects

To be delivered under Transport to Employment

Programme	SEStransit
Project partners	Transport Scotland, local authorities, Scotland's Railway, bus operators

Programme summary

The purpose of Project SEStransit is to provide faster, greener and more reliable connections across our region and to key strategic sites, helping more people travel sustainably. Our Strategic Business Case will set out the context and need for such a system and will be followed by a series of Outline Business Cases for individual projects or packages. Achieving this will in turn reduce congestion in our urban areas, improving productivity, as well as increasing overall access to key employment sites across our region.

RTS actions

Project addresses a wide range of RTS actions therefore individual actions are not listed here

Programme objectives

Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including local authorities before the end of Stage 1 work, and reported in the Case for Investment.

In advance of confirming the specific objectives, the working definition of the project is:

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.

Milestones/tasks and deliverables

Q1 Network development and packaging

Milestones/tasks

- Option shortlisting against problems and opportunities, TPOs and STAG criteria.
- Option prioritisation and packaging against regional aspirations and requirements (e.g. the recognised need to improve connectivity into Edinburgh and the need to enable inclusive growth across the region)

Deliverables:

- Network Development Technical Note (draft)

Q2 *Modelling and detailed appraisal and engagement*

Milestones:

- Model specification
- Quantification of impacts and benefits using the SEStran regional model
- Distributional analysis of social and economic benefits appraisal
- Evidencing public support through appropriate public engagement
- Building stakeholder buy-in through targeted stakeholder discussions and workshops

Deliverables:

- Network Development Technical Note (final)

Q3 *Modelling and detailed appraisal and engagement*

Milestones:

- Model specification
- Quantification of impacts and benefits using the SEStran regional model
- Distributional analysis of social and economic benefits appraisal
- Evidencing public support through appropriate public engagement
- Building stakeholder buy-in through targeted stakeholder discussions and workshops
- SEA and Integrated Impact Assessment scoping
- Commercial, management and financial case

Deliverables:

- Detailed appraisal – draft report
- SEA scoping – draft report
- IIA scoping – draft report
- Engagement – draft report

Q4

Milestones:

- Internal approvals
- Report reviews

Deliverables:

- Detailed appraisal – final report
- SEA scoping – final report
- IIA scoping – final report
- Engagement – final report
- SBC - draft report

Delivery areas

SEStransit Strategic Business Case

Completion of the strategic business case for the SEStransit project

Programme	Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan
Project partners	Local authorities, City Region Deals, Green Free Ports

Programme summary

The Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan will provide a mechanism to identify, assess, prioritise and coordinate all regional transport projects that are required over the medium to long term, to realise the ambitions of the Regional Transport Strategy to support the economic and net-zero ambitions of the Regional Prosperity Framework and local authority economic priorities.

Through strengthened collaboration, joint working, co-production and engagement, we will seek to ensure a robust basis for integrated regional economic development, land-use and transport planning, provision and delivery, maximising the opportunities for our region. The six themes of the RTS Deliver Plan are:

1. Mass Transit (SEStransit)
2. Active Travel
3. Freight
4. Data/Digital
5. Decarbonisation
6. Interchange

RTS actions

Project addresses a wide range of RTS actions therefore individual actions are not listed here

Programme objectives

The initial phase of the programme development focused on the collation of all the currently committed and planned transport investment by partners across the region. Each project was initially assessed against seven criteria of a 'regional' test.

The next phase that was paused in late summer 2025, to allow partners to focus on SEStransit, was to undertake a 'mapping & gapping' review of projects to identify:

- *Cross boundary opportunities for collaboration or upscaling;*
- *Opportunities for coordinated theme delivery*
- *Opportunities for service efficiencies and coordination*
- *Opportunity to increase the ambitions that maybe constrained by local budget reality.*

The programme is paused and will be recommenced in the latter half of 2026/27, so that the emerging outcomes of SEStransit, regional spatial planning and regional economic partnership development can be incorporated into the process. The next steps will be:

- *Review the emerging outcomes of SEStransit to identify areas of focus*
- *Recommence the 'mapping & gapping' exercise*
- *Incorporate the emerging regional spatial and economic development aspirations*
- *Update regional and LA priority lists*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop scope of service to commence the STAG process</i>
Milestones/tasks and deliverables
Q1
N/A
Q2
N/A
Q3 <i>Review of regionally dependant projects</i>
<p>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review development and impact of SEStransit,</i> • <i>Review development and impact of regional spatial and economic development progress</i> <p>Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Consultancy Support • Update programme documents • Set up recommencement of regional development in Q4
Q4 <i>Recommence Development/Prepare for future stages</i>
<p>Milestones:</p> <p>Mapping and Gapping Workshops Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Strategic matrix analysis of projects (incl review of STPR2) • Update regional and LA project priority list • Scoping for STAG/project Development • Programme for next phase • Cost estimate for next phase
Delivery areas
Mapping & Gapping
<p>Completion of project development</p> <p>Update regional and LA project priority list</p>
Next Steps
Scoping for STAG/project Development

Appendix 2 – Cross Portfolio Delivery Areas

Some work SEStran officers will deliver in 2026/27 sits outside the five key programmes described above but nonetheless is key to realising the vision of our Regional Transport Strategy.

Delivery	Description
Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan: Active Travel Theme	<p>A key theme of the RTS delivery plan is regional active travel. We have entered an application to Transport Scotland Active Travel Infrastructure Fund to refresh the SEStran Strategic Cycle Network, taking into account local authorities' new and developing plans for connecting routes across the South East.</p> <p>Should we be successful, we plan to update and broaden the use case for the previously developed SEStran Strategic Cycle Network. This would update the network, focussing on both existing, in construction and planned cycling routes. The proposal is to develop an online mapping tool to enable local authorities and other relevant partners to update the network at agreed regular intervals with standardisation of infrastructure types.</p>
Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan: Data Theme	<p>The South East of Scotland City Region Deal's authorities have benefited from the insights of the Workforce Mobility Project, but in the future RTPs will more directly receive learnings that will inform the data theme of our work:</p> <p>Mobile Phone Data Dashboards – These dashboards provide footfall data for trip attractors from every UK postcode over five years, supporting RTS delivery plan's data theme. PowerBI integration gives Local Authorities easy access to information, with heatmaps, dwell times, and time-of-day visits for enhanced analysis.</p> <p>Postcode Accessibility Tool – This tool offers detailed analysis of employee data—postcodes and shift patterns—to evaluate sustainable travel to work. By identifying barriers like excessive walking or unsuitable arrival times, it informs improvements to transport and active travel, helping employers support behavioural change.</p> <p>Sustainable Transport Accessibility Tool – The tool analyses transport connectivity to any Scottish site, using user-defined travel parameters. The Midlothian LDP assessment checked sites against public transport, considering a 45-minute journey, 8am departure and 6pm return, providing evidence for strategic improvements in line with RTS goals.</p>

Thistle Assistance	<p>Thistle Assistance is a free app and card for people to use when they need some additional support using public transport. Both can be personalised to show the support required (for example more time getting to a seat) and are shown to the driver or public transport staff member when boarding. The aim of Thistle Assistance is to improve the journey experience for anyone who requires extra assistance while travelling.</p> <p>For 2026/27, the Thistle Assistance project will focus on an in depth evaluation work of the scheme to assess its impact on users, better understand how to best engage with transport operators and identify areas for improvement.</p>
Real time Passenger Information	<p>Real time passenger information covers the provision of bus, rail and tram information via information on screens and apps. SEStran in the next year will be supporting three main strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software contract – A regionally procured contract is managed by SEStran on behalf of all local authorities (plus Strirling Council). The contract covers the running of the software which enables officers to input bus timetable and bus stop audit information on behalf of, or in collaboration with, bus operators. This will include a forum to support the contract, offering opportunities for local authorities to share learnings, speak with the provider directly, and discuss future opportunities. • Journeo Equipment Framework – A regional contract procured by City of Edinburgh Council that supports the equipment to display the information, and the associated maintenance to ensure the bus times are displaying correctly <p>Indoor and outdoor screen management – SEStran have built up a network of around 170 screens across the region which are currently situated in public buildings, libraries and park and ride sites. The next year will be focused on improving reliability of screens as certain sites and identifying sites where existing screens are no longer viable.</p>
Climate Adaptation Work	<p>For 2026/27, climate adaptation work within SEStran will focus on strengthening organisational climate knowledge and embedding adaptation considerations across regional transport planning and delivery. This includes developing internal capability through targeted climate workstreams and collaboration with partners, informed by national adaptation priorities and emerging best practice. SEStran will support a more joined-up approach to climate resilience by contributing to cross-sector discussions on climate-ready infrastructure, ensuring transport considerations are aligned with land use, energy and place-based planning. This work sits alongside, and complements, SEStran’s wider programmes, helping to ensure that the Regional Transport Strategy responds effectively to the increasing</p>

	risks posed by climate change while supporting resilient, sustainable communities across South East Scotland.
2026/27 Communications and marketing	This area of work builds on SEStran's Communications Strategy and Stakeholder Map and will deliver communications activity to raise awareness of who we are, what we do and the difference our work makes across the South East of Scotland. It focuses on clearly demonstrating the impact, importance and value of SEStran's work, particularly the benefits of taking a coordinated regional approach to transport challenges. Through consistent, targeted communications, we will showcase our expertise, strengthen our profile with key stakeholders and the public, and make a clear case that we deliver excellent value for money, with the additional investment detailed in this business plan enabling greater social, economic and environmental returns for the region.
Logo Update and Website Redesign	In 2026/27, the SEStran logo will be updated to align with refreshed branding guidelines and support the corporate Communications Strategy and delivery work identified above. Alongside this will be a complete rebuild and redesign of the SEStran website to enable our messaging to reach our target audiences in a clear, effective and impactful way. The rebuild and redesign will allow us to better showcase our work (both projects and strategy), whilst ensuring that basics such as accessibility guidelines are met and provide improved control over the website so more updates can be carried out internally.

Appendix 3 - Our governance

SEStran Partnership Board

The SEStran Partnership Board is the strategic decision-making body for the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership. It sets the regional direction for transport policy, approves budgets, and oversees the delivery of major programmes across the eight partner local authorities. The Board meets quarterly, with agenda-setting sessions held in advance to prepare reports and agree forward business.

Membership is made up of elected members from the partner councils, supported by SEStran's senior management team.

Performance and Audit Committee

The Performance & Audit Committee ensures strong governance, transparency, and compliance across SEStran's work. Its remit includes reviewing financial performance, risk management, audit outcomes, and organisational performance indicators. The Committee meets quarterly, following a consistent annual cycle, with meetings typically scheduled in February, June, September and November.

Attendees include appointed elected members from partner authorities and non-councillor members, alongside relevant SEStran officers who provide reports and advisory support.

PaSDOS (Projects and Strategy Delivery & Oversight Subgroup)

PaSDOS provides focused oversight of SEStran's strategic project delivery. These sessions support coordination across key programmes—such as emerging regional transport initiatives—and help shape papers and recommendations ahead of committee and Board consideration. PaSDOS meetings are scheduled periodically throughout the year, often aligned to programme milestones or quarterly governance cycles.

Typical attendees include SEStran officers, project leads and, where relevant, partner authority representatives.

We are South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran), bringing together stakeholders across transport, place-based, economic and development planning to shape and deliver a better-connected, low carbon transport system. Our work includes delivering our Regional Bus Strategy, the People and Place active travel programme, Project SEStran, and improving transport to health.

www.sestran.gov.uk

GO
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