

## **REGIONAL BUS ACTION PLAN**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Board on progress of implementation of the Regional Bus Strategy

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The SEStran Regional Bus Strategy (RBS) sets out a vision for a high-quality, affordable, accessible, and integrated bus network across the region, aiming to boost passenger numbers and satisfaction while supporting social, environmental, and economic development. The strategy was developed through extensive consultation with local authorities, operators, and the public, including a major stakeholder survey that received over 5,000 responses, reflecting strong community engagement and interest in shaping the future of regional bus services.
- 2.2 Three key policy areas were developed out of the RBS: improving the level of service, affordability, and service quality. Key actions include enhancing network connectivity by settlement type, simplifying and integrating ticketing, targeting fare support for those in transport poverty, and advancing bus priority measures to improve reliability and journey times. The strategy also emphasises the importance of a positive network identity, integrated multimodal ticketing, accessible information, and the development of a region-wide Customer Charter. Additional measures focus on upgrading bus stops and interchanges, decarbonising the fleet, and ensuring safety, security, and inclusion for all users.
- 2.3 The Regional Bus Action Plan (the Action Plan) provides the framework for delivering the outcomes of the RBS through coordinated, practical actions across South East Scotland. It translates strategic ambitions into a programme of work that combines direct delivery by SEStran, partnership activity with local authorities and operators, and wider advocacy with national agencies and stakeholders. The Action Plan recognises that improving the regional bus network requires collaboration across multiple organisations, and is structured to support this through clear governance, shared evidence bases, and coordinated approaches to planning and delivery.
- 2.4 The Action Plan is organised around the core themes of level of service, affordability and ticketing, and quality. It aligns closely with wider SEStran regional programmes such as Transport to Employment and Transport to Health. It includes a mix of actions focused on building evidence, testing delivery models, improving coordination, supporting policy and funding change. Overall, the plan aims to deliver a more integrated, reliable, and accessible bus network that supports economic growth, social inclusion,

and environmental outcomes, ensuring that bus services contribute effectively to wider regional priorities rather than operating in isolation.

2.5 In order to direct implement of the Action Plan, a Programme Board has been formed and had its inaugural meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026. The key outputs were:

- Approval of Board membership and terms of reference
- Discussion of the RBS and, in particular, levels of service and how successful implementation would be measured
- Agreement that each Board member would submit their proposed year 1 priorities by 22<sup>nd</sup> May, in order that three could be agreed and taken forward by the team in advance of the next Board meeting, which will take place in September 2026

2.6 The following organisations are represented on the Programme Board:

- Bay Travel
- Borders Buses
- Bus Users UK
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Citylink
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Community Transport Association
- Confederation of Passenger Transport
- East Lothian Council
- Ember
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Flixbus
- Lothian Group
- McGill's Buses
- Midlothian Council
- Moffat and Williamson (to be confirmed)
- Office of the Scottish Roadworks Commissioner
- Scotland's Railway
- Scottish Borders Council
- SEStran
- Stagecoach
- West Lothian Council

### 3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Prior to the next meeting of the Bus Programme Board, the team will
- Consider proposed priorities from Board members and identify three priority actions for year 1
  - Finalise drafting a Project Initiation Document to support delivery of these priorities
  - Devise measurable benefits to define success following on from Board feedback
  - Establish working groups for agreed programme actions
  - Build on initial stakeholder engagement to ensure projects are widely communicated
  - Begin work on priority actions

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Partnership Board is asked to note progress against implementation of the Regional Bus Strategy

Rebecca Smith  
**Projects Officer**  
12 June 2026

#### **Appendix 1:** Regional Bus Action Plan (Draft)

Policy Implications	Following on from the strategy being approved in November 2026, the action plan is being developed in line with the Regional Bus Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy.
Financial Implications	The Action Plan proposed requires staff resource and investment to realise the outcomes of the RBS. This has been draft in line with 2026/27 budgets to ensure it is achievable.
Equalities Implications	The Regional Bus Strategy was accompanied by an EqIA, Fairer Scotland Duty, Child Rights and Welfare. Any individual projects will be reviewed via appropriate mechanisms to ensure their impacts are understood.
Climate Change Implications	Without improving our public transport offering, we risk increased private car use with an increase in CO2 emissions having corresponding negative impacts on the climate.



**GO**  
**SEStran**  
South East of Scotland  
Transport Partnership

# The SEStran Regional Bus Action Plan

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# 1. Introduction

This Regional Bus Action Plan (RBAP) sets out how SEStran and its partners will deliver the outcomes of the South East Scotland Regional Bus Strategy (SRBS).

[Visual to be added showing the flow of RTS -> RBS -> RBAP]

The RBAP brings together actions that SEStran will lead directly, actions where it will provide partnership support, and actions where its principal role will be advocacy with national government and other stakeholders. In doing so, it reflects the reality that delivery of regional bus improvements depends on coordinated action with the involvement of multiple stakeholders, such as local authorities, transport operators, Transport Scotland, neighbouring Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), and wider partners including NHS Boards, Community Planning Partnerships (CPP), Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs), equality groups, and the third sector.

The plan is structured around the key themes of the SRBS (level of service, affordability and ticketing, and quality) and is designed to support implementation through clear workflows, proportionate governance, and a focus on evidence-based prioritisation. Some actions are intended to establish new regional evidence bases or shared approaches, while others are about coordination, testing delivery models, or supporting wider policy and funding changes.

The RBAP is part of a wider programme of regional transport delivery. It is intended to align with the Regional Transport Strategy, ongoing SEStran workstreams, such as the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health programmes. This is important to ensure that bus interventions are not considered in isolation, but instead contribute to wider social, economic, environmental, and public service outcomes across South

East Scotland.

Timescales for delivery are set out within the following framework:

- **Ongoing actions:** actions that will continue throughout the life of the RBAP, including partnership working, monitoring and review, and continuous improvement.
- **Priority actions in Year 1:** actions to be progressed in Year 1 to establish momentum, put key enablers in place, and begin delivery of the RBAP.
- **Priority actions in Years 2–3:** actions to be taken forward in Years 2 to 3 to build on early progress and support implementation across the core policy areas.
- **Mid-term actions:** actions to be delivered over the 3-to-7-year period, supporting wider coordination, investment, and service improvement.
- **Long-term actions:** actions to be delivered towards the end of the 10-year RBAP period, reflecting more substantial change, longer lead-in times, or dependencies on broader policy, funding, or infrastructure programmes.

## 2. Level of Service

### SRBS Actions

The SRBS sets out an aim to establish equitable connectivity standards across the region – recognising that different places need different delivery models—so that people can reliably reach jobs, education, healthcare, and other daily needs. The principle is to: define fair minimum standards; measure current connectivity against them; and create a realistic, prioritised programme of improvements, using flexible and demand responsive transport (DRT) where it best delivers value and inclusion.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Priority Year 1	<b>Carry out a detailed audit of connectivity against a set of core equitable service standards for settlements in the region</b> , and some settlements in neighbouring Regional Transport Partnerships. Following this, review the feasibility of potential standards and develop a prioritised programme of improvements, considering factors such as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Service standards will take account of flexible and DRT models, recognising that DRT may be the most effective means of delivering core service levels in rural or low-demand areas, in addition to considering rail service provision.	SEStran Led	Undertake connectivity audit study and present to bus operators and LAs.	<b>SRBS-LS-01</b>
Priority Years 2–3	<b>Informed by the audit and review, engage on the potential implementation of core equitable service standards</b> for intra-SEStran, inter-urban, and cross-boundary connectivity, including important movements outside of the RTP area.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Explore barriers with operators and LAs. Consider pilots to be undertaken based on feedback from partners.	<b>SRBS-LS-02</b>

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will commission and manage a regionwide connectivity audit against a core set of equitable service standards (SRBSLS01), within the SEStran and for key cross boundary movements. The audit will model accessibility by time of day, direct services versus the need to interchange. It will explicitly weight results by deprivation (SIMD) so that improvements prioritise communities with the lowest car access.

On completion of the audit, SEStran will engage with partners to translate the findings into a deliverable improvement programme and agree an implementation path (SRBSLS02). This could include codesigned packages that combine timetable changes, guaranteed interchanges, and flexible Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) in rural/low demand areas, with quick win stop/interchange upgrades where they materially cut walk and wait time.

### SEStran Partnership Support

Working with local authorities, operators, and other relevant partners (such as NHS Boards, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), and Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs)), SEStran will guide the design of example transport services to turn “standards gaps” into costed interventions.

### Advocacy

SEStran will advocate for funding mechanisms that recognise rurality and low demand contexts, advocate for change to improve the ability to provide DRT where it best delivers equity, and shared good practice across LAs.

## Workflow for Delivery

*SRBS LS 01* will be delivered through Phases A to B of the following workflow, completing a region-wide connectivity audit. Building on that evidence base, *SRBS LS 02* will move into delivery. Through Phases C to E, SEStran will work with partners to co-design, implement, and refine solutions to address the outcomes of the audit.

### Phase A – Mobilisation

The SRBS set out an example of regional connectivity principles. The mobilisation for this action will be to translate this into a workflow for an audit (Phase B).

### Phase B — Regional Connectivity Audit

SEStran will commission a study to undertake a regional connectivity audit and create an accessibility analysis environment (in Podaris software) for future work.

First the study will test the existing bus network to a set of ‘Level of Service’ standards. An equity lens will be set for these standards, considering factors such as:

- SIMD deprivation levels.
- Access to a set of locations (settlements and services, such as healthcare) by time bands which align with travel key periods (part-day, working day, and full day).
- Direct routing and maximum number of interchanges.
- Multi-operator interchange requirements.

Outputs will be made available to SEStran in a format which enables engagement with project partners (e.g. LAs and bus operators).

### **Phase C — Co-design of interventions and preliminary viability**

Using the outputs of the audit, SEStran and partners will agree a prioritised shortlist of network issues (initially the top ten) and develop a set of interventions. For example, these could include timetable and periods of operation adjustments for employment shifts; direct or express links to reduce interchanges and detours; guaranteed interchange windows; or DRT feeders in rural and lower demand areas.

Initially, the top 10 options will be coded and mapped in Podaris, and the network re-tested to measure impacts. Indicative operating costs and potential farebox will be estimated.

Workshops with local authorities, bus operators, and relevant partners will confirm the appropriateness of the options and consider implementation of improvements.

### **Phase D — Pilot implementation and monitoring**

Having identified appropriate interventions, agreed with partners, and suitable funding identified, pilots can be launched. Pilots should be monitored against a set of agreed KPIs, such as usage, cost, revenue, target user feedback, achievement of proposed outcomes (e.g. improved access to employment).

### **Phase E — Evaluate and Improve**

The programme will evaluate the impact of the pilots, the appropriateness of the Level of Service standards, and overall approach to improving the Level of Service, working with partners.

Improvements to the approach can be proposed and implemented, with further improvements through this method explored.

### **Roles and Governance**

- SEStran: commission the audit; maintain standards; convene sprints; programme and report; coordinate cross-boundary alignment; host regional dashboards.
- Local authorities/operators: supply data; design and deliver changes; commit to timed connections/guaranteed interchanges; upgrade priority stops/hubs.
- Neighbouring RTPs: engage on cross boundary movements, as required.
- Transport Scotland: standards alignment, funding pathways, data access (SBOD/DTDS), and cross regional coordination.

Wider partners, for example for health and education focused interventions:

- CPPs/LEPs: agree on locations; validate shift/education demand; feedback on pilots.
- NHS Boards: validate clinic/shift patterns; support on-site improvements; share attendance/DNA metrics for evaluation.

### **Risks and Mitigations**

- Operator resource constraints: phase changes; combine small timetable tweaks with DRT to cover peaks/off peaks; tie to workforce actions on driver availability.
- Funding gaps: ready a mix of quick wins and scalable packages; evidence SIMD weighted access gains for bids; align with health/employment funds via CPPs.
- Cross boundary complexity: use SEStran to convene neighbouring RTPs and commit to shared standards on key corridors; pre agree information/ticketing rules for pilots.

- Community confidence: communicate early, use fixed change windows, and show “what changed because you said so,” as recommended in the SRBS’s ‘stability’ guidance.

### **How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?**

SEStran will aim to link the Level of Service workstream to the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health programmes. As the work develops, this could include elements such as:

- Targeted standards for employment access: set minimum first/last trip times, maximum interchanges, and weekend coverage for corridors serving major employment and training sites, prioritising SIMD-weighted gaps and shift-based demand identified by LEPs. This aligns with the Transport to Employment pillars on rural transport to work and further education, and reducing ticket costs.
- Guaranteed access to hospitals and health campuses: define standards for the most constrained hospital corridors, including clinic peaks, staff shift changes, and visiting hours, and coordinate with patient and community transport. This aligns with Transport to Health evidence on long, multi-stage journeys, poor connections, and the need for more direct routes and better connections.

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### 3. Affordability and Ticketing

#### SRBS Actions

The SRBS aims to make fares and ticketing fair, simple, and integrated so buses are competitive with the car and do not penalise users who interchange across operators, modes, or areas.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Priority Year 1	<b>Lobby Transport Scotland to identify barriers to the uptake of National Entitlement Cards</b> and best value bus fare options, particularly among young people. Explore ways to improve access to these options for those who need them most.	Advocacy	SEStran to set out position statement.	SRBS-AFF-04
Priority Year 1	Engage with Transport Scotland and other stakeholders to <b>explore improved integrated ticketing between bus and rail</b> , building on opportunities created by the public ownership of ScotRail Trains Limited (ScotRail).	Advocacy	SEStran to set out position statement.	SRBS-Q-TICK-04
Priority Year 1	<b>Engage on the ‘Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024’</b> with Transport Scotland and the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB) to ensure that the strategy meets the needs of the region, and to identify opportunities to maximise the benefits of proposed enhancements to smart and integrated ticketing and payment systems.	Advocacy	SEStran to set out position statement.	SRBS-Q-TICK-03
Priority Years 2–3	<p><b>Establish a working group with key stakeholders to undertake a regional fares review</b> – or take part in national efforts – to develop integrated ticketing and pricing solutions for more affordable and equitable journeys – especially for key strategic movements across the SEStran region. This collaborative work will seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Identify problem areas where users face difficulties accessing affordable bus fares, including comparing bus and car travel costs.</li> <li>→ Develop multi-operator, multi-modal, and multi-area fare options that offer ‘best value’ and do not penalise users who interchange.</li> <li>→ Advance smart ticketing solutions, such as auto-capping contactless payments and account-based ticketing, in line with Transport Scotland’s Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy and the Fair Fares Review.</li> <li>→ Promote greater regional consistency and equity in fare structures.</li> </ul> <p>Consider a partnership approach to limit price increases over a specified period (e.g. once a</p>	SEStran Led	Scope regional fares review study.	SRBS-AFF-03

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
	year) and align them with an appropriate control metric (e.g. operating costs or inflation).			
Priority Years 2–3	<p><b>Conduct a ticketing review</b>, engaging with bus operators, local authorities, and other stakeholders to set out actions which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Ensure ticketing supports the delivery of the affordability policies set out in this bus strategy.</li> <li>→ Ensure that all operators in the region support contactless payment options. This includes the integration of contactless payment systems with fare capping mechanisms across operators and areas, then modes.</li> <li>→ Take actions to simplify the ticketing offer in the region.</li> <li>→ Develop frameworks for revenue sharing among operators to support the implementation of integrated ticketing systems.</li> <li>→ Ensure that digital ticketing solutions, or alternatives, are accessible to all users, including those in rural areas and those who may not have access to smartphones or the internet.</li> <li>→ Explore the potential role of the powers set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and other partnership arrangements to deliver improved integrated ticketing any payment in the region.</li> <li>→ Provide incentives for operators to participate in integrated ticketing schemes.</li> </ul>	SEStran Led	Scope ticketing review study.	SRBS-Q-TICK-02
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Support actions to improve integrated journey planning, payment, and ticketing</b> for different modes and operators as outlined in Transport Scotland’s ‘Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024’.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Actions coming from the regional fares and ticketing reviews.	SRBS-Q-TICK-01
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Champion NSG reform</b> to meet inflationary pressures on bus operations, thus supporting bus services.	Advocacy	SEStran to set out position statement.	SRBS-AFF-02
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Advocate to the Scottish and UK Governments for fiscal policies that rebalance the cost of travel</b> in favour of sustainable and public transport options, thereby supporting the competitiveness of bus services.	Advocacy	SEStran to set out position statement.	SRBS-AFF-05
On-Hold	<b>Conduct a feasibility study and readiness assessment for a bus flat fares pilot.</b> This study will outline the potential scope, benefits, challenges, costs, key stakeholders, and delivery partners for the pilot scheme.	SEStran Led	Request made for pilot participation – unsuccessful.	SRBS-AFF-01

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will take forward three tightly linked strands that together aim to deliver simpler, fairer, and more integrated ticketing and fares.

SEStran will lead a regional fares review (SRBS-AFF-03) focused on affordability and improved equity.

In parallel, SEStran will lead a regional ticketing review (SRBSQTICK02) that translates affordability policy into practical delivery. The review will set out how the concepts presented in the SRBS can be achieved, e.g. best value options, such as auto capping, and/or simplifying available products set so that users can intuitively access the best deal. Taken together, the ticketing and fares reviews will provide a coherent package that can be taken forward with partners (see section below).

Advocacy and engagement with partners (as discussed below) will be a third aspect to this, ensuring that the reviews above and outcomes are aligned to the opportunities available across the region and nationally.

While SEStran will maintain a readiness position on flat fares, a feasibility study will not be progressed at this time (SRBS-AFF-01), recognising that current pilot funding has been allocated elsewhere. The regional ticketing and fares reviews will retain the option to move forward with a flat-fares pilot should this be supported by those studies.

### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will convene a working group to undertake the regional fares and ticketing reviews (SRBS-AFF-03, SRBS-Q-TICK-02). This will help to identify affordability gaps, design options, and consider mechanisms to deliver changes.

The outcomes of the regional ticketing and fares reviews will enable SEStran to also support actions to improve integrated journey planning, payment, and ticketing in line with Transport Scotland's Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024 (SRBS-Q-TICK-01).

### Advocacy

SEStran will champion NSG reform to reflect inflationary pressures (SRBS-AFF-02), lobby to remove barriers to National Entitlement Card and best-value product uptake (especially among young people) (SRBS-AFF-04), and advocate for fiscal measures that rebalance the cost of travel in favour of public transport (SRBS-AFF-05). SEStran will also engage with NSTAB and Transport Scotland on the 2024 Ticketing and Payments Strategy (SRBS-Q-TICK-03) and explore improved bus-rail integration opportunities under ScotRail public ownership (SRBS-Q-TICK-04).

## Workflow for Delivery

SRBS-AFF-03 and SRBS-Q-TICK-02 will be delivered through Phases A to D of the following workflow, producing an evidence-based regional fares and ticketing package. In parallel, SRBS-Q-TICK-01/03/04 and SRBS-AFF-02/04/05 will run as national engagement and advocacy. Building on that evidence base, pilots will move into delivery in Phase E. Through Phase F, SEStran will work with partners to evaluate, scale, and embed successful solutions.

### **Phase A – Mobilisation (Duration 2 months)**

This phase will establish the scope, team, and governance structure to deliver the affordability and ticketing programme:

- Assemble a SEStran-led Affordability & Ticketing partnership with representatives from local authorities, representatives from bus operators, Transport Scotland, including a liaison to the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB).
- Consider a wider partner team, based on requirements and specialist topics being considered: RTPs where cross-boundary movements are material, ScotRail for intermodal and action SRBS-Q-TICK-04; LEPs/CPPs, NHS (for health access), and equalities/accessibility groups, such as MACS.
- Confirm specialist support, e.g. policy, legal/competition, commercial/revenue apportionment, ticketing/payments/ICT, customer insight, equalities and inclusion, communications.
- Set out a delivery plan and initiate the following three interlinked workstreams, within the remit of the team above with an RACI for each:
  - 1. Regional fares review (SRBS-AFF-03)
  - 2. Regional ticketing review (SRBS-Q-TICK-02)
  - 3. National engagement & advocacy (SRBS-AFF-02/04/05; SRBS-Q-TICK-03/04),

### **Phase B – Evidence base, co-design, and technical and legal groundwork (Duration 6-8 months)**

This phase will build the evidence base for the three workstreams and co-designed options for improvements with stakeholders.

#### **Build the evidence base:**

- Define the affordability metrics to be used in the study. This could include, for example:
  - Commute cost as a % of minimum wage by area/corridor/settlement type.
  - What is the travel threshold an individual can access on X% of an average/minimum/sector specific wage by public transport/bus.
  - How does this affect employment opportunities.
  - Comparative bus vs car costs.
  - Impacts for shift work and rural users, etc.
- Compile baseline data on fares and ticketing products, prices, capping/usage rules, and inter-operator penalties/combined products; map factors such as young person concession uptake and gaps.
- Use origin–destination patterns (e.g. TTW, operators’ demand data, TomTom and/or NEC data where available), socio-economic data (e.g. SIMD, employment), and corridor priorities to identify “pressure points” where price/complexity most suppresses travel and limits opportunities (e.g. to access employment).
- Initiate appropriate Impact Assessments (e.g. EqIA and CRWIA).

### **Undertake technical and legal groundwork:**

- Map current payment and back office stacks (ETMs, cEMV, validators, apps), settlement processes, and data standards; identify gaps to deliver capping and inter-operator settlement.
- Obtain legal advice on the use of Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 powers for ticketing schemes and on competition law for multi operator fares and revenue sharing.

### **Undertake stakeholder co-design of the principles to be applied:**

- Conduct targeted engagement with:
  - Operators (commercial, community transport), Transport Scotland, NSTAB, ScotRail, and LAs on constraints, back office capabilities, and operational realities.
  - User groups: e.g. low paid/shift workers, young people, rural communities, disabled passengers and Thistle Assistance users, and hospital patients/visitors/workers.
- Codesign principles for the regional fares and ticketing options, building on the principles set out in the SRBS, such as, simplicity, flexibility, auto best value, nondigital parity, revenue fairness, and interoperability.

**Decision Gateway:** Board and partner endorsement of the evidence pack and design principles for preferred options.

### **Phase C – Design Preferred Regional Package (Duration 4–9 months)**

#### **Translate the evidence into an implementable regional package(s) through the fares and ticketing reviews:**

- Regional fares review (SRBS-AFF-03) package options could result in:

- Defining a core “best value” proposition for strategic movements: e.g. multi operator bus caps (day/week) with fare neutrality across operators; a package for bus+rail products for key corridors.
- Developing options for partnership based price change protocols (e.g., annual limit aligned to an agreed index such as operating cost inflation), subject to operator agreement.
- Packages related to impact assessments (ridership, revenue, equity, and cause displacement).

- Ticketing review (SRBS-Q-TICK-02) package options could result in:
  - Defining capping specifications (rules across operators/areas; daily/weekly caps; treatment of transfers) and back office settlement logic; account based ticketing options, where feasible.
  - Revenue sharing frameworks: evaluate models (e.g., “apportion by taps/time/distance,” hybrid rules for express/local, minimum revenue floors), ensuring transparency and auditability.
  - Accessibility commitments: maintain cash acceptance pathway, smartcard parity with cEMV, retail top-up network in rural/deprived areas, and accessible information.
  - Define incentives for operator participation (marketing, co-funded validators, data-sharing reciprocity, phased adoption).

Throughout the above reviews, consider the interfacing with national programmes, engaging with Transport Scotland and NSTAB to:

- Align designs with Transport Scotland’s Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024.
- Seek technical guidance.

- Consider funding and potential grant alignment, as well as co-operation with other areas.

**Decision Gateway:** Board and partner approval of the preferred regional package (fares, ticketing, revenue sharing, accessibility commitments), go/no-go for business case stage.

#### **Phase D – Business Case, Commercial, legal, and technical enablement (Duration 7–12 months)**

Put the enabling arrangements in place to deliver.

- Depending on the scale and scope of the preferred packages, and the funding options, develop a proportionate Business Case. Guidance can be sought from Transport Scotland, should this seek national funding.

Prepare commercial, legal, and technical enablers:

- Partnership agreements and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
  - Draft and agree non-statutory partnership agreements, e.g. for auto-caps and integrated ticketing products, pricechange protocols, data-sharing (performance and settlement), dispute resolution, and branding/communications.
- Procurement/readiness
  - If needed, procure back office services for multi operator capping and settlement (build on existing operator stacks where possible); specify standards to futureproof and reduce integration costs.
  - Confirm equipment upgrades (cEMV readers, software updates) and a migration plan that minimises disruption.
- Complete Impact Assessments (e.g. EqIA and CRWIA).

**Decision Gateway:** Board and partner approval of the Business Case, technical certification, and agreements.

#### **Phase E – Delivery and monitoring**

- Procurement and deployment of preferred scheme – details of which to be informed by the previous phases.
- Include appropriate communications and customer support, e.g. consistent, accessible messaging across operators, stops, websites, and apps.
- Undertake monitoring activities.

#### **Phase F – Evaluation and improvement**

Evaluate the changes and undertake improvements:

- This links to the data and monitoring approach set out in the SRBS.
- Consider publishing outputs to improve transparency.

#### **Undertake Advocacy actions as evidence emerges:**

- NSG reform aligned to operating cost inflation (SRBS-AFF-02).
- Removing barriers to National Entitlement Card and best value product uptake, especially among young people (SRBSAFF04).
- Wider fiscal measures to rebalance costs in favour of sustainable transport (SRBS-AFF-05).
- Maintain visibility on any future funding options, such as further flat fares pilot windows (SRBS-AFF-01).

## **Roles and Governance**

SEStran:

- Convene and chair the partner working group and manage the programme.
- Lead the regional fares review and ticketing review; explore technical/legal work on competition law, revenue apportionment, and back office interoperability.
- Coordinate alignment with national programmes and the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board (NSTAB).

Local Authorities and Bus Operators:

- Participate in the reviews and co-design outputs.
- Participate in ticketing schemes and facilitate enabling measures.

Transport Scotland, NSTAB, ScotRail:

- Provide technical guidance on standards, data, and interoperability; advise on legal frameworks and potential funding routes; ensure coherence with the Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024.
- Collaborate on bus rail integrated offers and back office enablement; share demand insights for corridors where intermodal products are proposed.

Cross boundary Governance:

- Where products span RTP boundaries, SEStran will convene joint RTP sessions to agree product rules, data standards, and communications, ensuring consistency on shared corridors.

CPPs, LEPs, NHS Boards, Equalities/Access Groups (e.g., MACS):

- Advise on affordability metrics, outreach, and inclusion; validate employment/health access use-cases and support evaluation.

## **Risks and Mitigations**

- Operator participation risk: mitigate with phased onboarding, fair and transparent revenue apportionment discussions, and incentives (co-marketing, shared tech funding).
- Technical interoperability risk: adopt open standards and staged cutovers; align closely with the national strategy and NSTAB guidance.
- Equity risk: maintain non-digital pathways (cash, smartcard, retail top-up), retail network in rural/deprived areas, and targeted outreach.
- Lack of funding: engage on potential funding avenues throughout the workstreams, closely consider the financial case as part of the overall Business Case.
- Legal/competition risk: secure advice early; use permissible ticketing scheme frameworks and clear governance.

## **How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?**

- Clear affordability metrics linked to employment opportunities: e.g. proportion of minimum-wage take-home pay spent on commuting; trip-chaining and capping design so workers paying for childcare or multi-stop journeys are not penalised.
- Targeted fare pilots for priority employment corridors and healthcare access (e.g. integrated “to hospital” products, shift alignment, fare discounts in SIMD areas), backed by KPIs on uptake and employment/attendance outcomes.

- Support for users without digital access: paper and smartcard parity, cash acceptance pathway, and retail top-up locations aligned to deprived areas and rural settlements.
- Codesign and cofunding: develop interventions with Community Planning Partnerships, Local Employability Partnerships, and NHS Boards, using labour market and clinic/shift intelligence. Explore evidence outcomes to make the funding case.

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## 4. Network Performance and Stability

### SRBS Actions

Reliable, punctual, and stable bus services are the foundation for passenger growth. The strategy will push forward bus priority and road space reallocation, while strengthening the fleet, workforce, and operational processes that underpin day-to-day performance.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Ongoing	Continue to engage on and support <b>initiatives which reduce car use and reduce the impacts of traffic congestion on bus services.</b>	SEStran Ongoing Work	Communications work programme linked to real world actions.	SRBS-Q-NPS-08
Ongoing	Progress the policies and actions set out in the RTS related to bus priority, road space reallocation, and bus rapid transit. Where barriers have been met in the delivery of these, such as due to the pause in Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund, work with stakeholders to explore alternative avenues for delivery within the means available to funding partners.	SEStran Ongoing Work	Identify BIF opportunities. Engage on 10-year plans to understanding wider scope.	SRBS-Q-NPS-01
Priority Year 1	Engage with local authorities and bus operators to <b>review and strengthen procedures for making changes to the bus network</b> , with the goal of enhancing network stability. This should include improved processes for managing service change rates, consultation, communication, and information-sharing with key stakeholders, including utilising provisions under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 for sharing information on local service changes. Additionally, opportunities related to the upgrade of legacy Traveline Scotland services as part of Transport Scotland's Digital Travel Data Services (DTDS) project should be explored in partnership with Transport Scotland.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Set out LA issues with the existing arrangement and co-draft a regional service change protocol proposition.	SRBS-Q-NPS-05
Priority Years 2-3	<b>Develop a framework to guide a balanced approach to road space reallocation</b> between bus and active travel schemes. This should consider an increased role for bus operators in the development of road space reallocation proposals.	SEStran Led	Scope study with potential partners.	SRBS-Q-NPS-02
Priority Years 2-3	<b>Engage with stakeholders to identify collaborative actions and share knowledge</b> to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <b>Improve vehicle reliability and availability</b> for the delivery of services, including assistance in developing robust and ambitious fleet renewal and upgrade plans.</li> <li>→ <b>Overcome driver availability issues</b>, such as joint training, recruitment, and retention efforts across the industry within the region. Some early progress has been made on this through the</li> </ul>	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Operator working group.	SRBS-Q-NPS-03

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
	<p>Bus Driver Recruitment Roadshow, facilitated by the Workforce Mobility Project as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>→ <b>Improve incident and issue reporting and response procedures</b> affecting reliable and punctual bus operations across the region, including enhanced enforcement where problems are affecting the movement of buses for key regional movements.</p>			
Priority Years 2–3	Engage with local authorities, bus operators, and community service providers to <b>identify how short-term funding affects the stability of supported, community, and third sector services</b> , and agree on actions to address these barriers.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Review transport for health outputs and use this as an example for a partner workshop discussion.	SRBS-Q- NPS-06
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Explore rationalisation and optimal siting of bus stops</b> to improve network efficiency and legibility, ensuring an appropriate balance between coverage and journey time.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Understand the current work that has been undertaken at LA level.	SRBS-Q- NPS-07
Long-term	Work with local authorities and bus operators to <b>improve the transparency for users of bus reliability and punctuality performance</b> across the region, along with the actions being undertaken to monitor and mitigate cases where performance falls below acceptable levels.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	SBODS engagement, operator working group.	SRBS-Q- NPS-04
Long-term	<b>Explore the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced analytics</b> as outlined in the section <i>Data and Monitoring</i> , to support improvements in network performance, stability, and resilience by optimising timetables, predicting and mitigating reliability issues, enhancing incident response, and informing targeted interventions for areas most at risk of service disruptions.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Engage with operator working group on use and value.	SRBS-Q- NPS-09

<sup>1</sup> Bus Driver Recruitment Roadshow | SEStran Website, 2024

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will progress RTS policies on bus priority, road space reallocation, and BRT (SRBS-Q-NPS-01), and where external constraints exist, broker alternative delivery avenues within available means.

SEStran will develop a framework to balance road space between bus and active travel, with a stronger operator role in scheme design (SRBS-Q-NPS-02).

### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will convene **operator and local authority working groups** (with guest stakeholders as required) to begin collaborative actions to:

- Improve fleet reliability and accelerate renewal and upgrades (SRBS-Q-NPS-03).
- Address driver availability via joint recruitment, training, and retention (SRBS-Q-NPS-03).
- Enhance incident reporting and response protocols and enforcement to protect bus movement for key regional flows (SRBS-Q-NPS-03).
- Improve transparency through regional reliability/punctuality dashboards (SRBS-Q-NPS-04), working with data custodians (e.g., SBOD).
- Strengthen service change processes to enhance network stability, using Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 provisions and leveraging DTDS upgrades (SRBS-Q-NPS-05).
- Assess how short-term funding affects supported and community services and agree mitigations (SRBS-Q-NPS-06).

→ Explore rationalisation and optimal siting of stops to balance coverage with journey time (SRBS-Q-NPS-07).

→ Apply AI and analytics to optimise timetables, predict reliability issues, and inform targeted interventions (SRBS-Q-NPS-09).

### Advocacy

SEStran will advocate for sustained, multi-year operational and capital funding that supports bus priority and service stability; for tools that enable enforcement of bus lanes; and for national support to adopt open performance metrics, enabling fair comparisons and accountability.

## Workflow for Delivery

In relation to *SRBS-Q-NPS-01* and other RTS-linked actions, SEStran will continue to align this workstream with the most up-to-date position on bus priority, road space reallocation, and Bus Infrastructure Fund and related delivery opportunities across the region. This should include maintaining an overview of corridor studies, local authority schemes, wider RTS interventions, and any emerging delivery opportunities through relevant funding programmes.

For the **working group actions**, SEStran will lead a coordinated programme that brings together findings from recent studies and channels them into discussions within operator and local authority working groups, inviting guest stakeholders when helpful. Through regular event, these groups will aim to tackle the specific actions outlined in the SRBS.

SEStran will lead a study (SRBS-Q-NPS-02) to **develop a regionally applicable framework for balancing road space between bus priority and active travel**, embedding the sustainable travel hierarchy, measurable user benefit, and a stronger operator role in scheme design. The framework will help standardise how options are generated, assessed, approved. This type of approach draws on the prioritisation principles of place/movement classification, outcome-led scoring, and transparent trade-offs that have been implemented in other areas of the UK and should be adapted to SEStran's context and SRBS and RTS policy objectives.

The study scope should cover SEStran corridors and centres with material bus-active travel conflicts or opportunities, including cross-boundary links. This includes interactions between sustainable transport interventions for the reallocation of general traffic in favour of bus lanes/gates, signals, stops/stands, and active travel schemes such as segregated cycleways, crossings, improved footway width/surface,

and safer junctions. This aligns with the SRBS emphasis on reliable, competitive bus journey times, enhanced active travel, and structured reallocation criteria linked to deliverability and enforcement readiness.

The following phases will help guide the development of the framework.

### **Phase A — Purpose and Principles**

Define the purpose of the framework: to guide balanced allocation of road space between bus priority and active travel across SEStran, embedding the sustainable travel hierarchy, measurable user benefit, and a stronger operator role in scheme design. Adopt core principles for place/movement classification, outcome-led scoring, and transparent trade-offs.

### **Phase B — Scope and Applicability**

Work with partners to specify where and how the framework applies, such as corridors and centres with material bus-active travel conflicts or opportunities. Consider the scope of the interventions involving reallocation, e.g. from general traffic to bus lanes/gates, signal priority, stops/stands, and active travel measures such as segregated cycleways. Clarify that the scope of the framework in terms of process, e.g. that it standardises option generation, assessment, decision-making and funding, and monitoring.

### **Phase C — Evidence Base and Typologies**

Define the evidence the framework expects to use, for example: bus punctuality and speed, dwell and stop spacing, cancellations; pedestrian and cycle flows and safety proxies; junction delay; kerbside demands; street typology and place/movement functions; accessibility and equality needs; utilities and enforcement feasibility. Where possible, this should consider consistent data sources, with potential data custodians being consulted, e.g. through SBOD.

Establish a simple typology that links street function (place vs movement) to default design priorities and minimum protection levels. This should allow local preferences to be captured, e.g. alignment with bus and active travel strategies.

#### **Phase D — Option Generation Method**

Standardise how options are generated so each corridor/location considers balanced multimodal packages. Require generation of contrasting but feasible concepts and staged variants (rapid/interim/permanent), ensuring both bus and active travel measures are tested in constrained contexts.

Encourage co-design sessions so operators and active travel stakeholders shape viable, complementary packages rather than competing single-mode schemes. For example, operators can provide input on stop locations, agree service changes aligned to new priority.

#### **Phase E — Appraisal and Trade-offs**

Define a consistent appraisal approach that makes trade-offs explicit and repeatable. Use a transparent scoring matrix with weighted criteria, for example:

- Movement outcomes: bus journey time and variability; excess wait/headway adherence; active travel continuity/protection; pedestrian crossing delay and comfort.
- Equity and inclusion: SIMD-weighted access gains; kerb-free routes; Blue Badge/loading; bus stop accessibility.
- Place impacts: town centre vitality, public realm, air quality, noise.
- Deliverability: cost, phasing, utilities, TROs, enforcement readiness, maintenance.

- Include sensitivity tests, for example: peak vs off-peak performance, displacement effects, and resilience under disruption.

#### **Phase F — Framework Products**

Deliver a concise, reusable toolkit including such elements as:

- Method and governance guide
- Data specification and typology
- Option generation templates
- Scoring matrix with example weights and thresholds
- Decision rules and minimum standards
- Reporting templates for monitoring and review

#### **Phase G — Monitoring and Iteration**

- Specify common KPIs and reporting so schemes can be compared and refined over time.
- Require pre/post evaluation and publication of “what changed and why,” with periodic reviews to update the framework.

#### **Roles and Governance**

SEStran would lead the regional co-ordination of the study, working closely with partners such as:

- Local authorities (design/enforcement)
- Bus operators (co-design/ops input)
- Sustrans, local groups (design)
- Transport Scotland (standards, data, alignment with appraisal and funding processes)

- Equality/access groups (MACS/Thistle Assistance)
- CPPs/LEPs/NHS (priority destinations)
- Police Scotland (enforcement)

## Risks and Mitigations

- Consensus on the framework and priorities: encourage buy-in at each stage to ensure groups are aligned, e.g. operators and active travel groups. Consider opt-in pilot corridors.
- Evidence and data quality: validate using sample corridors and engage with relevant data holders.
- Stakeholder capacity: Give operators and other stakeholders structured co-design roles and explore ways to reduce burden in the process.

## How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?

- Priority and reliability improvements focused on corridors serving hospitals and major employment sites, with enforceable KPIs, e.g.

reliability of bus travel to ensure on-time shift starts for healthcare workers.

- Pilots such as early and late serving buses to hospital campuses and industrial estates, with guaranteed connections and DRT feeders where fixed routes cannot viably meet times.
- The potential for pump-primed stability measures for supported services connecting deprived areas to work and health, with a clear taper and a legacy plan.

## 5. Network Identity

### SRBS Actions

A clearer, regionally coherent identity can reduce confusion where journeys cross operator and boundary lines, making travel feel like one network. This identity should be inclusive of other sustainable modes and built around simplicity, legibility, and trust.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Long-term	Collaborate with key stakeholders to initiate <b>discussions aimed at establishing a regional network identity</b> for buses and other sustainable modes of transport. This will address the key questions outlined in the SRBS.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Establish a Network Identity Working Group and scope priorities.	SRBS-Q-NI-01
Long-term	<b>Identify</b> major travel patterns which cross established operator or area boundaries, and result in <b>“confusion” for users</b> because they involve multiple identities, complex ticketing options, etc.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Consider learnings from the fares and ticketing reviews.	SRBS-Q-NI-02

### Overall Approach

#### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will consider the outcomes of the fares and ticketing reviews (SRBS-AFF-03, SRBS-Q-TICK-02) and consider situations and patterns that create user confusion due to multiple brands and complex products (SRBS-Q-NI-02). Insights will inform proposals for brand, information, and integrated ticketing simplification to be discussed with partners (SRBS-Q-NI-01), as below.

#### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will convene discussions on a regional network identity for buses and other sustainable modes (SRBS-Q-NI-01), exploring scope, opt-in options for operators, co-branding with local identities, accessibility standards, and the relationship with integrated ticketing and fares.

#### Advocacy

SEStran will advocate for brand implementation where it demonstrably improves legibility and integrated use.

## Workflow for Delivery

As these are long-term actions, a detailed workflow for delivery will be developed at a later date, based on the outcomes of related working group actions and studies, such as the fares and ticketing reviews (SRBS-AFF-03, SRBS-Q-TICK-02). As noted in the SRBS, a clear network identity requires integration of services in a practical sense.

Initial workflow following from the fares and ticketing reviews would be for SEStran to convene a Network Identity focused Working Group to explore whether, how, and where a regional identity would materially improve legibility and confidence for cross-boundary/operator bus travel and other sustainable modes. Using the SRBS's suggested questions as a guide, the group's purpose could be to:

- Assess user benefits and necessity (e.g., do confusion hotspots justify intervention?)
- Define what a regional identity could look like in practice (information, wayfinding, ticketing interfaces, at-stop/digital assets, optional co-branded vehicle treatments)
- Test whether “regional” is the right geography or if corridor/cluster approaches are preferable.
- Gauge willingness to participate among operators, authorities, and partners, and identify feasible opt-in/co-brand models.
- Specify the enabling changes required (information and data standards aligned with DTDS/Traveline; alignment with integrated ticketing workstreams; customer accessibility standards)
- Appraise feasibility, costs, risks, and resourcing pathways.

- Recommend a proportionate, pilot-led roadmap focused first on high-impact cross-boundary movements (e.g., hospitals, job hubs, colleges) with clear success measures (reduction in ticketing/validity queries; improved awareness and legibility; consistent presentation across channels)

As partnership support, SEStran could facilitate evidence packs from the fares and ticketing reviews, coordinate user co-design with accessibility groups, and prepare an adoptable identity toolkit for pilots, while keeping participation voluntary and benefits-led.

## Risks and Mitigations

- Limited operator/authority buy-in: keep participation voluntary with clear co-brand options; demonstrate quick wins on pilot corridors; couple identity with fares and ticketing simplification benefits.
- Identity outpacing integrated products and creating confusion: sequence identity deployment with real-world integration measures.
- Accessibility and inclusivity gaps in design: apply inclusive design principles; co-design with disability and equalities groups.
- Inconsistent adoption across boundaries and modes: prioritise cross-boundary pilots; offer a toolkit; agree minimum standards.
- Funding and maintenance of physical assets: start with low-cost, high-visibility materials; use shared procurement frameworks; define maintenance responsibilities in MOUs.
- Legal/competition concerns around branding and information: keep identity non-discriminatory and optional; seek early legal advice.

## How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?

- Coherent signage and real-time information at hospitals and employment hubs, including accessible formats and multi-operator consistency.

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## 6. Information, Customer Service, and Feedback

### SRBS Actions

People need accurate, accessible, and consistent information before and during travel, and clear ways to give feedback that lead to visible improvements. A region-wide approach can lift standards, simplify experiences, and build trust.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Ongoing	<b>Promote a unified source of information</b> to enable users to easily access accurate, comprehensive, and consistent travel details across all stages of their journey.	Advocacy	Review current regional and national information channels and agree the role SEStran can play in promoting a clearer single source of journey information.	SRBS-Q-INF-01
Ongoing	<b>Ensure that information provision, customer service, and feedback mechanisms are accessible and inclusive</b> , catering to the diverse needs of all users. This includes promoting equitable access to public transport services and the feedback process, with proactive engagement of hard-to-reach groups to ensure all voices are represented in decision-making.	Advocacy	Engage equality, accessibility, and community representatives to identify priority improvements for inclusive information and feedback channels.	SRBS-Q-INF-02
Ongoing	<b>Promote data accuracy and expand the provision of real-time information</b> across all media channels to ensure users have reliable and timely access to travel updates.	SEStran Led	Scope a review of current real-time information accuracy, coverage, and data quality issues with operators and LAs.	SRBS-Q-INF-05
Priority Years 2–3	<b>Enhance the collection and analysis of feedback data across the regional network</b> to identify common issues and areas for improvement. This will enable more effective and efficient service delivery and foster a culture of continuous improvement.	SEStran Led	Scope a shared regional feedback/data approach.	SRBS-Q-INF-04
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Prioritise accessibility, convenience, consistency, and regional integration</b> by learning from successful practices adopted by individual areas, operators, and other proven initiatives. These elements should support both strategic and cross-boundary movements, as well as local travel – particularly where multi-operator journeys are involved.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Compile “what works” evidence pack and draft regional principles.	SRBS-Q-INF-03

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Long-term	<b>Standardise customer service procedures</b> to provide users with clear expectations regarding response times and recourse options, thereby enhancing user trust, satisfaction, and confidence in the bus network.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Consider feasibility through working groups and agree a point at which this should be progressed to align with real-world conditions.	SRBS-Q-INF-06
Long-term	<b>Work towards a region-wide Customer Charter in the longer-term</b> , by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Identifying common standards and commitments across bus operators, covering areas such as passenger rights, conditions of carriage, health and safety, accessibility, and customer service.</li> <li>→ Assessing where shared standards are currently lacking and exploring options to address these, considering the diversity of operators and service areas.</li> <li>→ Establishing a framework for the Customer Charter, including approaches to accountability, enforcement, funding, resources, and the potential for measurable targets and public reporting.</li> </ul>	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Consider feasibility through working groups and agree a point at which this should be progressed to align with real-world conditions.	SRBS-Q-INF-07

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will enhance feedback data collection and analysis across the region (SRBS-Q-INF-04), undertaking a study to consider appropriate steps for this and the role of SEStran in this, aligned with the SRBS.

### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will work with partners to prioritise accessibility, convenience, and regional integration by scaling proven practices and aligning approaches where multi-operator journeys are common (SRBS-Q-INF-03). In the longer term, SEStran will consider support for standardising customer service procedures (SRBS-Q-INF-06), and the potential for a region-wide Customer Charter, setting shared standards, accountability, and reporting (SRBS-Q-INF-07).

### Advocacy

SEStran will promote unified information for accurate, end-to-end travel detail (SRBS-Q-INF-01) and ensure inclusion in information and feedback mechanisms, proactively engaging hard-to-reach groups (SRBS-Q-INF-02).

## Workflow for Delivery

### **Phase A - Immediate priorities and studies**

SEStran will take forward action SRBS-Q-INF-04 in line with the SEStran Regional Bus Strategy, “Information, Customer Service, and Feedback” policy intent, SRBS-Q-INF-04 will set out a shared regional feedback/data approach. The study will map current channels and datasets, agree common use-cases, and explore minimum data standards. This can inform a protocol for regular reporting and dashboards for use by partners.

In parallel, *SRBS-Q-INF-05* should be taken forward as a focused review of real-time information quality and coverage across the region. This should examine current data quality issues, differences in provision between operators and areas, and the extent to which passengers can access timely updates across apps, websites, roadside displays, and other channels. The review should identify priority actions to improve consistency, accuracy, and coverage, while aligning with wider work on DTDS, open data, and customer information standards.

### **Phase B - Partnership Working Groups**

SRBS-Q-INF-03 will be progressed through a working group. SEStran will compile a “what works” evidence pack from operators and councils and translate it into draft ‘regional principles’, particularly for cross-boundary, multi-operator journeys. These principles can then be used to guide discussions around long-term actions.

### **Phase C - Long-term evolution and monitoring**

SRBS-Q-INF-06 and SRBS-Q-INF-07 will be monitored while conditions mature. As real-world consistency improves via the mid-term principles and the feedback/data backbone, the working group will consider if and when to move toward standardised customer service procedures and, ultimately, the feasibility and scope of a region-wide Customer Charter, including accountability and reporting.

### **Ongoing Advocacy and Engagement**

SRBS-Q-INF-01 and SRBS-Q-INF-02 continue as standing actions. SEStran will advocate for a unified information source and inclusive, accessible channels—digital and nondigital—aligned to the strategy’s commitments on information quality and accessibility.

SEStran’s immediate role should be to convene the relevant partners, clarify where regional coordination can add value, and ensure that this work aligns with wider digital, ticketing, and customer information developments. Roles and governance should remain proportionate to the scale of delivery, with SEStran leading evidence gathering and coordination, operators and local authorities informing practical improvements, and Transport Scotland engaged where action depends on national systems, DTDS, or wider policy development.

## Risks and Mitigations

- Data consistency: collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including Transport Scotland and NSTAB.
- Inclusion risk: undertake Impact Assessment (e.g. EqIA) and targeted user testing on potential changes.
- Readiness: longer term actions require monitoring before moving forward, to consider whether the operating context is appropriate.

## How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?

- Integrated, accessible information for employment sites, hospital access, and shift-based travel.
- Co-design with health boards and employers, including staff.

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## 7. Interchanges and Bus Stops

### SRBS Actions

High-quality, consistent stops and interchanges reduce anxiety, improve accessibility, and cut end-to-end travel time. A typology-led design hierarchy enables targeted investment and predictable user experience.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Priority Year 1	Investigate the implementation of an interchange and bus stop typology-based design hierarchy to enable the targeting of appropriate resources, facilities, and design standards to deliver consistency across the region.	SEStran Led	Scope study.	SRBS-Q-HUB-01
Priority Year 1	Undertake a critical review of all existing bus-based Park and Rides and consider whether action is required to enhance their effectiveness.	SEStran Led	Scope study.	SRBS-Q-HUB-03
Priority Year 2-3	Consider the potential for region-wide procurement of bus stops provided, such as those provided by advertising companies, which may offer advantages such as cost efficiencies, improved maintenance, and greater consistency in design and facilities across the region.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Build working group.	SRBS-Q-HUB-02

### Overall Approach

#### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will investigate a design typology with minimum standards for each category of stop and interchange (SRBS-Q-HUB-01) and critically review Park & Ride sites to determine if interventions are required to raise performance (SRBS-Q-HUB-03).

#### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will work with partners to explore region-wide procurement for stop infrastructure to achieve cost efficiencies, better maintenance, and consistent design (SRBS-Q-HUB-02).

#### Advocacy

SEStran will advocate for capital support to improve interchanges and bus stops.

## Workflow for Delivery

This work should be linked closely to ongoing *SEStransit* work. For example, building on work on hubs, SEStran will scope the typology study, identify and audit priority sites, and develop minimum standards for each category of stop and interchange. In parallel, SEStran will convene a working group with relevant partners to assess options for region-wide procurement, maintenance models, and delivery responsibilities.

As this work progresses, SEStran should ensure that the focus on higher-footfall interchanges through *SEStransit* is complemented by a proportionate approach for smaller and rural locations, so that quality improvements are not concentrated solely in the busiest places. The overall workflow should therefore support both strategic hubs and a wider network of stops that are essential for local access.

[additional detail can be provided, if SEStransit outputs are available].

## Risks and mitigations

- Improvements may be delivered unevenly across the region, resulting in an inconsistent passenger experience between areas and between different types of stop and interchange. This can be addressed through buy-in to the development and application of a clear regional typology and associated minimum standards, providing a common framework for design, facilities, accessibility, and information provision while still allowing proportionate responses to local context and differing levels of demand.

- Funding may be secured for initial stop or interchange upgrades without sufficient provision for ongoing maintenance, repair, and renewal, leading to declining asset quality over time. This can be addressed by considering whole-life costs, maintenance responsibilities, and long-term funding arrangements at the point of design, specification, and procurement, including through any region-wide contracting or asset management models.
- Smaller and more rural locations may be deprioritised if investment is focused primarily on high-footfall sites through *SEStransit*. This can be addressed by ensuring that the typology and wider investment approach include appropriate quality standards and proportionate improvement pathways for lower-demand locations, so that rural communities and smaller settlements also benefit from safe, accessible, and good-quality waiting environments.

## How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?

- Prioritise early upgrades at hospital campuses and employment hubs. Work with LAs, CPPs and LEPs to consider these.

## 8. Safety, Security, and Inclusion

### SRBS Actions

A safe, inclusive network is non-negotiable. This means better training, better reporting, a zero-tolerance culture, and attention to the design of vehicles and infrastructure that welcomes all users.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Ongoing	<b>Ensure there is proactive consultation</b> between SEStran and equality and welfare groups, seeking guidance to ensure effective engagement.	SEStran Led	Structured engagement approach with equality and welfare groups.	SRBS-Q-SSI-01
Priority Year 1	<b>Ensure there is specialised training</b> across the region for bus drivers to address specific mobility, disability, or information needs, and to develop conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques for safety and security.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Engagement with operator working group	SRBS-Q-SSI-02
Priority Year 1	<p>Work with operators and authorities to <b>promote a zero-tolerance approach</b> towards harassment, discrimination, and violence against passengers and bus drivers, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Launching a public awareness campaign to educate passengers about the unacceptability of harassment, discrimination, and violence.</li> <li>→ Implementing a confidential reporting system for passengers to report incidents of harassment or discrimination.</li> <li>→ Ensuring there is training for bus drivers and staff on recognising and addressing harassment, discrimination, and violence.</li> </ul> <p>Explore opportunities for collaboration with Police Scotland to ensure action is taken against perpetrators of harassment, discrimination, violence, and anti-social behaviour.</p>	SEStran Providing Partnership Support + Advocacy	Establish working group	SRBS-Q-SSI-04
Mid-term Years 3-7	Work with operators and authorities to <b>explore enhanced vehicle standards</b> across the region, improving safety, security, and inclusion. Additionally, collaborate to establish standards for bus stops, stations, and interchanges—such as the integration of audio-visual systems.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Engagement with operator working group	SRBS-Q-SSI-03
Mid-term	<b>Establish and enhance passenger and driver safety and security reporting systems,</b>	SEStran Providing	Engagement with operator	SRBS-Q-

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Years 3-7	enabling the easy reporting of safety and security concerns, suspicious activities, or incidents in real-time, and ensuring prompt responses to such reports.	Partnership Support	working group	SSI-05
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Explore the potential for dedicated transport policing services</b> for buses in the region.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Initiate as part of SRBS-Q-SSI-04, recognising a long-term delivery timeline.	SRBS-Q-SSI-06
Long-term	<b>Consider measures such as a “Safe Places” scheme</b> , where key interchanges, stops, and buses (amongst other locations) can offer help if someone is anxious, scared or at risk while they are out and about and need support. An example of such a scheme is the <a href="#">Safe Places National Network</a> .	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Investigate as part of SRBS-Q-SSI-04, considering this as a potential option.	SRBS-Q-SSI-07
Long-term	<b>Monitor issues to identify the scale of problems and the responses required</b> and provide clear performance metrics to regularly assess the effectiveness of safety, security, and inclusivity measures.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Investigate during SRBS-Q-SSI-04, then monitoring an agreed approach.	SRBS-Q-SSI-08

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will ensure proactive consultation with equality and welfare groups (SRBS-Q-SSI-01) and promote region-wide specialised driver training covering disability awareness, information needs, and de-escalation (SRBS-Q-SSI-02).

### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will work with operators and authorities to raise vehicle, stop, and interchange standards, including AV systems and consistent accessibility features (SRBS-Q-SSI-03). It will help establish real-time safety and security reporting systems with prompt responses (SRBS-Q-SSI-05), explore dedicated transport policing options (SRBS-Q-SSI-06), and consider “Safe Places” schemes at key hubs (SRBS-Q-SSI-07). SEStran will also work with partners to monitor issues and publish performance metrics to assess the effectiveness of safety, security, and inclusivity measures (SRBS-Q-SSI-08).

### Advocacy

SEStran will promote a zero-tolerance stance on harassment and violence, support public awareness campaigns, encourage confidential reporting, and coordinate with Police Scotland to ensure action (SRBS-Q-SSI-04).

## Workflow for Delivery

SRBS-Q-SSI-01, 02, and 04 will be progressed first through Phases A to C of the following workflow, establishing the foundations for wider delivery. Building on that work, Phases D to F will support development of the longer-term actions on standards, reporting systems, “Safe Places”, policing, and monitoring.

### **Phase A – Mobilisation and taskforce set-up**

This phase will establish the governance and partnership structure for the workstream.

- Establish a multi-agency taskforce involving operators, local authorities, Police Scotland, equality and welfare groups, and other relevant partners.
- Agree the role of this group in overseeing delivery and informing priorities.
- Confirm links to related work on vehicles, stops, interchanges, driver training, and passenger information.
- SRBS-Q-SSI-02: review current driver training provision and begin development of a shared approach to specialised training on disability awareness, information needs, conflict resolution, and de-escalation.
- SRBS-Q-SSI-01: maintain proactive consultation with equality and welfare groups, establishing a structured approach to engagement that can inform the wider workstream on an ongoing basis.

### **Phase B – Priority Years 2–3 action development**

This phase will build on the Year 1 foundations to progress the Priority Years 2–3 action on zero-tolerance measures.

- Review current incident reporting arrangements, public communications, safeguarding approaches, and relevant existing campaigns across the region.
- Gather evidence from operators, Police Scotland, equality and welfare groups, and other partners on the main gaps and priorities.
- SRBS-Q-SSI-04: develop common principles for a zero-tolerance approach towards harassment, discrimination, violence, and anti-social behaviour affecting passengers and drivers.
- Explore options for public awareness activity, confidential reporting routes, and alignment with existing partner-led work.
- Ensure that any proposed campaign or reporting approach is informed by specialist expertise and lived experience.

### **Phase C – Mid-term development and pilot activity**

This phase will support the Mid-term Years 3–7 actions, moving from early partnership development into more structured proposals and pilot activity.

- SRBS-Q-SSI-03: work with operators and authorities to explore enhanced vehicle, stop, station, and interchange standards that support safety, security, and inclusion, including features such as audio-visual systems.
- SRBS-Q-SSI-05: develop options for more consistent passenger and driver safety and security reporting systems, with a focus on accessibility, ease of use, and prompt response arrangements.
- SRBS-Q-SSI-06: explore the feasibility of dedicated transport policing services for buses in the region, informed by the experience of the earlier zero-tolerance and reporting work.

- Identify where pilot measures may be appropriate to test new reporting arrangements, campaign materials, or infrastructure and vehicle-related improvements.
- Review funding, delivery responsibilities, and governance requirements for wider implementation.

### **Phase D – Long-term rollout and monitoring**

This phase will support the Long-term actions once earlier stages of work have matured and there is sufficient evidence to support wider rollout.

- SRBS-Q-SSI-07: consider the role of “Safe Places” approaches at key interchanges, stops, and buses, informed by the outcomes of earlier pilot activity and partnership work.
- SRBS-Q-SSI-08: develop a more mature monitoring framework to identify the scale of issues, track responses, and assess the effectiveness of safety, security, and inclusion measures over time.
- Review whether there is a case for wider regional rollout of selected interventions and identify the practical conditions required to support this.
- Continue to refine the overall delivery approach in response to evidence, partner feedback, and changing operational conditions.

### **Risks and Mitigations**

- Weak partner buy-in: address through early multi-agency engagement, with clear roles and shared ownership.
- Measures not informed by expertise and lived experience: address through proactive consultation with relevant experts and representative groups.

- New initiatives duplicating or conflicting with existing work: address by mapping current activity early and aligning with partner programmes.

- Inconsistent adoption of training, reporting, and zero-tolerance measures: address through shared expectations and common delivery principles.

- Underused reporting systems: address by making routes simple, accessible, confidential, and supported by visible follow-up.

- Longer-term proposals dependent on coordination, funding, or cross-agency agreement: address through phased development, early feasibility work, and continued partnership working.

### **How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?**

- Prioritise hospitals and employment hubs, considering the feeling of safety around early/late shifts.
- Zero-tolerance approach linked to healthcare sector.
- Align driver training with patient and staff needs, e.g. including mobility assistance and wayfinding to healthcare sites.

## 9. Fleets, Depots, and Bus Drivers

### SRBS Actions

Performance and customer experience depend on high-quality, reliable vehicles, well-equipped depots, resilient energy supplies, and a well-supported workforce. Decarbonisation should be planned to protect service viability and enhance quality, with potential blockers identified well in advance. This allows long-lead solutions, such as grid enhancements, to be developed and delivered in time.

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Ongoing	Work with and support the activities of the <b>Workforce Mobility Project</b> in enabling and supporting projects including Data lead Public Transport First Approach (Data based decision making for revenue and capital investment); bikes on buses investment; Key regional Employer Sustainable Transport Options to Optimise Shift Patterns (Green Travel and Recruitment Plans); and Regional Transport Strategy Deliver Plan. These projects enable organisations to be better informed and develop travel planning, supported by a public transport system that understands and responds to actual travel demand	SEStran Ongoing Work	Partnership delivery of Workforce Mobility Project between City Deal and SEStran. Align forum agendas and share evidence of best practice; identify joint actions and reporting regularity.	SRBS-Q-FDBD-08
Ongoing	Engage with bus operators within the SEStran region to <b>address current and future challenges in bus driver recruitment, retention, training, and passenger satisfaction.</b> Identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership to overcome these challenges across the region. This includes promoting knowledge sharing and other forms of learning between smaller and larger operators, as well as among commercial operators, the third sector, and council operations, where appropriate. Build on the successful programme in 2024 <a href="#">Bus Driver Careers Helix</a> and learnings from regional SCOT-ZED project.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Establish an operator workforce forum; agree shared actions on recruitment pipelines, training modules, and retention incentives.	SRBS-Q-FDBD-05
Priority Year 1	<b>Seek an update</b> from the Department for Transport to determine the status of their response to the consultation <b>on the Review of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR)</b> , which was due to be published in 2024. This will ensure that SEStran remains informed and can further contribute to the development of inclusive and accessible public transport policies.	Advocacy	Submit formal request for PSVAR consultation status; schedule follow-up engagement and update regional standards accordingly.	SRBS-Q-FDBD-09
Priority Year 1	<b>Conduct a comprehensive study to identify the challenges and enablers of decarbonisation</b> within the region, encompassing all scales of bus operation. This study	SEStran Led	Scope and procure the regional decarbonisation	SRBS-Q-FDBD-02

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
	<p>should consider factors such as funding, energy, skills, and broader resource requirements necessary for upgrading fleets, depots, and supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>→ Include high-level forecasting of potential energy and depot needs for the phased decarbonisation of the bus network. Highlight grid capacity and other energy source issues to be resolved. Engage with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and other energy sector stakeholders to consider the potential to accommodate future decarbonisation needs. This may involve exploring cost-effective sources of electricity and hydrogen and harnessing renewable energy and storage solutions to manage supply, demand, and ensure energy resilience.</p> <p>This should include engagement with operators and authorities that have begun decarbonising their fleets and depots, as well as those involved in broader energy innovations. One such innovations is the Levenmouth Energy Park's renewable hydrogen production and use in Fife Council's hydrogen-diesel hybrid refuse collection fleet, local offices, and housing.</p>		challenges/enablers study; define data needs and secure DNO/operator participation.	
Priority Year 1	Work with operators and authorities to <b>review and improve welfare facilities for drivers</b> , including those needed while drivers are on duty and away from the depot. This includes assessing current facilities at depots and on-route locations, identifying priority areas for enhancement, and promoting improvements to support staff well-being, health, and retention.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Work with operators to audit existing welfare facilities; prioritise gaps by route and depot; agree a delivery plan and funding options with partners.	SRBS-Q-FDBD-06
Priority Year 2-3	<b>Identify appropriate support mechanisms for vehicle sharing</b> to improve fleet utilisation and service viability across sectors such as health and social care, education, and community transport. Initially, engage with local authorities and other stakeholders regarding their studies in this field.	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Map existing vehicle-sharing studies and assets; run a cross-sector workshop to identify quick-win sharing arrangements and governance.	SRBS-Q-FDBD-04
Mid-term Years 3-7	<b>Develop a regional decarbonisation plan</b> for bus fleets, depots and related infrastructure, based on the outcomes of this study.	SEStran Led	Translate study outputs (SRBS-Q-FDBD-02) into a draft regional plan; convene partners to agree phasing, funding asks,	SRBS-Q-FDBD-03

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Consider mechanisms for knowledge sharing and support between different bus operators, as well as authorities, to facilitate the exchange of communal experiences in decarbonisation.</li> <li>→ Consider opportunities for shared and/or public ownership of depots and supporting infrastructure. Note that a Scotland-wide shared charging network is proposed through ScotZEB2; engagement on the scope of this should be undertaken.</li> <li>→ Consider actions to minimise the impacts of energy cost changes on bus operations, allowing for better forward planning and confidence in fleet decarbonisation proposals.</li> <li>→ Engage with the national government on potential future funding sources for decarbonisation post-ScotZEB2. Emphasise the importance of an application process that ensures funding reaches the areas and organisations most in need.</li> </ul>		and ownership models.	
Mid-term Years 3-7	<p>Engage with key stakeholders in the region to <b>establish standards that enhance the consistency of vehicle quality</b> across all scales of bus operation, including fixed-route services and other delivery models such as DRT, community transport, and the wider third sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ This should consider a typology approach for route types, addressing aspects such as appropriate vehicle size, capacity, onboard facilities, information technology ticketing systems (and their interoperability), and enhanced accessibility standards.</li> <li>→ For information, ticketing, and payment systems, engage with Transport Scotland regarding their ‘Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024’.</li> <li>→ This should also include ensuring alignment of vehicle accessibility standards with on-street infrastructure standards to improve accessibility across the regional network.</li> </ul>	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Form a regional standards working group; draft a vehicle/route-type typology and test against priority corridors and DRT/community use cases.	SRBS-Q- FDBD-01
Mid-term Years 3-7	<p>Investigate opportunities to <b>establish a set of regional values for quality related to bus drivers</b>, aimed at improving passenger satisfaction and addressing other barriers to bus use. This should include consideration of the means to achieve these values, such as through driver training, technologies, and other forms of assistance.</p>	SEStran Providing Partnership Support	Co-design a draft set of regional driver quality values; pilot enhanced training/tech support on selected corridors.	SRBS-Q- FDBD-07

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will deliver a comprehensive decarbonisation challenges/enablers study (SRBS-Q-FDBD-02), including energy and depot needs forecasting, grid capacity constraints, and DNO engagement. It will draw on live innovations—such as Levenmouth’s hydrogen projects—and produce a regional decarbonisation plan (SRBS-Q-FDBD-03), with knowledge sharing across operators and authorities, options for shared/public depot ownership, and actions to mitigate energy price volatility. It will seek clarity on future funding streams in Scotland.

### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will work with stakeholders to set consistent vehicle quality standards across route types and models (fixed route, DRT, community) (SRBS-Q-FDBD-01), aligning on-board accessibility and IT/ticketing capabilities with on-street infrastructure. It will identify support mechanisms for vehicle sharing across sectors (health, education, community) (SRBS-Q-FDBD-04) and tackle driver recruitment, retention, training, and welfare facilities (SRBS-Q-FDBD-05/06). It will explore regional values for driver quality and passenger experience (SRBS-Q-FDBD-07) and support the Workforce Mobility Group (SRBS-Q-FDBD-08).

### Advocacy

SEStran will seek updates on the PSVAR review status from the Department for Transport to ensure alignment with forthcoming accessibility requirements (SRBS-Q-FDBD-09).

## Workflow for Delivery

### Phase A - Evidence and Alignment

Delivery begins with establishing a clear and shared understanding of the current position across fleets, depots and the workforce (SRBS-Q-FDBD-02). This involves consolidating existing data on vehicle quality, infrastructure readiness and workforce challenges (SRBS-Q-FDBD-05), alongside aligning with ongoing initiatives such as the Workforce Mobility Project (SRBS-Q-FDBD-08). Engagement with operators, local authorities and partners is used to validate issues, identify common barriers such as energy constraints and recruitment pressures, and agree a coordinated approach through structured forums and governance arrangements.

### Phase B: Standard, Prioritisation and Delivery

Building on this foundation, partners work collaboratively to define regional standards for vehicles, depots and driver quality to improve consistency and passenger experience (SRBS-Q-FDBD-01). This includes developing a route-based typology, setting expectations for accessibility, onboard technology and interoperability, and establishing a shared set of values for driver quality supported through training and technology. These standards are then used to identify and prioritise interventions across fleets, infrastructure and workforce, ensuring that actions are aligned with regional needs, deliverable within existing constraints, and supported by clear responsibilities and coordination mechanisms (SRBS-Q-FDBD-07).

Delivery focuses on implementing a coordinated regional programme across fleets, depots and workforce. This includes progressing a regional decarbonisation plan and supporting knowledge sharing between operators and authorities (SRBS-Q-FDBD-04). Opportunities for shared or public ownership of depots are explored, alongside engagement with

national initiatives such as ScotZEB2 and consideration of energy cost impacts. Regional standards for vehicle quality are applied across service types and aligned with national ticketing and accessibility frameworks, while driver quality values are taken forward through training, technology and wider support measures. Ongoing engagement with national government on future funding and continued collaboration ensures delivery remains coordinated and responsive over time.

## Risks and Mitigations

- Incomplete decarbonisation evidence or limited operator data sharing: agree data requirements early and use a proportionate evidence-gathering approach.
- Grid constraints, depot limitations, uncertain fuel pathways, and long lead times: engage early with Distribution Network Operators and energy stakeholders, supported by high-level forecasting.
- Uneven progress across different operator types and scales: ensure the actions reflect all scales of operation.

## 10. Data And Monitoring

### SRBS Actions

A modern bus system benefit from data being shared, standardised, and used to drive decisions. SEStran will lead improved coordination in data collection, transparency, and its use to deliver the policies of the SRBS.

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TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Priority Year 1	<p><b>Undertake a review of data and monitoring in the SEStran region,</b> considering ways to collect, share, analyse, and monitor data to the benefit of the bus network and users, including integration with other modes, where relevant. This should also consider opportunities for specific uses in the region, such as the potential for improving the transparency of bus network performance metrics. The review should also identify mechanisms for actioning improvements, noting the expected need for formal agreements with key stakeholder and partnership working.</p>	SEStran Led	Scope study with potential partners.	SRBS-Q-DATA-02
Priority Year 1	<p><b>Enable Workforce Mobility Project</b> in data focused projects including <b>transport, employment, and spatial data</b> to support evidence-based planning and targeted interventions. This includes travel demand and behaviour insights which support bus patronage by understand commuting patterns and inform interventions such as modal shift, behaviour change, and workplace-based programmes.</p>	SEStran Led	Enable continue project delivery and expansion.	SRBS-Q-DATA-03

TIMELINE	ACTION FROM RBS	ACTION TYPE	FIRST STEP	REF.
Priority Year 1	<p><b>Engage with Transport Scotland on their ‘Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Delivery Strategy 2024’</b> on the data aspects of their strategy and set out opportunities for application in the SEStran region. This should include such considerations as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Consulting on legislation under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.</li> <li>→ Data standardisation and interoperability.</li> <li>→ Collection, utilisation, and transparency, including the potential for open data sharing and the applications of this.</li> <li>→ Maximising the use of Digital Travel Data Services (DTDS) enhancements to such areas as information, real time updates, and disruption alerts.</li> <li>→ Opportunities around the enhanced Concessionary Travel Scheme data collection and analysis proposals, such as origin and destination data.</li> <li>→ Continuous improvement of smart ticketing and integrated travel initiatives, including monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the initiatives are meeting their objectives and to provide data-driven insights for future enhancements.</li> </ul>	Advocacy	Seek update and align engagement with the review of data and monitoring in the region.	SRBS-Q-DATA-01

## Overall Approach

### What will SEStran Lead?

SEStran will review data and monitoring across the region (SRBS-Q-DATA-02), setting standards for collection, sharing, and action. This will include options for a public performance dashboard, formal data-sharing agreements, and clear governance to ensure improvements are implemented.

### SEStran Partnership Support

SEStran will coordinate with partners to work on, and implement actions from, the data and monitoring review.

### Advocacy

SEStran will engage with Transport Scotland on the Smart, Digital, Integrated Ticketing and Payments Strategy (SRBS-Q-DATA-01), including legislation under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, data standardisation and interoperability, open data where possible, the use of DTDS, enhanced concessionary data analysis (e.g. patterns of movement), and continuous improvement frameworks with evaluation included.

## Workflow for Delivery

SRBS-Q-DATA-02 will be delivered through Phases A to C of the following workflow, establishing a regional approach to data collection, sharing, analysis, and reporting. In parallel, SRBS-Q-DATA-01 will continue as an advocacy action with Transport Scotland, helping to align regional priorities with national data, digital, and legislative developments.

### Phase A – Scope, governance, and baseline

SEStran will scope the review with key partners, including local authorities, operators, Transport Scotland, and relevant data custodians. This phase should agree the main use-cases for the work, such as performance monitoring, transparency, accessibility, fares and ticketing analysis, and evaluation of interventions. It should also identify the main datasets and systems currently available across the region, including operational performance data, timetable and real-time information, fares and ticketing data, concessionary travel data where available, customer feedback, accessibility information, and relevant contextual datasets such as employment and health destinations.

### Phase B – Gap analysis and framework development

Using the baseline review, SEStran will identify the main gaps and barriers affecting the collection, sharing, analysis, and use of data across the regional bus network. This should include issues relating to data consistency, interoperability, transparency, reporting, and governance, as well as where formal data-sharing agreements may be required. The main output of this phase should be a regional data and monitoring framework, setting out priority indicators, possible dashboard and reporting products, governance arrangements, and a phased approach to implementation.

### Phase C – Implementation planning and alignment with national work

SEStran will work with partners to identify how the review findings should be taken forward in practice, including any early actions, pilot use-cases, or reporting arrangements that can be implemented in the short term. This phase should also inform SEStran's engagement with Transport Scotland under SRBS-Q-DATA-01, helping to ensure that regional priorities are reflected in wider discussions on data

standardisation, DTDS, concessionary travel data, open data, and monitoring and evaluation requirements within national smart and integrated ticketing initiatives.

## Risks and mitigations

- Data inconsistency: ensure this is a core part of the data review, coordinate with DTDS.
- Commercial sensitivity: use aggregation/anonymisation; define publication thresholds in a MOU.
- Capacity constraints with partners: start with small use-cases to test the concepts of data sharing and use, and try to reduce burden on partners, e.g. LAs, operators.

## How does this align with the Transport to Employment and Transport to Health Workstreams?

- Use data to target affordability, reliability, and service gaps for key employment and health corridors.
- Evaluate impacts of pilots on employment access, clinic attendance, and reduced “did not attend” rates, feed learning into future funding bids.
- Work with CPPS and LEPs on data dashboards. For example, CPPs could host transparent dashboards that track access to employment and healthcare by time of day and settlement, alongside reliability to shift times (SRBS-Q-DATA-02). LEPs could integrate labour market and employability outcomes (e.g., starts and sustainment), while NHS boards could share relevant attendance metrics (e.g., DNAs) under appropriate data-sharing agreements.

## 11. Cross-topic Programme

→ Once agreed on the approaches above, set out the overlapping streams (e.g. working groups, advocacy), set out the timescale, schedule of events, etc.

- Set out a visual representation of the workflows.
- Set out costing envelopes.
- Overall governance approach and set of stakeholders.

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