

DELIVERY PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report updates the Board on the performance of the Partnership's strategy and project workstreams for 2026/27, focusing on quarter 1. This report was previously noted by the Performance and Audit Committee.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In previous reporting cycles, this report was presented to the Project and Strategy Delivery Oversight Group (PaSDOS) prior to issuing to the Performance and Audit Committee and then the Board. Following the revision to PaSDOS' terms of reference, this report will no longer be reviewed by PaSDOS, and so the Performance and Audit Committee will be the principal location for scrutiny of SEStran's delivery programme.
- 2.2 In light of the above and the move to a programmatic approach for delivery work, the format of this report will be revised for the next quarter. These revisions will focus on a clear dashboard overview for each project, alongside a single overview dashboard. Going forward, this covering report will be reduced as all key information will be included on each dashboard.
- 2.3 Members should also note that spend to date and budget projections, broken down by programme, are included in the Finance Officer Report elsewhere on this agenda. This paper will therefore focus on delivery against milestones and risks and issues.

3 PEOPLE AND PLACE (P&P)

3.1 Status Update

P&P is currently on budget and programme, with the budget fully allocated and it is expected that the grant will be spent in full as in 2025/26.

3.2 Milestones

1 milestone is delayed, and all others are either complete or on track. The delayed milestone is currently being progressed, due to complete mid-September, and will not have a knock on impact to the wider programme.

3.3 Risks

The top 3 risks currently identified, along with their current mitigations, are:

Risk: Reduction in revenue funding could lead to an inequitable programme that favours cycling over walking and wheeling and/or lacks capacity to engage with seldom heard groups – rated as a high risk.

Mitigation: The impact of reduced revenue funding is being raised continually with Transport Scotland. Planning for 2027/28 will consider how available revenue funding can be optimised to protect walking and wheeling projects, supported by monitoring the transport modes covered by funded projects.

Risk: Errors being made in payments after they have been authorised and passed to CEC for payment, resulting in overpayment or payments to the wrong account that need to be recovered and/or underpayments that impact fundee's cashflow – rated as a high risk.

Mitigation: Payment errors will be escalated with the CEC finance team to understand their causes, identify preventative measures, and ensure any future errors are prevented or, if they do occur, that they are detected and resolved quickly.

Risk: With the reductions to funding in 2026/27, schools' projects have had completion dates shortened by 3 months i.e. Q4+1 is no longer funded so, in 2026/27, they are funded from Q4+1 of 2025/26 plus 9 months funded from 2026/27 budgets. This risks creating an increased funding gap for 2027/28 if the reduction is continued because, without funding for Q4+1 from this year's funding, schools will require 12 months funding from the 2027/28 budget. This is rated as a medium risk.

Mitigation: The potential 2027/28 funding gap for school projects will be built into programme planning, with delivery organisations made aware of the pressures and the issue continuing to be raised with Transport Scotland.

3.4 Issues

Two new issues have been raised in 2026/27 to date. One relates to the revenue funding reduction that was reported to the last Board meeting. The second is a medium severity issue around incorrect payments being made – this is as per the risk noted above.

4 **REGIONAL BUS ACTION PLAN (RBAP)**

4.1 Status Update

The Regional Bus Action Plan is currently on programme. Governance arrangements are in place through the Regional Bus Programme Board, with work progressing on Year 1 priority actions, the Level of Service assessment, advocacy activity and bus network performance monitoring. Thistle Assistance remains on budget and on target.

4.2 Milestones

Key Quarter 1 governance milestones have been achieved, including establishment of the Programme Board and agreement of programme governance arrangements.

Work is progressing on the Level of Service review, development of priority actions and embedding monitoring and evaluation across related projects. One Thistle Assistance milestone has been delayed and reprogrammed, with all others on track.

4.3 Risks

The top three risks and their mitigations for RBAP are:

Risk: Changes to services, fares, or access could reduce public trust or disproportionately impact certain groups (e.g. rural, digitally excluded).

Mitigation: Embed EqlA and targeted engagement in all workstreams. Use pilot approach with visible benefits to make the case for supported services. Advocacy and facilitating engagement to ensure action is taken early where services are at risk or new policy will heavily impact the network.

Risk: RTPI: Lack of knowledge and resource within the project results in screens being installed poorly or behind schedule.

Mitigation: Procure expert consultant support to ensure the standard for screens across the region improves to:

- Ensure 100% of screens are being SAT and FAT tested by the supplier
- Ensure supplier delivers the screens within the financial year and works with local authorities to overcome any blockers
- Support knowledge of screen maintenance to ensure local authorities are better equipped to report defective screens

Risk: Thistle Assistance: Lack of engagement with key stakeholders as part of the evaluation work, limiting evidence and preventing development of relevant recommendations.

Mitigation: Six key stakeholders (transport operators) have been identified and will be interviewed by SEStran team to build on the existing positive relationships. Other stakeholders will be interviewed by our appointed consultants. The format of the interview proposed is short (30-45min) and taking place online to allow flexibility and increase opportunities for engagement.

4.4 Issues

There's currently one issue logged regarding the Thistle Assistance app having been removed from the Apple store. Next steps have been agreed internally, and efforts are currently being made to enable the app to be reinstated on the app store.

5 TRANSPORT TO HEALTH (TtH)

5.1 Status Update

TtH is currently on budget and on target. The budget is 70% committed and the remainder is expected to be spent in full this financial year.

5.2 Milestones

One milestone is currently delayed with the rest of them being either completed or on track. The delayed milestone has a revised date; we're confident that this milestone will be achieved within this revised timeframe.

5.3 Risks

The top 3 risks currently identified, along with their current mitigations, are:

Risk: £2 Bus Fare impacts the bus market such that routes are cut or funding for wider transport interventions is unavailable.

Mitigation: We are actively monitoring and influencing Transport Scotland / Scottish Government as part of the development of the bus bill.

Risk: Lack of buy-in and commitment from stakeholders at officer and senior level, diminishing quality, collaboration of efforts and limiting progress.

Mitigation: With the consultants appointed, a stakeholder engagement plan has been agreed to maximise value of engagement activities while being mindful of the time commitments required from our partner organisations. Additionally, a letter has been sent out to each NHS Boards CEO to establish a more formal engagement approach with them.

Risk: Lack of strategic direction from Scottish Government, causing instability in shaping of strategy creating a divergence with TS policy.

Mitigation: We have actively been engaging with Transport Scotland and the Primary Care team to share our plans and strategic direction on Transport to Health.

5.4 Issues

There are currently no issues recorded for this programme.

6 TRANSPORT TO EMPLOYMENT (TtE)

6.1 Status Update

TtE is currently on budget and programme. There remains approximately £100,000 of budget to be committed, but plans are in place to allocate this funding and it is still expected that the grant will be spent in full.

6.2 Milestones

All milestones are currently on track or complete. Several milestones were completed late, most notable the awarding of funding. This was largely due to delays in developing project proposals to the point at which funding could be awarded. These delays are not expected to have a knock-on impact on the programme, as these grant funded projects either started at risk without funding confirmed or were not expected to start until summer/early autumn.

6.3 Risks

The top 3 risks currently identified, along with their current mitigations, are:

Risk: Errors being made in payments after they have been authorised and passed to CEC for payment, resulting in overpayment or payments to the wrong account that need to be recovered and/or underpayments that impact fundee's cashflow – rated as a high risk.

Mitigation: Payment errors will be escalated with the CEC finance team to understand their causes, identify preventative measures, and ensure any future errors are prevented or, if they do occur, that they are detected and resolved quickly.

Risk: TtE is a new work area for SEStran and therefore knowledge of the best solutions may be lacking, which could lead to low quality proposals and/or lack of faith in SEStran's ability to deliver from those already working in this area – rated as a medium risk

Mitigation: We have sought input from external partners and existing experts in the field, including the Workforce Mobility Programme, Community Planning Partnership partners and Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs). Engagement with these organisations is intended to improve understanding of effective approaches, while further knowledge development opportunities for the SEStran team are being identified during 2026/27.

Risk: Lack of national guidance on evaluation, combined with likely difficulty in evidence in significant shift in child poverty in one year, results in risk of programme not showing significant impact on its core aim – rated as a medium risk

Mitigation: We are maintaining ongoing engagement with Transport Scotland and other Regional Transport Partnerships to agree evaluation requirements and core outcomes. In addition, a specialist consultant has been commissioned to work with

SEStran and three other RTPs to develop an evaluation framework and undertake programme evaluation, with the risk to be reviewed when that framework is in place.

6.4 Issues

There are currently no issues recorded for this programme

7 **REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN (RTSDP)**

- 7.1 Work on the RTSDP was delayed in 2025/26 due to a lack of available resource to progress. With additional capacity in the team for 2026/27, work is due to begin again when funding has been confirmed, which are expected imminently. The core of this work this year will be a consultant commission to review and refine existing regional transport project prioritisation work, complete a baseline assessment of projects across SEStran and partner authorities, identify future investment priorities, and develop a deliverable programme of regional transport interventions to 2035 and beyond.

8 **SEStransit**

- 8.1 Work on SEStransit has slowed since the end of 2025/26 due to delays in funding announcements from Transport Scotland (Bus Infrastructure Funding was announced on 26th August). While awaiting funding, SEStran has continued to develop the SEStransit Programme-Level Strategic Business Case in partnership with local authorities, Transport Scotland and other regional stakeholders. The Strategic Context stage is now complete and the Case for Investment has progressed.
- 8.2 Following receipt of a funding offer letter, the next phase will focus on completing the Strategic Business Case and identifying, modelling and appraising potential transport interventions to improve regional connectivity. Work will include stakeholder engagement, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Integrated Impact Assessment activities, alongside development of the commercial, financial and management business cases. The completed overarching business case will be presented to partners for approval and will establish a long-term regional investment programme for South East Scotland.
- 8.3 For the next Committee meeting, SEStransit will be fully incorporated into this report with the same detail available as for other programmes. Members should also note that a tender is currently underway to secure additional programme management resource to oversee the next phase of SEStransit up to 31st December 2027.

9 **CROSS PROGRAMME WORK**

- 9.1 This area of works covers Comms and Marketing, Project Consultancy, and the projects contingency budget.

9.2 Comms and Marketing

This funding has covered the redesign of the SEStran logo (which is now complete), and will also be used to rebuild and redesign the SEStran website to enable our messaging to reach our target audiences in a clear, effective and impactful way (for which work is now underway). There are no specific risks for this area of work. Milestones are all complete or on track, with the procurement for the website completed slightly late, but work will still complete in advance of 31st March 2027. The budget is fully allocated with a small contingency remaining.

9.3 Project Consultancy

This funding has covered seconded roles within the projects team to provide additional capacity and experience. There are no specific milestones or risks associated with this budget. We are predicting a slight underspend based on current commitments, which cancels out the slight overspend noted in 9.4.

9.4 Projects Contingency

This budget is covering a wide range of both unexpected costs that have come up in year related to other delivery areas, as well as providing funding for standalone opportunities that have arisen, such as sponsorship of a Powering Futures Challenge, work looking at land value capture, and support for work on a data strategy. There are no specific milestones or risks associated with this project. The budget is predicting a slight overspend based on current commitments, which is cancelled out by the slight underspend noted in 9.3.

10 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The Board is asked to note the contents of this report

Michael Melton
Programme Manager
25th September 2026

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