ITEM A1

SEStran Partnership Board Minutes

10.00am, Friday, 25 September 2026

Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, Edinburgh, and Microsoft Teams

Present	Name	Organisation Title
	Cllr Sally Pattle (Chair)	West Lothian Council
	Cllr Chas Booth	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Jack Caldwell	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Neil Cuthbert	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Neil Gardiner	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr Stephen Jenkinson	City of Edinburgh Council
	Cllr John McMillan (Vice Chair)	East Lothian Council
	Cllr Ian Cameron	Fife Council
	Cllr Derek Glen	Fife Council
	Cllr Colin Cassidy	Midlothian Council
	Cllr Jenny Linehan	Scottish Borders Council
	Cllr Tom Conn	West Lothian Council
	Linda Bamford	Non-Councillor Member
	Mailys Garden	Non-Councillor Member
	Simon Hindshaw	Non-Councillor Member
	John Scott	Non-Councillor Member
	Clara Walker	Non-Councillor Member
	Paul White	Non-Councillor Member
	Sally Wyke	Non-Councillor Member
In Attendance	**Name**	**Organisation Title**
	Andrew Rose (Clerk)	City of Edinburgh Council
	Deborah Paton	City of Edinburgh Council
	Jamie Robertson	City of Edinburgh Council
	Tom Stokes	City of Edinburgh Council
	John Mitchell	Fife Council
	Gordon Brown	West Lothian Council
	Nicola Gill	West Lothian Council
	David Maule	West Lothian Council
	Brian Butler	SEStran
	Ewan Doyle	SEStran
	Rebecca Duncan	SEStran
	Rachael Murphy	SEStran

	Sarah Junik	SEStran
	Sandra Lavergne	SEStran
	Michael Melton	SEStran
	Rebecca Smith	SEStran
	Daniel Moran	SEStran
Apologies for Absence	**Name**	**Organisation Title**
	Cllr Russell Imrie (Vice Chair)	Midlothian Council
	Cllr Scott Harrison	Clackmannanshire Council
	Alistair Couper	Non-Councillor Member

1. Order of Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and indicated that the order of business would be as listed in the circulated agenda.

2. Apologies for Absence

As detailed above.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

A1. Minutes

Decision

1) That the minute of the SEStran Partnership Board of 19 June 2026 be approved as a correct record.
2) That, subject to the apologies of Councillor Chas Booth and Councillor Ian Cameron being recorded and the correction of a typographical error in the spelling of Deborah Paton, the minute of the Special Partnership Board of 17 July 2026 be approved as a correct record.
3) That the minute of the SEStran Performance and Audit Committee of 11 September 2026 be approved as a correct record.

A2. (a) Annual Audit Report and Annual Audited Accounts 2025/26

The Board considered a report by the Treasurer presenting the 2025/26 Annual Audit report by Audit Scotland and the audited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Decision

1) That the Annual Audit Report to the Board and the Controller of Audit be noted.
2) That authority be given for the audited Annual Accounts to be signed.

(Reference – Report by the Treasurer, submitted)

(b) Finance Officer's Report

The Board considered a report by the Treasurer presenting the first update, in accordance with its Financial Regulations, on the financial performance of the Partnership's Core and Projects budgets for 2026/27, which had been approved by the Board at its meeting held on 13 March 2026, and then revised to reflect reduced People and Place Programme funding for 2026/27 in June 2026. The report also sought approval for the realignment of some Projects budgets.

An analysis of financial performance to the end of July 2026 was also presented.

Decision

1) That the current forecast underspend on the Core revenue budget of £22,000 be noted.
2) That the latest forecasts for the People and Place Programme, Transport to Employment Programme and the Workforce Mobility Project, be noted.
3) That the realignment of the 2026/27 budget to reflect (a) People and Place – Transport Scotland funding for 2025/26 Quarter4+1 grants of £416,107 and (b) Transport to Employment Programme – Transport Scotland additional 2026/27 funding of £229,728, be approved.

(Reference – Report by the Treasurer, submitted)

A3. Council Requisitions

The Board received a report by the Partnership Director presenting the issues, challenges and evolving transport sector landscape that impacts the funding gap which the Partnership currently faces. The report also outlined proposals to change the way in which funding is calculated and also of proposed increases to council requisitions for 2026/27.

Considerable discussion took place and the Board sought advice on whether a decision on this matter could be deferred to enable individual councils to consider the impact of the proposed requisition increases on their budgets.

Officers outlined the potential impact if the identified funding gap was not addressed and also highlighted activity that was taking place across Scotland by all Regional Transport Partnerships.

Decision

1) That consideration of this matter be continued to a special meeting of the Board to be held before its scheduled meeting in December 2026.
2) That prior to the special meeting, officers should undertake dialogue with the Cabinet Secretary.
3) That delegated authority be granted to the Partnership Director to meet with council officers as required.

(Reference – Report by the Partnership Director, submitted)

A4. Annual Report 2025/26

The Board considered a report by the Communications and Marketing Officer presenting the 2025/26 Annual Report which is formatted as per the preceding one for 2024/25.

The Board was requested to submit any comments that members may have no later than 2 October 2026 to allow time for the report to be published.

Decision

1) That feedback or comments by Board members on the Annual Report be submitted to the Communications and Marketing Officer by 2 October 2026.
2) That authority be delegated to the Partnership Director to publish the Annual Report after 2 October 2026.
3) That it be noted that the Annual Report will be included on the B agenda of the Board meeting on 4 December 2026.
4) That Board members be requested to share the report, once published, with networks and contacts to help raise awareness of the work of SEStran.

(Reference – Report by the Communications and Marketing Officer, submitted)

A5. Programme for Government

The Board considered a report by the Partnership Director providing an initial overview of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2026-27 which was published on 1 September 2026. The Partnership Director also provided a verbal presentation on a letter sent by the First Minister to COSLA on 21 September, outlining indicative plans for Local Government Reform.

The report and presentation highlighted areas of direct significance for the Partnership in terms of strategic objectives, delivery commitments and statutory responsibilities, and also identified where further analysis or engagement will be required as more details of policy measures are released.

Decision

1) That the publication of the Programme for Government, and the initial assessment as set out in the report, be noted.
2) That officers monitor the introduction of the Public Service Renewal (Scotland) Bill and bring a dedicated paper to a future meeting of the Board outlining any specific governance, operational, or statutory implications for regional transport partnerships once the draft legislation is formally published.
3) That the Partnership continue proactive engagement with Scottish Government officials and regional partners as Programme for Government measures are developed.
4) That a dedicated paper be brought to a future meeting of the Board on Public Sector Reform.

(Reference – Report by the Partnership Director, submitted)

A6. Projects Report

The Board received a report by the Senior Partnership Manager providing an update on the key programmes within the Business Plan 2026/27.

Decided

That the content of the report be noted.

(Reference – report by the Senior Partnership Manager, submitted.)

A7. Integrated Regional Employability and Skills

The Board considered a report by the Senior Partnership Manager providing an update on the Integrated Employability and Skills Programme and the opportunity for SEStran to sign the regional Community Wealth Building Pledge, as attached as an appendix to the report.

Decision

1) That the signing of the Community Wealth Building Pledge, with the formal signing to be undertaken by the Board's Chair, be approved.
2) That Board members may participate in a photograph to mark the formal signing of the Pledge and which will be used in promotional activity by SEStran and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal.
3) That a letter be submitted on behalf of the Board to Ministers reinforcing its support of the Integrated Employability and Skills Programme.

(Reference – report by the Senior Partnership Manager, submitted.)

A8. Date of Next Meeting

The Board was reminded that its next ordinary meeting would be held on Friday, 4 December 2026 in the Dean of Guild Court Room, Edinburgh City Chambers and online via Microsoft Teams.

Decision

The Board noted the date of its next ordinary meeting.

B1. Business Plan 2026-27

The Board considered a report by the Partnership Director reminding that it had approved the Business Plan 2026-27 in June 2026 and had delegated authority to him to finalise and publish it. The final Business Plan was attached as an appendix to the report.

Decision

That the final Business Plan 2026–27, approved by the Board in June 2026 and finalised for publication under the authority delegated to the Partnership Director, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Partnership Director, submitted)

B2. SESTRAN Consultation Response

The Board considered a report by the Senior Project and Strategy Officer providing an update on SEStran's response to consultations between June and September 2026.

Decision

That the content of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Senior Project and Strategy Officer, submitted)

B3. Contracts Register

The Board considered a report by the Programme Manager presenting the Partnership's Contract Register which, in line with a commitment to transparency in procurement, is brought to the Board, following review by the Performance and Audit Committee, every six months.

Decision

That the Contracts Register, as attached as an appendix to the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

B4. Risk Management Framework

The Board considered a report by the Business Manager providing a quarterly update on the Corporate Risk Register.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Business Manager, submitted)

B5. Delivery Programme Performance Report

The Board received a report by the Programme Manager providing an update of the Partnership's Strategy and Project workstreams for 2026/27, with a focus on quarter one.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

B6. Summary of Grant Awards

The Board received a report by the Programme Manager detailing grant awards made in 2026/27, as detailed in the appendix to the report.

Decision

That the content of the report, and the grant awards and variations as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

B7. Public Sector Reform Act (2010) – 2025/26 Report

The Board received a report by the Programme Manager reminding it that regional transport partnerships are included in the schedule of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 which requires publication of certain information and that the report advises of the information to be published.

Decision

That the content of the material for publication under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, and as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Programme Manager, submitted)

B8. HR Policy Review

The Board received a report by the Business Manager providing an update on the review of SEStran's employment and governance related policies, namely the Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy, the Anti-Fraud Policy, the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy and the new Conflict of Interest Policy.

The report advised that it had been considered and approved by the Performance and Audit Committee on 11 September 2026.

Decision

That the content of the report be noted.

(Reference – Report by the Business Manager, submitted)

B9. Appointment of Interim Secretary

The Board received a report by the Partnership Director informing it of an urgent decision he had taken under his delegated authority to appoint an interim Secretary to the Board.

Decision

1) That it be noted that Andrew Rose, Democratic Services Manager at the City of Edinburgh Council, has been appointed as the interim Secretary to the Board pending the appointment of a permanent Secretary at the appropriate time.
2) To note that the Partnership Director has taken this urgent decision in accordance with Standing Orders – Application of List of Officer Powers (Urgent Decision).

(Reference – Report by the Partnership Director, submitted)