



SWestrans REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Case for Change Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared to accompany the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Case for Change Report which will underpin the development of a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for the SWestrans' Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) which covers the south west of Scotland area.
- 1.1.2 Stantec UK Ltd (Stantec) has been commissioned by SWestrans RTP to support the preparation of the new RTS. The RTS will set out a new long-term vision for transport across the region for the period up to 2042. It is intended the new RTS will set out a clear framework for how transport and mobility will be provided, developed and improved in the region to meet the aspirations for a sustainable and economically active growth area over the next 20 years.
- 1.1.3 Working collaboratively with Stantec, SWestrans has produced a Case for Change Report (the 'Case for Change') which seeks input and views from stakeholders on the type and level of change needed to the transport system in the south west of Scotland to inform the development of the Strategy. This builds upon and takes account of comments and information received from a stakeholder and public consultation exercise held in 2018 (as part of the South West Scotland Transport Study) and a stakeholder consultation in 2022 (specifically for the RTS) which is reported in the Case for Change document.

1.2 Overview of RTS Case for Change and ER

RTS Case for Change

- 1.2.1 The Case for Change provides a consolidated evidence base to identify the main transport problems experienced within the SWestrans area and sets out a series of Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) and RTS Objectives to underpin the development of the new RTS. In doing so, the Case for Change seeks to ensure the RTS is founded on an evidence base which reflects the latest understanding of problems and issues in the region and reflects travel behaviour changes arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2.2 As detailed further in **Section 3**, the Case for Change includes the identification of relevant Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) and associated proposed RTS Objectives. This ER provides a proportionate assessment of the likely environmental effects associated with these proposed substantive components of the Case for Change which are intended to underpin the development of the RTS. This forms part of a multi-stage appraisal and strategy development process which will include a future consultation on the full Draft RTS and an accompanying ER.
- 1.2.3 In developing the Draft RTS, options will be identified and developed, sifted and appraised through Stage 2 – Preliminary Options Appraisal of the STAG process. Details of options development, appraisal and how the SEA has informed the selection of options (including consideration of reasonable alternatives) will then be set out in the full Draft RTS and accompanying ER in due course.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 1.2.4 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 ('the 2005 Act') requires Responsible Authorities, including RTPs such as SWestrans, to assess the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing relevant and qualifying plans and programmes, as defined within the Act. This assessment must also examine the likely significant effects of implementing reasonable alternatives to the plan or programme under consideration. The assessment is carried out by following a staged process of reporting known as Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

- 1.2.5 The SEA process is being undertaken from the outset in tandem with the development of the emerging RTS to allow key environmental issues to inform the content of the RTS. This SEA Commentary accompanies the RTS Case for Change Report and builds upon an earlier RTS SEA Scoping Report (Stantec, February 2022) ('the SEA Scoping Report'), which was consulted on with SEA Consultation Authorities¹ from 11th February 2022 for a 35 day period. The SEA Scoping Report set out a proposed SEA Framework (a final version of which is included in **Appendix A**) and methodology to underpin all stages of the SEA.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives

- 1.3.1 This report has been prepared by Stantec to assess the extent to which the Case for Change addresses relevant environmental issues. In doing so, this report responds to relevant statutory requirements², considers the development of the emerging RTS to date and presents an initial assessment of likely significant effects from the proposed RTS Objectives. This forms the second stage of a multi-stage SEA that will be carried out to assess the likely significant environmental effects from the emerging RTS throughout its development.

- 1.3.2 The objectives of this report are to:

- **Assess the compatibility of the proposed Transport Planning Objectives with the SEA Objectives**, including their coverage of key environmental issues, as previously identified through SEA Scoping.
- **Assess the extent to which the proposed RTS Objectives address identified key environmental issues** with reference to the 2005 Act. Whilst the high level nature of the Case for Change precludes the identification of likely significant effects at this stage, the assessment includes testing the compatibility of the proposed RTS Objectives with the suite of 'SEA Objectives' to underpin the SEA process.
- Contribute to the on-going SEA process for the emerging RTS.

- 1.3.3 This report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2 – Approach to SEA:** provides an overview of the SEA being undertaken in respect of the emerging RTS.
- **Section 3 – Assessment:** assesses the coverage of key environmental issues within the issues and problems as set out in the Case for Change and assesses the compatibility of the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives with the RTS SEA Framework.
- **Section 4 – Recommendation and Next Steps:** builds upon **Section 3** to set out specific recommendations to be addressed at the next stage of the RTS development process. These seek to ensure the avoidance of likely significant adverse environmental effects and improve the effectiveness of the emerging RTS.

¹ The SEA Consultation Authorities are defined by section 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 as NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

² In accordance with Section 14 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, this report acts as a statutory Environmental Report insofar as required to accompany each substantive component of the emerging RTS which is subject to public consultation.

2 Approach to Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 This report builds on a SEA Scoping Report (Stantec, February 2022) which was subject to consultation with the SEA Consultation Bodies between February and March 2022 in accordance with Section 15 of the 2005 Act. The Scoping Report:

- Sought the views of the SEA Consultation Authorities on the proposed scope, methodology and level of detail required in undertaking a legally compliant SEA of the emerging RTS.
- Took account of the information requirements for Environmental Reports (ER) contained in Schedule 3 to the 2005 Act (where relevant), including through providing detailed baseline and policy reviews in appendices A and B respectively³.
- Set out an evidence-based SEA Framework, comprising a set of 10 linked SEA Objectives and associated guide questions and criteria, for use in assessing the likely significant environmental effects of the emerging RTS.
- Outlined the proposed methodology to assess the likely significant environmental effects of the emerging RTS throughout its development.

2.1.2 Having regard to all consultation responses provided in respect of the SEA Scoping Report, the proposed SEA Framework and proposed assessment methodology remain valid. However, the SEA Framework has been refined in response to comments provided by the SEA Consultation Authorities, including the following amendments:

- Addition of a guiding question relating to the infrastructure which itself has heritage value.
- Increased emphasis on the environmental issues relating to socio-economic SEA Objectives.

2.1.3 The updated SEA Framework is provided in **Appendix A** and has been used in this assessment of the Case for Change. The summarised comments received from the SEA Consultation Authorities in response to the Scoping Report and how these have been addressed are provided in **Appendix B**.

2.2 Assessment of the Case for Change

Pre-Assessment Phase

2.2.1 The SEA process has directly informed and helped to improve the Case for Change. The initial internal Draft Case for Change was reviewed by the assessment team and advice regarding identified weaknesses and opportunities for enhancement provided to the RTS development team prior to the formal SEA (leading to the preparation of this ER). This identified any gaps or weaknesses that could be addressed to strengthen the Case for Change. As a result of this review, the Case for Change as published now considers environmental issues more strongly,

³ In accordance with Sections 14(c) and (d) of the 2005 Act, it is not considered necessary or proportionate to append detailed baseline and policy reviews to this short Environmental Report. Instead, the key environmental and policy issues arising from reviewing baseline environmental characteristics and the relationship of the emerging RTS with other relevant plans and programmes are summarised in **Section 3** below. In accordance with the 2005 Act, updated environmental baseline and policy reviews will be included in the full Environmental Report (ER) that will be prepared to accompany the Draft RTS in due course.

including identification throughout the report of opportunities available from implementation of the Strategy.

Methodology

- 2.2.2 The high-level nature of the Case for Change precludes the identification of specific likely significant environmental effects. The assessment has therefore focused more generally on:
- Assessing the compatibility of the proposed Transport Planning Objectives with the SEA Objectives, including their coverage of key environmental issues, as previously identified through SEA Scoping.
 - Assessing the extent to which the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives address key environmental issues and thus the ability of the emerging RTS to tackle such issues. This includes testing the compatibility of the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives with the SEA Framework (**Appendix A**).
- 2.2.3 At this stage of the SEA, opportunities to improve the coverage of key environmental issues and policy drivers and to enhance the ability of the emerging RTS to tackle such challenges have been identified. These recommendations (**Section 4**) should be considered as the emerging RTS is developed, and addressed in the Draft RTS which will be prepared in due course.

Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

- 2.2.4 The 2005 Act requires the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme (i.e., the emerging RTS) and reasonable alternatives to be examined, as well as the rationale for identifying reasonable alternatives to be described. The 2005 Act further states that to be considered as reasonable alternatives, options must relate to the plan or programmes' corresponding objectives and geographical scope. To be eligible for consideration in this SEA process, reasonable alternatives must therefore be:
- Realistic, in that they are plausible alternatives which could be implemented instead of proposals within the emerging RTS and are consistent with relevant national and other policy frameworks.
 - Related to the objectives of the emerging RTS.
 - Within the geographical scope of the emerging RTS, i.e., any reasonable alternatives would need to be related to the distribution characteristics of future development within the south west Scotland region.
- 2.2.5 SEA reporting needs to demonstrate how all reasonable alternatives for the substantive components within an emerging plan have been identified and iteratively assessed in a timely manner. The assessment found that extensive analysis has been undertaken to consider a wide range of issues to derive the TPOs and the subsequent RTS Objectives which set the direction for the strategy. Whilst these are strategic in nature, recommendations are provided later in the report to expand the scope of the RTS Objectives to support the consideration of a wider range of potential reasonable alternatives as the Strategy develops.

3 Assessment

3.1 Key Environmental Issues and Policy Requirements

- 3.1.1 In accordance with Section 14(3) of the 2005 Act, appendices A and B of the SEA Scoping Report (Stantec, February 2022) presented detailed baseline and policy reviews to identify the key environmental issues and policy requirements which should be addressed in the new RTS. These were summarised in **Section 3** of the SEA Scoping Report with reference to the 13 environmental factors ('the SEA topics') prescribed in Schedule 3 of the 2005 Act.
- 3.1.2 Responses received from initial engagement with key stakeholders have been reviewed and considered in the preparation of the Case for Change.
- 3.1.3 Environmental Issues are addressed within the following sections of the RTS Case for Change:
- Chapter 2 Background & Context (*including policy context*);
 - Chapter 3 Transport Context;
 - Chapter 4 Socio-economic Context;
 - Chapter 5 Future Context;
 - Chapter 6 Public & Stakeholder Consultation; and
 - Chapter 7 Developing RTS Objectives.
- 3.1.4 Chapters 2 to 6 provide the baseline and a background to the region and its transport network, establishing the overall factual context within which the RTS is being developed. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of local, regional and national policy documents, including Scotland's National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) which provides the national transport policy framework and sets out four interlinked national priorities: *Reduces Inequalities; Takes Climate Action; Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth; and Improves our Health and Wellbeing*. It clearly demonstrates how existing and emerging policy has been used to identify problems, issues, constraints and opportunities which the emerging RTS should address.
- 3.1.5 Having regard to all consultation responses and relevant policy, a suite of key environmental issues and policy requirements for the emerging RTS is presented in **Table 3.1** and discussed further at 3.1.7 below. The suite of key environmental issues was originally identified within the Swestrans RTS SEA Scoping Report.

Table 3.1 Key Issues Relevant to the Swestrans RTS SEA

Grouped Baseline Topics	SEA Environmental Aspects	Key Issues
Air and Climate	Air Quality Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to maintain and improve air quality for the benefit of human health and the environment. • The need to mitigate climate change including through promoting sustainable land use patterns (including the 20-minute neighbourhood) and the decarbonisation of the transport sector. • The need to ensure that new development, including transport infrastructure and facilities, is resilient to adverse weather and adaptable to the effects of climate change. • The need to consider, and integrate, the role of natural (green/blue) infrastructure in tackling climate change. • The need to align with the national Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 (Scottish Government, 2020) and the Dumfries and Galloway Carbon Neutral Route Map. • The need to recognise the importance of maintaining and enhancing the forest, woodland and peat resources for carbon storage and sequestration.
Physical Environmental	Biodiversity, Geodiversity Flora & Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to conserve and enhance biodiversity interests including sites designated for their ecological importance, including within the coastal and marine environment. • The need to maintain, restore and expand valued habitats and to safeguard protected species and non-designated biodiversity interests. • The need to protect and enhance green infrastructure assets and wildlife corridors. • The need to prioritise the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land. • The need to protect sites designated for their geological interest.
	Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to protect and enhance the health of soils, including peatland and carbon rich soils.
	Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to protect and enhance the quality of water resources and the water environment • The need to locate new development including transport infrastructure away from areas of flood risk, and for infrastructure to be resilient to flooding (and adverse weather more widely).
	Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to protect and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings. • The need to retain and invest in existing heritage assets and their settings.
	Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to conserve and enhance landscape character and to protect visual amenity. • The need to protect and enhance local landscape and townscape character, customs and traditions including in areas recognised for their importance such as areas of wild land and locally designated landscapes. • The need to protect and enhance the seascape character.

Grouped Baseline Topics	SEA Environmental Aspects	Key Issues
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to protect the Dark Sky Park status of the Galloway Forest Park.
Social and Economic	Population (including relevant socio-economic issues), Human Health, Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to align with and support the implementation of adopted and emerging relevant national policies, including NTS2 (Scottish Government, 2020) and the draft Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The need to align with and support the implementation of the adopted Local Development Plan and other relevant regional and local policies applicable to the SWestrans region. The need to develop an integrated, efficient and sustainable transport system which meets identified needs and supports population growth and enables population retention. The need to develop an affordable and accessible transport system, including within rural areas. The need to support the growth and diversification of key economic sectors and to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth and realise the opportunities from the low carbon economy. The need to tackle deprivation and severance and to improve access to key amenities, the natural environment and economic opportunities for all demographic groups and communities. The need to ensure transport services are demand responsive and provide convenient travel options. The need to provide transport services appropriate to meet the needs of the projected ageing population of the region. The need to provide transport services that enable participation and reduce rural isolation. The need to strengthen transport links, including to Carlisle, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

- 3.1.6 These issues and requirements should be reflected within the emerging RTS and taken account of in the associated SEA. It should be noted that whilst key population and health issues need to be addressed in the SEA, some aspects of these are also considered where relevant in the implementation of applicable equalities duties (refer to separate **Case for Change Equalities Duties Report**).
- 3.1.7 Existing and emerging policy requirements which the emerging RTS should take account of include the need to:
- Ensure the avoidance of likely significant adverse effects from the implementation of the Strategy on sites designated at international and national levels for reasons of biodiversity and geodiversity conservation, landscape, cultural heritage or ecological importance;
 - Minimise and appropriately mitigate likely adverse effects on sites designated at the local level for their ecological and other natural heritage importance;
 - Minimise the environmental impacts of transport provision and infrastructure, including in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and using natural resources sustainably;
 - Ensure transport networks are resilient to climate change, and able to adapt to the threats posed by climate change;
 - Underpin the development of a safe, secure, efficient, reliable and integrated transport system across the SWestrans region;
 - Encourage measures that reduce the need to travel and allow communities in different locations to flourish supporting efforts to reduce inequality of outcome in south west Scotland and improve quality of life and environment for all in the region;
 - Ensure the conditions are in place to allow a widespread uptake of active and sustainable modes of transport for all demographic groups and communities;
 - Improve the accessibility of the transport system (both physical access and access to transport information) and the provision of a range of appropriate transport modes to meet identified needs;
 - Ensure that transport and transport information is accessible to all and does not contribute to social exclusion or disadvantage, whether through severance or unaffordability;
 - Ensure that the transport network offers convenient, sustainable, and flexible services that meet the needs of the population in terms of accessing employment, education, facilities and services.
 - Enable the efficient, effective, affordable and sustainable movement of people and freight to increase economic productivity, competitiveness and opportunities for all ensuring no one is unfairly disadvantaged;
 - Secure economic growth and inward investment by supporting the delivery of new and upgraded transport infrastructure to increase connectivity and improve access to high quality employment and economic opportunities;
 - Minimise the amenity impacts of transport, including by reducing noise and vibration particularly from road traffic;
 - Ensure the avoidance of unacceptable human health impacts from transport, in particular impacts on local air quality and support the delivery of public health benefits through facilitating and encouraging active travel; and,
 - Seek to protect and enhance the health and wellbeing of the resident and working population, including through facilitating access to healthcare, safeguarding physical health and providing opportunities to enhance mental health and social wellbeing.
- 3.1.8 Whilst all of the key environmental issues covered in **Table 3.1** and policy requirements listed above should be addressed in the new RTS, the following must be afforded particular importance given their significance at national and international levels and their local relevance:

- i. Responding to the climate emergency; and
- ii. Contributing to the delivery of sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

3.2 Initial SEA Comments on Internal Draft Case for Change Report

- 3.2.1 An assessment of the coverage of environmental issues in the initial internal Draft Case for Change, ahead of further review detailed in the next two sections resulted in feedback to the team and subsequent amendments. A summary of these comments and the subsequent amendments to the document is presented in **Table 3.2** below.

Table 3.2 Initial SEA comments on internal Case for Change Report

Problem / Issue / Framework Element of Draft Case for Change	SEA Recommendation for internal Draft Case for Change	How did the SEA Influence the Published Case for Change
Chapter 2: Background & Context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2.3.1 Scottish Government Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations for rewording to better clarify the need to reduce the need to travel. ▪ Recommend text summarising the implications of several of the policy documents are reviewed to incorporate greater emphasis on climate action/decarbonising transport, which are a strong focus across national policy. ▪ Table 2.2 Other National Policy Documents would benefit from the addition of the Climate Change Plan (2020). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reworded to better clarify the need to reduce the need to travel ▪ Added suggested text ▪ Included suggested Climate Change Plan (2020) summary text
Chapter 5: Future Context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 5 (Future Context) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rewording recommendations made to highlight the reduced need to travel and to clarify wording around the transport innovation for alternative fuels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepted recommendations
Chapter 7: Developing RTS Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 7 (Developing RTS Objectives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This section summarises transport problems (defined as 'being a problem experienced by a user, or potential user of the transport network'), the supply side causes and the consequences. These are then taken forward to develop the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) in response to each problem, which are used to develop a set of RTS Objectives, which set the direction of the Strategy. ▪ This approach focuses on individuals' views of transport problems, which results in them being focussed on a social/financial perspective. To address this, in addition to the user focussed problems, the transport planning team have added a section identifying non-user problems: the impact of the operation and development of the transport network on the environment; the blight of traffic on communities; development patterns can lead to car dependency; and financial stability of local bus services in the long term. This addition helps to balance the focus of the transport problems and thus the subsequent TPOs and RTS Objectives. ▪ It is recommended that this is taken further to consider some of the strategic issues within the region, including the dominance of freight movements by road (particularly timber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added more text regarding the strategic importance of freight movement in the SWestrans area

Problem / Issue / Framework Element of Draft Case for Change	SEA Recommendation for internal Draft Case for Change	How did the SEA Influence the Published Case for Change
	<p>and traffic associated with the ports), and the strategic importance of the port facilities (both existing and proposed) and the transport connections to these facilities.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section 7.6 (Step 6: RTS Objectives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Six RTS Objectives are provided with further sub-objectives and societal outcomes provided for each Objective. These provide useful expansion of the Objectives to confirm their scope and intent. ▪ Recommendations are made to expand or clarify the scope of the Objectives, along with wording amendments, as summarised below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All comments accepted and clarifying text added where required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given the strategic importance of timber in the region, there is relatively limited consideration of freight within the RTS Objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added more text regarding freight movement in the region
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall, there is limited consideration of the port facilities (both existing and proposed) themselves, and the strategic transport routes to them. Links to the ports are considered under RTS Objective 5 which relates to road transport (although the scope only appears to be in relation to rest areas and secure parking); and through RTS Objective 4 which includes a sub-objective relating to intermodal freight. Given the significance of through traffic within the region to the port, and the port development proposals, it is recommended that this is given greater emphasis and a wider scope in the RTS Objectives. The reasonable alternatives for these routes will need further consideration in SEA terms as the RTS develops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepted comments provided and have added more scope in RTS objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connectivity from the region to other areas is only considered through RTS Objective 5 in relation to road-based transport. Suggest that coverage of connectivity to areas outside of the region is reviewed to broaden the scope to include other modes of transport. ▪ Connectivity to Northern Ireland/Ireland from the ports is identified within the CfC Report as a key strategic issue, however, is not currently considered within the RTS Objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope of connectivity outside of the region increased to cover all relevant RTS Objectives ▪ Intermodal freight has been covered under Objective 4, no changes needed ▪ Added more reference to Cairnryan in Objective 5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The policy review identifies the importance of reducing the need to travel within the National Transport Strategy Sustainable Investment Hierarchy. Consideration should be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Included context on 20-minute neighbourhoods and additional walking and cycling tourism

Problem / Issue / Framework Element of Draft Case for Change	SEA Recommendation for internal Draft Case for Change	How did the SEA Influence the Published Case for Change
	<p>given to reflecting this within the RTS Objectives, albeit this may be through partnership working such as with those involved with land use planning, broadband provision etc.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RTS Objective 1: The scope of this objective is limited to active travel for communities. Recommend considering expansion of the scope to include tourism (as identified earlier in the report). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scope of the RTS Objective broadened to cover all users; sub-objective added to incorporate leisure uses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RTS Objective 6: Recommendations have been given to reword some of the sub-objectives: Protection and enhancement of biodiversity should be a sub-objective rather than an outcome, this would better fit with the NPF4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moved to sub-objective and accepted rewording suggestions

3.3 Assessment of Transport Planning Objectives and Proposed RTS Objectives

3.3.1 The Case for Change Report records how the SMART and evidence-based TPOs were developed. It provides the robust basis necessary to underpin the development and assessment of sound candidate policies, proposals and transport interventions for potential inclusion within the emerging RTS. It has involved extensive baseline analysis of the socio-economic context and the transport system and demand.

3.3.2 The RTS seeks to address the problems experienced by users and potential users of the transport network in south west Scotland as identified through stakeholder and public consultation and analysis of relevant transport planning data. This provides a structured and logical approach to define problems and relate them to outcomes and impacts. From a user perspective the transport problems relate to a range of parameters which define a trip, including:

- All modes of travel:
 - Awareness of travel options
 - Cost of travel and affordability
 - Fuel / power issues
 - Integration of travel between modes (e.g., bus to train)
 - Journey information, including for protected groups who may find accessing information particularly difficult
 - Journey quality
 - Journey times
 - Personal security (fear of crime)
 - Personal Accessibility – being able to access transport networks and services specifically including for people with disabilities or other protected characteristics which affect accessibility
 - Reliability of journey times (including public transport service punctuality)
 - Safety (transport)
 - Travel emissions
- Public transport services specifically:
 - Capacity
 - Comfort
 - Connectivity (availability of services)
 - Ease of use / convenience
 - Integration between services (within mode, e.g., bus to bus)
 - Service reliability (cancellations)
 - Timetables (first and last / frequency)

Transport Planning Objectives

3.3.3 A high-level assessment of the compatibility of the 75 identified TPOs in the Case for Change with the SEA Objectives included in the RTS SEA Framework (Appendix A) is presented in **Table 3.3** below.

Table 3.3 Compatibility of RTS Transport Planning Objectives with SEA Objectives

SEA Objective	Relevant Transport Planning Objectives (TPO)
<p>Climate Change: Respond to the climate emergency by decarbonising infrastructure assets and services, promoting natural infrastructure, facilitating a low carbon economy and adapting to accommodate the effects of climate change.</p>	<p>The TPOs provide adequate coverage of the Climate Change SEA Objective through seeking to facilitate and encourage active travel by creating environments which better allow people to choose walking and cycling as options. Reducing the environmental impacts associated with the operation of all modes of transport is included, along with support for EVs. Improvements to public transport to make it more reliable, improve interchanges and improve journey times also support this SEA Objective.</p> <p>The TPOs which relate to car travel could prove problematic, for instance improving journey times and removing cost-barriers could have a reverse effect and make these the preferred travel mode above active and public transport. However, it is recognised that car travel will remain important socially and economically in the south west of Scotland, given the population density and rural nature of the region.</p>
<p>Air Quality and Amenity: To maintain air quality, by reducing concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and minimise exposure to noise and vibration.</p>	<p>Many of the TPOs included are likely to have a positive impact on Air Quality and Amenity by decarbonising the transport network, lowering pollutant emissions, supporting alternatives to car use and promoting active travel. During the next stage of the RTS, options will be developed and appraised. The appraisal will include consideration of environmental impacts, including contribution to air pollution and noise and vibration.</p>
<p>Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil: Conserve, protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests, including through safeguarding important sites, species, soil resources and habitats and by protecting and enhancing green infrastructure.</p>	<p>There are no TPOs which directly cover this SEA Objective, although note is made that these issues will be covered within the Environment STAG Criterion during the options development, appraisal and strategy development. Any option that involves the delivery of new (or modification of) infrastructure (including active travel infrastructure) should have regard for their potential impact on biodiversity, geodiversity and soil (including peat and other carbon rich soils) and opportunities to enhance the physical environment (such as peatland restoration) should be included.</p> <p>Creating environments which allow more people to walk and cycle have the potential to create, protect and enhance new green infrastructure and this should be considered as the RTS progresses. These issues will be considered as part of the options appraisal during the next stage of the RTS development.</p>
<p>Water, Flood Risk and Resilience: Conserve, protect and enhance water environments, water quality and water resources, whilst adapting to climate change and reducing exposure to flood risks.</p>	<p>Direct coverage of this SEA Objective within the TPOs is limited, however reducing the environmental impact is included for each mode of transport and note is made that water will be covered within the Environment STAG Criterion during the options development, appraisal and strategy development. There is one objective included to directly increase resilience of the road transport network against weather, flood risk and adapting to climate change – consideration should be given to the need to expand this to other modes of transport / infrastructure. As the RTS progresses it should be ensured that any transport interventions have regard for this objective and should not contribute to flood risk on the transport network or</p>

SEA Objective	Relevant Transport Planning Objectives (TPO)
	elsewhere as a result of transport interventions. During the next stage of the RTS, options will be developed and appraised. The appraisal will include consideration of environmental impacts, including the effect on water, drainage and flooding.
Cultural Heritage: Conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment, cultural assets and promote south west Scotland's distinct culture.	Opportunities to conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets are not directly included in the TPOs, however reducing the environmental impact is included for each mode of transport and note is made that these issues will be covered within the Environment STAG Criterion during the options development, appraisal and strategy development.
Landscape: Protect and enhance the landscape character, townscape character and visual amenity.	Landscape considerations are not given much coverage in the TPOs, however reducing the environmental impact is included for each mode of transport and note is made that landscape will be covered within the Environment STAG Criterion during the options development, appraisal and strategy development. The appraisal of the options should consider landscape impact and seek to minimise the impact to and enhance landscape and townscape character and amenity. These issues will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of the options during the next stage of RTS development.
Accessibility and Connectivity: Facilitate appropriate connectivity and affordable, sustainable access for all to employment, education, facilities, services, and social and leisure opportunities.	The TPOs give good coverage of this SEA Objective with improvements to affordability and accessibility featuring a particularly strong emphasis with regard to active travel and public transport. Connectivity to other areas in Scotland and England are covered as well as internal integration between transport systems which focus on improving accessibility and reducing uncertainty allowing for easier access to facilities, services, and opportunities.
Inclusive Growth: Improve social and economic prosperity for all by enhancing productivity and competitiveness and through reducing socio-economic and environmental inequalities.	This SEA Objective is indirectly supported by the majority of the TPOs for example through the support of more sustainable modes of transport. Some coverage is also given to the freight sector, including opportunities for intermodal freight. However relatively little reference is made to the key economic growth areas within TPOs, such as Cairnryan green freeport.
Human Health: Improve the health of the resident and workplace population, including with respect to physical and mental health and social wellbeing.	Human health is afforded good coverage through the TPOs related to increased safety and personal security, reduced conflicts, injuries and fatalities, improved active travel environments, decarbonisation and public transport improvements.
Material Assets: Manage, maintain and where possible regenerate the efficient use of natural resources, ecosystem services, land and infrastructure to meet identified needs.	Through seeking to make improvements to existing road networks and freight links good coverage is given in the TPOs to this SEA Objective. No specific mention of ecosystem services is given in the TPOs. Any interventions resulting from the RTS should seek to ensure that natural resources and ecosystem services are promoted, and that infrastructure and land are used efficiently. These issues will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of the options during the next stage of RTS development.

3.3.4 Overall, the identified TPOs provide good coverage of the SWestrans RTS SEA Framework and associated key issues, especially in relation to socio-economic related SEA Objectives. Several of the SEA topic areas will be developed further through the options appraisal and strategy development through the SEA and STAG appraisal.

RTS Strategic Objectives

- 3.3.5 The Case for Change includes an assessment of the alignment between the identified 75 TPOs and six proposed RTS Strategic Objectives, which demonstrates that the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives provide good coverage of individual TPOs whilst setting out a manageable number of RTS Strategic Objectives to underpin the development of wider RTS components.
- 3.3.6 An assessment of the compatibility of the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives with the SEA Objectives defined within the RTS SEA Framework (Appendix A) is presented in **Table 3.4** below.
- 3.3.7 The proposed RTS Strategic Objectives are:
- Strategy Objective 1 - To facilitate and encourage safe and active travel for all by connecting communities and travel hubs
 - Strategy Objective 2 - To improve the quality and sustainability of public transport within, and to / from the region
 - Strategy Objective 3 - To widen access to, and improve connectivity by public transport within and to / from the region
 - Strategy Objective 4 - To improve integration between all modes of travel and freight within and to / from the region
 - Strategy Objective 5 - To provide improved, reliable, resilient, and safe road-based connectivity for the movement of people and goods within the region, and to key locations including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Carlisle and Cairnryan
 - Strategy Objective 6 – To reduce the impact of transport on the people and environment of the region
- 3.3.8 Each objective is supported by sub-objectives and societal outcomes which are helpful in setting out further detail on the scope and intention of the objectives, which have aided the SEA process.

Table 3.4 Compatibility of RTS Objectives with SEA Framework

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
<p>1. Climate Change: Respond to the climate emergency by decarbonising infrastructure, promoting natural infrastructure, facilitating a low carbon economy and adapting to accommodate the effects of climate change.</p>	++	+	+	+	-	+	++
	<p>All of the proposed RTS Objectives match well with SEA Objective 1 relating to climate change. Through improving the quality, reliability and connectivity of public transport, these Objectives will encourage a shift towards less carbon intensive travel options. However, addressing barriers to travel could increase the amount people travel and thus (without intervention), carbon emissions. This conflicts with the targets to achieve net zero. Objective 1 most closely aligns with SEA Objective 1 by supporting and encouraging active travel which will reduce the reliance on carbon intensive travel options more considerably.</p> <p>RTS Objective 5 highlights the needs for network resilience to extreme weather and adaptation to climate change which aligns well to the SEA Objective. However, there is also a natural conflict between these objectives as improved road-based connectivity may increase use of roads and traffic levels. However, it is recognised that road-based travel will remain important to this rural area. This issue is somewhat balanced through the support of the decarbonisation of the transport system within RTS Objective 6.</p> <p>RTS Objective 6 aims to reduce the impact of transport on the environment, including by decarbonising the transportation system. The development and encouragement of this in the</p>						

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
							region may help to drive the decarbonisation of private vehicles, helping to facilitate a low-carbon economy.
<p>2. Air Quality and Amenity: To maintain air quality, reduce concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and minimise exposure to noise and vibration.</p>	++	+	+	+	?	++	<p>RTS Objectives 1 and 6 both strongly support SEA Objective 2 by encouraging active travel and reducing the impact of transport on the people and the environment of the region, including air pollutant emissions associated with the transport network. These objectives will help to reduce the amount of traffic and congestion leading to better air quality and minimising human exposure to noise and vibration.</p> <p>RTS Objectives 2, 3 and 4 support SEA Objective 2 by encouraging a shift towards better public transportation and thus reducing the number of vehicles on the road. Any increase in emissions to air through increased provision of public transport, may be off-set through the support for decarbonising the transport network, as supported by RTS Objective 6.</p> <p>RTS Objective 5 aims to provide improved, reliable, resilient, and safe road-based connectivity within the region and out of the region. As such, there is a natural conflict with the SEA Objective. However, it is recognised that road-based travel will remain important to this rural area. This issue is somewhat balanced through the support of the decarbonisation of the transport system and reduced impact on communities within RTS Objective 6.</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
<p>3. Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil: Conserve, protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests, including through safeguarding designated and non-designated sites, species, soil resources and habitats and by protecting and enhancing green infrastructure</p>	?	?	?	?	?	++	<p>A sub-objective to RTS Objective 6 explicitly aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services. Whilst geodiversity and soils are not specifically mentioned in any of the RTS Objectives, they are covered in the broader sense by RTS Objective 6 and will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of options during the next stage of the RTS development.</p> <p>Where the RTS Objectives support measures to reduce emissions of pollutants to atmosphere, there is potential for subsequent benefits to biodiversity. This includes the support of active travel through RTS Objective 1 and public transport through RTS Objectives 2 to 4. As such these RTS Objectives have the potential to support this SEA Objective, depending on the way in which they are implemented as the RTS is developed. Where relevant the subsequent policies and proposals to implement these Objectives should include appropriate consideration and safeguards in respect to biodiversity, geodiversity and soils.</p> <p>RTS Objective 5 aims to provide improved, reliable, resilient, and safe road-based connectivity within the region and out of the region. As such, there is some natural conflict with the SEA Objective. However, it is recognised that road-based travel will remain important to this rural area. This issue is somewhat balanced through the support of the</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
							<p>decarbonisation of the transport system and reduced impact on communities within RTS Objective 6.</p> <p>There is potential for some development proposals that may arise from the RTS to affect biodiversity, geodiversity, and soils.</p>
<p>4. Water, Flood Risk and Resilience: Conserve, protect and enhance water environments, water quality and water resources, whilst adapting to climate change and reducing flood risks.</p>	+	+	?	?	+	+	<p>Whilst there is no explicit consideration of impact on water quality and flood risk in the RTS Objectives, they are covered in the broader sense by RTS Objective 6 (to reduce the impact of transport on the environment) and will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of options during the next stage of RTS development.</p> <p>RTS Objectives 1, 2 and 6 support active travel, more sustainable travel options, transition towards an environmentally sustainable post-carbon transport system and efficient movement of people. As such, they have the potential to support this SEA Objective, depending on the way in which the aspect is managed as the RTS develops.</p> <p>RTS Objective 5 is compatible with the Resilience element of this SEA Objective, through supporting travel networks resilience and ability to adapt to the threat posed by climate change.</p> <p>There is an element of uncertainty in the relationship of RTS Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
							this SEA Objective as potential impacts (beneficial or adverse) would depend on their implementation. Where relevant the subsequent policies and proposals to implement these Objectives should include appropriate consideration and safeguards in respect of the water environment and flood risk e.g. through harnessing green/blue infrastructure in drainage designs of transport interventions.
5. Cultural Heritage: Conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment, designated and non-designated cultural assets and promote south west Scotland’s distinct culture.	?	?	?	?	?	+	<p>Whilst there is no explicit consideration of impact on cultural heritage in the RTS Objectives, they are covered in the broader sense by RTS Objective 6 (to reduce the impact of transport on the environment) and will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of options during the next stage of RTS development.</p> <p>RTS Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5 have the greatest potential to align with Cultural Heritage as they could make heritage assets more accessible to residents and tourists alike. However, increased visitor numbers should be supported by any required infrastructure to cope with larger volumes of people.</p> <p>There is an element of uncertainty in the relationship of RTS Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with this SEA Objective as potential impacts (beneficial or adverse) would depend on their implementation. Where relevant, policies and proposals to implement these Objectives should include appropriate safeguards in respect of</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
							cultural heritage to conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets.
6. Landscape: Protect and enhance the landscape character, townscape character and visual amenity.	?	?	?	?	?	+	<p>Whilst there is no explicit consideration of impact on landscape in the RTS Objectives, they are covered in the broader sense by RTS Objective 6 (to reduce the impact of transport on the environment) and will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of options during the next stage of RTS development.</p> <p>RTS Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 have an uncertain relationship with this SEA Objective as potential impacts (beneficial or adverse) would depend on their implementation. Where relevant, policies and proposals to implement these Objectives should include appropriate consideration and safeguards in respect of landscape character and visual amenity.</p>
7. Accessibility and Connectivity: Ensure appropriate and affordable, sustainable access for all to employment, education, facilities, services, and social and leisure opportunities.	++	++	++	++	++	0	<p>The Accessibility SEA Objective receives good coverage across the first five of the RTS Objectives by supporting improved access to facilities.</p> <p>RTS Objective 1 aims to facilitate active travel for everyone and improve more sustainable travel options for all including those without access to a car. RTS Objectives 2, 3 and 4 look to improve the quality, sustainability, access to, and connectivity of public transport within the region;</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
							<p>and improve integration between all modes of travel within the region.</p> <p>There is no direct relationship with RTS Objective 6 although the promotion of sustainable forms of access would be broadly compatible with the aim of this objective.</p>
<p>8. Inclusive Growth: Improve social and economic prosperity for all by enhancing productivity and competitiveness and through reducing societal and environmental inequalities.</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	<p>All RTS Objectives align with this SEA Objective through seeking to enhance the efficiency and performance of the transport system for all groups whilst increasing accessibility enabling economic growth/prosperity.</p> <p>RTS Objective 1 has been expanded in scope to support active travel for all users, including for leisure use. This supports economic growth through tourism. Active travel also supports economic prosperity through improved access to employment, education etc.</p> <p>RTS Objectives 4 and 5 directly support the movement of freight/people/goods, supporting growth.</p> <p>RTS Objective 6 seeks to reduce the impact of transport on people, which may support reduced societal inequalities from socio-economic disadvantage.</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
<p>9. Human Health: Improve the health of the resident and workplace population, including with respect to physical and mental health and social wellbeing.</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	<p>Overall, the Health SEA Objective is well represented throughout all RTS Objectives.</p> <p>RTS Objectives 1 to 4 reduce the reliance on carbon-based transport, thus reducing emissions to air and potentially subsequently improving human health.</p> <p>RTS Objective 1 supports active travel, has clear links to the Human Health SEA Objective as it directly seeks to improve health (both physical and mental) and wellbeing through transport interventions.</p> <p>By supporting road safety, RTS Objective 5 relates well to this SEA Objective.</p> <p>RTS Objective 6 seeks to reduce the impact of transport on the people of the region including through decarbonising the transport network, reduced traffic and reduced effects on communities affected by traffic.</p>
<p>10. Material Assets: Manage, maintain and where possible improve the efficient and effective use of natural resources, ecosystem services, land and infrastructure to meet identified needs.</p>	?	?	?	?	?	+	<p>RTS Objective 6 seeks to reduce the impact of transport on the environment and includes a sub-objective relating to eco-system services. There is no explicit consideration of the efficient and effective use of natural resources, land and infrastructure to meet identified needs in the RTS Objectives. These issues will be considered as part of the environmental appraisal of options during the next stage of RTS development.</p>

SEA Objectives	RTS Objectives						Commentary
	1. Safe and active travel	2. Improve quality of public transport	3. Widen access and connectivity to public transport	4. Improve integration of between modes of transport	5. Improve and better connect transport to other areas	6. Reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment	
							<p>RTS Objective 1 supports active travel; RTS Objectives 2, 3 and 4 support more sustainable travel options. As such, they have the potential to support this SEA Objective, depending on the way in which the aspect is managed as the RTS develops.</p> <p>Where relevant the subsequent policies and proposals to implement these Objectives should include appropriate safeguards in respect of the efficient and effective use of natural resources, ecosystem services, land and infrastructure to meet identified needs.</p>
KEY:	++	Strong compatibility	-	Incompatible			
	+	Compatible	~	No clear relationship			
	0	Neutral	?	Uncertain			

- 3.3.9 The assessment provided in **Table 3.4** demonstrates that in general the proposed RTS Objectives provide an appropriate high-level platform from which to develop specific schemes, policies and proposals to address a range of key environmental (as well as socio-economic and wider) issues. RTS Objective 6 provides an overarching direction to the RTS to reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment of the region, with a sub-objective for the delivery of transport projects in a more sustainable way in terms of the physical environment. Although this is not specific to some aspects of the environment (such as the water environment, heritage, landscape or material assets), it is noted that these issues will be considered within the appraisal of the options during the next stage of the RTS development process (see section **4.3 Next Steps** below).
- 3.3.10 The assessment has identified some areas of potential conflict between objectives to promote accessibility with requirements to meet emissions reductions targets. This may be particularly apparent due to the rural nature of the region where it is recognised that road-based travel will remain important as part of an integrated transport system in the area.
- 3.3.11 Going forward the SEA process will be used to test the relationship between the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives and individual options to maximise likely significant beneficial effects and avoid or minimise likely significant adverse effects from the RTS when read and implemented as a whole.

4 Recommendation and Next Steps

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Building upon the analysis in **Section 3**, this section identifies specific recommendations to be addressed in the next stages of the RTS development process to further enhance the consideration of key environmental issues. These recommendations should be considered as the emerging RTS is developed and addressed in the Draft RTS which will be prepared in due course.

4.2 Compatibility with SEA Objectives and Opportunities for Enhancement

4.2.1 The Case for Change has good coverage of most environmental issues and no major omissions have been identified. The RTS Objectives include a set of sub-objectives and societal outcomes have been developed to support and underpin the achievement of each objective. These provide useful expansion of the Objectives to confirm their scope and intent and the review has identified that the RTS Objectives have a good level of compatibility with the SEA Objectives. As the RTS develops, relevant policies and proposals within the RTS should include appropriate safeguards in respect of the SEA topic areas, with a preference for preventing environmental effects before reducing and mitigating them. Opportunities to capture and commit to relevant environmental enhancement will be sought wherever practical.

4.2.2 The RTS Objectives include a set of sub-objectives and societal outcomes to support and underpin the achievement of each objective. These provide useful expansion of the Objectives to confirm their scope and intent.

4.2.3 The SEA review of the draft Case for Change document (prior to publication) identified several opportunities for improvement, which have resulted in the following strengthening of the (published) RTS Objectives:

- Expansion of the scope of the RTS Objective 1 to include active travel for all users, including for leisure use, supporting walking and cycle-based tourism.
- Support of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, to reflect the national objectives to reduce the need to travel and promote active travel.
- Expansion of the coverage of connectivity with other regions within the RTS Objectives (now covered by RTS Objectives 2 to 5).
- Addition of connectivity by public transport to support inclusive growth and economic development (including Carinryan Green Freeport).
- Increased emphasis/clarity regarding the movement of freight within the RTS Objectives. It is now considered directly within RTS Objectives 4 and 5; and by inference within 6.
- Further text changes to clarify and strengthen the RTS Objectives and sub-objectives.

4.2.4 During the next stage, each of the RTS Strategic Objectives will underpin the development of a long-list of options. The broadening of the RTS Objectives noted above should aid consideration of broader (and potentially more sustainable) options as part of this process. The long-list of options will be considered through the SEA to check that all 'reasonable alternatives' are being considered.

4.2.5 To avoid potential tensions, gaps or 'silo working' between the implementation of individual RTS Strategic Objectives (which could undermine the overall environmental performance of the RTS) it will be important for the RTS to include an over-arching Vision.

- 4.2.6 When developing the options, consideration should be given to the potential natural conflict between objectives to promote accessibility with requirements to meet emissions reductions targets. This is likely to be particularly relevant to car and ferry based travel which are important socially and economically in the region.
- 4.2.7 The Case for Change identifies both risks and opportunities to tackle issues, for partnerships with other organisations and improvements which should be taken forward as the RTS develops. Many of the challenges and opportunities identified within the Case for Change are driven by the identified environmental and social issues (such as decarbonisation of transport driven by climate change) which will be central to the development of the RTS and thus the nature of transport in south west Scotland going forward.

4.3 Next Steps

- 4.3.1 This SEA Environmental Report is being published for consultation alongside the Case for Change which has been prepared to underpin the preparation of the new RTS for the SWestrans area. This forms the first part of a multi-stage process which will include a detailed options appraisal process and future consultation on a full draft RTS.
- 4.3.2 In accordance with the 2005 Act and best practice the SEA process is being carried out from the outset and in tandem with the development of the emerging RTS to allow key environmental issues to inform the content of the new RTS. All consultation feedback received in respect of the Case for Change and this ER will be reviewed and used to inform and refine the proposed RTS Strategic Objectives and the development of options. The next stage will be the Stage 2 – Preliminary Options Appraisal.
- 4.3.3 During this stage, subject to the consultation, the problems and opportunities identified in this document along with the stated RTS Objectives will be used as a basis to generate a long-list of options which will subsequently be appraised against the:
- RTS Objectives
 - STAG criteria:
 - Environment
 - Biodiversity and habitats
 - Geology and soils
 - Land use (including agriculture and forestry)
 - Water, drainage and flooding
 - Air quality
 - Historic environment
 - Landscape
 - Noise and vibration
 - Climate Change
 - Greenhouse gas emissions
 - Vulnerability to the effects of climate change

- Potential to adapt to the effects of climate change
 - Health, safety, and wellbeing
 - Accidents
 - Security
 - Health outcomes
 - Access to health and wellbeing infrastructure
 - Visual amenity
 - Economy
 - Transport Economic efficiency
 - Wider economic impacts
 - Equality and accessibility
 - Public transport network coverage
 - Active travel network coverage
 - Comparative access by people group
 - Comparative access by geographic location
 - Affordability
 - Established policy directives
 - Feasibility, affordability, and public acceptability
 - Sustainable Investment Hierarchy and Sustainable Travel Hierarchy
 - Risk and uncertainty
- 4.3.4 The SEA framework will be applied during this appraisal process.
- 4.3.5 The results of the appraisal of options will be presented and the remaining options taken forward. Following this stage, the RTS document will then be produced which will collate the outputs of the above tasks into a Strategy and an associated Delivery Plan.
- 4.3.6 A full Environmental Report (ER) will be prepared to accompany the Draft RTS for consultation, with all relevant information requirements prescribed in Section 14 and Schedule 3 of the 2005 Act addressed in that ER. This will include the identification of all likely significant environmental effects (with appropriate strategic mitigation measures if required) from all proposed RTS components, a detailed review of the approach adopted to identify and assess reasonable alternative options, and full details of how all comments received from the SEA Consultation Authorities at each stage have been taken account of in the SEA and RTS development process.

Appendix A SWestrans RTS SEA Framework

SEA Objectives	Proposed Guide Questions: Will the RTS (component)...	Proposed Criteria to Assess Candidate Transport Interventions and Schemes
<p>1. Climate Change: Respond to the climate emergency by decarbonising infrastructure assets and services, promoting and enhancing natural infrastructure, facilitating a low carbon economy, and adapting to accommodate the effects of climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to decarbonisation of the transport system? • Promote modal shift towards sustainable public transport and active travel? • Support a sustainable pattern of development which minimises energy consumption and GHG emissions? • Reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys and encourage car sharing? • Promote the use of clean fuels and technologies? • Enhance the resilience of infrastructure assets to adverse weather and the effects of climate change? • Promote the use of nature-based solutions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a sustainable pattern of development that facilitates achieving carbon neutrality. • Changes in emissions from traffic and public transport services. • Impacts on climate change mitigation: modal shifts and GHG emissions or saving (construction and operational phases). • Adaptability of new and upgraded transport infrastructure and services. • Resilience to adverse weather and the effects of climate change.
<p>2. Air Quality and Amenity: To maintain and improve air quality, by reducing concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and minimise exposure to noise and vibration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or enhance air quality? • Avoid unacceptable noise and vibration levels at sensitive locations? • Prevent and reduce emissions of harmful pollutants? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to congestion pinch points. • Likely operational emissions.
<p>3. Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil: Conserve, protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests, including through safeguarding important sites, species and soil resources and by protecting, promoting and enhancing green infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure appropriate safeguards for the integrity, conservation objectives and feature of sites designated at international, national, or local levels for reasons of biodiversity or geodiversity value or species protection? • Support the protection and enhancement of valued species and habitats? • Support safeguarding against habitat loss or fragmentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to and impacts on sites designated at international, national and local levels for reasons of biodiversity conservation, ecological importance or geological importance (i.e. effects on integrity, objectives and features). • Proximity to and impacts on designated woodlands, important trees or hedgerows and other valued habitats.

SEA Objectives	Proposed Guide Questions: Will the RTS (component)...	Proposed Criteria to Assess Candidate Transport Interventions and Schemes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the protection and enhancement of protected trees and important woodland areas? • Protect and enhance important soil resources? • Support the protection and restoration of peatland? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to and impacts on non-designated biodiversity features including wildlife corridors and connectivity. • Potential impacts on protected species. • Consideration of climate change on vulnerability and condition of habitats, species and soils.
<p>4. Water, Flood Risk and Resilience: Conserve, protect and enhance water environments, water quality and water resources, whilst adapting to climate change and reducing exposure to flood risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid deterioration and enhance the overall, ecological and chemical classification of water bodies and the water environment in accordance with the Water Framework Directive? • Affect the volume of surface water runoff into or abstraction from water bodies? • Minimise the risk of flooding to people, property, infrastructure and environmental assets? • Manage residual flood risks appropriately and avoid new flood risks including by incorporating nature based solutions? • Seek to minimise new development in areas prone to flood risk or mitigate the potential for such risk? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Flood Risk Zones. • Proximity to and impacts on the WFD status of watercourses, waterbodies and aquifers. • Resilience to flood risk.
<p>5. Cultural Heritage: Conserve, protect and enhance the historic environment, designated and non-designated cultural assets and promote south west Scotland’s distinct culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve, protect and enhance the integrity, character and setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets? • Preserve archaeological sites and protect potential unknown archaeological resources? • Promote the continued use, retention and investment in the region’s designated and non-designated heritage assets (including from existing infrastructure)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to and potential effects on designated and non-designated heritage assets, archaeological sites and their settings. • Opportunities to enhance access to, and enjoyment and understanding of, sites of archaeological and cultural heritage significance. • Promote the continued use, retention and investment in the region’s designated and non-designated heritage assets?

SEA Objectives	Proposed Guide Questions: Will the RTS (component)...	Proposed Criteria to Assess Candidate Transport Interventions and Schemes
<p>6. Landscape: Protect and enhance the landscape character, townscape character and visual amenity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance landscape character? • Safeguard important landscape and townscape features? • Protect visual amenity and valued views? • Protect the unique characteristics of south west Scotland? • Maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the public realm and built environment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to and impacts on designated landscapes and areas with wild land character. • Changes in landscape and townscape character from new infrastructure. • Impacts on visual amenity and key views. • Impacts on settlement integration or coalescence.
<p>7. Accessibility and Connectivity: Facilitate appropriate connectivity and affordable, sustainable access for all to employment, education, facilities and services, and socio-economic and leisure opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity to employment, education, personal business and social and leisure opportunities in particular by active travel and public transport? • Improve the accessibility and integration of the transport network, and therefore encourage use of more environmentally friendly modes of transport? • Improve availability and access to transport and travel information? • Respond to potential environmental impacts resulting from periods of increased travel demand e.g. during holiday periods, peak livestock season etc? • Reduce the need to travel? • Reduce congestion, service delays and allow for greater journey time reliability? • Help reduce severance effects of the transport network? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the NTS2 sustainable travel hierarchy. • Address the evidenced physical accessibility problems. • Proximity to and impacts on the public transport network. • Proximity to the existing transport network. • Proximity to and impacts on identified congestion pinch points. • Proximity to and impacts on the accessibility of community facilities, public services and key amenities. • Proximity to and impacts on the accessibility of education infrastructure.
<p>8. Inclusive Growth: Improve social and economic prosperity for all by enhancing productivity and competitiveness and through reducing societal and environmental inequalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support better integration of land-use/spatial planning, transport planning and economic development decisions to reduce the need to travel and support sustainable transport modes? • Help to integrate labour and housing markets to meet identified population needs in a sustainable manner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development, employment benefits and social value unlocked by the intervention. • Ability to help reduce identified inequalities (as assessed through separate reporting). • Support the creation of safe and attractive public realm.

SEA Objectives	Proposed Guide Questions: Will the RTS (component)...	Proposed Criteria to Assess Candidate Transport Interventions and Schemes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of existing and emerging spatial strategies at national, regional and local levels? • Support the growth of the population of south west Scotland through both retaining and attracting people to live, work and invest in the region? • Promote the co-location of synergistic economic activities and related land uses? • Support increased and diversified employment opportunities including those required for a 'just transition' to Net Zero? • Address transport needs resulting from existing and changing demographic and socio-economic characteristics? • Support the implementation of relevant equalities duties, as assessed through separate reporting? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to area-based regeneration and socio-economic renewal. • Impacts on transport efficiency and sustainability. • Impacts on freight movement and its sustainability. • Proximity to and impacts on key employment locations (existing and planned), particularly of sustainable modes of transport.
<p>9. Human Health: Improve the health of the resident and workplace population, including with respect to physical and mental health and social wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and encourage use of public transport and active travel? • Improve connections to and access to recreational opportunities and facilities? • Reduce the negative impacts of transport on human health, especially in terms of pollution and air quality? • Reduce the likelihood of transport-related road accidents and casualties? • Improve connectivity to healthcare facilities? • Safeguard environmental quality to maintain and enhance human health? • Facilitate access to the natural environment for all? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to and impacts on access to healthcare facilities. • Proximity to and impacts on active travel networks. • Levels of active travel. • Health outcomes and determinants. • Proximity to and impacts on open space. • Contribution of biodiversity and the natural environment (and access to them) in people's health. • Consideration of post COVID-19 issues for transport and working / living patterns.
<p>10. Material Assets: Manage, maintain and where possible regenerate the efficient and effective use of natural resources, ecosystem services,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the re-development of previously developed land? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with or ability to support land-use/spatial planning and economic development decisions.

SEA Objectives	Proposed Guide Questions: Will the RTS (component)...	Proposed Criteria to Assess Candidate Transport Interventions and Schemes
<p>land and infrastructure to meet identified needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the provision of adequate infrastructure, services and facilities to meet identified needs? • Improve movement of people, goods and services within, out of and into Dumfries and Galloway? • Help move Dumfries and Galloway towards a circular economy, thus minimising the use of resource inputs and the creation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions? • Support and enhance natural resources to realise and sustain ecosystem services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to and impacts on the delivery of major development allocations and committed developments. • Facilitate the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land. • Proximity to and impacts on vacant and derelict land (VDL). • Impacts on prime agricultural land and pastoral land. • Impacts on marine-based assets / fisheries. • Impacts on natural resources, including the extraction of mineral resources. • Impacts on ecosystem services. • Support key sectors (timber, road haulage to/from ports, tourism, food & drink and biofuel) within Dumfries and Galloway whilst mitigating against the impacts on the environment. • Connectivity of Dumfries and Galloway to the central belt and the north of England.

Appendix B Review of SEA Scoping Consultation Responses

Table B1: Summary of SEA Scoping Consultation Responses – Issues for RTS Development

SEA Consultation Body	Comment	Response
NatureScot	<p>Proposed SEA Framework and Objectives</p> <p>We welcome all issues being scoped-in to the SEA process for the new SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy. This reflects the wide range of possible impacts from transport policies and projects, as well as the range of opportunities for both environmental improvement and the use of nature-based solutions as part of transport infrastructure projects. However, we consider that some of the objectives and guide questions for proposed SEA Objectives 7 – 9 focus on socio-economic objectives rather than to environmental objectives. We’ve set out more detail on this below.</p>	None required.
	<p>Table 4.4: Proposed SEA Objectives for the emerging RTS</p> <p>Accessibility and Connectivity: The proposed SEA Objective could make reference to the accessibility and connectivity of sustainable modes of travel. The proposed guide questions should also be reviewed and refined to ensure that they relate to the environment, as opposed to socio-economic objectives. For example, “Improve availability and access to transport and travel information”; and “Respond to periods of increased travel demand e.g. during holiday periods, peak livestock season etc.” appear to relate to socio-economic objectives. We recognise that there could also be indirect environmental effects, in which case the guide question should be amended to reflect this.</p>	Guide questions will be amended to reflect the environmental focus of the objective over socio-economic. There are inherent linkages between socio-economic and environmental outcomes which this objective seeks to explore.
	<p>Inclusive Growth: This proposed SEA Objective could make reference to the environment as a factor in inclusive growth, for example “Improve social and economic prosperity for all by enhancing productivity and competitiveness and through reducing societal <i>and environmental</i> inequalities.” In addition, the</p>	Wording changes will be made and guide questions reviewed.

SEA Consultation Body	Comment	Response
	<p>proposed guide questions should be reviewed to ensure that they relate to the environment. For example, “Support increased and diversified employment opportunities” appears to be a socio-economic objective rather than an environmental one.</p>	
	<p>Human Health: We are pleased that the proposed assessment criteria includes “Contribution of biodiversity and the natural environment (and access to them) in people’s health”. We suggest including a guide question on this, for example, “...facilitate access to the natural environment for all?” We are not clear what is meant by the final guide question, “Safeguard sensitive environmental receptors to maintain and enhance human health?” – could this be made clearer?</p>	<p>Additional guide question will be included and final guide question reviewed and amended.</p>
	<p>Material Assets: We support the inclusion of natural resources and ecosystem services in this proposed SEA Objective. We consider that the guide questions could helpfully make specific reference to natural resources and ecosystem services. Additionally, the guide questions should be reviewed to ensure that they clearly relate to the environment. For example, “Unlock the delivery of housing to meet identified needs?” is a socio-economic objective rather than an environmental one.</p>	<p>Guide questions to be reviewed and amended.</p>

SEA Consultation Body	Comment	Response
	<p>5.3: Proposed SEA Methodology</p> <p>SWestrans propose to use SEA Objectives and assessment matrix to assess for significant environmental effects, which is a tried and tested approach. The proposed methodology set out in Section 5.3 of the Scoping Report presents a thorough and robust approach to SEA. We are pleased that the proposed assessment matrix for the proposed RTS policies, as set out in Table 5.3, includes consideration of enhancement measures in addition to mitigation. We consider that this will support identification of specific enhancement measures, particularly in relation to securing positive effects for biodiversity to align with the emerging National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Along with the specific mitigation measures identified, these should be used to directly inform the Plan by identifying precise requirements.</p>	<p>None required. The SEA team are integral to the development of the RTS, providing feedback on an iterative basis to directly inform the strategy.</p>
<p>Historic Environment Scotland</p>	<p>Scope and level of detail</p> <p>We welcome that the need to protect and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings has been identified as a key issue for the development of the South-West of Scotland Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and, as a result of this, that the cultural heritage topic area has been scoped-in to its Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).</p>	<p>None required</p>
	<p>Table 4.1: Previous SEA Framework – Assessment of Continuing Validity</p> <p>In addition to identifying opportunities for protecting, enhancing, promoting and providing access to the Region’s heritage assets, we also suggest that the assessment criteria could include a consideration of opportunities for retaining and investing in the Region’s heritage assets. It should be noted that several of Dumfries and Galloway’s existing infrastructure assets also have heritage value. Options for the retaining and investing in existing infrastructure assets can therefore also give rise to positive effects on the Region’s historic environment.</p>	<p>Key opportunities under the cultural heritage topic will be expanded to include retaining and investing in existing heritage assets.</p>

SEA Consultation Body	Comment	Response
	<p>Table 4.4: Proposed RTS SEA Framework</p> <p>As indicated above, we consider that it may also be helpful to include a guide question that will evaluate whether the RTS component will promote the continued use, retention and investment in the Region’s designated and non-designated heritage assets.</p>	<p>Recommendation agreed and will be added.</p>
	<p>Appendix A Baseline Review</p> <p>We recommend that table A.1 could be usefully amended to include some information on larger cultural heritage designations such as Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Historic Battlefields. We do, however, welcome the overview of the cultural heritage baseline presented at paragraphs A.3.12 and A.3.13 and the consideration of relevant pressures and opportunities included at Section A.4</p>	<p>Suggested heritage designations will be included within the updated baseline which will be presented in the full ER for the draft RTS.</p>
	<p>Appendix B Review of Plans and Programmes</p> <p>We consider that the analysis of national (Scotland) legislative and policy frameworks for the cultural heritage topic area included at Appendix B could also be updated to include reference to the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS, 2019). It should be noted that this document replaces the, now outdated, Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS, 2016).</p>	<p>Noted thank you. Suggested policy documents listed will be added to the relevant section of the ER document to be published with the draft RTS.</p>
SEPA	<p>Alternatives</p> <p>We note that alternatives are still being considered. Any reasonable alternatives identified during the preparation of the plan should be assessed as part of the SEA process and the findings of the assessment should inform the choice of the preferred option. This should be documented in the Environmental Report.</p>	<p>Alternatives will be included and documented in the Environmental Report to be published with the draft RTS. The next stage of the RTS process will include consideration of various transport options.</p>

SEA Consultation Body	Comment	Response
	<p>Methodology</p> <p>When it comes to setting out the results of the assessment in the Environmental Report please provide enough information to clearly justify the reasons for each of the assessments presented. It would also be helpful to set out assumptions that are made during the assessment and difficulties and limitations encountered.</p>	<p>This information will be included within the narrative of the assessment.</p>
	<p>Mitigation and Enhancement</p> <p>Where the mitigation proposed does not relate to modification to the plan itself then it would be extremely helpful to set out the proposed mitigation measures in a way that clearly identifies: (1) the measures required, (2) when they would be required and (3) who will be required to implement them.</p>	<p>This information will be included within the narrative of the assessment.</p>