

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

**Meeting of Friday, 22 March 2024 at 10.30am,
Council Hall, Council Offices, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DD
and via Microsoft Teams**

Members of the Board

John Campbell (Chair)	- Dumfries and Galloway Council
Karen Jackson (Vice Chair)	- South of Scotland Enterprise
David Bryson	- NHS Dumfries and Galloway
Jim Dempster	- Dumfries and Galloway Council
Willie Scobie	- Dumfries and Galloway Council
Keith Walters	- Dumfries and Galloway Council
Andrew Wood	- Dumfries and Galloway Council

Future Meetings

28 June 2024

27 September 2024

29 November 2024

Douglas Kirkpatrick

Lead Officer, South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Meeting of Friday, 22 March 2024 at 10.30am
Council Hall, Council Offices, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DD and
via Microsoft Teams

1. **SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTES OF MEETING ON 2 FEBRUARY 2024 – FOR APPROVAL**
4. **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24** – note and comment on the external audit plan for 2023/24 in the Appendix.
5. **DRAFT REVENUE EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2024/25** - Recommendation - agree the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 as set out in Table 1.
6. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT OF SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP** – Recommendations – (i) note and welcome the Internal Audit; and (ii) agree the main findings of the internal audit and to implement the action plan to address the 9 Audit Actions identified as summarised in Table 2.
7. **REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2023 TO 2042** – Recommendation - note the letter, at the Appendix, from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport which confirms final approval from Scottish Ministers of the SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042.
8. **PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS** – Recommendations – (i) revoke the current Procurement Standing Orders, effective from 25 March 2024; and (ii) approve the adoption of the Procurement Standing Orders provided at the Appendix of this report, effective from 25 March 2024.
9. **SWESTRANS ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23** – Recommendation – agree SWestrans Annual Report for 2022/23 attached as the Appendix for submission to Scottish Ministers.
10. **DEVELOP TO DELIVER** – Recommendations – (i) note the “Develop to Deliver – 2023 Refresh” document at the Appendix; and (ii) endorse the principles of collaboration, opportunities for regional coordination and role of Regional Transport Partnerships in enabling liaison between national and local authorities.
11. **LOCAL BUS NETWORK REVIEW** – Recommendations – (i) note the outcome of the school and local bus review at the Appendix; and (ii) approve the key actions to be taken forward at set out at paragraph 3.8.

12. **RAIL UPDATE** – Recommendations – (i) note the update on TransPennine Express West Coast Main Line rail services; (ii) note the update on Grand Union Trains Services and (iii) note the update on the Stranraer Rail Line.
13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR MAY DECIDE IS URGENT DUE TO THE NEED FOR A DECISION**

It is recommended that Members of the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Board agree to consider the following item of business in private and exclude the Press, members of the public and Observers from the meeting given the report contains confidential or exempt information in respect of paragraphs 6, 8, and 9 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

14. **ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING** Report to follow – For Board Members only

Douglas Kirkpatrick
Lead Officer
South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Claire Rogerson
Secretary to the Board
South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Meeting of Friday 2 February 2024
 at 10.30am at Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters, English Street,
 Dumfries and via Microsoft Teams

Present

Members

John Campbell (Chair)	-	Dumfries and Galloway Council
Karen Jackson (Vice-Chair)	-	South of Scotland Enterprise
David Bryson	-	NHS Dumfries and Galloway
Willie Scobie	-	Dumfries and Galloway Council
Keith Walters	-	Dumfries and Galloway Council
Andrew Wood	-	Dumfries and Galloway Council

Officials

Douglas Kirkpatrick	-	Lead Officer
Claire Rogerson	-	Secretary to the Board
Kirsty Dunsmore	-	Policy and Projects Officer
Janet Sutton	-	Finance Officer
Grant Coltart	-	Team Leader Transport Planning and Operations

Apologies

Jim Dempster	-	Dumfries and Galloway Council
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Observers

June Hay	-	Outdoor Access Forum
Frazer Smith	-	Stagecoach

In Attendance

Sean Marshall	-	Substitute Board Member
Ron McLean	-	Beattock Station Action Group
Ciaran O'Brian	-	Audit Scotland

1. SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES

6 Board Members present and 1 apology.

John Campbell, David Bryson, Willie Scobie and Keith Walters attended at Dumfries and Galloway Council Headquarters.

Karen Jackson and Andrew Wood attended via MS Teams as agreed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NONE declared.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING 24 NOVEMBER 2023

Decision

APPROVED.

4. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24 FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Decision

The Board **NOTED** the forecast outturn for the revenue budget as at 31 December 2023.

5. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME 2023/24 UPDATE

Decision

The Board **NOTED** the update on the Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 as outlined in the report.

6. STAG UPDATE

Decision

The Board **NOTED**:-

6.1 the feedback from Transport Scotland; and

6.2 that the re-opening of rail stations at Beattock, Eastriggs and Thornhill would be included in the forthcoming Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Decision

The Board:-

7.1 **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the Risk Register for 2024/25 included as the Appendix to the report; and

7.2 **NOTED** that there may be an updated Risk Register brought to a future meeting once in the internal audit is completed.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR MAY DECIDE IS URGENT DUE TO THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Decision

The Board **NOTED** that there was no item of urgent business deemed urgent by the Chair due to the need for a decision.

PROCEDURE – The Board **AGREED** to consider the following item of business in private and exclude the press, members of the public and observers from the meeting given that the report contained confidential or exempt information in respect of paragraphs 6,8 and 9 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

9. ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING

Summary of Report – The report advised the Board of a change to the distribution and management of the Behaviour Change element of active travel funding from 2024/25. The report advised the Board of the current work undertaken to provide the necessary initial information to Transport Scotland on the SWestrans element of this funding. The report sought the agreement of the Board for officers to continue to develop potential interventions in partnership with other Regional Transport Partnerships, Transport Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Decision

The Board:-

NOTED

9.1 the change to the distribution and management of the Behaviour Change element of the active travel funding from 2024/25;

9.2 the current work undertaken to provide the initial information to Transport Scotland on the SWestrans element of this funding; and

9.3 **AGREED** that officers continue to develop potential interventions in partnership with other Regional Transport Partnerships, Transport Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24

1. Reason for Report

1.1 SWestrans external auditors have published the plan of work they intend to undertake for the 2023/24 financial year, based on their analysis of risks facing SWestrans.

1.2 The plan is attached as the **Appendix** and highlights the audit work necessary to ensure the SWestrans has in place sound arrangements for producing accurate financial statements, for maintaining an effective internal control environment and for managing its performance. By discussing the work plan and the risks on which it is based, the Board can obtain an understanding of the control environment in operation within SWestrans and of the assurances available from external audit work.

2. Background

Audit Scotland have been appointed by the Accounts Commission as the Council's external auditors for the financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27. This is the second year they will be providing the service to SWestrans.

3. Key Points

3.1 An audit plan has been prepared which will lead to a professional audit opinion on the accounts of SWestrans. The plan sets out the responsibilities of the external auditor and SWestrans and the timetable to be followed. It also identifies the reporting arrangements for the work and a list of outputs which are expected to be delivered.

3.2 In the plan SWestrans external auditors state the main elements of their work will include:

- an audit of the annual accounts, and provision of an Independent Auditor's Report.
- an audit opinion on other statutory information published within the annual accounts including the Management Commentary and the Annual Governance Statement.
- consideration of arrangements in relation to wider scope area of financial sustainability and a review of the Annual Governance Statement.
- consideration of Best Value arrangements.

3.3 The audit plan identified the main risk attaching to SWestrans financial statements. Reviewing the plan allows the Board to become better informed about how and why the external auditor has prioritised certain risks over others. The Board can also form a view as to the risks associated with the audit process itself.

4. Consultations

The Proper Officer has been consulted and is in agreement with its terms.

5. Implications	
Financial	The fee which has been agreed for the SWestrans 2023/24 audit is included in the plan document.
Policy	No policy implications from this report
Equalities	No equalities implications from this report
Climate Change	No climate change implications from this report
Risk Management	The audit plan relates to the known risks R04 – Capital funding R06 – Overspending R07 – Revenue funding R10 – Procurement R11 – Contract disputes R12 – Third Party liabilities R14 – Withdrawal of DGC Governance support R15 – Cyber crime
Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

6. Recommendation

Members of the Board are asked to note and comment on the external audit plan for 2023/24 in the Appendix.

Janet Sutton - Report Author Finance Officer Tel: 01387 260105 Date of Report: 05 March 2024 File Ref:	Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG1 8PN
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APPENDIX – External Audit Plan 2023/24

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Annual Audit Plan 2023/24



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Board
March 2024

Contents

Introduction	3
Annual accounts	5
Wider Scope and Best Value	9
Reporting arrangements, timetable, and audit fee	11
Other matters	13

Introduction

Summary of planned audit work

1. This document summarises the work plan for our 2023/24 external audit of South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans). The main elements of our work include:

- an audit of the annual accounts, and provision of an Independent Auditor's Report
- an audit opinion on other statutory information published within the annual accounts including the Management Commentary and the Annual Governance Statement
- consideration of arrangements in relation to wider scope area of financial sustainability and a review of the Annual Governance Statement
- consideration of Best Value arrangements.

Audit appointment

2. Peter Lindsay, Audit Scotland, has been appointed as the external auditor of SWestrans for the period from 2022/23 to 2026/27 inclusive. The 2023/24 financial year is therefore the second of the five-year audit appointment.

3. The audit team will actively engage with you over the course of the audit to ensure our audit work continues to be focused on risk.

Respective responsibilities of the auditor and SWestrans

4. The [Code of Audit Practice](#) sets out in detail the respective responsibilities of the auditor and SWestrans. Key responsibilities are summarised below.

Auditor responsibilities

5. My responsibilities as appointed auditor are established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Code of Audit Practice (including [supplementary guidance](#)) and guided by the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard.

6. Auditors in the public sector give an independent opinion on the financial statements and other information within the annual accounts. We also review and report on the wider scope arrangements in place at SWestrans. In doing this, we aim to support improvement and accountability.

SWestrans' responsibilities

7. SWestrans is responsible for maintaining adequate accounting records and internal controls, and preparing financial statements for audit that give a true and fair view. They are also required to produce other reports in the annual accounts in accordance with statutory requirements.

8. SWestrans has the primary responsibility for ensuring the proper financial stewardship of public funds, compliance with relevant legislation, and establishing effective arrangements for governance, propriety, and regularity that enable them to deliver their objectives.

9. The audit of the annual accounts does not relieve management or the SWestrans Partnership Board members as those charged with governance, of their responsibilities.

Communication of fraud or suspected fraud

10. In line with ISA (UK) 240 (*The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Statements*), in presenting this plan to the SWestrans Board we seek confirmation from those charged with governance of any instances of actual, suspected, or alleged fraud that should be brought to our attention. During our audit, should members of the Board have any such knowledge or concerns relating to the risk of fraud within it, we invite them to communicate this to us for our consideration.

Adding Value

11. We aim to add value to SWestrans through our external audit work by being constructive and forward looking, by identifying areas for improvement and by recommending and encouraging good practice. In so doing, we will help SWestrans promote improved standards of governance, better management and decision making and actively participate in discussions.

Annual accounts

Introduction

12. Our approach to the audit of the 2023/24 annual accounts, including the financial statements, has been designed to support the appointed auditor's opinion as to whether the annual accounts give a true and fair view of SWestrans' finances for the year ended 31 March 2024, and have been properly prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (the 2023/24 Code).

Materiality

13. The concept of materiality is applied by auditors in planning and performing the audit, and in evaluating the effect of any uncorrected misstatements on the financial statements. I am required to plan my audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement over both the amount and the nature of the misstatement.

Materiality levels for the 2023/24 audit

14. We assess materiality at different levels as described in [Exhibit 1](#), along with the levels set for the 2023/24 audit of SWestrans.

Exhibit 1

Materiality levels for the 2023/24 audit

Materiality	Amount
Planning materiality – This is the figure we calculate to assess the overall impact of audit adjustments on the financial statements. Materiality has been set based on our assessment of the needs of the users of the financial statements and the nature of the SWestrans' operations. For the year ended 31 March 2024, we have set our materiality at 2% of gross expenditure based on the audited accounts for 2022/23.	£96,000
Performance materiality – This acts as a trigger point. If the aggregate of errors identified during the financial statements audit exceeds performance materiality, this could indicate that further audit procedures are required. Using our professional judgement, we have assessed performance materiality at 65% of planning materiality.	£62,000
Reporting threshold (i.e. clearly trivial) – We are required to report to those charged with governance on all unadjusted misstatements more than the 'reporting threshold' amount.	£5,000

Source: Audit Scotland

Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

15. Our risk assessment draws on our cumulative knowledge of SWestrans, its major transaction streams, key systems of internal control, and risk management processes. It is informed by our discussions with management, meetings with internal audit, attendance at committees, and a review of supporting information.

16. Audit risk assessment is an iterative and dynamic process. Our assessment of risks set out in this plan may change as more information and evidence becomes available during the progress of the audit. Where such changes occur, we will advise management, and where relevant, report them to those charged with governance.

17. Based on our risk assessment process, we identified the following significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements. These are risks which have the greatest impact on our planned audit procedures. [Exhibit 2](#) summarises the nature of the risks, management's sources of assurance over these risks, and the further audit procedures we plan to perform to gain assurance over the risks.

Exhibit 2

2023/24 Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

Significant risk of material misstatement	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit response
<p>1. Risk of material misstatement due to fraud caused by management override of controls</p> <p>As stated in ISA (UK) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of management's ability to override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.</p>	<p>Owing to the nature of this risk, assurances from management are not applicable in this instance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing. • Make inquiries of individuals involved in the financial reporting process about inappropriate or unusual activity relating to the processing of journal entries and other adjustments. • Test journals at the year-end and post-closing entries and focus on significant risk areas. • Consider the need to test journal entries and other adjustments throughout the year. • Evaluate significant transactions outside the normal course of business. • Assess the adequacy of controls in place for identifying and disclosing related party relationship and transactions in the financial statements. • We will assess any changes to the methods and underlying assumptions used to prepare accounting estimates compared to the prior year.

Significant risk of material misstatement	Management's sources of assurance	Planned audit response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive testing of income and expenditure transactions around the year-end to confirm they are accounted for in the correct financial year. • Focussed testing of accounting accruals and prepayments.

Source: Audit Scotland

Consideration of the risks of fraud in the recognition of income and expenditure

18. As set out in ISA (UK) 240: *The auditor's responsibilities relating to fraud in an audit of financial statement*, there is a presumed risk of fraud over the recognition of revenue. There is a risk that revenue may be misstated resulting in a material misstatement in the financial statements.

19. We have rebutted this risk as funding received from the Dumfries and Galloway Council is clearly communicated and can be readily agreed to third party confirmations. In addition, SWestrans other income streams comprise of contributions from partners that can be readily agreed to supporting documentation, and we have concluded there is limited opportunity or incentive to manipulate the recognition of income in the financial statements.

20. In line with Practice Note 10: *Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom*, as most public-sector bodies are net spending bodies, the risk of material misstatement due to fraud related to expenditure recognition may in some cases be greater than the risk relating to revenue recognition.

21. We have rebutted this risk as the main expenditure streams of SWestrans can be readily forecast based on a predictable pattern of spend and mainly comprise of payments to bus operators which can be agreed to contracts. We also consider there to be limited incentive and opportunity for the manipulation of expenditure recognition in the financial statements.

22. We have not, therefore, incorporated specific additional audit procedures into our audit plan in relation to the risks of fraud in the recognition of income and expenditure, over and above our standard audit procedures.

Audit of the management commentary and annual governance statement

23. In addition to the appointed auditor's opinion of the financial statements, the Accounts Commission prescribes that the appointed auditor should provide opinions as to whether the management commentary and annual governance

statement have been compiled in accordance with the appropriate regulations and frameworks and are consistent with the financial statements.

24. To inform these opinions we will consider whether the disclosures within each statement comply with the requirements of the applicable guidance, and confirm that relevant information reflects the contents of the financial statements and other supporting documentation, including:

- **Management commentary:** Consideration of performance information reported to the SWestrans Partnership Board and published during the year.
- **Annual governance statement:** Reviewing the Local Code of Corporate Governance and Internal Audit's annual assurance statement.

25. Based on our knowledge of the audit, and the established procedures in place to produce these statements, we have not identified any specific risks to be communicated to those charged with governance in relation to the audit of the management commentary and annual governance statement.

Wider Scope and Best Value

Introduction

26. Reflecting the fact that public money is involved, public audit is planned and undertaken from a wider perspective than in the private sector. The Code of Audit Practice sets out the four areas that frame the wider scope of public sector audit, and requires auditors to consider and conclude on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the arrangements in place for each wider scope area in audited bodies.

27. In summary, the four wider scope areas are:

- **Financial management** – this means having sound budgetary processes. We will consider the arrangements to secure sound financial management, including the strength of the financial management culture, accountability, and arrangements to prevent and detect fraud, error, and other irregularities.
- **Financial sustainability** – we will look ahead to consider whether the body is planning effectively to continue to deliver services, also comment on financial sustainability in the medium (two to five years) to longer term (longer than five years).
- **Vision, leadership, and governance** – we conclude on the clarity of plans in place to deliver the vision, strategy, and priorities adopted by the Audited Body. We also consider the effectiveness of the governance arrangements to support delivery.
- **Use of resources to improve outcomes** – we will consider how the Audited Body demonstrates economy, efficiency, and effectiveness through the use of financial and other resources.

28. The Code includes a provision relating to the audit of less complex audited bodies. In the light of the limited volume and lack of complexity of the financial transactions and its low-risk nature, we plan to apply this provision of the Code to the 2023/24 audit of SWestrans. The annual audit work will focus on a review of the Annual Governance Statement and the financial sustainability of the organisation and its services. We will report on these areas in our 2023/24 annual audit report.

Conclusions on wider scope responsibilities

29. Our risk assessment has not identified any significant risks in respect of the above wider scope areas.

30. Our planned work on the wider scope areas is risk based and proportionate, and in addition to local risks, we may be asked by the Accounts Commission to

consider specific risk areas which are impacting the public sector as a whole. We have not been asked to consider specific risks for 2023/24 audits, but we will remain cognisant of challenges identified in prior years such as climate change.

Best Value

31. Auditors have a duty to be satisfied that bodies that fall within section 106 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 have made proper arrangements to secure Best Value. We will consider how SWestrans demonstrates that it is meeting its Best Value responsibilities, and we will report our findings as part of our Annual Audit Report.

Reporting arrangements, timetable, and audit fee

Reporting arrangements

32. Matters arising from our audit will be reported on a timely basis and will include agreed action plans. Draft reports will be shared with the relevant officers to confirm factual accuracy.

33. We will provide:

- an Independent Auditor's Report to SWestrans and the Accounts Commission setting out our opinions on the annual accounts.
- SWestrans and the Accounts Commission with an Annual Audit Report containing observations and recommendations on significant matters which have arisen during the audit and conclusions on wider scope areas.

34. [Exhibit 3](#) outlines the target dates for our audit outputs set by the Accounts Commission. In determining the target reporting date, due regard is paid to the dates for approving the annual accounts set out in regulations of 30 September 2024.

35. We plan to issue our Independent Auditor's Report and Annual Audit Report by the target date.

Exhibit 3 2023/24 Audit outputs

Audit Output	Target date	Board Date
Annual Audit Plan	31/03/2024	22/03/2024
Independent Auditor's Report	30/09/2024	27/09/2024
Annual Audit Report	30/09/2024	27/09/2024

Source: Audit Scotland



36. All Annual Audit Plans and the outputs detailed in [Exhibit 3](#), and any other outputs on matters of public interest, will be published on our website: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk.

Timetable

37. To support an efficient audit, it is critical that the timetable for producing the annual accounts for audit is achieved. We have included a proposed timetable for the audit at [Exhibit 4](#) that has been discussed with management.

38. We will continue to work closely with management to identify the most efficient approach as appropriate and will keep timeframes and logistics for the completion of the audit under review. Progress will be discussed with management and finance officers over the course of the audit.

Exhibit 4 Proposed annual accounts timetable

 Key stage	 Provisional Date
Consideration of the unaudited annual accounts by those charged with governance	28 June 2024
Latest submission date for the receipt of the unaudited annual accounts with complete working papers package.	28 June 2024
Latest date for final clearance meeting with officers, agreement of the audited and unsigned annual accounts and the proposed annual audit report.	23 August 2024
Issue of proposed annual audit report, letter of management representation and proposed independent auditor's report to those charged with governance.	26 August 2024
Agreement of audited and unsigned annual accounts.	26 August 2024
Issue of Annual Audit Report to those charged with governance.	27 September 2024
Signed Independent Auditor's Report	27 September 2024

Source: Audit Scotland

Audit fee

39. In determining the audit fee, we have taken account of the risk exposure of SWestrans and the planned management assurances in place. The agreed audit fee for 2023/24 is £12,560 (£11,850 in 2022/23).

40. In setting the fee for 2023/24, we have assumed that SWestrans has effective governance arrangements and will prepare a comprehensive and accurate set of annual accounts for audit in line with the agreed timetable for the audit. The audit fee assumes there will be no major change in respect of the scope of the audit during the year and where our audit cannot proceed as planned, a supplementary fee may be levied.

Other matters

Internal audit

41. It is the responsibility of SWestrans to establish adequate internal audit arrangements. We will review the internal audit plan and the results of internal audit's work.

42. While we are not planning to place formal reliance on the work of internal audit in 2023/24, we will review internal audit reports and assess the impact of the findings on our financial statements and wider scope audit responsibilities.

Independence and objectivity

43. We are independent of SWestrans in accordance with relevant ethical requirements, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard. This standard imposes stringent rules to ensure the independence and objectivity of auditors.

44. Audit Scotland has robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance with Ethical Standard including an annual *'fit and proper'* declaration for all members of staff. The arrangements are overseen by the Executive Director of Innovation and Quality, who serves as Audit Scotland's Ethics Partner.

45. The Ethical Standard requires auditors to communicate any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the audit team. We are not aware of any such relationships pertaining to the audit of SWestrans.

Audit Quality

46. Audit Scotland is committed to the consistent delivery of high-quality public audit. Audit quality requires ongoing attention and improvement to keep pace with external and internal changes. A document explaining the arrangements for providing assurance on the delivery of high-quality audits is available from the [Audit Scotland website](#).

47. The International Standards on Quality Management (ISQM) applicable to Audit Scotland for 2023/24 audits are:

- ISQM (UK) 1 which deals with an audit organisation's responsibilities to design, implement and operate a system of quality management (SoQM) for audits. Our SoQM consists of a variety of components, such as: our governance arrangements and culture to support audit quality, compliance with ethical requirements, ensuring we are dedicated to high-quality audit through our engagement performance and resourcing arrangements, and ensuring we have robust quality monitoring arrangements in place. Audit Scotland carries out an annual evaluation of our SoQM and has concluded that we comply with this standard.

- ISQM (UK) 2 which sets out arrangements for conducting engagement quality reviews, which are performed by senior management not involved in the audit to review significant judgements and conclusions reached by the audit team, and the appropriateness of proposed audit opinions of high-risk audit engagements.

48. To monitor quality at an individual audit level, Audit Scotland also carries out internal quality reviews of a sample of audits. Additionally, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) carries out independent quality reviews.

49. Actions to address deficiencies identified by internal and external quality reviews are included in a rolling Quality Improvement Action Plan which is used to support continuous improvement. Progress with implementing planned actions is regularly monitored by Audit Scotland's Quality and Ethics Committee.

50. Audit Scotland may periodically seek your views on the quality of our service provision. The team would also welcome feedback more informally at any time.

The audit team

51. Key contacts in the audit team are:

- Peter Lindsay CPFA, Senior Audit Manager
- Ciaran O'Brien CA, Senior Auditor

52. The local audit team is supported by a specialist technical accounting team, all of whom have significant experience of public bodies and work with accounting regulatory bodies.

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Annual Audit Plan 2023/24

Audit Scotland's published material is available for download on the website in a number of formats. For information on our accessibility principles, please visit:

www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/accessibility

For the latest news follow us on social media or [subscribe to our email alerts.](#)



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DRAFT REVENUE EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2024/25

1. Reason for Report

To seek agreement to the draft revenue budget for the financial year 2024/25

2. Background

2.1 The Scottish Government has offered £259,250 revenue funding for 2024/25, the same level as applied since 2011/12.

2.2 Funding of £100,000 is also provided in kind by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

2.3 Dumfries and Galloway Council at its meeting of 27 February 2024, agreed its budget for 2024/25. At this meeting the Council approved SWestrans Revenue Budget for 2024/25 of £4,374,392.

3. Key Issues

The total available draft revenue funding of £4,374,392 is as indicated in Table 1 with the sources of income to achieve a balanced budget provided in Table 2.

Item	Cost £
Staff Costs	249,348
Administration Costs	31,428
Procured Services	4,044,866
Central Support	48,750
TOTAL	4,374,392

Table 1 – 2024/25 Revenue Funding

Income	Cost £
Scottish Government Funding	259,250
Dumfries and Galloway Council Funding	100,000
DGC Requisition	3,836,788
SPT contribution	97,322
SBC Contribution	5,400
NHS Contribution	70,000
SRUC Contribution	5,632
TOTAL	4,374,392

Table 2 – 2024/25 Sources of income

4. Implications	
Financial	It is intended to provide monitoring reports to Board meetings on a regular basis throughout financial year 2024/25
Policy	No policy implications from this report
Equalities	No equalities implications from this report
Climate Change	No climate change implications from this report

Risk Management	Revenue budget relates to two known risks: R06 – Overspend R07 – Revenue funding
Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

5. Consultation

The Proper Officer (Finance) has been consulted and is in agreement with the terms of this report.

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members of the Board agree the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 as set out in Table 1.

Janet Sutton - Report Author Tel:01387 260105	Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG1 8PN
Date of Report: 01 March 2024 File Ref:	

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT OF SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

1. Reason for Report

To inform the Board of the findings of an internal audit undertaken by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Internal Audit service on the internal control, risk management and governance arrangement of SWestrans.

2. Background

2.1 SWestrans use financial and operational systems and resources provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council. In considering the systems of internal control, the Partnership considers the findings of the Council's Internal Audit service. The annual accounts of the Partnership refer to seeking specific internal audit assurance on the systems of internal control, risk management and governance arrangements.

2.2 The last internal audit on SWestrans was undertaken in 2010.

2.3 The objective and purpose of the internal audit were agreed with the Lead Officer prior to the audit commencing.

3. Key Points

3.1 The objective of the audit was to provide assurance to the Board on the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements of the Partnership.

3.2 The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance to the Board against the following 11 control objectives that:

1. There is a clear relationship between the Partnership and the Council, including a Service Level Agreement and data sharing agreements.
2. The standing orders are approved, up to date and complied with.
3. The financial regulations and codes are up to date.
4. Procurement standing orders have been reviewed and agreed.
5. There is effective monitoring of the Members code of conduct.
6. The authorisation structure is appropriate.
7. Risk management arrangements are effective.
8. Impact assessments are robust and completed.
9. Performance management information reflects the objectives of the Partnership, is accurate and reported timeously.
10. Budget monitoring is effective.
11. There is a complete asset register.

3.3 The 'Internal Audit Report 2023-24: SWestrans (Governance) Audit' is included as **Appendix 1**. The report includes an Audit Opinion (section 2); Main Findings (section 3) and an Action Plan (section 4) which includes a management response and timescales to address the identified action points.

3.4 A summary of the Main Findings is provided in **Table 1** below:

	Control objective	Level of assurance
1	There is a clear relationship between the Partnership and the Council, including an SLA and data sharing agreements.	Low
2	The standing orders are approved, up to date and complied with.	Good
3	The financial regulations and codes are up to date.	Satisfactory
4	Procurement standing orders have been reviewed and agreed.	Low
5	There is effective monitoring of the Members Code of Conduct.	Good
6	The authorisation structure is appropriate.	Satisfactory
7	Risk management arrangements are effective.	Satisfactory
8	Impact assessments are robust and completed.	Good
9	Performance management information reflects the objectives of the Partnership, is accurate and reported timeously.	Low
10	Budget monitoring is effective.	Good
11	There is a complete asset register.	Satisfactory

Table 1 – Internal Audit 2023/24 – Main Findings

3.5 The report identifies 9 Action Points to improve control measures and provides a prioritised Action Plan (2 – High; 6 – Medium; 1 – Low) to address these measures. A summary of the actions, their priority and suggested timescale to address the actions is provided in **Table 2** below:

	Audit Action Points	Priority	Timescale
1	A Service Level Agreement, (including data sharing arrangements) should be agreed between SWestrans and the Council.	Medium	December 2024
2	A privacy agreement should be developed for SWestrans.	Medium	May 2024
3	The Financial Regulations and Codes used by SWestrans should be updated.	Medium	September 2024
4	Updated Procurement Standing Orders should be presented to the Board for consideration and approval.	High	March 2024
5	A scheme of delegation should be established.	Medium	March 2025
6	The Board should be updated on Risk Management at least twice a year.	Medium	May 2024
7	An updated risk management plan should be reported to the Board for consideration and approval.	Low	May 2024
8	The delivery plan, performance indicators and a business plan should be updated and considered by the Board for approval. Thereafter these documents should be reviewed on a regular basis.	High	May 2024
9	The Board should be updated with regular updates on SWestrans own assets including the Asset Register.	Medium	September 2024

Table 2 – Internal Audit 2023/24 – Audit Action Points

4. Implications	
Financial	There are no financial implications from this report.
Policy	Policy implications will be assessed and reported as appropriate as opportunities develop.
Equalities	No equalities implications from this report
Climate Change	No climate change implications from this report
Risk Management	Develop to Deliver recommendations and actions relate to the known risks: R03 – Strategic Direction R05 – RTS Delivery
Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

5. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:

- 5.1 note and welcome the Internal Audit; and
- 5.2 agree the main findings of the internal audit and to implement the action plan to address the 9 Audit Actions identified as summarised in Table 2.

Report Author: Douglas Kirkpatrick Tel: 01387 260136	Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN
Date of Report: 27 February 2024 File Ref: SW2/Meetings/2024	

APPENDIX – Internal Audit Report 2023-24: SWestrans (Governance) Audit

Communities – Governance & Assurance

Internal Audit Report 2023-24: SWestrans (Governance) Audit

Final Report – March 2024



1 Introduction

1.1 SWestrans is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland and covers an area contiguous within the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Partnership Board consists of five Councillor members and two external members, one from South of Scotland Enterprise and one from NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

1.2 The partnership use financial and operational systems and resources provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council. In considering the systems of internal control, the Partnership considers the findings of the Council's Internal Audit service. The annual accounts of the Partnership refer to seeking specific internal audit assurance on the systems of internal control, risk management and governance arrangements.

1.3 The objective of the audit was to provide assurance to the SWestrans Board on the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements of the Partnership.

1.4 The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance to SWestrans Board that:

- There is a clear relationship between the Partnership and the Council, including an SLA and data sharing agreements.
- The standing orders are approved, up to date and complied with.
- The financial regulations and codes are up to date.
- Procurement standing orders have been reviewed and agreed.
- There is effective monitoring of the Members code of conduct.
- The authorisation structure is appropriate.
- Risk management arrangements are effective.
- Impact assessments are robust and completed.
- Performance management information reflects the objectives of the Partnership, is accurate and reported timeously.
- Budget monitoring is effective.
- There is a complete asset register.

2 Audit Opinion

Whilst working closely with the Council, SWestrans is a separate statutory body. As a small organisation the Board has a key role in its governance arrangements. This was reflected in its Board reporting, particularly in areas such as budget reporting and risk management. SWestrans Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct for Board Members were in place and up to date.

SWestrans was established 17 years ago, and some key governance documents have not recently been updated such as its Procurement Standing Orders, and its Financial Regulations and Codes. A Service Level Agreement has not been established with the Council. There is no data sharing agreement in place.

Performance management is currently weak. A new Regional Transport Strategy for 2022 - 2042 is awaiting approval from the Scottish Governments Transport Minister and once agreed, SWestrans will have a clear strategy for delivering services.

3 Main Findings

3.1 The level of assurance is based on the following definitions:

Good	Appropriate controls are in place and these are operating effectively. Suggestions for good practice may still be made.
Satisfactory	There is an established system of control in place. Weaknesses in the design or operation of controls may result in loss to the organisation. The loss is likely to be not significant or would be minimised by compensating controls.
Low	One or more key controls is either absent or operating ineffectively. As a result, there is a significant risk of loss or undetected error.

	Control objective	Level of assurance	Comments
1	There is a clear relationship between the Partnership and the Council, including an SLA and data sharing agreements.	Low	<p>SWestrans is an independent statutory body but operates in close co-operation with the Council, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, and South of Scotland Enterprise.</p> <p>A Service Level Agreement was approved by the SWestrans Board in March 2007. However, it was not approved by the Council and remained a draft document. Although the relationship is well-established (17 years) a formal SLA should be agreed between the two parties as well as a Data Sharing Agreement (Action Point 1).</p> <p>The privacy notice on the SWestrans website refers to the Council as the data controller. As a separate statutory body SWestrans should have its own privacy notice based on the data they hold and how they make use of it (Action Point 2).</p>

	Control objective	Level of assurance	Comments
2	The standing orders are approved, up to date and complied with.	Good	SWestrans reviews its Standing Orders on at least an annual basis. Whilst dated June 2022 the current standing orders were amended by the Board in September 2022 to reflect the continuation of hybrid meetings which going forward would be recorded and livestreamed online. The Standing Orders were reviewed by the Board in October 2023, no amendments were required.
3	The financial regulations and codes are up to date.	Satisfactory	SWestrans Financial Regulations and Codes are dated September 2006. They are an older version of the Council's Financial Regulations and Codes. These should be reviewed. (Action Point 3).
4	Procurement standing orders have been reviewed and agreed.	Low	<p>The Procurement Standing Orders are dated July 2013. They are an older version of the Council's Procurement Standing orders which SWestrans adopted and need revising to reflect updates to legislation. Procurement is a key risk on SWestrans risk register.</p> <p>To address the risk the Council's Procurement Team, in liaison with SWestrans Lead Officer, are preparing a new set of Procurement Standing Orders with a view to completing them before the year end. The intention is to present them to the Board at their March 2024 meeting (Action Point 4).</p>
5	There is effective monitoring of the Members Code of Conduct.	Good	<p>The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000 provides for Codes of Conduct for all Local Authority Councillors and members of relevant public bodies including SWestrans. The Act introduced a new ethical framework under which Scottish Ministers were required to issue a Code of Conduct for Councillors and a Model Code of Conduct for Devolved Public Bodies.</p> <p>The Model Code highlights the need for board members to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and to have an awareness of the organisation's policies in relation to a number</p>

	Control objective	Level of assurance	Comments
			<p>of areas e.g. social media, equality, diversity and bullying and harassment.</p> <p>The SWestrans Code of Conduct was approved by Scottish Ministers on 26 April 2022. In compliance with the Code, we found all Board Members had completed a register of interest, all of which were on the SWestrans website. There is effective monitoring of the Members Code of Conduct.</p>
6	The authorisation structure is appropriate.	Satisfactory	<p>SWestrans accounting records are maintained using the Council's general ledger using a separate company code.</p> <p>Expenditure invoiced directly to SWestrans is paid through the Council's creditors system and coded to SWestrans ledger codes. SWestrans provides its own purchase order for any goods/ services with all invoicing managed through Centros.</p> <p>SWestrans employs no staff directly, the Council employs five staff who work on SWestrans. The Council raises an invoice to SWestrans (quarterly) for their direct staff costs. The Council also incurs some central support costs on behalf of SWestrans. These are invoiced to SWestrans appropriately.</p> <p>The Lead Officer SWestrans is the authorised signatory for expenditure up to £100,000 (as per the Council's authorised signatory list). Expenditure above this is authorised by the Head of Neighbourhood Services or Director Communities. As SWestrans is a separate statutory body the authorisation of expenditure is reserved to the Board unless specifically delegated. The Board should consider a formal scheme of delegation to allow expenditure to be incurred (Action Point 5).</p>
7	Risk management arrangements are effective.	Satisfactory	<p>SWestrans has a risk register which is updated and presented annually to the Board for approval. The risk register for 2023/24 was approved at the January 2023 meeting. The risk register for</p>

	Control objective	Level of assurance	Comments
			<p>2024/25 was updated and approved by the Board at the February 2024 meeting. It would be good practice for the Board to be updated on Risk Management at least twice a year (Action Point 6). The format of risk reporting could be improved by information on what may trigger a risk and by including an action plan against each risk.</p> <p>SWestrans has adopted the Councils Risk Management Framework. A separate risk management plan has been adopted but this has not been reported to the Board since September 2017 (Action Point 7).</p>
8	Impact assessments are robust and completed.	Good	<p>SWestrans has adopted the Council's Impact Assessment toolkit.</p> <p>An updated Equalities Mainstream report was presented to the Board in March 2023. It covers impact assessments and states that the impact assessment tool helps check whether their policies and practices are fair and inclusive. An impact assessment must be completed when designing policies and strategies, establishing practices, making major decisions (including financial decisions). Implications for equalities are outlined in each Board report to ensure they are clearly highlighted allowing board members, community representatives, diversity groups and other interested parties the opportunity to scrutinise the implications and participate in decision making that affects them.</p> <p>SWestrans Board reports include an implications section which considers financial, policy, equalities, climate change and risk management factors. It does not state the Impact Assessment outcome and the Lead Officer has agreed a statement to this effect will be included going forward.</p>

	Control objective	Level of assurance	Comments
			The implications section was completed for 32/36 Board reports in 2023. There was one exception where the section would have been useful, a rail update report.
9	Performance management information reflects the objectives of the Partnership, is accurate and reported timeously.	Low	<p>The Performance Management Framework in place for monitoring and reporting the achievement of SWestrans' strategic objectives includes the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2009 – 2023; • Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring Indicators; and • The Business Plan 2010-2015 <p>The Delivery Plan sets specific transport projects to help deliver the strategic objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy and improve transport services for the region. It was last revised in March 2010 and is out of date.</p> <p>The new Regional Transport Strategy 2022 to 2042 is awaiting approval from the Scottish Governments Transport Minister and once approved a new Delivery Plan will be taken to the SWestrans Board for approval (Action Point 8). We were advised the Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis throughout the lifetime of the strategy (2023-2042) as part of the ongoing monitoring process.</p> <p>The Business Plan provides a link between the strategic priority interventions in the Regional Transport Strategy, and the project details listed in the capital and revenue expenditure programmes each year. It relates to years 2010-2015 and has not been updated on an annual rolling basis. It is intended to update the business plan once the new Regional Transport Strategy is in place.</p> <p>The progress of SWestrans is monitored annually to the Board in the form of an Annual Report which is then submitted to</p>

	Control objective	Level of assurance	Comments
			Scottish Ministers (per legislation). The Performance Indicators matrix to monitor progress was included in the Annual Report up until the 2020/21 report when it was decided that they were so dated as to no longer be useful. There will be new indicators accompanying the new Delivery Plan.
10	Budget monitoring is effective.	Good	<p>SWestrans Board agrees the draft revenue budget at the start of each year generally at their March meetings. In terms of capital, the Board has an indicative 3-year budget which allows for continuation of capital spend but the actual amount available for each individual year can only be confirmed once the preceding year's budget has closed and slippage is determined. This therefore goes to the first Board following this year-end process which is generally June.</p> <p>SWestrans Board also maintains oversight of financial performance through scrutiny of the budget monitoring reports which were being presented regularly (generally quarterly) to them at Board meetings.</p>
11	There is a complete asset register.	Satisfactory	<p>The only assets that SWestrans has are buses that are leased to operators to deliver SWestrans supported local bus services. SWestrans has a vehicle Asset Register and a Fleet List. These documents are regularly updated by the Lead Officer.</p> <p>A report on vehicles used for local bus contracts was taken to the Board in November 2022. This stated that there were issues with the vehicles owned by SWestrans and highlighted implications for the current and future delivery. The Board noted the ongoing issues and agreed to receive regular updates on SWestrans owned vehicle assets. This has not however been provided (Action Point 9).</p>

4 Action Plan

4.1 Actions are categorised as follows, High and Medium priority recommendations will be followed up by a report to Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee.

Priority	Definition
High	Urgent - Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.
Medium	Needed to raise the level of assurance provided by the control system to acceptable levels
Low	Good practice which will contribute to the general effectiveness of control.
Service Improvement	Opportunities for business improvement and/or efficiencies have been identified.

	Audit Action Points	Risk	Priority	Management Response	Timescale
1	A Service Level Agreement, (including data sharing arrangements) should be agreed between SWestrans and the Council.	Governance may be compromised by a lack of clarity over responsibilities. SWestrans Board not receiving the Services it requires.	Medium	Subject to Board agreement, the Lead Officer will approach the Council to develop an appropriate Service Level Agreement which would be agreed by both organisations.	December 2024
2	A privacy agreement should be developed for SWestrans.	Not complying with the requirement of the data protection principles.	Medium	The Lead Officer will work with the Council's Information and Governance Manager to develop and complete the privacy agreement.	May 2024

	Audit Action Points	Risk	Priority	Management Response	Timescale
3	The Financial Regulations and Codes used by SWestrans should be updated.	Public money not being administered properly. Best practice not being followed. Lack of openness and integrity by Officers.	Medium	The Board's Finance Officer is currently working with senior Council colleagues to bring our Financial Regulations more into line with the most recent Council Financial Regulations and Codes.	September 2024
4	Updated Procurement Standing Orders should be presented to the Board for consideration and approval.	Non-compliance with procurement regulations/ legislation leaving SWestrans potentially exposed. Poor contract arrangements. Best value not achieved.	High	The Standing Orders have been updated in partnership with the Council's Procurement Manager and are the subject of a report to the March Board.	March 2024
5	A scheme of delegation should be established.	Lack of control over expenditure.	Medium	The anomaly of the Lead Officer's signing privileges within the Council requires to be addressed. It is not appropriate for a senior Council Officer with no responsibility to the SWestrans Board to be counter signing SWestrans financial transactions. A solution will be developed with the Council's Head of Finance.	March 2025
6	The Board should be updated on Risk Management at least twice a year.	Unforeseen events occur, reputational risk.	Medium	This will be actioned for the Board in May 2024.	May 2024
7	An updated risk management plan should be reported to the Board for consideration and approval.	Ineffective management of risks.	Low	This will be actioned for the Board in May 2024.	May 2024
8	The delivery plan, performance indicators and a business plan should be updated and considered by the Board for approval. Thereafter these documents should be reviewed on a regular basis.	Unclear vision of performance. Inaccurate information and targets/ objectives / goals not being met.	High	This will be a key focus once the Regional Transport Strategy is approved by Scottish Ministers with a RTS Delivery Plan brought to the Board as soon as possible.	May 2024



	Audit Action Points	Risk	Priority	Management Response	Timescale
9	The Board should be provided with regular updates on SWestrans own assets including the Asset Register.	The Board being unaware of the condition of existing assets.	Medium	Regular reports (twice per year) will be added to our agenda.	September 2024

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2023 TO 2042

1. Reason for Report

To advise the Board of the letter received from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport which confirms final approval of SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 by Scottish Ministers.

2. Background

The Board, at its meeting on 30 June agreed the SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023 to 2042 (RTS) for submission to Scottish Ministers for approval.

3. Key Points

3.1 Feedback on the submitted RTS covering comments from each of the policy leads in Transport Scotland was received on 28 September 2023 with a consensus that the RTS was received positively and had good clear links with overarching strategic direction and national objectives.

3.2 The approval process for the RTS required consideration and response to each of the feedback points raised highlighting any changes being made to the strategy before sending the updated RTS for approval. Once this had been received, the policy leads would have a final opportunity to seek clarification before ministerial approval was sought.

3.3 Officers working with colleagues at Stantec reviewed the feedback in detail and, where appropriate, provided a suggested response or change. At its meeting on 27 October 2023 the Board were presented with the suggested response to Transport Scotland's feedback and agreed to submit the response. It was sent to the Transport Scotland on 14 November 2023.

3.4 On 7 March 2024 SWestrans received a letter from Cabinet Secretary for Transport, attached as the **Appendix**, which confirmed approval from Scottish Ministers of SWestrans RTS 2023-2042.

3.5 Officers will now begin finalising the delivery plan for the RTS and will present the delivery plan for comments and feedback from the Board at its meeting on 28 June 2024.

4. Implications	
Financial	There are no financial impacts.
Policy	Policy implications are included within the report.
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment was a critical element of the RTS.
Climate Change	A SEA was a critical element of the RTS. Climate issues are a focus of the RTS.
Risk Management	The need for a current RTS and Delivery Plan relates to a number of known risks:

	R03 – Strategic Direction R04 – Capital Funding R05 – RTS Delivery R07 – Revenue Funding
Impact Assessment	The report does relate to a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy and a full EqIA accompanies the RTS.

5. Recommendation

Members of the Board are asked to note the letter, at the appendix, from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport which confirms final approval from Scottish Ministers of the SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042.

Report Author: Douglas Kirkpatrick/Kirsty Dunsmore Tel: 01387 260136 Date of Report: 08 March 2024 File Ref: SW2/Meetings/2024	Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN
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Appendix – Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Transport

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Councillor John Campbell
South West Scotland Transport Partnership
Cargen Tower
Garroch Business Park
Dumfries
DG2 8PN

By email: john.campbell@dumgal.gov.uk
CC: douglas.kirkpatrick@dumgal.gov.uk

7 March 2024

Dear John,

Regional Transport Strategy for South West of Scotland 2023-2042

Thank you for submitting the South West of Scotland 2023-2042 Regional Transport Strategy for approval by Scottish Ministers in accordance with the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005.

The SWestrans strategy fulfils the role required of a high-level document in that it describes your approach to working with your constituent councils to support the Scottish Government's key purpose and national outcomes, the National Transport Strategy and agreed regional and local transport priorities. Delivery of the Strategy and transport improvements in the South West of Scotland is a matter for SWestrans and its constituent Councils.

I am pleased to approve your Regional Transport Strategy and wish you every success in the efforts in achieving its priorities.

Yours sincerely,

FIONA HYSLOP

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

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PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS

1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to obtain approval to revoke the existing Procurement Standing Orders and replace with the revised Procurement Standing Orders provided at the **Appendix** of this report.
- 1.2 The revised Procurement Standing Orders have been developed following a detailed review in light of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015; Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016; the Concessions Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016; and the statutory guidance made under and in terms of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

2. Considerations

- 2.1 South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) is required to have Procurement Standing Orders to ensure appropriate governance for the effective management of the Partnership. The Procurement Standing Orders govern all spend through contracts across SWestrans.
- 2.2 The current Procurement Standing Orders were last reviewed in July 2013. At its meeting on 26 October 2023, the Board noted that a review of Procurement Standing Orders would be undertaken and reported back.
- 2.3 The key changes to the Procurement Standing Orders are:
 - Translation of the procurement legislation in Scotland into SWestran's Procurement Standing Orders.
 - To take cognisance of best practice following discussions and forums with other local authorities across Scotland, along with guidance issued by the Scottish Government to support implementation of the procurement legislation.
 - The full range of procedures available under the legislation has also been included. Previously there were two tender procedures generally used and reflected within the 2013 Procurement Standing Orders, an open procedure (all interested suppliers are able to submit a tender) and a restricted procedure (a PQQ is used to shortlist the number of suppliers that are invited to submit a tender). Within the new procurement legislation, there are more tender procedures available, which aim to promote innovation and can support early engagement with suppliers to find solutions or identify different ways to deliver services. All tender procedures available within the legislation have now been incorporated within the updated Procurement Standing Orders.
 - Revisions to thresholds have been made to reflect amendments to Thresholds set by the Procurement Reform Act 2014. These thresholds also provide consistency with the thresholds within Dumfries and Galloway Council's Procurement Standing Orders. This should facilitate a more

proportionate approach to procurement which should promote access to contract opportunities for local SMEs.

- Following recent audit reviews, feedback was provided that a fundamental update was required of the Partnership's Procurement Standing Orders given the significant change in procurement landscape since they were last reviewed. The recommendations within this report seek to address the relevant audit recommendations.
- The revised Procurement Standing Orders include additional approval routes and control mechanisms situations along with clearer reporting obligations.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members of the Board:

- 3.1 revoke the current Procurement Standing Orders, effective from 25 March 2024; and
- 3.2 approve the adoption of the Procurement Standing Orders provided at the Appendix of this report, effective from 25 March 2024.

Karen Scott, Procurement & Commissioning Manager for Dumfries and Galloway Council - Report Author
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Date of Report: 13 March 2024
File Ref:

Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick
Lead Officer
The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership
Cargen Tower, Garroch Business Park
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Appendix – SWestrans Procurement Standing Orders, dated March 2024



PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS

March 2024

Final Version 1.0

Contents

1.	Introduction, Purpose and Ambit	4
2.	Definitions	4
3.	Compliance	8
4.	Variation, Revocation and Suspension of the Procurement Standing Orders.....	8
5.	Exemptions	8
6.	Financial Provision	10
7	Valuing the Contract	10
8.	Best Value.....	12
9.	Use of Existing Contracts	12
10	Extensions to Existing Contracts and Contract Variations	13
11.	Indicative Total Values of Contracts	14
12.	Framework Agreements and Dynamic Purchasing System	14
13.	Form of Contract	14
14.	Nomination of Sub-Contractor.....	15
15.	Specification of Standards.....	15
16.	Procedures.....	15
17.	Open Procedure.....	17
18.	Restricted Procedure	17
19.	Negotiated Procedure without Prior Publication of a Notice	18
20.	Competitive Procedure with Negotiation	19
21.	Competitive Dialogue Procedure.....	20
22.	Innovation Partnership	20
23.	Quick Quote	21
24.	Electronic Auctions.....	21
25.	Framework Agreements.....	22
26.	Dynamic Purchasing Systems.....	23
27.	Concessions.....	23
28.	Design Contests.....	24
29.	E-Procurement.....	24
30.	Opening of Tenders	25
31.	Validation, Clarification and Correction of Tenders	25

32.	Technical and Financial Checks.....	26
33.	Post -Tender Negotiations.....	27
34.	Notification of Award	27
35.	Mandatory Standstill Period	28
36.	Health and Safety	28
37.	Equality	28
38.	Contracts Register	28
39.	Extension of Contract Duration	29
40.	Assignment, Termination and Modification.....	29
41.	Pilot Projects	29
42.	Sustainable Development	29
43.	Commencement Date	29

Procurement Standing Orders

1. Introduction, Purpose and Ambit

- 1.1 The purpose of Procurement Standing Orders (“the Standing Orders”) is to set clear rules and procedures for the procurement of goods, works and services for the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (“SWestrans”). The rules and procedures help ensure that SWestrans complies with its legal obligations and is fair, transparent and accountable in its dealings with contractors and suppliers. These Standing Orders are also intended to ensure that SWestrans obtains best value for money and that it is taking good care of the public pound.
- 1.2 The Standing Orders shall apply to the making of all contracts by or on behalf of SWestrans. For the avoidance of doubt, the term “contract” includes any form of agreement, written or unwritten, to which SWestrans is a party which creates rights and / or responsibilities for any of the parties involved but excludes a Grant. Guidance on use of Grants is however included within these Standing Orders.
- 1.3 The Standing Orders are subject to any overriding requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and all regulations and guidance made under and in terms of the Act (“the Procurement Reform Act”).
- 1.4 For the procurement of works contracts, the Scottish Government’s Construction Procurement Handbook shall also be followed.
- 1.5 No tenders shall be invited, nor any offer made or acceptance until a Contract Strategy Document, Framework Utilisation Form or a Negotiated / Contract Extension Request form, including the information set out within Schedule 1, 2 or 3 respectively, has been approved. Likewise, no contract shall be awarded without the approval of the Contract Authorisation Report, in the form set out within Schedule 4.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The following words and expressions used in these Standing Orders shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them:
 - a) “Act” means the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (as amended);
 - b) “Best Value” means good governance and effective management of resources with a continuous focus on continuous improvement, to deliver the best possible outcomes for the public;

- c) "Call-Off Contract" means a contract for the provision of goods, services or works to SWestrans which is procured under an existing Framework Agreement which SWestrans are permitted to use;
- d) "Collaboration Agreement" means the agreement which sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties participating in a Collaborative Procurement;
- e) "Collaborative Procurement" means the procurement of goods, services or works by SWestrans in collaboration with one or more Contracting Authorities, as defined by the 2015 Regulations, with the aim of achieving value for money for SWestrans through sharing expertise, resource and / or by securing benefits through economies of scale through the aggregation of spend to create greater buying power.
- f) "Contract Documents" means the documents to be used in any procurement procedure and where different those intended to form part of any contract following on from a procurement procedure. It includes, but is not restricted to, the SPD, the invitation to tender for or to negotiate a contract, the proposed conditions of contract, the specification or the description of the goods, services or works required and the pricing document and includes any such documents or their equivalents issued using electronic means.
- g) "Contracting Authority" has the meaning given to it in Regulation 2(1) of the 2015 Regulations or as the case may be in Section 1 of the Act, typically for the purposes of these Procurement Standing Orders means SWestrans.
- h) "Contract Authorisation Report" means the document referred to in Standing Order 36.1, containing a summary of the tender process conducted and details of the contract recommended for award. This report shall be provided in the form at Schedule 4.
- i) Contract Notice means the notice published to advertise the procurement opportunity to the market and must include the minimum and specific requirements as set out within the 2015 Regulations.
- j) "Contracts Register" means the register of contracts which SWestrans maintains, pursuant to Section 35 of the Act, and which applies to all contracts of £20,000 or greater in value.
- k) "Contract Strategy Document" means the document referred to in standing order 1.7 which sets out the procurement strategy for delivery of a requirement and is agreed jointly between the Dumfries and Galloway Council's and SWestrans. This report shall be provided in the form at Schedule 1.
- l) "Council" means the Dumfries and Galloway Council constituted under the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
- m) "Dynamic Purchasing System" means an electronic procurement system developed for commonly purchased requirements. Such a system shall be open to any economic operator, meeting the minimum selection requirements,

throughout its duration. The number of operators placed on the system should not be restricted.

- n) "Electronic Means" means electronic equipment for the processing (including digital compression) and storage of data which is transmitted, conveyed and received by radio, by wire, by optical means or by other electromagnetic means.
- o) "Financial Regulations" means the SWestran's Financial Regulations which provide policies to handle SWestrans finances.
- p) "Framework Agreement" means any agreement which sets out terms and conditions under which specific purchases (Call-Off Contracts) can be made throughout the term of the agreement, where SWestrans have expressly been named to use the agreement within the Contract Notice at the time of setting up the agreement.
- q) "GPA Thresholds" means the financial value thresholds derived from the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) by the World Trade Organisation and as updated within Schedule 5 of these Procurement Standing Orders.
- r) "Grant" means funding which is provided as a contribution towards another party's activities for its own purposes and which provides no goods or services to the SWestrans in return.
- s) "Lead Officer" means the SWestrans appointed lead officer responsible for the procurement requirement.
- t) "Public Contracts Scotland Portal" means the Scottish Government's official national portal for advertising public sector contract opportunities, which include the Quick Quote facility.
- u) "Quick Quote" means the online quotation facility on the Public Contracts Scotland Portal which allows Contracting Authorities to obtain competitive quotes electronically for low value requirements.
- v) "Quote" means a binding offer made by an organisation to provide goods, services or works to SWestrans. Typically, a quote may only provide a price or a price and methodology for delivery of the requirement specified by SWestrans in their invitation to submit a quotation.

- w) “Regulated Contract” means a contract for the provision of goods or services with an estimated value / spend over £50,000 in total or a contract for the provision of works with an estimated value / spend over £2,000,000 in total unless the Contract is excluded under the Procurement Reform Rules.
 - x) “Regulated Procurement” means (i) any procedure carried out by SWestrans in relation to the award of a Regulated Contract including, in particular, the seeking of offers in relation to the contract and the selection of suppliers; and (ii) the award of a Regulated Contract by SWestrans.
 - y) “Signature” or “Signed” includes a reference to a signature or other form of formal confirmation using electronic means, such as a digital signature, encryption or other formally recognised authority for identification purposes. For the avoidance of doubt, facsimile signatures are not acceptable.
 - z) “SPD” means the Single Procurement Document. This document is consistently used throughout Scotland and enables tenderers to provide self-declarations to confirm their ability to meet the minimum requirements through a selection procedure. The use of the SPD is mandatory for Regulated Contracts.
 - aa) “Sustainable Procurement Duty” means the duty of that name under the Act.
 - a) “SWestrans” means the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership defined in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005.
 - dd) “Tender” means a formal legal document prepared by a supplier in response to an invitation to submit a tender to deliver goods, services or works to SWestrans. This will include specifics of how a requirement will be met and will generally include a price and response to qualitative criterion.
 - ee) “the Threshold” for the purpose of these standing orders refers to the threshold under the 2015 Regulations and the Concession Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016. The sterling equivalent is recalculated every second year on 1 January of that year to ensure they remain aligned to thresholds set out in the GPA. The next change is due on 1 January 2024. Details of the full list of thresholds applying from 1 January 2022 are set out in Schedule 5.
 - ff) “Written” or “in writing” means any expression consisting of words or figures which can be read, reproduced, and subsequently communicated. It may include information which is transmitted and stored by electronic means provided its provenance / authorisation can be proven.
 - gg) “2015 Regulations” means the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.
 - hh) “2016 Regulations” means the Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016.
- 2.1 Any reference in these standing orders to a statute, other legislation or Directive shall

include reference to any statute, legislation or Directive amending or replacing it.

- 2.2 Any reference in these Standing Orders to a contract shall include, where the context allows, reference to a sub-contract.

3 Compliance

- 3.1 The procurement and award of all contracts, Framework Agreements or Dynamic Purchasing Systems by and on behalf of SWestrans shall comply with the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 3.2 In the event of conflict between these Standing Orders and the requirements of legislation or directives, such legislation or directive overrides the Standing Orders.
- 3.3 The procurement and award of all contracts for goods, services and works by and on behalf of SWestrans shall also comply with the following duties:
- 3.3.1 All tenderers, suppliers and contractors shall be treated equally and without discrimination. Tenderers shall be provided with an equal opportunity when tendering for contracts with SWestrans, based on the same information and criteria and tenders shall be evaluated in a non-discriminatory manner. The ongoing management of suppliers and contractors shall continue to be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner.
- 3.3.2 SWestrans shall act in a transparent and proportionate manner. Tenderers shall be informed in advance, of the evaluation criteria and the scoring methodology which will be used to assess tender responses and determine the successful tenderer. All evidence sought during the tender process shall be proportionate to the value, risk and nature of the requirement.

4 Variation, Revocation and Suspension of the Procurement Standing Orders

- 4.1 These Standing Orders may be varied or revoked by the Board of SWestrans. Any variation to or revocation of the Standing Orders shall be effective on the first working day after the conclusion of the Board meeting at which it was approved.
- 4.2 The SWestrans Lead Officer may approve variations to the Standing Orders in the following circumstances:
- 4.2.1 To change references to legislation, where the legislation is repealed or amended, to insert updated references to the new legislation; or
- 4.2.2 To change the financial values of the Thresholds where referred to in the Standing Orders, to implement any changes in these Thresholds.
- 4.2.3 To amend the Schedules.

5 Exemptions

- 5.1 Subject to standing order 1.2, there shall be exempted from the provisions of these Standing Orders all contracts for the supply of goods or materials for the provision of services or for the execution of works where:-
- 5.1.1 The total estimated value of the proposed contract is less than £50,000 for goods and services and less than £500,000 for works but the contract shall be granted in accordance with the SWestrans' Procedure Note for Lower Value contracts as set out in Schedule 6.

- 5.1.2 In the opinion of the Lead Officer, urgent action is required to prevent danger to life, serious risk to health or damage to property. In such circumstances a report will be submitted to the SWestrans Board at the first available subsequent meeting detailing both the circumstances justifying use of this exemption and the action taken. In such circumstances, any relevant requirements of the GPA and the Procurement Reform Rules shall be complied with. On all occasions where this exemption has been used, SWestrans Board shall be notified and consulted as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- 5.1.3 The contract relates to any of the functions being exercised by Dumfries and Galloway Council on behalf of SWestrans, in which case the procurement standing orders for the Council shall apply.
- 5.1.4 The services required are the appointment of junior or senior legal counsel and Solicitor Advocates (for the avoidance of doubt the appointment of Solicitors is not exempt). However, any such contract must be granted in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Act.
- 5.1.5 Where in the SWestran's Board opinion it is essential that the contract is entered into for the settlement of any claim or litigation raised by or against SWestrans.
- 5.1.6 The contract is for the disposal by SWestrans of surplus or scrap materials and equipment previously used by SWestrans. Best Value shall still be obtained.
- 5.1.7 The contract is being funded by money provided by an external party (including funds from the National Lottery funding distributors, Scottish Government etc) and the award of that money to SWestrans is subject to such conditions that make it impractical for SWestrans to comply with these Standing Orders in procuring the contract. In such circumstances, this will be reported to the SWestrans Board explaining the procedure followed and justification for doing so. In such circumstance, any relevant requirements of the Treaty Principles, the EU Procurement Rules and the Procurement Reform Rules shall be complied with. Otherwise externally funded contracts shall follow these Standing Orders.
- 5.1.8 The contract is co-funded by SWestrans, and SWestran's contribution is less than 50% in cash terms (i.e., discounting in-kind values). However, SWestrans shall ensure Best Value is obtained. Advice may be sought from Legal Services, who shall ensure these obligations shall be passed to the contracting authority.
- 5.1.9 The contract relates to the performing arts. Where performing arts are commissioned by SWestrans, Best Value shall be obtained.
- 5.1.10 It is for a contract of employment, unless the contract is with an employment agency for the supply of staff.
- 5.1.11 The contract relates solely to the transfer, acquisition or disposal of heritable property including a license to occupy or use heritable property.
- 5.1.12 The spend relates to the award of a Grant by SWestrans and not the procurement of a contract for the provision of goods, services or works to SWestrans but shall be awarded in accordance with the Guidance Note on Use of Grants at Schedule 7. Specific advice in relation to the award of Grants by SWestrans should be obtained from the Council's legal service.
- 5.1.13 The award of works or services concessions which are subject to the application of

the Concessions Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

6 Financial Provision

- 6.1 No tender shall be invited or accepted unless appropriate financial provisions have been made and approved in terms of the SWestran's Financial Regulations, or funding has been guaranteed to be provided by a third party.
- 6.2 Where tenders are required to be sought in circumstances where financial provision has not been secured, approval to do so is required from the SWestrans Lead Officer, taking advice from the Council's Procurement and Commissioning Manager and tenderers shall be clearly advised of the basis that tenders are being invited.
- 6.3 The financial provision for the purposes of this Standing Order 6 must include for the full value of the contract, as calculated in accordance with Standing Order 7.

7 Valuing the Contract

- 7.1 For the purposes of these Standing Orders, the value of a contract shall be calculated over the whole life of the contract not the annual value. Where it is likely that a supply of goods, services or works shall be required on a continuing basis over a number of years, the anticipated duration of the continuing supply shall be taken into account when estimating the value of the contract for the purposes of these Standing Orders. When it is not possible to anticipate the length, the annual contract value shall be multiplied by 4 to reach an indicative contract value.
- 7.2 The contract value includes the amount payable as a result of the procurement exercise of any form and any extension period as explicitly set out in the Contract Documents.
- 7.3 Where SWestrans provides for prizes or payment to third parties, these shall be taken into account when calculating the estimated contract value.
- 7.4 It is not permissible to disaggregate a contract in order to circumvent the requirements of these Standing Orders or the Act.
- 7.5 For Regulated Procurements the estimated value must consider any applicable Value Added Tax that may be levied as set out within Schedule 5.
- 7.6 If the cost of a contract is only being met in part by SWestrans the total value of the contract including the funding from a third party shall be, for the purposes of these Procurement Standing Orders, calculated by totalling all the contributions to be made towards the contract cost.
- 7.7 Where a contract includes the provision of services or other funding in kind to the contractor / supplier by either SWestrans or a third party, the value of the contract shall be calculated by including the value of the services being provided and / or the

funding in kind in addition to any monetary consideration.

- 7.8 The estimated value shall be the value estimated at the time at which the procurement is commenced, ensuring it is representative of the current market conditions and tender submissions that may be received.
- 7.9 On receipt of tenders, where the tenders returned are higher than the Threshold applied, advice on how to proceed must immediately be sought from the Council's Procurement and Commissioning Manager. The SWestrans Lead Officer may authorise the procedure to continue where the breach is not to a regulated Threshold, and where there is sufficient evidence to validate the pre-tender estimate as genuine, justification for the additional costs and the proposed contract value does not exceed the permissible financial delegations as set out within the Finance Scheme of Delegation.
- 7.10 In the case of the procurement of a Framework Agreement the estimated value shall be the total estimated value of all of the contracts envisaged thereunder pursuant to and for the total term of the Framework Agreement.
- 7.11 In the case of the procurement of a Dynamic Purchasing System the estimated value shall be the total estimated value of all of the contracts envisaged pursuant to and for the total term of the Dynamic Purchasing System.
- 7.12 In the case of an innovation partnership procurement, the estimated value shall be the total estimated value of the research and development activities to take place during all stages of the partnership together with the estimated value of works, supplies or services to be developed and delivered by the partner.
- 7.13 In the case of a public works contract the estimated value shall include the total estimated value of any supplies and services that are necessary for executing the works and that are to be provided by SWestrans to the contractor.
- 7.14 In the case of a procurement to be awarded in the form of separate lots, the estimated value shall be the total estimated value of all such lots.
- 7.15 In the case of a public supply contract relating to the leasing, rental, hire or hire purchase of products the estimated value shall be—
- I. in the case of a fixed term contract for a period of less than or equal to 12 months, the total estimated value of the contract;
 - II. in the case of a fixed term contract for a period of more than 12 months, the total value including the estimated residual value; and
 - III. in the case of a contract without a fixed term or the term of which cannot be defined, the monthly value multiplied by 48.
- 7.16 In the case of a public service contract for a service of a kind mentioned in this

paragraph, the estimated value shall be calculated by reference to—

- I. for insurance services, the premium payable and any other form of remuneration;
- II. for banking and other financial services, the fees, commissions payable, interest and any other form of remuneration; and
- III. for design contracts, the fees, commissions payable and any other form of remuneration.

8. Best Value

- 8.1 All procurement of goods works or services shall be based on “Best value”. “Best value”, in this context, is defined as the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality (or fitness for purpose) to meet SWestran’s requirements. Additional guidance is provided within the guidance note for completion of the Contract Strategy Document.
- 8.2 No tender evaluations shall use price or cost as the sole contract award criteria, without prior approval from SWestran’s Lead Officer taking advice from the Council’s Procurement and Commissioning Manager. No such approval shall be granted for Regulated Contracts.

9. Use of Existing Contracts

- 9.1 Where SWestrans has an existing contract for the provision of goods, services or works, which has been competitively tendered and awarded, this contract shall be used for all requirements falling within the scope of that contract.
- 9.2 Where SWestrans has an existing Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System in place, this should be used where the requirements fall within the scope of the Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System. However, where an existing SWestran’s Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System will not represent value for money, this shall be clearly documented within the Contract Strategy Document and an alternative route to market may be recommended.
- 9.3 Where the Council, another local authority or public sector body have an existing collaborative contract, Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System in place which can be utilised by SWestrans, this should be used. Advice from the Council’s Corporate Procurement Team shall be taken in conjunction with the Council’s Governance and Assurance Service Manager to ensure that the contract is one to which SWestrans can be party and that no further compliance procedures on the part of SWestrans are necessary. Where an existing Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System will not represent value for money to SWestrans, this shall be clearly documented within the Framework Utilisation Form provided at Schedule 2 and an alternative route to market may be recommended.
- 9.4 Where there is no suitable existing contract, Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System, SWestrans may consider the use of a Collaborative Procurement provided it is in the best interests of SWestrans so to do. However, prior to utilising a Collaborative Procurement, the SWestrans Lead Officer shall enter into a Collaboration Agreement.

10 Extensions to Existing Contracts and Contract Variations

- 10.1 Where an existing contract includes the option to extend within the terms of the contract, SWestrans Lead Officer shall consider and may authorise the exercise of the extension option on behalf of SWestrans. Such an extension may only be authorised, without wider contract authorisations where the value stated within the Contract Authorisation Report and contract award notice has not been reached, including the value of spend that may be spent on the contract during the extension period. The Council's Procurement and Commissioning Manager and Governance and Assurance Manager shall be consulted as necessary on the scope of the extension option and any necessary notices or documents to be issued / entered into.
- 10.2 For the purpose of clause 10.1, an extension of a contract includes the option to increase the amount of supplies, services or works acquired under the contract as well as the option to increase the duration of the contract.
- 10.3 Changes (variations) to contracts can occur throughout the lifetime of a contract, subject to the terms and conditions of the contract. Such changes may relate to:
- Service Delivery;
 - Scope of Work;
 - Performance;
 - Costs;
 - Product Availability/ Specification Change/ Revision of Rates;
 - Legislative changes;
 - Whether the contract represents Best Value.

The need for contract variations should be minimised. Any contract variation must be compliant with the 2015 Regulations. Where a substantial change is required, it may require a new procurement of a new contract. This should only be done following receipt of appropriate legal and procurement advice.

- 10.4 For works contracts, it is recognised that a degree of flexibility is required to allow the responsible contract manager on site to respond to unforeseen circumstances necessary to allow completion of the planned works. To accommodate this, a tolerance of £50,000 or 20% of the contract value shall be allowed. Such variations shall be retrospectively report to the SWestrans Board.
- 10.5 Where a contract has been advertised in accordance with the Thresholds and it becomes apparent that the indicative total value of the contract as previously reported within the Contract Authorisation Report is likely to be exceeded, the SWestrans Lead Officer shall obtain appropriate legal and procurement advice on what action requires to be taken.
- 10.6 Where a contract has not been advertised under the Thresholds and the increase in

the value of the contract is such that the Threshold is likely to be exceeded, no further orders shall be made under the contract.

11. Indicative Total Values of Contracts

- 11.1 Where a contract has been advertised in accordance with the Thresholds and associated rules and it becomes apparent that the indicative total value of the contract as previously reported is likely to be exceeded, the SWestrans Lead officer shall obtain appropriate procurement and legal advice on what action requires to be taken.
- 11.2 Where a contract has not been advertised under the relevant Thresholds and the increase in the value of the contract is such that the Threshold is likely to be exceeded, no further orders shall be made under the contract.
- 11.3 In every contract which is priced on a schedule of rates, prior to invitations to tender being issued, indicative quantities shall be provided. The indicative quantities shall be used to provide an indicative total value for the contract used for the tender evaluation. The relevant indicative total value shall also be set out in all reports and relevant Contract Notices.

12. Framework Agreements and Dynamic Purchasing System

- 12.1 Where there is likely to be a repeated need for a particular supply of goods, services or works to SWestrans, this can be procured by way of a Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System. Appropriate assistance and guidance shall be obtained from the Council's Corporate Procurement Team before proceeding by way of setting up or utilising a Framework Agreement or Dynamic Purchasing System.
- 12.2 No Framework Agreement shall last longer than 4 years except in exceptional circumstances, as justified under the 2015 Regulations and fully documented within the Contract Strategy Document.

13. Form of Contract

- 13.1 Every contract shall be:
- In the name of SWestrans;
 - In writing;
 - Signed by an officer authorised by SWestrans to sign contracts; and
 - Subject to the Laws of Scotland.
- The Contract Documents in respect of all contracts over the Thresholds shall be drafted by the Council's procurement or governance & assurance services.
- SWestrans shall use template terms and conditions provided by Legal Services or shall request drafting of fit for purpose terms and conditions from Legal Services where suitable templates are not available.
- 13.2 SWestrans may also make use of Contract Documents prepared by the Scottish Government, the Crown Commercial Services, Scotland Excel, or any other agency of the UK government, other Scottish Centres of Procurement Expertise;

local authorities; and other collaborative bodies where SWestrans are eligible to use the Contract Documents and that these are suitable for the contract.

- 13.3 All tender documents shall clearly state that the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 apply to all contracts arranged by or on behalf of SWestrans. This is to ensure that contractors / suppliers / service providers are aware that SWestrans may be required, as a matter of law, to release information to third parties which may include information that the contractor / supplier / service provider may wish to be treated as confidential.
- 13.4 The following rules shall apply when determining how to treat a mixed procurement of any contract for the supply of goods, provision of services and the carrying out of works:-
- (i) Services/Supplies
Determining factor is the main subject matter identified by reference to the element which has the highest estimated value i.e., if the value attributed to services exceeds that attributable to supplies then it will be treated as a services contract.
- (ii) Services/Social and Specific Services
Determining factor is the main subject matter identified by reference to the element which has the highest estimated value i.e., if the value attributed to services exceeds that attributable to the Social and Specific Services then it will be treated as a services contract
- (iii) Concession/ Works, Services and/or Supplies
If the estimated value of the works/services/supplies element exceeds the Thresholds, it will be treated as a public contract for works/services/supplies and not a concession contract
- (iv) Works/ Services or Supplies
Determining factor is the main subject of the contract in question regardless of the relative values of the elements and then the relevant Threshold applies to determine the applicable rules.

14. Nomination of Sub-Contractor

- 14.1 Where a contract provides for the nomination of a sub-contractor, the appointment of a nominated sub-contractor shall comply with these Standing Orders.

15. Specification of Standards

- 15.1 Where there is a recognised British, European or International Standard applicable to any contract which is current at the date of tender, the Contract Documents shall require that the goods, materials or services to be used or supplied and all workmanship shall at least meet the requirement of that standard.

16. Procedures

- 16.1 All contracts shall be awarded in accordance with one of the procedures set out in these Standing Orders. Generally, the Open Procedure or call offs under existing

contracts or Framework Agreements will be used, however due to complexity of the requirements use of another procedure may be recommended and approved within the Contract Strategy Document.

- 16.2 The procedure to be used, along with the reasons for using that procedure, shall be recorded within the Contract Strategy Document provided at Schedule 1.
- 16.3 No tender shall be invited or offer made or accepted for any contract for the supply of goods, or the carrying out of works or the provision of services (including a call off from an internal or external Framework Agreement) without a contract reference number having been attributed.
- 16.4 A Contract Strategy Document in the form provided at Schedule 1 or a Framework Utilisation Form set out at Schedule 2, shall be prepared for all requirements where the estimated aggregated value exceeds £50,000 for goods and services or £500,000 for works. The Contract Strategy Document shall record the procedure to be used and the reasons for the recommended use of that procedure. Where using an existing Framework Agreement, typically those provided by the Council, Crown Commercial Services, Scotland Excel or Scottish Government, then the Framework Utilisation Form provided at Schedule 2 may be used to record this information and the market information provided within the framework owner's contract strategy can be relied upon to inform the decision making on the suitability of its use.
- 16.5 Where the estimated value of any contract is likely to equal or exceed the higher Threshold, procurement advice shall be obtained on the appropriate threshold to be applied. Where tenders return over the threshold for the procedure utilised, procurement advice must be obtained. The SWestrans Lead Officer shall not authorise the award of the contract where the recommended contract value is greater than the relevant Threshold plus 10%. This applies to contracts governed by the Procedure Note for Lower Value Contracts provided at Schedule 6 of these Standing Orders.
- 16.6 Where it is established that the Regulated Procurement Rules apply to any contract, procurement advice shall be obtained, which should ensure the appropriate procedure is followed in terms of those Rules.
- 16.7 Any contract that is not required to follow a procedure set out in the Regulated Procurement Rules shall be let in accordance with one of the procedures set out in these standing orders and shall comply with any procurement guidance issued.
- 16.8 The SPD shall be used in all procedures.
- 16.9 All prior information notices, Contract Notices and contract award notices must be published via the Public Contracts Scotland website and Find a Tender and OJEU (if applicable) in accordance with applicable provisions of the Act, the 2015 Regulations, any other regulations made by the Scottish Government under the Act and any guidance issued by the Scottish Government under the Reform Act.

17. Open Procedure

- 17.1 The Contract Strategy Document approval may authorise the use of the open procedure which shall be conducted in accordance with this Standing Order.
- 17.2 Where using the open procedure a Contract Notice shall be published on the Public Contracts Scotland Portal and where the estimated contract value is above the Threshold, the notice shall also be published on Find a Tender. Additional publicising of the contract opportunity may be placed, for example in local newspapers.
- 17.3 The Open Procedure may be used to procure a public contract, Framework Agreement, Dynamic Purchasing System, alliance contract or public social partnership with one or multiple providers.
- 17.4 The date and time stated in the notice by which tenders must be received, shall be no sooner than 5 working days from the date the notice is published, however, to encourage competition longer tender times should be allowed. For Regulated Procurement the relevant 2015 Regulations prescribed timescales must be observed, this is generally a minimum of 30 calendar days from publishing the tender until the tender deadline, taking into account reductions available for use of electronic tender systems.
- 17.5 The Invitation to Tender template document provided on the Council's Procurement Sharepoint site shall be used.
- 17.6 Any queries received during the tender process shall be submitted and responded to utilising the question-and-answer facility of the e-tender platform, providing the response to all interested parties.
- 17.7 Clarifications and queries should be minor. Where there are a substantial number of queries or fundamental clarifications or changes are required to the tender document, procurement advice shall be obtained by the SWestrans Lead Officer to determine if this requires a new procurement procedure to be followed.
- 17.8 At the same time as a notice is published, the relevant contract documents shall also be available electronically. The Contract Notice shall not be published where a final set of tender documents are not available for publication.

18. Restricted Procedure

- 18.1 The Contract Strategy Document approval may authorise the use of the restricted procedure which shall be conducted in accordance with this Standing Order.
- 18.2 Where using the restricted procedure, a notice shall be published on the Public Contracts Scotland Portal and where the estimated contract value is above the Threshold, the notice must also be published on Find a Tender. Additional publicising

of the contract opportunity may be placed, for example in local newspapers.

- 18.3 All applicants responding to the notice issued in terms of Standing Order 18.2 shall be required to provide a completed SPD by the date and time specified in the notice. This date and time shall take cognisance of the complexity of the subject matter of the contract and the time needed to prepare the SPD.
- 18.4 No organisation shall be invited to tender unless they have successfully complied with the technical and financial checks in standing order 33 and have met the criteria to be invited to tender set out in the Contract Notice.
- 18.5 A sufficient number of organisations shall be selected to be invited to tender to ensure genuine competition; this in any event shall not be fewer than five for each contract / lot. Where fewer than five applicants express an interest, all those applicants meeting the minimum evaluation criteria, shall be invited to tender.
- 18.6 Invitations to tender shall be sent simultaneously to each applicant selected to tender for a contract and the invitation to tender shall be accompanied by a link to the Contract Documents which shall have been made available electronically.
- 18.7 The invitation to tender shall also include the final date and time for the receipt of tenders by the Council and the criteria to be used in evaluating the tenders.
- 18.8 The Invitation to Tender template document provided on the Council's Procurement Sharepoint site shall be used.

19. Negotiated Procedure without Prior Publication of a Notice

- 19.1 The negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice is only available in very limited circumstances and shall only be used where it is identified as the appropriate procedure procurement advice shall be obtained by the SWestrans Lead Officer.
- 19.2 The negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice shall only be used with the prior written approval of the SWestrans Board, taking cognisance of all relevant procurement and legal advice.
- 19.3 Where the 2015 Regulations do not apply, the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice shall only be used in the circumstances stated in the Procurement Reform Rules (Regulation 6 of the 2016 Regulations).
- 19.4 Where the 2015 Regulations apply, the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice shall only be used on any grounds specified in those Rules.
- 19.5 For the purposes of these Standing Orders the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice means the direct negotiations with a single contractor or supplier or service provider without competition, with a view to awarding the contract to that contractor or supplier or service provider or to extend an existing contract.
- 19.6 Where the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice has been used the contract shall be awarded on behalf of SWestrans by the Lead Officer, with the

prior approval of the SWestrans Board.

- 19.7 In all cases where the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a notice is used, a full written record of all contacts, discussions and communications with prospective contractor(s), supplier(s) or service provider(s) shall be kept by the SWestrans Lead Officer.
- 19.8 A minimum of two officers, shall be present at all times during any discussions with prospective contractors. One of these officers may be a Council officer.
- 19.9 The SWestrans Lead Officer shall ensure that records of all discussions with prospective contractors are signed as such by all participants.
- 19.10 The principles of fairness, equal treatment, and transparency shall be observed at all times during the negotiations.

20. Competitive Procedure with Negotiation

- 20.1 The Contract Strategy Document may recommend, and authorisation of the Contract Strategy Document may elect to use the competitive procedure with negotiation where the restricted and open procedures in these Standing Orders are not appropriate for a requirement.
- 20.2 The competitive procedure with negotiation may only be used on one of the following grounds:
 - a. Where the needs of the SWestrans cannot be met without adaptation of readily available solutions;
 - b. Where the contract includes design or innovative solutions;
 - c. Where the requirement is complex in nature, in its legal and financial make-up or because of its risks;
 - d. Where the technical specifications cannot be established with sufficient precision; or
 - e. Where unacceptable or irregular tenders have been received following a restricted or open procedure.
- 20.3 The justification for use of the competitive procedure with negotiation shall be recorded in the Contract Strategy Document.
- 20.4 Where the competitive procedure with negotiation is used, the rules for such a procedure as set out in the 2015 Regulations shall be followed. However, where the 2015 Regulations would not otherwise apply to the contract, timescales that are applied to the procedure shall take into account factors such as the complexity of the subject matter of the contract.
- 20.5 In all cases where the competitive procedure with negotiation is used, a full written record of all contacts, discussions and communications with tenderers shall be kept by the SWestrans Lead Officer.
- 20.6 A minimum of two officers, shall be present at all times during any discussions with tenderers. One of these officers may be a Council officer.
- 20.7 The SWestrans Lead Officer shall ensure that records of all discussions with tenderers are signed as such by all participants.

- 20.8 The principles of fair, equal treatment and transparency shall be observed at all times during the negotiations.

21. Competitive Dialogue Procedure

- 21.1 The Contract Strategy Document may recommend, and authorisation of the Contract Strategy Document may elect to use the competitive dialogue procedure where the restricted and open procedures in these Standing Orders are not appropriate for a contract.
- 21.2 The competitive dialogue procedure shall only be used on one of the grounds set out in standing order 20.2.
- 21.3 The justification for the use of the competitive dialogue procedure shall be recorded within the Contract Strategy Document.
- 21.4 Where the competitive dialogue procedure is used, the rules for such a procedure set out in the 2015 Regulations shall be followed. However, where the 2015 Regulations would not otherwise apply to the contract, timescales that are applied to the procedure shall take into account factors such as the complexity of the subject matter of the contract.
- 21.5 In all cases where the competitive procedure is used, a full written record of all contacts, discussions and communications with tenderers shall be kept by the SWestrans Lead Officer.
- 21.6 A minimum of two officers, shall be present at all times during any discussions with tenderers. One of these officers may be a Council officer.
- 21.7 The SWestrans Lead Officer shall ensure that records of all discussions with tenderers are signed as such by all participants.
- 21.8 The principles of fair, equal treatment and transparency shall be observed at all times during the negotiations.

22. Innovation Partnership

- 22.1 The Contract Strategy Document may recommend, and authorisation of the Contract Strategy Document may elect to use the innovation partnership procedure as defined within the 2015 Regulations, where there is a need for innovative works, products or service which cannot be met by solutions already available on the market.
- 22.2 The aim of the innovation partnership will be the development of the required innovative works, products, or services and the subsequent purchase of the resulting works, supplies, or services.
- 22.3 The estimated value of the works supplies, or services shall not be disproportionate in relation to the investment required for their development.

- 22.4 Where the innovation partnership procedure is used, the rules for such a procedure set out in the 2015 Regulations shall be followed. However, where the 2015 Regulations would not otherwise apply to the contract, the timescales that are to apply to the procedure shall take into account factors such as the complexity of the subject matter of the contract.

23. Quick Quote

- 23.1 Where a contract is above the Thresholds for the Procedure Note for Lower Value Contracts provided at Schedule 6 but below the regulated Threshold, the Contract Strategy Document may elect to use the quick quote procedure.
- 23.2 The Quick Quote procedures to be followed shall be the same as those set out in Schedule 6 to these Standing Orders, notwithstanding that the value of the contract will be greater than the procedure note thresholds.

24. Electronic Auctions

- 24.1 For the purpose of these Standing Orders, the expression “electronic auction” means:- A repetitive process involving an electronic device for the presentation of new prices, revised downwards, and/or new values concerning certain elements of tenders, which occurs after an initial full evaluation of the tenders, enabling them to be ranked using automatic evaluation methods or utilising an existing framework agreement where the use of electronic auctions as a call off mechanism is permitted.
- 24.2 The Contract Strategy Document may recommend, and authorisation of the Contract Strategy Document may elect to use an electronic auction where the possibility of the use of an electronic auction has been stated in the approved Contract Strategy Document and subsequent Contract Documents issued to suppliers and, where the 2015 Regulations apply, in the Contract Notice published in the appropriate portal and journals.
- 24.3 Electronic auctions shall be considered for IT purchases.
- 24.4 For the avoidance of doubt, an electronic auction may be used where previous stages of a tendering procedure have not been undertaken using electronic means.
- 24.5 Before proceeding with an electronic auction, a full initial evaluation of the tenders shall have been made in accordance with the award criteria. All tenderers who have submitted admissible tenders shall be invited simultaneously by electronic means to submit new prices and/or new values.
- 24.6 Throughout each phase of an electronic auction SWestrans shall instantaneously communicate to all tenderers involved at least sufficient information to enable them to ascertain their relative rankings at any moment. SWestrans may also, at any time, announce the number of participants in that electronic auction. In no case, however, shall SWestrans disclose the identities of the tenderers during any phase of an electronic auction.
- 24.7 Prior to the commencement of any electronic auction, SWestrans shall intimate to all tenderers involved the date and time fixed for the carrying out of the electronic auction and the proposed duration of the electronic auction together with any proposals for the extension of the duration of the electronic auction.

25. Framework Agreements

- 25.1 Where SWestrans wishes to establish a framework agreement (“Framework”) to provide for agreement on the terms for future contracts for the purchase by SWestrans of goods, services and works, the following requirements shall be complied with: -
- (a) Where the 2015 Regulations apply, SWestran’s Lead Officer shall establish the Framework in accordance with those Regulations.
 - (b) In all other circumstances: -
 - i. The suppliers to be invited to tender shall be selected from those who have responded to a notice.
 - ii. The notice shall be published in accordance with the relevant procedure being followed.
 - iii. The notice shall mention: -
 - a. that SWestrans wishes to establish a Framework;
 - b. a description of the goods, service or works which are to be purchased under the Framework;
 - c. The conditions and call off procedure of the Framework and the applicable contract conditions that shall apply to contracts called off under the Framework.
- 25.2 Where a Framework has been established SWestrans may award a contract under the Framework without being required to seek further competition amongst the contractors on the Framework, where the call off procedure of the Framework permits them to do so, doing so presents value for money and where the direct award Framework call off procedure has been approved as the procurement route in the Contract Strategy Document.
- 25.3 Where a Framework has been established but it does not lay down all of the terms of a proposed contract including, for example, where a new item can legitimately be added to the Framework, a mini competition procedure under the Framework in accordance with Standing Order 25.4 below shall be conducted, where use of the Framework has been approved as the procurement route within the Contract Strategy Document.
- 25.4 Any mini-competition procedure shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Framework and the following:-
- a) every contractor on the Framework capable of performing the contract shall be issued with an invitation to take part in the mini competition. All invitations shall be issued at the same time;
 - b) the invitations shall specify the closing date and time for submission of tenders under the mini competition procedure. The time limit fixed for the return of tenders shall take into account factors such as the complexity of the subject matter of the contract and the time needed to prepare a tender, but, in any event, shall be not less than 4 working days from the date the invitations are issued;
 - c) each tender shall be kept confidential until the expiry of the time limit for the receipt of tenders;
 - d) any award of contract shall be made to the contractor or contractors who submitted the best tender or tenders on the basis of the award criteria specified in the

- Contract Documents based on the Framework documents; and
- e) any award of contract following a mini competition procedure shall comply with Standing Orders 33 and 36.

25.5 Where a Regulated Contract is awarded, following a direct award or further competition, under a Framework, an award notice must be published on the Public Contracts Scotland Portal.

25.6 Where, in order to participate in an existing Framework, SWestrans is required to enter into a participation agreement or other similar agreement regulating the use of the Framework by SWestrans, the Lead Officer shall have the authority to enter into the agreement on behalf of SWestrans.

26. Dynamic Purchasing Systems

26.1 The SWestrans Lead Officer may elect to establish and use a Dynamic Purchasing System ("DPS") if satisfied that:

- a) it is in the interests of SWestrans to do so;
- b) the DPS will only be used for commonly used purchases the characteristics of which, as generally available on the open market, meet SWestrans's requirements; and
- c) the costs of the DPS will not outweigh the likely benefits of using the DPS.

26.2 Any DPS established under this Standing Order shall be operated as a completely electronic process and, throughout its period of validity, shall be open for the admission of any suppliers who meet the selection criteria set.

26.3 Where the Contract Strategy Document elects to establish and use a DPS, the rules for such a procedure set out in the 2015 Regulations shall be followed.

27. Concessions

27.1 Where SWestrans intends to grant a services concession contract or a works concession contract ("concession"), SWestrans Lead Officer shall be responsible for determining a best estimate of the financial value of the concession which shall be in accordance with the Concession Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016, if applicable.

27.2 Based on the best estimate of the financial value of the concession, the SWestrans Lead Officer, seeking procurement and legal advice, shall determine the procedures that require to be followed in terms of these Standing Orders and, where applicable, the Concession Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016. This shall ensure the principles fair, equal, transparent treatment of interested parties continue to be observed and is likely to recommend an advertised opportunity irrespective of if the Concessions Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016 threshold applies.

28. Design Contests

28.1 Where the SWestrans Lead Officer considers it appropriate to do so, a design contest may be held, which shall be a competitive procedure whereby plans and designs are invited under predetermined rules in terms of which the successful entry selected is awarded a contract.

- 28.2 Where a design contest is to be held, a notice shall be placed on the Public Contracts Scotland Portal and in addition may also be placed in one or more national newspapers circulating in the Dumfries and Galloway area and also in such trade journals as may be considered necessary. The notice shall state:-
- a) that a design contest is being held;
 - b) a description of the project;
 - c) the place where a prospective competitor may obtain a copy of the rules; and
 - d) the date not less than 14 days from the date of the publication of the notice by which the prospective competitor must intimate, in writing, their interest in being involved in the contest.
- 28.3 After the expiry of the period specified in the notice, invitations to tender shall be sent to at least three persons selected. If fewer than three persons have applied and are considered suitable, then invitations to tender shall be sent to all suitable persons.
- 28.4 Where only one suitable applicant has applied, SWestrans Lead Officer shall decide either to abandon the contest or to negotiate with the sole suitable applicant for the award of the contract using the Negotiated Procedure without Prior Publication of a Notice in Standing Order 19.
- 28.5 For the purposes of these Standing Orders a design contest means a competition in which SWestrans:-
- a) invites the entry of plans and designs;
 - b) establishes rules for the competition under which the plans or designs will be judged by a jury;
 - c) may award prizes; and
 - d) is enabled to acquire the use or ownership of plans or designs selected by the jury.

29. E-Procurement

- 29.1 This Standing Order shall apply to any tendering procedure (including for the avoidance of doubt a mini competition under a Framework) or contract entered into using electronic means.
- 29.2 Unless in exceptional circumstances, all procurement exercises or negotiated procedures shall be conducted by electronic means ("e-procurement").
- 29.3 No tender submitted using electronic means shall be considered unless it is received in the format requested and prior to the deadline for the receipt of tenders as stated in the Contract Documents and is submitted via the electronic tender system.
- 29.4 All tenders received shall be kept unopened in a single secure electronic mailbox that cannot be opened before the deadline for the receipt of tenders.
- 29.5 Insofar as is reasonably practicable the electronic tender system used does not allow the identity of the organisation(s) submitting the tender to be revealed prior to the tender being opened after the deadline for the receipt of tenders.
- 29.6 For each procurement exercise the electronic tender system used shall keep and, if required, produce a record showing the time and date of receipt of all tenders received.
- 29.7 Late tenders shall be clearly identified as such by the system and shall be recorded as rejected on the system with the tenderer being notified to this effect.

- 29.8 Late tenders shall be rejected except in special circumstances where a late tender is required to be received. Acceptance of a later tender shall only be granted in circumstances where for example only one other offer has been received by the deadline and may only be accepted provided the other offer has not yet been opened.
- 29.9 The tender deadline for the submission of tenders shall be extended:
- i) where additional relevant information, although requested by a potential tenderer in good time, is not supplied at least six days before the deadline; or
 - ii) where significant changes are made to the Contract Documents; or
 - iii) Where it is considered appropriate to do so to provide the best possible tender returns.
- 29.10 Where the deadline for submission of tenders is extended, the officer responsible for the administration of the tender process shall notify all potential tenderers of the extension and any tenderers who have already submitted tenders shall be given the opportunity to re-submit their tenders.
- 29.11 This Standing Order shall also apply to the receipt and custody of tenders for sub-contracts let using electronic means to be performed by nominated sub-contractors.

30. Opening of Tenders

- 30.1 All tenders shall be opened as soon as is reasonably practical following the tender deadline.
- 30.2 All tenders for a procurement exercise shall be opened immediately one after the other during one session.
- 30.3 A minimum of two officers from shall be present when tenders are opened. The officers present shall complete and sign a record to show who opened the tenders, who witnessed the process and the responses received. One of these officers may be a Council officer.

31. Validation, Clarification and Correction of Tenders

- 31.1 All tenders shall be subject to checking.
- 31.2 Between the last time and date for the receipt of tenders and the date on which a decision is taken as to which, if any, tender is to be accepted a tenderer may be contacted where it is necessary to validate or clarify the terms of the tender, including the withdrawal of any qualification to the tender or to affect any necessary adjustments. A full written record shall be kept of all such contacts and shall be retained with the original tender.
- 31.3 An arithmetical check of all tenders will be carried out and recorded as having been completed. Where examination of the tenders reveals arithmetical errors, or obvious errors in the rates tendered or discrepancies, the tenderer will be given the opportunity of confirming, amending (in the case of arithmetical errors only) or withdrawing his tender. All correspondence relating to such matters shall be in writing or in email and shall be retained with the original tender.

- 31.4 For works contracts, reviews to ensure sustainable pricing of all tenders will also be carried out. Where this review provides areas for concern the clarification procedures as set out within the Scottish Government Construction Procurement Handbook for abnormally low tenders and sustainable pricing shall be conducted and as further set out within section 33.
- 31.5 Where during the commercial evaluation of tender submissions, the evaluators consider that a tender may be abnormally low, the procedures set out to clarify abnormally low tenders within the relevant procurement handbook or procurement journey provided by Scottish Government shall be followed to ascertain the sustainability of the offer.
- 31.6 The application of this procedure and the outcome must be documented within the Contract Authorisation Report.

32. Technical and Financial Checks

- 32.1 No organisation may be awarded a contract for the supply of goods, materials or services or the execution of works unless a satisfactory review of the proposed organisation has been carried out as to:-
- the technical capability of the tenderer; and
 - the financial standing of the tenderer.
- 32.2 It shall not be necessary to review the financial standing of proposed contractors where:
- the estimated value of the contract is £100,000 or below; or
 - the tenderer has been reviewed in the preceding 12 months from the date of the tender.
- 32.3 Assessment of a tenderer's technical capacity shall include a determination as to whether:
- a) the tenderer meets the selection criteria; and
 - b) any exclusion grounds under the Procurement Reform Rules apply to the tenderer.
- 32.4 The assessment under Standing Order 32 shall be based initially on the SPD submitted by the tenderer but, at any moment during the procedure, SWestrans may require the tenderer to submit all or any of the supporting documents where it is considered to be necessary to ensure the proper conduct of the procedure.
- 32.5 Where a procedure requires a shortlist of participants to be prepared, before a participant may be included on the shortlist the officers responsible for the procurement shall:-
- a. verify that the participant whom he/she intends to shortlist meets all relevant criteria; and
 - b. require the participant to submit such means of proof and supporting documents that is considered to be necessary.

- 32.6 Before preparing any report to seek approval to award a contract, the officers responsible for the procurement shall:-
- a. verify that the participant who is the proposed contractor meets all relevant criteria; and
 - b. require the participant who is the proposed contractor to submit such means of proof and supporting documents that is considered to be necessary.
- 32.7 Where the responsible officers are unable to verify that an organisation meets all relevant criteria, or where an organisation fails to submit such means of proof and supporting documents as required, the organisation shall be excluded from the procedure.
- 32.8 A record showing the results of each check of the technical capacity and financial standing for each tenderer shall be retained on file by the Corporate Procurement Team. Procuring service departments shall provide copies of such records to Corporate Procurement Team where they were not directly involved in the evaluation.

33. Post -Tender Negotiations

- 33.1 Once the evaluation of tenders has been completed, SWestrans may enter into post tender negotiations. Post tender negotiations shall only be used in circumstances where the tender evaluation process has been conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders and has identified a tenderer or tenderers who have submitted the most economically advantageous tender to SWestrans for a contract or part of a contract and is satisfied that there is scope for improvement in the offer received and that such negotiations will be in the best interests of securing value for money or improved terms and conditions for SWestrans. Post tender negotiations shall only be used with that tenderer so identified. The post tender negotiations shall not be used to put other tenderers at a disadvantage or to distort competition.
- 33.2 Where it is considered possible that post tender negotiations might apply, a clear indication will be given to prospective contractors in the instructions to tenderers that post tender negotiations might be considered.

34. Notification of Award

- 34.1 Following the evaluation of all tenders received, the Contract Authorisation Report provided at Schedule 4 shall be prepared and submitted for approval in advance of notifying tenderers of the outcome or awarding a contract.
- 34.2 The successful tender shall only be accepted on behalf of SWestrans in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.
- 34.3 The SWestrans Lead Officer may terminate any procedure at any time up to the award of the contract where in circumstances where Lead Officers believes that justification exists for that course of action and appropriate procurement and legal advice has been obtained. Where a procedure is terminated, all tenderers shall be informed of the decision in writing as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 34.4 In accordance with the Procurement Reform Rules, where a tenderer is excluded from a procedure at any stage before submitting a tender, the tenderer shall be notified in writing and provide reasons as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 34.5 All tenderers shall be informed in writing of the success or otherwise of their tender as

soon as is reasonably practicable after the approval of the successful tender and shall be provided with reasons in accordance with the applicable Procurement Reform Rules.

- 34.6 Where e-tendering has been used, the communication with tenderers in terms of Standing Order 34.5 above shall be undertaken using the e-tender system.
- 34.7 Advice may be sought from the Council's Corporate Procurement Team on the wording of these letters, or templates to be used where available.

35. Mandatory Standstill Period

- 35.1 Where the 2015 Regulations apply and authority has been granted for the acceptance of the successful tenders, no tender shall be accepted until the date when the mandatory standstill period in terms of those Regulations has expired, and no valid challenge has been received to the contract award decision.
- 35.2 The mandatory standstill period is a period of at least 10 calendar days between the date of dispatch of the letters issued in accordance with the 2015 Regulations and the date when it is proposed to enter into the contract.

36. Health and Safety

- 36.1 No contract shall be awarded to a contractor unless the contractor, supplier or service provider satisfies SWestrans that they are operating health and safety policies which conform to the current legislation.

37. Equality

- 37.1 No contract shall be awarded to a contractor unless the contractor, supplier or service provider satisfies SWestrans that they are complying with the Equality Act 2010.

38. Contracts Register

- 38.1 Within 5 working days of the award of a contract, the officer who has responsibility for awarding or managing the contract shall ensure it is included on the appropriate Contracts Register.

39. Extension of Contract Duration

- 39.1 Where appropriate and in conformity with the 2015 Regulations, provision can be made in a contract for a period of extension.

40. Assignment, Termination and Modification

- 40.1 In every contract, there shall be a provision whereby the contractor shall be prohibited from transferring or assigning to any person or persons whatever, any portion of the contract without the prior written consent of SWestrans. SWestrans shall seek appropriate legal and procurement advice prior to considering the assignment of a contract.
- 40.2 The Lead Officer may exercise any power on behalf of SWestrans to terminate any

contract or part of a contract or to terminate SWestran's participation in a Framework Agreement or to agree to vary or amend the terms of any contract but only following legal and procurement advice and subject to them all being satisfied that it is reasonable and in the interests of SWestran's to exercise that power.

41. Pilot Projects

- 41.1 These Standing Orders shall apply to any procurement related to pilot projects for which SWestrans has responsibility whether or not fully or part funded by SWestrans, the Council, the Scottish Government or another third party.

42. Sustainable Development

- 42.1 SWestrans are committed to achieving sustainable procurement outcomes and must ensure SWestrans fulfils its Sustainable Procurement Duty.
- 42.2 The Sustainable Procurement Duty will be considered in the development of every Contract Strategy Document for a Regulated Procurement, taking into account how the Regulated Procurement can:
- (a) improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Dumfries and Galloway area;
 - (b) facilitate the involvement of small and medium enterprises, third sector organization and supported businesses in the Regulated Procurement; and
 - (c) promote innovation.

43. Commencement Date

- 43.1 These Standing Orders shall come into effect on the first working day after the SWestrans Board meeting at which they are approved.

SCHEDULE 1 – CONTRACT STRATEGY DOCUMENT

1 SECTION ONE – CONTRACT OVERVIEW

1.1 CONTRACT DETAILS

Contract Title	
Contract Reference Number	
Proposed Contract Duration Period (including Optional Extension)	
Date Created	
Author	
Department	

1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GUIDANCE: Highlight the key points of your strategy considering:

DO's	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and concise (max 5-8 sentences) • Focus on Why? What? How? • Note key findings on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ benchmarking and opportunities ➤ options considered ➤ recommendations (incl. procurement route) and key actions ➤ contract benefits ➤ key risks and resource implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use jargon • Be inconsistent • Add new information (to what was detailed in the report) • Include additional tables • Write it before the report is completed

1.3. USER INTELLIGENCE GROUP

GUIDANCE:

- User Intelligence Group (UIG) is created by both procurement and technical professionals to ensure a contract is developed to meet user requirements.
- You will need to identify the key stakeholders for this procurement exercise.
- More guidance can be found in the UIG Welcome Pack template attached

Important: All members of the User Intelligence Group need to complete the Procurement Conflict of Interest Declaration before the tender documents are developed.



1.1. UIG Welcome Pack including Procurement Conflict of Interest [

It will only be in very limited circumstances where a UIG will not be required to ensure a collective understanding

of the business requirements at the outset of any procurement process.

Yes – UIG will be required for this contract. Attach completed Procurement Conflict of Interest Declarations to this Contract Strategy.

No – UIG will not be required for this contract. Provide a brief justification below.

1.4 CONTRACT OBJECTIVE & SERVICE STRATEGY/FORWARD PLAN

GUIDANCE:

- Highlight contract's key objectives based on the prior analysis.
- Consider: **what does this contract need to do?** and **what will this contract achieve?**
- Detail any outcomes the contract is required to deliver.
- Explain how this contract will contribute to your service area's plan (include hyperlinks to relevant Committee papers as appropriate at the end of the document).

1. AGREED BUDGET

GUIDANCE: Information MUST be completed prior to the contract strategy sign off.

Authorised Budget Amount		Estimated Annual Contract Value	
Budget Year(s) in which expenditure will be incurred			
Cost Centre		Account Code	
Additional Comments:			

2 SECTION TWO – CURRENT CONTRACT INFORMATION


2.1 CURRENT SITUATION, CONTRACT STATUS & SPEND ANALYSIS

GUIDANCE:

- Provide information on how the requirements are currently being bought or have been bought (in the last 4 years) e.g., start and end dates, current supplier and contract spend.
- Provide a summary of the current contract scope with any TUPE implications (if applicable) and the agreed exit strategy.

New or Recurring Requirement?

New - if there is no current contract, please provide brief information on how the goods services or works are currently being bought or have been bought in the past.

Recurring - complete the below fields regarding the current contract			
Contract Start Date		Contract End Date	
Contract Duration		Lead Authority For collaborative contracts e.g. Scotland Excel	
Contract Scope 1 - 2 sentence(s) summary, highlighting any key amendments to the planned new contract if applicable			
TUPE Implications			
<p>GUIDANCE: TUPE = The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TUPE applies if there is either a business transfer or a service provision change. • It aims to protect employees' rights and ensure continuity of employment. • If you are not sure if TUPE applies, please review the guidance below and/or consult with Legal and HR teams & complete section 9.1. Contract Strategy Consultation. <p> Guide to TUPE Regulations 2006.pc</p>			
Do TUPE implications apply? (if no, please move to the next section)			
Details/Justification (include details if clauses to allow for TUPE information to be shared within tender documents from incumbent provider are in current contract and any known risks)			
Current Supplier(s)			
FINANCIAL SPEND			
Annual Spend (Year 1)			

Annual Spend (Year 2)	
Annual Spend (Year 3)	
Annual Spend (Year 4)	
Total Spend	

GUIDANCE: Check Spikes Cavell Hub to gain a detailed understanding of the current commodity spend.

New/Recurring Contract	New	Recurring
Spend by Commodity and any Sub-Commodity		
Spend by Department		
Off Contract Spend		

2.2 CURRENT EXIT STRATEGY

GUIDANCE:

- Attach the current contract exit strategy if available
- Describe plans and timetable to be followed when the current contract is due to expire.
- Consider how to ensure smooth transition to a new contract: handover of files, exit period/implementation period, communication with new supplier, communication with clients about changes to the service provided etc.

2.3. KEY LESSONS LEARNED

GUIDANCE:

- What have you learned from previous experience?
- Are there any issues that should be considered in the development of this contract?
- The documents below can be used as a template to prompt lessons learned if they have not previously been tracked (Lessons Learned tracker should be used throughout the duration of your contract to record relevant notes).



Post Project Review.doc



1.4. Lessons Learned Log.xlsx

3 SECTION THREE – COMMODITY & SUPPLY MARKET ANALYSIS

3.1 COMMODITY ANALYSIS

GUIDANCE:

- Complete the table below with information which summarises the commodity characteristics.
- This information will help populate the tender specification.

- Consider the use of additional tools such a PESTLEE Analysis, Porters 5 Forces or SWOT Analysis (the guidance on how to use these tools is attached below)



1.5. Commodity and Supply Market Analy

Functionality

What are the key requirements of the contract?

End User Requirements

What does the end user need the contract to deliver?

Organisation Requirements

What are the requirements of the organisation?

Future Trends

Are there any future changes to be considered e.g., IT developments?

Constraints

Are there any barriers that could prevent requirements being met?

3.2 SUPPLY MARKET ANALYSIS

GUIDANCE:

- Complete the table below with information which summarises the current market conditions.
- This information will be used to inform business engagement activities and will influence the development of the commodity strategy e.g., route to market, lotting strategy.

Market Description

E.g., construction, adult care, transport

Market Overview

Summary of market conditions e.g., size, cycle/stage, number of suppliers.

Trade Associations



Who we may need to consult to obtain information to develop specifications, e.g., regulatory bodies

Key suppliers

Who is likely to respond to this?

Market Trends

E.g., inflation			
Developments and Innovation Are there any new developments in technology?			
Has Market Consultation been carried out? If not, please provide justification for not doing this. If yes, please provide key points and findings.			
3.3. POLICIES AND REGULATIONS			
GUIDANCE: Consider which Policies / Regulations apply to the contract. If any policy applies, or you are unsure, please contact the relevant team for further information. If you seek consultation with other teams, please complete section 9.1. Contract Strategy Consultation.			
Policy/regulation	Consider	Outcome	Contact
GDPR/ Data Protection Act 2018 ("DPA")	Does GDPR / DPA apply? A Data Protection Impact Assessment may be required.		Data Protection Officer
IR35	Does IR35 apply?		HR
Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment	Does TUPE apply?		Legal & HR
Construction Design and Management Regulations	Do CDM regulations apply?		Health & Safety
Equalities and Fairness	Have the outcomes this contract is required in support of been assessed for Equality and Fairness? An EFIA may be required.		Equalities Officer
Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCIDSS)	Does this contract include an income stream for which customers will make payments via a debit or credit card?		IT
3.4. ICT REQUIREMENTS			
GUIDANCE:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether there any IT requirements to be included in the contract. If yes, please contact your IT Service for further guidance. This is critical where there will be a requirement to run software or connect devices to the Council's ICT infrastructure. 			

3.5. KEY RISKS		
<p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the risks which will need to be managed for this procurement? • Information noted here will help to determine the content of the tender documentation. • Complete the Risk Register (template below) and attach it with your response. <p> 1.6. Appendix B - Risk Register.docx</p>		
Key Risks Overview		
Risk Register Attach completed risk register		
4 SECTION FOUR – OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT		
4.1 BEST VALUE TRIANGLE		
<p>GUIDANCE: Consideration should be given to the Best Value Triangle. An example Best Value Triangle can be found in the attachment below.</p> <p> 1.7. Initial Opportunity Assessr</p>		
Best Value Triangle – Opportunities		Considerations
Purchase Demand Management	Reduce Consumption	
	Consolidate Spend	
	Improve Specifications	
Supply Base Management	Restructure Relationships	
	Increase Competition	
	Restructure Supply Base	
Total Cost Management	Optimise Total Supply Chain Costs	
	Reduce Total Ownership Costs	
	Reduce Transactions	
4.2. ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS		

GUIDANCE: Has an alternative resource to deliver the contract been considered? Is there in-house resource, partner organisation's or an arm's length organisation's existing agreement to be used to meet the requirements of this contract? If yes, a **summary of the In-House/Outsourcing Decision Making record should be provided.**



Inhouse
Outsourcing Decisic

	Yes/No	Additional Comments
Have you considered in-house resource?		
Have you considered partner's or an arm's length organisation resource?		

4.3. COLLABORATION

GUIDANCE:

- Complete the table below detailing potential collaboration opportunities.
- Consider if there are similarities in the scope of other public bodies' contracts.
- Consider if there are national/collaborative contracts and frameworks available (e.g., Scottish Government, Scotland Excel, CCS).
- Consider if these are appropriate to be used by SWestrans.
- Where a collaborative contract is available, the commodity strategy relating to this contract should be obtained for review.

Is there an opportunity for collaboration?	
Details / Justification	
Collaborative Contract Available	
Lead Authority	

5 SECTION FIVE – PROCUREMENT PROCESS

5.1 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

GUIDANCE: Describe the strategic options which have been considered and the preferred option to be implemented. This may include several option appraisals to demonstrate consideration for route to Market (open or restricted) and lotting considerations.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Procurement Route				
Pros and Cons of each option				

Recommendation and justification				
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Procedure				
Pros and Cons of each option				
Recommendation and justification				
Lots	Not Applicable	1 Lot	Geographical	Product/Service
Pros and Cons of each option				
Recommendation and justification				
How many suppliers per lot?				
It is suitable as a reserved contract? Reserved contract – contract’s participation is reserved to sheltered workshops, economic operators and programmes aimed at integration of disabled or disadvantaged people (Ref: Reg. 20 of Public Contract Regulations 2015)				
5.2. PROCUREMENT ROUTE & PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED				
Procurement Route				
Lots (if applicable)				
Form of contract				
Selection Criteria (Themes and minimum criteria)				
Insurance requirements values for Employer’s Liability Public Liability Professional Indemnity Other				
Award Criteria (Price/Quality Ratio)				
Award Criteria (Themes)				
Award Criteria (Additional Comments)				

6 SECTION SIX – PROPOSED CONTRACT’S BENEFITS

6.1 SOCIAL VALUE

GUIDANCE:

- The Sustainable Procurement Duty requires an organisation to consider how they can improve the Social, Environmental and Economic wellbeing of the area in which they operate in (with a particular focus on reducing inequality).
- Sustainable procurement is concerned with identifying the potential environmental, social and economic aspects that could be incorporated within a procurement process and would contribute to delivering social value.
- Sustainable procurement should align with the climate change priority to 'Urgently respond to climate change and transition to a carbon neutral region'.
- Consider how sustainability areas relevant to the contract requirements might be specified within the procurement process.
- Complete the Sustainability Test (as a min. for contracts falling into high ranked categories on the Prioritisation Tool)
- Guidance documents and the Sustainability Test are available on:
<https://sustainableprocurementtools.scot/>

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

GUIDANCE: Consider the following

- Availability of suitable and high-quality jobs
- Measures to encourage local small businesses
- Efficient and effective transport links
- Lifelong learning
- Training and skills development
- The provision of infrastructure, new information and communication technologies

SOCIAL BENEFITS

GUIDANCE: Consider the following

- The promotion of good quality and affordable housing
- Safe communities
- The encouragement of the voluntary sector including social enterprises and supported businesses
- Looking after the needs of children and young people
- Looking after the most vulnerable

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

GUIDANCE: Consider the following

- Availability of clean air, clean water and clean streets
- The quality of the built environment
- The removal of objects considered hazardous to health
- Removal of disfiguring or offensive graffiti
- Protecting communities against the threat of climate change

- Reducing the impact of climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Adopt low carbon technologies
- Freedom from high-risk flooding
- Improving and promoting biodiversity and accessibility to nature

EQUALITY

GUIDANCE: If the contract award decision is likely to have a significant impact on people affected by the decision, those should be consulted beforehand. This can be done by producing an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA):



1.8. EQIA Assessment.docx

Is EQIA Assessment Required?

If 'Yes', attach the completed document:

If 'No', provide justification:

FAIR WORK FIRST

GUIDANCE:

- As part of the SWestran's procurement duties, we must consider the effect fair work practices will have on the quality of the services and goods to be delivered.
- How will you evidence the successful supplier is taking responsibility for this?



Fair work commodity service st

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

GUIDANCE:


- Consider if this contract is suitable for the delivery of Community benefits.
- Community Benefits is the term used to refer to a range of 'social issues' including targeted recruitment and training, equal opportunities considerations, supply change initiatives, awareness raising programmes and community engagement activity which contribute more widely to sustainable procurement.


6.2 FORECAST SAVINGS

To be completed jointly by: Service & Procurement Teams

GUIDANCE: Contact the Finance Team if you seek further guidance.

Value	Percentage	Description	Financial Year

Additional Comments:	
6.3 NON – CASHABLE FINANCIAL BENEFITS To be completed jointly by: Service & Procurement Teams	
GUIDANCE: Detail the planned non-cashable financial contract benefits such as cost avoidance (e.g., fixed pricing), procurement efficiency (e.g., increased performance), added value elements.	
Description	Comment
7 SECTION SEVEN – CONTRACT AND SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT	
7.1 CONTRACT MONITORING ASSESSMENT	
GUIDANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of contract and supplier management required depends on the risk, value and complexity of the contract. Based on the Contract Segmentation Categories – Guidance document (attached below) determine the Contract Management level for your procurement.  <p>Contract Segmentation Catec</p>	
Contract Management Level Low/Medium/High	Comment
Frequency of Contract Management Monthly/Quarterly/Bi-Annually/Annually	
How will performance be monitored? E.g., Use of balanced scorecard	
What are the resource arrangements for contract management? Consider BAU contract management and escalation	
What will be the internal and external communication activities/plan?	
7.2 PLANNED CONTRACT PERFORMANCE MEASURES	
GUIDANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attached are examples of KPIs which can be used on all contracts. 	


 DGC Standard KPIs for Goods and Servi

KPI ID	KPI Title	KPI Description	Frequency

7.3 FUTURE EXIT STRATEGY

GUIDANCE:

- **Complete Appendix A – Exit Strategy** to provide details of any requirements (to be included within the tender documentation) relating to the process to be followed when the contract is due to expire.
- Consider: handover of files, exit period/implementation period, communication with new supplier, communication with clients about changes to the service provided etc.

 Appendix A - Exit Strategy.docx

Exit Strategy Overview	
Exit Strategy Attach completed Exit Strategy (Appendix A)	

7.4 PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

What are the payment milestones / frequency of payments to be included within the contract?	
What will be the payment method under the contract?	
What fixed pricing period will apply and what mechanism will be used to support any price variations? Please include reasons why.	

8 SECTION EIGHT – GOVERNANCE

8.1 RESOURCES (CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM)

GUIDANCE: Identify all members of project team; this should include everyone who will have an involvement in the project.

Project Role	Name	Department
Project Lead		
Project Sponsor		
Procurement Lead		
Insurance Advisor		
Health & Safety		
Finance		
Technical Specialists		
Contract Manager		
Tender Evaluation Panel		

8.2 PROJECT PLAN & KEY ACTIVITIES

GUIDANCE: This will be your procurement timeline. Depending on the procedure you have selected it may not be necessary to follow all steps set out below. Please note there are set timescales for carrying out an above threshold tender process.

Key Milestone	Duration (In days)	Planned Start Date	Anticipated End Date
Specification Development			
Stakeholder Consultation (e.g., Insurance, H&S Levels, Legal)			
Tender Published			
Tender Return Date			
Tender Evaluation & Clarification			
CAR/PSC Papers due for Approval by Stakeholders			
Approval Obtained			
Notification of Outcome Letters			
Obtain supporting documents Request for documentation			
Standstill Period			

Contract Award			
Contract Mobilisation & Implementation			
Contract Start Date			
Supplier on Site Date (if applicable)			
Review Tasks Complete Lessons Learned Log			

9 SECTION NINE – STRATEGY APPROVAL**9.1 Contract Strategy Consultation**

GUIDANCE: Complete when other departments have been consulted on the Contract Strategy e.g., in relation to TUPE, IR35, GDPR, DPA, Approved Budget, Forecasted Savings.

Department	Name and Title	Date	Signature
Legal Team			
Finance Team			
HR Team			
H&S			
IT			
Other			

9.2 Contract Strategy APPROVAL

To be completed jointly by: Procurement Teams

GUIDANCE: This section of the strategy requires sign off. The relevant levels are detailed below:

- Contract Value less than GPA Threshold – SWestrans Lead Officer with agreement from the Council's Procurement and Commissioning Manager
- Contract Value over GPA Threshold - SWestrans Board with agreement from the Council's Head of Finance and Procurement

Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	

SCHEDULE 2 – FRAMEWORK UTILISATION FORM

This form is for use where SWestrans have been considered and influenced the development of a wider contract strategy where the framework is set up, typically frameworks owned and managed by Dumfries and Galloway Council, Scotland Excel, Scottish Government and Crown Commercial Services.

1 SECTION ONE – CONTRACT OVERVIEW					
1.1 CONTRACT DETAILS					
Contract Title					
Contract Reference Number					
Proposed Contract Duration Period (including Optional Extension)					
Framework to be utilised (including Framework Owner and Lot)					
Framework Reference Number					
Date Created					
Author					
Department					
1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY					
GUIDANCE: Highlight the key points of your report considering:					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">DO's</th> <th style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">DON'Ts</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and concise (max 5-8 sentences) • Focus on Why? What? How? • Note key findings on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contract requirements ➤ Financial information ➤ Details of the framework to be used and call off mechanism </td> <td style="padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use jargon • Be inconsistent • Add new information (to what was detailed in the report) • Include additional tables • Write it before the report is completed </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DO's	DON'Ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and concise (max 5-8 sentences) • Focus on Why? What? How? • Note key findings on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contract requirements ➤ Financial information ➤ Details of the framework to be used and call off mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use jargon • Be inconsistent • Add new information (to what was detailed in the report) • Include additional tables • Write it before the report is completed 	
DO's	DON'Ts				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear and concise (max 5-8 sentences) • Focus on Why? What? How? • Note key findings on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Contract requirements ➤ Financial information ➤ Details of the framework to be used and call off mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use jargon • Be inconsistent • Add new information (to what was detailed in the report) • Include additional tables • Write it before the report is completed 				

 || 1.3. CONFLICT OF INTERST FORM | |

GUIDANCE:

- You will need to identify the key stakeholders for this procurement exercise.
- All key stakeholders listed must complete the Procurement Conflict of Interest Declaration.



Procurement
Conflict of Interest I

1.4 CONTRACT OBJECTIVE & SERVICE STRATEGY/FORWARD PLAN**GUIDANCE:**

- Highlight contract's key objectives based on the prior analysis.
- Consider: **what does this contract need to do?** and **what will this contract achieve?**
- Detail any outcomes the contract is required to deliver.
- Explain how this contract will contribute to your service area's plan (include hyperlinks to relevant Committee papers as appropriate at the end of the document).

1. AGREED BUDGET

GUIDANCE: Information MUST be completed prior to the contract strategy sign off.

Authorised Budget Amount (including annual breakdown where relevant)

Cost Centre

Account Code

2 SECTION TWO – CURRENT CONTRACT INFORMATION**2.1 CURRENT SITUATION, CONTRACT STATUS & SPEND ANALYSIS****GUIDANCE:**


- *Provide a summary of current contract arrangements where necessary, including last 4 years expenditure from Spikes / Integra, any exit strategy agreed, TUPE implications, notice periods etc.*


3.3. POLICIES AND REGULATIONS			
GUIDANCE: Consider which Policies / Regulations apply to the contract. If any policy applies, or you are unsure, please contact the relevant team for further information. If you seek consultation with other teams, please complete section 9.1. Contract Strategy Consultation.			
Policy/regulation	Consider	Outcome	Contact
GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018 (“DPA”)	Does GDPR / DPA apply? A Data Protection Impact Assessment may be required.		Data Protection Officer
IR35	Does IR35 apply?		HR
Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment	Does TUPE apply?		Legal & HR
Construction Design and Management Regulations	Do CDM regulations apply?		Health & Safety
Equalities and Fairness	Have the outcomes this contract is required in support of been assessed for Equality and Fairness? An EFIA may be required.		Equalities Officer
Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCIDSS)	Does this contract include an income stream for which customers will make payments via a debit or credit card?		BTS
ICT Requirements	Consider whether there any IT requirements to be included in the contract. If yes, please contact your IT Service for further guidance. This is critical where there will be a requirement to run software or connect devices to the Council's ICT infrastructure.		BTS
4 SECTION FOUR – OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT			
4.2. ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY METHODS			
GUIDANCE: Has an alternative resource to deliver the contract been considered? Is there in-house resource, partner organisation's or an arm's length organisation's existing agreement to be used to meet the requirements of this contract? If yes, a summary of the In-House/Outsourcing Decision Making record should be provided.			



Inhouse
Outsourcing Decisic

	Yes/No		Additional Comments	
Have you considered in-house resource?				
Have you considered partner's or an arm's length organisation resource?				
Can the service be delivered differently (e.g., stopped, reduced frequency, reduced specification)				
5 SECTION FIVE – PROCUREMENT PROCESS				
5.2 OPTIONS APPRAISAL				
<p>GUIDANCE: Describe the frameworks and call off procedures available and the pros and cons of each before making a recommendation.</p> <p>You must provide a statement to confirm the recommendation is permissible within the framework agreement.</p> <p>The options should include details of minimum criteria to be met by framework providers (to be placed on framework and contract specific) and the award criteria to be applied to result in a recommended supplier or contractor for award.</p>				
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Procurement Route				
Suitability / compliance checks on the SWestran's ability to use the framework (highlighting any risk – e.g., speculative frameworks)				
Pros and Cons of each option				
Recommendation and justification				
Award Criteria (Additional				

Comments)		
6 SECTION SIX – PROPOSED CONTRACT’S BENEFITS		
6.1 FAIR WORK FIRST		
Describe how fair work first criteria will be considered as part of the contract award process (where relevant)		
6.2 COMMUNITY BENEFITS		
Describe the proposed approach to secure community benefits (where relevant).		
6.3 FORECAST SAVINGS		
GUIDANCE: Contact the Finance Team if you seek further guidance.		
Value	Percentage	Description
Financial Year		
Additional Comments:		
7 SECTION SEVEN – CONTRACT AND SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT		
7.1 CONTRACT MONITORING ASSESSMENT		
GUIDANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of contract and supplier management required depends on the risk, value and complexity of the contract. • Based on the Contract Segmentation Categories – Guidance document (attached below) determine the Contract Management level for your procurement. 		
 Contract Segmentation Catec		
Contract Management Level	Comment	
Low/Medium/High		
Frequency of Contract Management		
Monthly/Quarterly/Bi-		

Annually/Annually	
How will performance be monitored? E.g., Use of balanced scorecard	
What are the resource arrangements for contract management? Consider BAU contract management and escalation	
What will be the internal and external communication activities/plan?	
7.2 FUTURE EXIT STRATEGY	
<p>GUIDANCE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Appendix A – Exit Strategy to provide details of any requirements (to be included within the tender documentation) relating to the process to be followed when the contract is due to expire. • Consider: handover of files, exit period/implementation period, communication with new supplier, communication with clients about changes to the service provided etc. <p> Appendix A - Exit Strategy.docx</p>	
Exit Strategy Overview	
Exit Strategy Attach completed Exit Strategy (Appendix A)	
7.3 PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS	
What are the payment milestones / frequency of payments to be included within the contract?	
What will be the payment method under the contract?	
What fixed pricing period will apply and what mechanism will be used to support any price variations? Please include reasons why.	
8 SECTION EIGHT – GOVERNANCE	
8.1 RESOURCES (CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM)	

GUIDANCE: Identify all members of project team; this should include everyone who will have an involvement in the project.

Project Role	Name	Department
Project Lead		
Project Sponsor		
Procurement Lead		
Insurance Advisor		
Health & Safety		
Finance		
Technical Specialists		
Contract Manager		
Tender Evaluation Panel		

8.2 PROJECT PLAN & KEY ACTIVITIES

GUIDANCE: This will be your procurement timeline. Depending on the procedure you have selected it may not be necessary to follow all steps set out below. Please note there are set timescales for carrying out an above threshold tender process.

Key Milestone	Duration (In days)	Planned Start Date	Anticipated End Date

9 SECTION NINE – STRATEGY APPROVAL

9.1 Contract Strategy Consultation

GUIDANCE: Complete when other departments have been consulted on the Contract Strategy e.g., in relation to TUPE, IR35, GDPR, DPA, Approved Budget, Forecasted Savings.

Department	Name and Title	Date	Signature
Legal Team			
Finance Team			
HR Team			
H&S			
IT			

Other			
9.2 Contract Strategy APPROVAL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract Value less than GPA Threshold – SWestrans Lead Officer with agreement from the Council's Procurement and Commissioning Manager Contract Value over GPA Threshold - SWestrans Board with agreement from the Councils 			
Name			
Title			
Signature			
Date			
Name			
Title			
Signature			
Date			

SCHEDULE 3 – NON-COMPETITIVE ACTION REQUEST FORM

PROPOSAL FOR CONTRACT NEGOTIATION / CONTRACT EXTENSION	
Contract Title:	
Created By:	
Tender / Quotation Ref No:	
Date Created:	
Supplier:	
Procedure Recommended:	
Contract Value:	
Contract Term:	
Details of Current Contract Status:	
Previous Spend:	
Previous Contract Term:	
Summary of Contract Requirements:	
Justification for request:	
Procurement Standing Orders / Regs exemption relied upon for Negotiation / Extension:	
Synopsis of Longer Term Plan / Strategy for delivery of these requirements:	
Implications if extension or negotiation is not approved:	

SCHEDULE 4 – CONTRACT AUTHORISATION REPORT TEMPLATE

CONTRACT AUTHORISATION: [TITLE OF REPORT]

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 [**Guidance:** should include an outline of the purpose of the contract, state the reasons for tender, links to any National programmes and confirm when the Contract Strategy was approved and by whom.]

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 [**Guidance:** State the supplier(s) name and registered address that you recommend awarding the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system to, the reference number attributed to the contract, the contract title, contract value and start / end dates and details of any extension timeframe applicable to the contract.]

3. Considerations

- 3.1 [Summary: What process was used (Open, Restricted, Negotiated, Framework Call Off, E-Auction etc.). State the number of companies to whom ITTs were issued/downloaded by but who failed to submit a bid and any reasons for this that have been recorded.]
- 3.2 [Market Engagement: Record actions and measures take for prior engagement with the market and record details where a supplier was excluded from tendering on this basis]

1.3 [Tender Information:

- i. Provide details of the qualitative selection criteria and reduction of number of tenderers where applicable. This must include the name of the selected tenderers and the reasons for their selection and the names of the tenderers rejected and the reasons for their rejection. Where a tender has been rejected as it was found to be abnormally low, reasons for this must be detailed. Where the minimum turnover threshold required was higher than two times the contract value, the reasons for this requirement must be provided.]
- ii. Provide details of the contract award criteria and the outcome of the evaluation. This should include a summary of the scoring for all tenderers considered at this stage using the table below:

	Price	Quality	Total
Supplier A			
Supplier B			
Supplier C			

- iii. The name of the successful tenderer and the reasons why its tender was selected.
- iv. Where it is known, details of sub-contracting arrangements must be recorded. This should include the share (if any) that the tenderer intends to subcontract to third parties and the names of the main contractor's subcontractors (if any).
- v. Where the competitive dialogue or competitive procedures with negotiation have been used, the circumstances justifying the use of the procedure should be recorded.
- vi. Where the negotiation procedure without prior publication procedure has been used, the circumstances justifying the use of the procedure should be recorded.

- vii. Where the recommendation includes the decision not to award a contract, framework or dynamic purchasing system following the tender procedure, the reasons for this must be provided.
- viii. Where applicable, the reasons why means of communication other than electronic means have been used for the submission of tenders must be provided.]

3.4 [Financial:

- Provide confirmation that sufficient budget is available to fund the contract.
- Where savings are generated through the procurement process, we need to set out where these savings will be attributed (e.g., against Procurement savings targets or other).
- Where there is a funding shortfall, we need to identify how this will be addressed.
- The relevant Procurement Officer and Finance Officer should agree the content of this section.
- This approach should not only apply to those contracts above the thresholds where a Contract Authorisation Report is required. Need to discuss how to achieve this.
- Where the contract funding includes revenue budget, include the table below to provide a breakdown of the costs and savings:

	Annual Budget	Recommended Annual Contract Value	Annual Revenue Saving / Cost Increase
Total			

- Where the contract funding includes capital or external sources of funding, include the table below to provide a breakdown of the costs and savings:

	Capital Budget for contract scope (excluding contingency)	Recommended Contract Value (excluding contingency)	Contingency Sum	Saving / Cost Increase
Total				

- The above reflects the 'standard content' to cover budgetary implications and treatment but this section should also contain other relevant information such as benchmark costs/comparisons etc where relevant.
- May also wish to refer to cost avoidance (or cost increase avoidance) where relevant (e.g., where an anticipated increase in cost has been minimised as a result of the procurement process).
- May need to amend the above where there is a difference between budgets available and current annual costs, although this should be less of an issue provided that budgets have been realistically aligned.]]

3.5 [Programme reference, where appropriate. e.g., Is the tender part of a Capital programme that has required prior board approval or need to be reflected in the award letter?]

3.6 [Commercial Specifics: Give detail on any bonding arrangements. e.g., Bonds, parent company guarantees, retentions, Insurances.]

3.7 [Where applicable: Statutory approvals obtained. e.g., has appropriate Planning

permission been obtained. Are there any other permissions that should be considered or reflected in the award letter?]

- 3.8 [Where applicable: SWestrans or Council ownership or equivalent of site or buildings.]
- 3.9 [Sustainable considerations and committed outcomes: Provide details of sustainable outcomes that will be achieved. Where no commitments have been sought or provided explain reasons why. Also include details of if Fair Work First criteria were considered and provide justification why not if this was not considered].

4. Governance Assurance

- 4.1 [Regulatory Compliance: Confirm any EU legislative routes that were followed, if GPA rules applied, if falls under light touch regime or any other regulatory impact on the tender or contract and detail how this has been complied with]
- 4.2 [Procurement Standing Order Compliance: state the specific clauses that are being acted upon.]
- 4.3 [Where applicable, detail any conflicts of interest detected and subsequent measures taken].

5. Impact Assessment

- 5.1 [only to be used for reports which propose a change in policy/strategy plan/project]

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS

Approved by

[This section of the Contract Authorisation Report required sign off. The relevant levels are detailed below:

- Contract Value less than GPA Threshold – SWestrans Lead Officer with agreement from the Council's Procurement and Commissioning Manager
- Contract Value over GPA Threshold - SWestrans Board with agreement from the Council's Head of Finance and Procurement

.]

NAME	DESIGNATION	SERVICE
		Finance and Procurement
		Procuring Service(s)

Appendices

Background Papers

SCHEDULE 5 – PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

The thresholds within this Schedule are relevant to procurement exercises which commence on or after 1 January 2024 (all which have not been advertised).

The thresholds which apply from 1 January 2024 shall now need to consider VAT, where applicable, when calculating the estimated value of a procurement for the purpose of determining whether the contract meets or exceeds the threshold values. Unless purchasers can demonstrate that a lower or no rate of VAT applies to a contract, the method used to estimate the value of contract is to add the standard rate of VAT (currently 20%) to the net contract estimate. This is the highest rate of VAT, which is chargeable in the UK, therefore this will avoid underestimating the contract's value if this is used to determine which set of regulations apply (i.e., if the relevant notices will be published on the UK-wide Find a Tender Service website).

To establish if a contract falls under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, VAT should be excluded when calculating the estimated value of the contract.

When completing relevant forms on Public Contracts Scotland, procurement officers are required to quote the estimated contract value, excluding VAT from the value.

The table below lists the threshold values. The final column is indicative only and shows the value of the new thresholds including the standard rates of VAT.

The Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015

	GPA Threshold	GPA Threshold including indicative VAT
Supplies & Services (including subsidised services contracts)	£179,807	£214,914
Works (including subsidised works contracts)	£4,447,174	£5,3372,609
Light touch regime for services	£552,950	£663,540
Small lots: supplies and services	£58,982	£70,778
Small lots: works	£737,267	£884,720

The Concession Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2016

	Threshold	Threshold including indicative VAT
Concession contracts	£4,447,174	£5,3372,609

The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 Thresholds:

Public contract (other	£50,000	n/a
------------------------	---------	-----

than a public works contract		
Public works contract	£2,000,000	n/a

Thresholds will next be reviewed on 1 January 2026

SCHEDULE 6 – PROCEDURE NOTE FOR LOWER VALUE CONTRACTS

PROCEDURE NOTE FOR LOWER VALUE CONTRACTS:

**Minimum Procedure for placing all contracts with a value of less than £50,000
for goods and services and £500,000 for works**

Contents

1.	Introduction	63
2.	Contracts between £0 and £1,999 (ex VAT) for goods and services and £0 to £4,999 (ex VAT) for works	63
3.	Contracts between £20,000 and £49,999.99 (ex VAT) for goods and services and between £5,000 and £499,999.99 for works.....	65
4.	Negotiated Procedure	66
5.	Extension to Existing Contracts.....	66

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance note details SWestran's procedures for placing contracts with a total estimated value of less than £50,000 for goods and services and £500,000 for works, exclusive of VAT but only where no contract exists. Note that the use of existing contracts is mandatory.
- 1.2 Where SWestrans has a Framework Agreement or contract already in place covering the requirement, the instruction must be awarded in terms of that Framework Agreement or Contract. Advice may be obtained from the Council's Corporate Procurement Team.
- 1.3 This defines the minimum requirement for any such procurement exercise. However, the Lead Officer may decide to follow SWestran's Standing Orders relating to contracts for any contract, regardless of its value.
- 1.4 Expressions used in this Guidance shall have the same meaning as that given to them in the SWestran's Standing Orders Relating to contracts, unless this guidance provides a different meaning.
- 1.5 Please refer to appropriate procurement delegations for clarity on officers with the relevant authority to seek and accept quotations.

2. Contracts between £0 and £1,999 (ex VAT) for goods and services and £0 to £4,999 (ex VAT) for works

- 2.1 The following procedures are to be adhered to, subject to the commodity and value of the procurement exercise being undertaken.
- 2.2 Values are not to be deliberately disaggregated to avoid the rules and to bring the expenditure under the thresholds.
- 2.3 The procuring service must seek Best Value for SWestrans and where applicable, must be able to clearly demonstrate transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment within the chosen tender process and in the award of a contract.

Supplies/Services/Works

Title	Threshold	Procedure
Best Value	£0 - £1,999.99 (ex VAT) for goods and services £0 - £4,999.99 (ex VAT) for works	Low value tenders can be undertaken at SWestran's officers' discretion. A written quotation is not required provided that Best Value principles are observed.

RFQ	£2,000 - £19,999.99 (ex VAT) for goods and services	Request for Quote (RFQ) carried out by SWestrans officers 1. 4 written quotations (including email) from competent suppliers to be sought; 2. Where only one supplier exists, see paragraph 4.2 below; 3. Where contracts are considered high risk and/or legally complex, seek procurement and legal advice; 4. Suppliers to be given
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		<p>at least five working days to respond;</p> <p>5. RFQ response to include details of the supplier and the price quoted;</p> <p>6. Responses to be opened following the deadline for responses;</p> <p>7. Written quotations to be retained in accordance with the SWestran's document retention policy.</p>
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3. Contracts between £20,000 and £49,999.99 (ex VAT) for goods and services and between £5,000 and £499,999.99 for works

- 3.1 Quick quote procedure must be carried out using the Public Contracts Scotland Portal (www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk) facility for quick quotes.
- 3.2 A minimum of six (6) suppliers will be invited to quote, (as many as possible but at least 50% of which should be local suppliers from the Dumfries and Galloway area where possible).
- 3.3 Suppliers shall be selected from those registered for that category on the PCS web portal and the selection shall not be restricted to existing suppliers.
- 3.4 Where there are less than six (6) suppliers registered, a proportionate level of research to encourage new suppliers to register on PCS must be undertaken. Failing that, all qualifying suppliers will be invited to submit quotations. In the event that there is only one qualifying supplier, the negotiated procedure shall be used in terms of paragraph 4 below.
- 3.5 Tenderers invited should be rotated where there is sufficient supply base.
- 3.6 Invitations to quote shall be prepared using the templates provided by on the Council's Procurement Sharepoint site.
- 3.7 A written specification shall be prepared and incorporated within the Invitation to Quote.
- 3.8 As a minimum the specification will incorporate:-
- 3.8.1 a clear description of what the supplier will be expected to provide under the contract;
 - 3.8.2 information about how SWestrans will pay for what is to be provided under the contract;
 - 3.8.3 details of the level of service to be provided under the contract, including, but not restricted to, timescales for delivery or performance and any performance measures set by SWestrans;
 - 3.8.4 the evaluation criteria to be used for the award of the contract;
 - 3.8.5 the terms and conditions applicable to the contract;
 - 3.8.6 the appropriate level of insurance.
- 3.9 The timescale permitted for the return of quotations must be sufficient to allow all of those invited the same and adequate opportunity to respond.
- 3.10 Any contract shall be awarded to the supplier/s who has submitted the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT), taking into account the price offered and the supplier's response to any quality or other criteria set by SWestrans.
- 3.11 The commercial evaluation shall be undertaken by an officer independent to the technical evaluation.
- 3.12 An evaluation of the quality responses shall be undertaken by a panel of technical or user experts.
- 3.13 The officer leading the quotation procedure shall then consolidate the commercial and

quality evaluation scoring to provide an overall quotation score and recommendation to award the contract.

- 3.14 All tenderers who submitted a quotation must be notified of the outcome in writing as soon as is practically possible. Feedback should also be provided.
- 3.15 The contract award is to be published on the Public Contracts Scotland web portal, quick quote facility.
- 3.16 Details of the contract awarded must be included within the SWestrans contract register.

4. Negotiated Procedure

- 4.1 The Lead Officer may authorise the use of the negotiated procedure, but only where the following limited grounds apply:
 - 4.1.1 where as a result of the invitation of competitive tenders, no valid offer or only one valid offer complying with specification has been received; provided always that no significant changes are made to the tender documents that were previously issued; or
 - 4.1.2 where the Lead Officer is satisfied that the requirement of the contract is unique or, after research, only one suitable source of supply can be identified; or
 - 4.1.3 where the Lead Officer is satisfied that for reasons of technical complexity or compatibility or for reasons connected to the protection of exclusive rights, subsequent deliveries of equipment or goods or the provision of services require to be purchased from the original supplier; or
 - 4.1.4 where in the case of a supply contract, the goods to be purchased or hired are to be manufactured purely for the purpose of research, experiment, study or development, but not when the goods are to be purchased or hired to establish their commercial viability or to recover their research and development costs; or
 - 4.1.5 when (but only if strictly necessary) for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by and not attributable to SWestrans, it is not possible to comply with the procedures in paragraphs 2 and 3; or
 - 4.1.6 where in the case of a services or a supply contract, in the opinion of the Lead Officer it is in the interests of SWestrans to take advantage of particularly advantageous bargain available for a very short period of time at a price considerably lower than normal market prices; or
 - 4.1.7 where pending the letting of a contract (“the main contract”) it is necessary to award a short-term contract to cover the period up to the commencement of the main contract. However, the short-term contract shall generally be for a period of no more than six months but in exceptional circumstances may be up to a twelve month period and shall not exceed £50,000.
- 4.2 In all cases where negotiated procedures have been used in terms of this paragraph 4, a full written record of all contacts, discussions and communications with prospective suppliers shall be kept by SWestrans, together with a full explanation as to why it was considered it to be appropriate to use the negotiated procedure.
- 4.3 All requests under clause 4.1 and 4.2 of this procedure note shall be prepared and recorded using the Non-Competitive Action Request Form provided at Schedule 3 of these Procurement Standing Orders.

5. Extension to Existing Contracts

- 5.1 Where the Lead Officer considers that an existing contract should be extended and the option to extend is given to SWestrans in terms of the contract, the Lead Officer may authorise the exercise of that option on behalf of SWestrans. For the avoidance of doubt, where the contract does not make provision for the extension of the contract, the Lead Officer shall not extend that contract unless the use of the negotiated procedure can be justified in terms of this Guidance and the procedure in paragraph 4 of this Guidance and, where appropriate, standing order 12 of SWestran’s Contract Standing Orders have been followed.
- 5.2 For the purposes of paragraph 5.1 of SWestran’s Contract Standing Orders an extension

of a contract includes the option to increase the amount of supplies, services or works acquired under the contract as well as the option to increase the duration of the contact.

SCHEDULE 7 – GUIDANCE NOTE FOR USE OF GRANTS

What is a grant?

A “grant” is a donation paid by SWestrans to an organisation to be used for a specified purpose which SWestrans wishes to support to help meet SWestrans strategic objectives and benefit the community. In effect, a grant is a gift of financial assistance from SWestrans with conditions attached. The attached conditions must be either grant conditions approved by SWestrans, or grant conditions required to be included by an organisation providing funding for the purpose of the grant. Whereas these conditions impose limits and instructions on how the grant may be used, they do not set out the precise details of any services to be provided nor do they prescribe how the specified purpose will be achieved. Grants are different from loans in that there is no expectation that any part of the grant will be repaid provided the conditions of grant are complied with. If the conditions are breached, SWestran’s only remedy is to demand that the grant be repaid.

What procedures require to be followed when a grant is being provided?

The Council’s legal service shall provide appropriate grant conditions which must be used. No grant shall be paid unless these procedures are followed and a binding agreement is in place setting out conditions that apply to the grant. Any questions regarding these procedures and terms and conditions must be referred to legal services.

Do the Procurement Regulations apply to grants?

There are some circumstances in which a grant might be viewed as a public services contract for the purposes of the 2015 Regulations. The 2015 Regulations set out the detailed procedural rules that apply to the purchase of works, services and supplies by SWestrans. Under the rules, a “public services contract” is defined as “a contract, in writing, for consideration (whatever the nature of the consideration) under which a contracting authority engages a person to provide services”. Therefore, these rules do not apply to straightforward grants. However, distinguishing between contracts, to which the rules would apply, and grants, to which they do not, is often difficult, for example, where SWestrans directs what, or how, services are to be provided or derives any benefit from them. Where there is any doubt, advice must be obtained from legal services.

What about Subsidies?

Even where the Procurement Regulations do not apply, the rules on subsidies are an important consideration. These are a complex set of rules which prohibit subsidies being paid by public bodies, such as SWestrans, which could confer any unfair advantage on an organisation or distort competition. An example would be where SWestrans gives a sum of money to only one of a number of local organisations who provide a service to the community, without there being any competition for that funding. The other organisations could claim that there has been an unfair subsidy paid to the organisation that was given the grant because they too could have provided the service if they had been given the opportunity.

There are some limited exceptions and financial limits below which funding is not considered to be a subsidy but, broadly, for a grant to be classed as a subsidy, the following criteria require to be met:-

- It is given by a public authority. This can be at any level – central, devolved, regional or local government or a public body;
- It makes a contribution (this could be a financial or an in-kind contribution) to an enterprise, conferring an economic advantage that is not available on market terms. Examples of a contribution are grants, loans at below market rate, or a loan guarantee at below market rate or allowing a company to use publicly owned office space rent free. An enterprise is anyone who puts goods or services on a market. An enterprise could be a government department or a charity if they are acting commercially; and
- It affects international trade. This can be trade with any World Trade Organisation member or, more specifically, between the UK and a country with whom it has a Free

Trade Agreement. For example, if the subsidy is going towards a good or a service which is traded between the UK and the EU this could affect trade between the EU and the UK. (Please note that you are not being asked whether the subsidy could harm trade but merely whether there could be some sort of effect.) Subsidies to truly local companies or a small tourist attraction are unlikely to be caught as this is unlikely to affect international trade.

A breach of the subsidy rules could have serious consequences for SWestrans. Therefore, any concerns about whether a grant could be considered a subsidy must be referred to legal services.

Is a competitive process needed where neither the Procurement Regulations nor the rules on Subsidies apply?

In some circumstances, such as where only limited funding is available or if applicants for grant funding have similar purposes, a competitive application process may be appropriate to determine how funding should be allocated whether or not the Procurement Regulations or the rules on subsidies apply. As it is a public body, SWestrans has certain duties when dealing with grants. It must act in a fair, transparent and consistent manner and all potential grant recipients must be treated equally.

SWESTRANS ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

1. Reason for Report

To agree the SWestrans Annual Report 2022/23.

2. Background

2.1 The former Scottish Executive published guidance on Regional Transport Strategies in March 2006. Paragraphs 112 and 133 of the Guidance require the preparation of an annual report to be submitted to Scottish Ministers.

2.2 The report should cover the operational and financial year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. It should include a report of performance against the objectives, targets and performance indicators set out in the Regional Transport Strategy and should be sent to constituent Councils and others who have provided funding.

3. Key Points

3.1 The draft Annual Report 2022/23 is attached as the **Appendix** to this report.

3.2 It is intended that the Annual Report will be submitted to Scottish Ministers as set out in the guidance referred to in paragraph 2.1.

4. Implications	
Financial	There are no financial implications.
Policy	This report complies with our policy requirements.
Equalities	There are no equalities implications.
Climate Change	There are no climate change implications.
Risk Management	The Annual Report relates to the known risks: R03 – Strategic direction R05 – RTS delivery
Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

5. Recommendation
Members of the Board are asked to agree the SWestrans Annual Report for 2022/23 attached as the Appendix for submission to Scottish Ministers.

Report Author: Kirsty Dunsmore Tel: 07734 073391	Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN
Date of Report: 28 February 2024 File Ref: SW2/meetings/2024	

APPENDIX – SWestrans Annual Report 2022/23

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23

The Annual Report of the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership, outlining its resources and outputs for financial year 2022/23.

Annual Report

1. FOREWORD

This is the annual report of the South West of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SWestrans), which details the resource utilisation and activities of the Regional Transport Partnership for the financial year 2022/23.

As a Model 3 Scottish Regional Transport Partnership, SWestrans has responsibility for procuring socially necessary public transport for the Dumfries and Galloway region. The work of the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership during 2022/23 was again a balance of service provision through its revenue budget, and service development through capital budgets.

As in previous years, the Partnership undertook a range of initiatives covering a number of transport modes, which sought to address the key locations, sectors and themes identified in the Regional Transport Strategy. The Partnership's officers and Board members have continued to participate in the development of active travel, bus, rail, road and in the development of the National Strategies.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 placed a duty on Scottish Ministers to create Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) covering the whole of Scotland. The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) was established by the Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005, and the Transfer of Functions to the South-West of Scotland Transport Partnership Order 2006.

The SWestrans area is the same as that covered by Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

A statutory requirement of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 is that each Regional Transport Partnership produces a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy was agreed by the SWestrans Board on 25 April 2008 after an extensive consultation exercise and approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2008. The RTS Delivery Plan was agreed by the Board on 27 March 2009.

The former Scottish Executive published guidance on Regional Transport Strategies in March 2006. Paragraphs 112 and 133 of the Guidance require the preparation of an annual report to be submitted to Scottish Ministers. The report should cover the operational and financial year to 31 March. It should include a report of performance against the objectives, targets and performance indicators set out in the RTS and should be sent to constituent Councils and others who

have provided funding. This report covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

SWestrans is subject to additional reporting requirements in respect of:

- Public Sector Equalities Duties.
- Public Sector Climate Change Duties.
- Public Sector Reform Act 2010.
- Public Sector Records Management.
- Freedom of Information.
- Publication Scheme.

This Annual Report is an integrated report in respect of these additional statutory and voluntary reporting requirements.

3. THE BOARD

3.1 Members

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Board consists of seven members. Five of these are local councillors nominated by Dumfries and Galloway Council. The other two are referred to as 'external members'. One member each is nominated by NHS Dumfries and Galloway and the South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). SWestrans has opted to give voting rights to external members.

The Members of the SWestrans Board on 1 April 2022 were:

- Andrew Wood (Chair) - Dumfries & Galloway Council
- John Campbell (Vice Chair) - Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Karen Jackson – External Member (South of Scotland Enterprise)
- Richard Brodie – Dumfries & Galloway Council
- David Bryson – External Member (NHS Dumfries & Galloway)
- Ronnie Tait – Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Adam Wilson – Dumfries & Galloway Council

The Council Member substitutes on 1 April 2022 were:

- Ian Carruthers
- Katie Hagmann
- Jim McColm
- Davie Stitt

Following the Local Government Elections in May 2022 SWestrans Board membership was updated to:

- John Campbell (Chair)- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Karen Jackson (Vice-Chair)- External Member (South of Scotland Enterprise)

- David Bryson- External Member (NHS Dumfries & Galloway)
- Jim Dempster- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Maureen Johnstone- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Keith Walters- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Andrew Wood- Dumfries & Galloway Council

The Council Member substitutes were updated to:

- Richard Brodie
- Ian Carruthers
- Ben Dashper
- Ivor Hyslop
- Sean Marshall

3.2 Observers

The terms of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 provide for the appointment of: “one or more observers, that is to say, persons who may... participate in proceedings of the Partnership but who may not hold office in it or participation its decisions.”

SWestrans has adopted an inclusive approach to requests for Observer status. The benefit of this is a wide range of sector interests and specialist expertise is available to the Board.

The list of Observers on 1 April 2022 was as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| • June Hay | Outdoor Access Forum |
| • Emma Watson | Network Rail |
| • Hugh McCreadie | Lochside and Woodlands Community Council |
| • Fraser Smith | Stagecoach Scotland |
| • Graham Whiteley | |
| • Rhian Davies | Sustrans |
| • Christopher Craig | Thornhill Station Action Group |

Alisdair Marshall MSYP for Galloway & West Dumfries was appointed as an observer to SWestrans Board at the 24 June 2022 Board meeting.

Observers receive Board Papers electronically.

4. MEETINGS

4.1 Dates

There were 5 Meetings of the Board between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 with provision for special meetings where urgent business needs to be discussed. Meetings were held on the following dates, with the option to join in person at

Council Hall, Council Offices, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DD or virtually via MS Teams:

- 24 June 2022
- 23 September 2022
- 25 November 2022
- 27 January 2023
- 31 March 2023

4.2 Agendas

Item	24 June 2022
1	Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair
2	Sederunt and Apologies
3	Declarations of Interest
4	Minute of Meeting on 25 March 2022
5	Board Membership
6	Adoption of Standing Orders
7	Code of Conduct
8	Observers Update
9	Representation on Outside Bodies
10	Revenue Budget Outturn Report 2021/22
11	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 For the Period ending 31 May 2022
12	Capital Expenditure Outturn Report 2021/2022
13	Capital Expenditure Programme 2022/2023- 2024/25 Update
14	Draft Annual (unaudited) Accounts 2021/22
15	Local Bus Update
16	Rail Update
17	Levelling Up Fund
18	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
19	Local Bus Service Contract (confidential)

Item	23 September 2022
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minute of Meeting on 24 June 2022
4	Community Transport Strategy Presentation
5	Regional Transport Strategy Draft for Consultation
6	Local Bus Update
7	Rail Update
8	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 For the Period ending 31 August 2022
9	Capital Expenditure Programme 2022/2023- 2024/25 Update
10	Calendar of Meetings
11	Representation on Outside Bodies
12	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
13	Local Bus Service Contract (confidential)

Item	25 November 2022
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minutes of Meeting on 23 September 2022
4	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 For the Period ending 31 October 2022
5	Climate Change Duties Reporting 2021/22
6	Capital Expenditure Programme 2022/2023- 2024/25 Update
7	Local Bus Update
8	Standing Orders Review
9	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
10	Local Bus Contracts Vehicles (Confidential)

Item	27 January 2023
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minutes of Meeting on 25 November 2022
4	TransPennine Express Presentation
5	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 For the Period ending 31 December 2022
6	Capital Expenditure Programme 2022/2023- 2024/25 Update
7	Local Bus Update
8	Risk Management
9	STPR 2 Update

Item	31 March 2023
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minutes of Meeting on 27 January 2023
4	Board Membership Update
5	Report by External Audit on 2021/22 Audit of SWestrans
6	Draft Revenue Expenditure Budget 2023/24
7	SWestrans Annual Report 2021/22
8	Equalities Reporting
9	RTS Consultation Update
10	Local Bus Network Update
11	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
12	Local Bus Contracts Sustainability (confidential)

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1 Members

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Board consists of seven Members. Five of these are local councillors nominated by Dumfries and Galloway Council. The other two are referred to as 'external members'. One Member each is nominated by the NHS Dumfries and Galloway Board and South of Scotland Enterprise.

5.2 Key Governance Documentation

Good governance is essential to any public body, and SWestrans has developed a series of governance documents to ensure the effective management of the organisation. The key governance documents for SWestrans are as follows:

- Standing Orders.
- Financial Regulations and Financial Codes.
- Procurement Standing Orders.
- Members' Code of Conduct.
- Guidance for Observers.

5.3 Annual Accounts 2022/23

Draft Annual Accounts for 2022/23 were considered by the SWestrans Board at its meeting on 30 June 2023. These were prepared to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards and proper accounting Practice. The draft unaudited accounts were submitted prior to the statutory deadline of 30 June 2023, and to Grant Thornton, who are the appointed external auditors for SWestrans. The draft accounts were published on the SWestrans website and the Council's website during this period. The Final Accounts were received by the Board at its meeting on 27 October 2023 prior to being signed by the Treasurer.

Revenue Expenditure

The expenditure for 2022/23 was £4,780,761. This was funded by:

- Grants from the Scottish Government totalling £259,250 for core costs and the progression of the Regional Transport Strategy;
- Dumfries and Galloway Council also contributed £100,000.
- Other contributions totalling £ 4,421,421.

5.4 Internal Audit

No internal audit was carried out during 2022/23.

5.5 External Audit

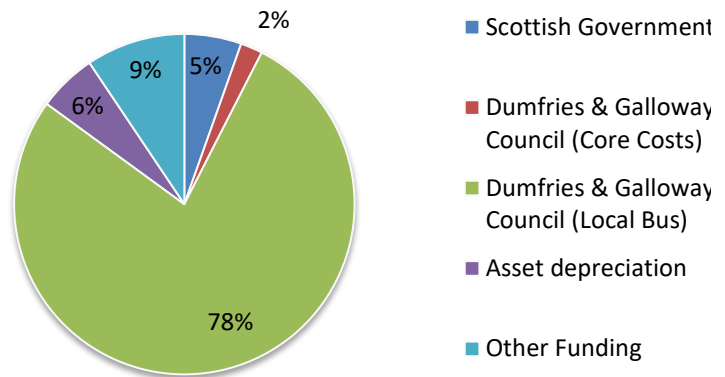
Audit of Accounts

Regulation 6 of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1985 (as amended) requires that a certified abstract of accounts and the external auditor's report to Board Members on those accounts should be laid before a meeting of the Board no later than two months following their receipt. The partnership's external auditors for 2022/23 were Audit Scotland.

The external auditor is required to audit the Transport Partnership's financial statements in accordance with the relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Accounts Commission.

The International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA 260) requires auditors to communicate matters relating to the audit of the financial statements to those charged with the governance of a body in sufficient time to enable appropriate action. The Senior Audit Manager therefore provided a report to the Board highlighting the points arising from his team's work.

SWestrans Funding Sources 2022/23



The external auditor's report on the audit of SWestrans' 2022/23 Annual Accounts to the Board, (in line with the requirements of the International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA 260)), will be presented to the Board for approval on 27 October 2023.

The Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership and the Accounts Commission for Scotland indicates that the Partnership's financial statements give a true and fair view and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The International Standard on Auditing 580 (ISA 580) requires auditors to obtain assurances from the proper officer on certain issues relating to the annual accounts.

Following approval by the Chair on behalf of the Board, the Senior Audit Manager will sign off the audit certificate.

As part of their responsibilities the external auditor is required to submit, at the conclusion of each year's audit, a final report addressed to both the Members of the Board and to the Controller of Audit.

There are no qualifications in the audit report on the Partnership's Final Accounts. It is the opinion of the external auditor that the financial statements present fairly the Partnership's financial position and income and expenditure for the year.

5.6 Performance Management

A comprehensive Performance Management Framework has been developed for monitoring and reporting the achievement of SWestrans' strategic objectives. The elements of the Performance Management Framework include:

- Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan.
- Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring and Review Framework.
- The Annual Report.
- The Business Plan.
- The Risk Management Plan.

The RTS Monitoring and Review Framework is described in more detail in Section 8.5.

6. FUNCTIONS

Under the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 the following transport functions have been transferred from Dumfries and Galloway Council to SWestrans:

- Formulation, consultation and publishing of policies.
- Promotion of passenger transport services.
- Procurement, management and administration of service subsidy agreements.
- Management and administration of concessionary travel schemes.
- Quality Partnership schemes.
- Ticketing schemes.
- Provision of information.

SWestrans is a Model 3 Regional Transport Partnership. This means that one of the functions transferred to it from Dumfries and Galloway Council is responsibility for procuring socially necessary public transport services.

The 2005 Act also allows SWestrans to share responsibilities with Dumfries and Galloway Council in what is known as a "concurrent powers" arrangement. Interventions that could be undertaken on this basis include those where the Council and SWestrans share responsibility, such as promotion of Traffic Regulation Orders to introduce bus priority measures on the Council's roads. Other passenger transport

functions, notably schools transport, remain the responsibility of Dumfries and Galloway Council.

SWestrans and Dumfries and Galloway Council work in close partnership to continue delivering passenger transport in an integrated fashion to ensure economies of scale and value for money.

7. STAFFING AND RESOURCES

7.1 Key Staff

SWestrans employs no staff directly. Staff are employed by Dumfries and Galloway Council on behalf of SWestrans, and either attached to the Partnership, or provide significant support to it in addition to their Council roles. During 2022/23 these staff resources included:

- Lead Officer – Douglas Kirkpatrick
- Team Leader- Grant Coltart
- Finance Officer – Janet Sutton
- Policy and Projects Officer – Kirsty Dunsmore
- Public Transport Officer- Linda Richardson
- Public Transport Assistant- Jason Bentley

Other Dumfries and Galloway Council staff can be invited to advise the Board on an ad hoc basis.

7.2 Other Business Needs

Some business requirements of SWestrans are provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council on its behalf. These include:

- Human Resources.
- Financial and Legal Services.
- Governance Support.
- Communications and Office Accommodation.
- Technology Solutions and Business Support.

7.3 Secretary to the Board

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires a Regional Transport Partnership to appoint a Secretary to the Board. This function is fulfilled by Claire Rogerson, Governance Officer Dumfries and Galloway Council's Democratic Services.

7.4 Chair of the Board

Andrew Wood was the Chair of the Board until 24 June 2022, when he was replaced by John Campbell following the Local Government Elections in May 2022. The Chair represents SWestrans on the Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Partnership.

7.5 Vice-Chair of the Board

John Campbell was the Vice-Chair of the Board until 24 June 2022, when he was replaced by Karen Jackson.

8. STRATEGY, POLICY, LOBBYING AND ENGAGEMENT

8.1 National and Regional Strategy

A statutory requirement of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 is that each Regional Transport Partnership produces a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy was agreed after an extensive consultation exercise and approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2008. The RTS is the key guiding document for SWestrans, and includes its Vision, Objectives and Policies. All policy development can be referred back to this document.

In performing its duty, a Transport Partnership shall have regard to any guidance in that respect given to it or to Transport Partnerships generally by the Scottish Ministers and to any current National Transport Strategy established by the Scottish Ministers.

National Transport Strategy

A new National Transport Strategy (NTS2) was agreed in 2020 and will have a significant impact on the refresh of the SWestrans RTS which will require to align our regional delivery to the national vision, policy and outcomes.



The NTS2 sets out priorities for Scotland's transport system over the next 20 years. The vision is that: we will have a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system helping to deliver a healthier, more prosperous and fairer Scotland for communities, business and visitors.

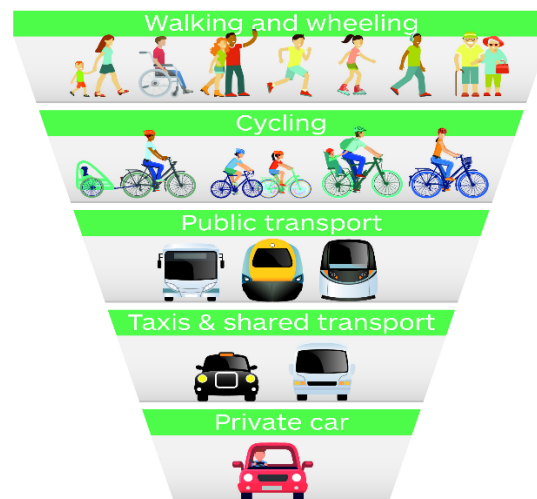
Importantly, overarching all the policies, to address the challenges and achieve the priorities there is an embedded Sustainable Travel Hierarchy for decision making which will promote walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people. Promotion of efficient and sustainable freight transport for the movement of goods, particularly the shift from road to rail will be prioritised.

In addition, at the national level the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy will be used to inform future investment decisions and ensure transport options that focus on reducing both inequalities and the need to travel unsustainably are prioritised. There is also a need to focus on maintaining and safely operating existing assets, taking due consideration of the need to adapt to the challenges, opportunities and impacts of climate change. Investment promoting a range of measures, including innovative

solutions, to make better use of existing capacity will then be considered, ensuring that existing transport networks and systems are fully optimised. Only following these steps will investment involving targeted infrastructure improvements be considered.

All future investment decisions will be assessed against their contributions to supporting this Strategy, and in particular how they impact against the Takes climate action outcomes and wider climate change targets.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport



Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)

On 8 December 2022 Transport Scotland published the final STPR2 report. The second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) was a Scotland-wide review of the strategic transport network across all transport modes. The review was undertaken to give Scottish Ministers a programme of potential transport investment opportunities for the period 2022-2042 and inform the next Infrastructure Investment Plan.

STPR2 Draft Report

The draft STPR2 report made 45 recommendations that focused investment on sustainable transport options grouped under 6 themes:

- Improving Active Travel
- Influencing travel choices and behaviours
- Enhancing access to affordable public transport
- Decarbonising transport
- Increasing safety and resilience on the strategic transport network
- Strengthening strategic connections

At its meeting in January 2023 the SWestrans Board was provided with a summary of the content of the draft STPR2 report and its implications for Dumfries and Galloway region.

Recommendation 40: Access to Stranraer and the ports at Cairnryan is specific to Dumfries and Galloway region and the Ayrshire and Arran region. STPR2 recommends that safety, resilience and reliability improvements are made on the A75 and A77 strategic road corridors, in turn supporting placemaking opportunities. This would include, but is not limited to enhancing overtaking opportunities, widening or realigning carriageways and improving junctions. To encourage greater use of public transport and enable regeneration activities, consideration would also be given to upgrading or relocating the railway station in Stranraer. These would provide more resilient connections to the draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) national developments at Stranraer Gateway, Chapelcross Power Station Redevelopment and the ports at Cairnryan.

Four other recommendations were highlighted as being of particular benefit for Dumfries and Galloway region:

- **Recommendation 18: Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals** - a detailed review of key ferry terminals to consider the improvements in timetable information, signing, ticketing and facilities required to deliver a seamless journey between different types of public transport to enhance the traveller experience and accessibility at ferry terminals.
- **Recommendation 23: Smart, integrated public transport ticketing** – continuing with the support and ongoing delivery of fully integrated smart ticketing and payment services across all public transport, to increase demand and encourage active travel. This recommendation supports the delivery of the objectives within the 2019 Transport (Scotland) Act, and subsequent workstreams, which aims to establish a National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board and set a technological standard for smart ticketing.
- **Recommendation 44: Rail freight terminals and facilities** - that Transport Scotland supports industry partners in carrying out an updated market study for rail freight growth in Scotland (linked to the 2019 industry growth plan) including a review of rail freight terminals/ hubs to confirm how to meet long-term mode shift requirements.
- **Recommendation 45: High speed and cross border rail enhancements** - that Transport Scotland continues to work closely with the UK Government to take forward a programme of infrastructure on-line and off-line upgrades targeted at longer-distance cross-border routes. These will provide higher speed passenger services and increased capacity and reliability for freight.

A further 28 recommendations were considered to provide benefits across most parts of Scotland, including Dumfries and Galloway, they are recommendations: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38.

8.2 Key Locations

The RTS identifies a number of key locations, and SWestrans is involved in initiatives in relation to each of these.

Dumfries

SWestrans continued to work in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Council to investigate and seek improved links to and from Dumfries. Particularly in relation to the real and perceived transport constraints that also restrict economic development, these being:

- Lack of access to West Coast Main Line passenger and freight services;
- Relatively slow rail links from Dumfries to the Central Belt;
- Poor quality of trunk road linkages between Dumfries and the A74(M).

Stranraer and Loch Ryan

The Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan include aspirations for developments within Stranraer. The details for these aspirations continue to be developed to integrate with and run in parallel with Dumfries and Galloway Council projects.

Gretna, Lockerbie, Annan Triangle

Lockerbie is the region's only main line station and is a key regional gateway and point of connection to the Central Belt and into England. The planned development of further car parking spaces through re-configuration of the existing car park at the Station and potential purchase of land continued during the year.

The Board at its meetings throughout 2022/23 were updated on the stages required to progress parking options at Lockerbie Station.

Remote Rural Communities

As a Model 3 Regional Transport Partnership, SWestrans is responsible for procuring socially necessary public transport services. Most of the region is rural, and with some 51% of the bus network (including Dumfries) requiring subsidy, SWestrans provides vital lifeline connectivity and social inclusion to many communities.

There are a small number of local bus operators serving Dumfries and Galloway and once again this year the Board and officers were greatly exercised by the ongoing sustainability issues that these operators face. It has become apparent from the issues being faced by operators and the low uptake in the most rural areas, particularly

outside of the standard work peaks, that bus services are fragile in areas of the region and cannot sustain a traditional bus service.

Throughout 2022/23 work has continued on social/community transport through the public social partnership (PSP).

8.3 Key Sectors/Themes

The Regional Transport Strategy also identifies a number of key sectors and themes.

Roads

The RTS Delivery Plan includes a commitment to securing five additional overtaking opportunities on the A75 and A77.

The RTS Objective to Improve Transport Links is reflected within the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan.

Bus

Local bus service provision continued to face a number of significant challenges in 2022/23 year. Sustainability issues regarding local bus services were raised by bus operators throughout the year and the Board agreed courses of action to maintain local bus services and prevent the return of contracts.

SWestrans continued its programme of bus shelter replacement and improvement during 2022/23.

Rail

SWestrans is a member of the West Coast Rail 250 Group, which brings together interested stakeholders to lobby for improvements to and on the West Coast Main Line.

SWestrans has lobbied for improvements to services on the Glasgow and Southwestern Line and on the Stranraer Line, consistent with the aspirations of the RTS Delivery Plan for improved services and station re-openings.

The primary community pressure regarding rail travel has been for new stations at Beattock, Thornhill and Eastriggs. As required by the guidance, a 'Strategic Business Case' for each station re-opening were submitted to Transport Scotland for consideration and decision on 14 October 2019. Following the outcome of STPR2 indicated SWestrans requested that Transport Scotland provide indicative timescales for assessment and decision.

Community Transport / Public Social Partnership

Community Transport provides an important element of transport provision in a rural region such as Dumfries and Galloway, often delivering a service which no other provider can meet.

The Dumfries and Galloway Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) continued to make significant progress in 2022/23.

The PSP is a multi-agency partnership between Dumfries and Galloway Council, SWestrans, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and the Community Transport operators/Third Sector, Dumfries and Galloway. The specific aims of this PSP are to develop a genuine and lasting partnership to support the remodelling of the Commissioner(s) transport services and to build the capacity of the community transport sector to be able to deliver these services in the future by:

- Understanding the market
- Increasing capability and capacity
- Responding to changing demand

Three work streams were developed to progress the PSP:

- Work Stream 1 - Transport Service Developments
- Work Stream 2 - Health and Social Care Transport Solutions
- Work Stream 3 - Capability and Capacity building

The Community Transport PSP model will be a critical building block of the new model of sustainable public transport that is being developed. This new model will not succeed without a sustainable and engaged Community Transport sector as a key delivery partner for all services.

Walking and Cycling

During 2022/23 SWestrans continued to fund active travel infrastructure through its Capital Programme. Several walking/cycling infrastructure opportunities to improve functional active travel were progressed.

Health

Under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, RTPs have a legal requirement to develop a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for their area which, as well as identifying accessibility, environmental, social and economic objectives, should seek to facilitate access to hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Regional Transport Strategies

should identify current transport gaps and opportunities within each Health Board and provide a mechanism to deliver and monitor these objectives.

The Regional Transport Strategy identifies healthcare as a key sector to be supported by the strategy, and this is reflected in the inclusion of Dumfries and Galloway Health Board as a statutory partner in the Regional Transport Partnership.

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, together with the Regional Transport Strategies (Health Boards) (Scotland) Order 2006, places a statutory duty on each Health Board to, so far as possible, perform their functions and activities consistently with the Regional Transport Strategies in their area.

NHS Boards therefore have a responsibility to work with RTPs and Local Authorities in developing these strategies to provide local transport solutions and enhance the role of the voluntary and community sector in the design and delivery of access to healthcare.

8.4 Community Planning

SWestrans is a member of the Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Partnership and is represented by the Chair of SWestrans at meetings.

8.5 RTS Monitoring and Review

There is a statutory requirement on SWestrans to undertake monitoring and review of the Regional Transport Strategy, and a commitment to undertaking this is included within the Strategy.

Paragraphs 112 and 133 of the Scottish Executive Guidance on Regional Transport Strategies indicates that the Annual Report should include performance against the objectives, targets and performance indicators set out in the RTS.

While the Regional Transport Objectives are set out in the Regional Transport Strategy, the local indicators and targets are being developed in the context of the RTS Delivery Plan attached to this report as **Appendix 1**, taking into account the aspirations of the Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Partners Single Outcome Agreement. These are reflected in the RTS Delivery Plan (Revised March 2010).

Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) states that Transport Planning Objectives should be expressed with SMART principles in mind – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timed. It is intended that any future refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy would re-examine the RTS Objectives with respect to these SMART principles. This will facilitate the setting of a more focussed basket of indicators.

8.6 Public Sector Equalities Duty

SWestrans is a listed public body under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations, and as such we have a duty to publish an Equalities Mainstreaming Report, and a new set of Equality Outcomes, every 4 years, to enable us to better perform the Equality Duty. We are also required to provide a progress update on the Equality Outcomes set every 2 years.

At its meeting of 31 March 2022, the SWestrans Board were provided an update on the agreed set of equality outcomes for the period 2021-2025. These outcomes are:

- EO1: Everyone will be able to easily access and understand the local bus service information they need.
- EO2: Public transport services are more flexible to meet the identified travel needs of those who need them most.
- EO3: Access and affordability issues are reduced through new transport solutions developed with partners.
- EO4: Our work is informed by a greater understanding of the transport and travel needs, barriers faced and experiences of people with protected characteristics.

The Board also noted the Equalities Mainstreaming Report for 2021-23. Both the Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes are published on the Partnership's website.

8.7 Public Bodies Climate Change Duty

Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on public bodies relating to climate change. These duties came into force on 1 January 2011.

There are three duties, which require that a public body must, in exercising its functions, act:

- In the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of the targets set in or under Part 1 of the Act.
- In the way best calculated to help deliver any programme laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 53 of the Act.
- In a way that it considers is most sustainable.

The Act requires that Scottish Ministers must give guidance to public bodies in relation to their climate change duties, and those bodies must have regard to such guidance. There are a number of public bodies that the Scottish Ministers consider to be 'major players', as they have a larger influence or impact on climate change than others. A list

of these in the Guidance includes SWestrans as well as the other Regional Transport Partnerships. An explanation as given as follows:

“Regional Transport Partnerships have an important contribution to make in reducing transport emissions. They are encouraged to consider the need for additional planning and demand management measures to reduce the need for travel and the carbon intensity of travel, and to maximise active travel (e.g. walking and cycling). This may include measures such as infrastructure, road space reallocation, prioritising integrated public transport and influencing the location of new development through the planning system.”

At the meeting on 19 November 2010 Members of the Board agreed that the public sector climate change duty should be mainstreamed within the existing SWestrans performance management and reporting framework, and at the meeting on 15 March 2013 Members of the Board agreed a SWestrans Climate Change Strategy.

At the meeting on 25 November 2022, Members of the Board agreed the submission of the 2021-22 Climate Change Duties Report for SWestrans.

8.8 Public Services Reform Act

The Public Services Reform (PSR) (Scotland) Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 28 April 2010. Part 3 of the Act imposes duties on Scottish Ministers and listed public bodies to publish certain information on expenditure and other matters on an annual basis. The list of public bodies in Schedule 8 to the Act includes “any Regional Transport Partnership.”

The provisions in Part 3 impose new duties on Scottish Ministers and each person, body or office-holder listed in Schedule 8 of the Act to publish as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year a statement of any expenditure incurred during the financial year on or in connection with Public relations; Overseas travel; Hospitality and entertainment; External consultancy; Payments with a value in excess of £25,000 (not including remuneration) and the number of members or employees (if any) who received remuneration in excess of £150,000.

SWestrans expenditure on the matters specified by the Public Services Reform Act 2010 is set out in the following table.

SWestrans expenditure 2022/23 on matters specified by the PSR Act 2010	
Public Relations - services are provided for SWestrans By Dumfries and Galloway Council's Communications Unit	0
Overseas Travel	0
Hospitality and Entertainment	0
External Consultancy	0
External Governance – e.g. external audit and governance support	13,517
Payments exceeding £25,000 - Payments to bus operators (total of 39 payments exceeding £25,000 to bus operators)	3,881,690
Remuneration exceeding £150,000	0

Each person, body or office-holder listed in Schedule 8 is also required to publish a statement as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year setting out the steps it has taken to promote and increase sustainable growth and to improve efficiency, effectiveness and economy during that financial year. Listed public bodies must have regard to any guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers about the various duties to publish information; and any such guidance must be laid before Parliament.

As indicated above, SWestrans operates with an extremely lean business model, leaving little scope for further improvements in efficiency in internal organisation. Nevertheless, the Partnership contributes to increasing sustainable economic growth within the region and for Scotland as a whole. We would summarise these as follows:

- Lobbying at regional, Scottish, UK national and European level for increased investment in transport and connectivity across all transport modes, including Rail, Roads, Ferries, Aviation and Active Travel. This has been achieved through a number of methods, and it is hoped will inform future transport policy i.e. STPR2.
- Innovative approaches to delivery of sustainable public transport services, including review of the local bus network and bus asset procurement as a spend to save initiative and the establishment of a PSP delivery model.
- Progression of a broad range of infrastructure and soft policy interventions (with significant levels of external funding) designed to advance the aspirations of the Regional Transport Strategy, including regionwide bus infrastructure upgrades.

These activities are driven by the vision of the Regional Transport Strategy for:

“...a transport system for the South West of Scotland that delivers the internal and external connectivity required to sustain and enhance the region’s economy and communities whilst minimising the impact of transport on the environment.”

The Regional Transport Strategy and associated Delivery Plan were developed through an extensive consultation process and are fully aligned with both National and Regional Performance Frameworks. As a consequence of this alignment the activities of SWestrans are wholly dedicated to delivering the Government’s purpose, and to improving regional and Scottish economic competitiveness and sustainability.

8.9 RTPs Joint Chairs and Lead Officers

The Chairs of all Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships hold regular joint meetings. The Joint Chairs also hold regular meetings with the Cabinet Secretary, COSLA and the Confederation for Passenger Transport. The Chair is supported at these meetings by the Lead Officer.

8.10 Freedom of Information, Records Management, and Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) provides individuals with a right of access to all recorded information held by Scotland’s public authorities. Information can only be withheld where FOISA expressly permits it. Section 23 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act requires that Scottish public authorities must adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and is approved by the Information Commissioner.

At the meeting on 22 July 2011 Members of the Board considered requirements of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and agreed a Publication Scheme. A Model Publication Scheme was launched by the Scottish Information Commissioner in October 2012. Public bodies may adopt the Model Publication Scheme in its entirety and publish a ‘Guide to Information’ to assist the public in finding information. The Scottish Information Commissioner has confirmed that public bodies no longer need to publish their own Publication Scheme. All the required information can be published within the Guide to Information. The Guide to Information advises how information can be obtained, and lists information that is available in the appropriate Classes of Information. A SWestrans Guide to Information has been prepared and published on the SWestrans website. Other information not published under these arrangements may be provided on request.

In addition to having a Records Management Policy the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 places an obligation on named public authorities (including transport partnerships) to prepare and implement a Records Management Plan (RMP) which sets out proper arrangements for the management of their records. The Records Management Plan must identify the individual who is responsible for management of

the authority's public records, and the individual who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the plan. Records Management Plans must be agreed with the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and regularly reviewed by the authority.

At the meeting on 15 March 2013 Members of the Board agreed to the adoption of the Scottish Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme 2013 and the Guide to Information. This information is published on the SWestrans website at www.swestrans.org.uk.

On 1 August 2016, SWestrans received a letter from the Keeper inviting submission of a Records Management Plan (RMP) under the assessment programme for 2016. During 2016/17, SWestrans worked with Dumfries and Galloway Council Records Management Team to ensure that SWestrans is fully incorporated within its updated existing RMP. In June 2017, Dumfries and Galloway Council agreed to include SWestrans within its RMP arrangements.

8.11 Communications and Information

Communications, Media and Press Relations support is provided to SWestrans by Dumfries and Galloway Council. This support includes the provision of a dedicated website at www.swestrans.org.uk and email inbox swestrans@dumgal.gov.uk

SWestrans uses the website to publish information about itself, including meeting agendas, reports and minutes. It is also used to publish studies undertaken by SWestrans which it wishes to place in the public domain. The website includes SWestrans contact information.

9. DELIVERY AND PROJECTS

9.1 The Regional Transport Strategy

SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) was agreed by the SWestrans Board on 25 April 2008 and approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2008. The RTS Delivery Plan was agreed by the Board on 27 March 2009. The RTS covers the period up to end of 2023.

SWestrans has a statutory duty to draw up a strategy for transport within its region and has worked with consultants Stantec throughout 2022/23 on the publication of a new RTS for 2023-42. It is hoped the final RTS will be published in early 2024 following sign off from the Transport Minister.

9.2 Revenue Budget

A detailed summary of the elements of the Revenue Budget 2022/23 is set out in the following table:

	Final Outturn 2021/22	Adjusted Budget 2022/23	Actual Expenditure to 31/03/23	Variance
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs	84,007	138,745	138,745	0
Supplies and Services	0	0	0	0
Transport Costs	10,016	0	0	0
Administration Costs	61,392	30,854	30,854	0
Payments	4,027,155	4,233,619	4,301,098	0
Central Support	43,391	44,071	44,701	0
Capital Charges	264,452	265,903	265,903	0
Total Expenditure	4,490,413	4,713,192	4,780,671	0
INCOME				
Scottish Government	259,250	259,250	259,250	0
D&G Council	100,00	100,000	100,000	0
Other Contributions	4,131,163	4,353,942	4,421,421	0
Total Income	4,490,413	4,713,192	4,780,671	0
NET EXPENDITURE	0	0	0	0

9.3 Capital Expenditure Programme

Expenditure on the elements of the Capital Expenditure Programme 2022/23 was as follows:

Item	£
Local Bus Network	569,205
Rail Station Parking	128,995
Active Travel Network	182,647
Total	880,847

9.4 External Funding

No external funding was drawn down in 2022/23.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

A709 Corridor Upgrade					
It is recognised that major improvements are needed on the A709 corridor in order to provide better connectivity to the Central Belt.					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
A709 Corridor Fastlink	Construction of a new road between Dumfries and Lockerbie to offer enhanced connectivity to Central Scotland	£54m (2002 price base)	Transport Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council	STAG Part 1 complete. STAG Part 2 complete and submitted to the Scottish Government and response received.	Considered at Board meeting on 26 March 2010 - to be retained as an aspiration.
Quality Bus Link between Dumfries Railway Station and Lockerbie Railway Station	Quality bus link and enhancements at both stations, including new Accessible Bus provision, access facilities, bus turning facilities, and Real Time Information	£600,000	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Substantially completed under GoSmart programme.	Potential for further improvements at Lockerbie, specifically integration of bus and rail.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

Bus Network Quality Strategy					
Package of measures aimed at improving the quality of the bus network, its integration with rail, cycling and walking, and its attractiveness to users. This includes new bus interchanges at key towns, new bus shelters across the network, real-time passenger information at key nodes, accessible buses and increased service frequencies on the rural bus network. The potential to use biofuels and reduce emissions will be examined.					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
New Bus Interchanges at Key Towns	Development of enhanced bus interchange facilities at key towns	£1,000,000	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Newton Stewart, Annan, Gretna, Moffat and Castle Douglas complete	Complete
Accessible Buses	Enhanced bus access with low floor buses and improved stops	TBC	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Fully accessible buses specified in all SWestrans contracts.	Ongoing
Increased Service Frequencies on Rural Bus Network	Enhanced bus network with regular stopping patterns and improved frequencies	TBC	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Policy Root & Branch Review Complete	Pressure from public sector funding contraction continues.
Real Time Passenger Information at Key Nodes	Introduction of message systems at key bus nodes to inform passengers of real-time bus movements	£2,000,000	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Extensive provision. System removed in 2016 due to financial savings required.	To be included in new Regional Transport Strategy.
New Bus Shelters Across Network	Roll-out of enhanced bus shelters across the region offering improved waiting environment	TBC	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Shelters provided from Capital Expenditure Programme across region	Ongoing
Development of Bus Information Strategy	Upgrade information at bus stops. Develop Bus/Air/Rail information and Traveline. Develop integrated ticketing strategy	TBC	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators, Rail Operators, Airline Operators	New style bus information panels provided across the region	Ongoing, issues with current software being addressed.
Improved Facilities at Rural Pick-up Points	Low cost improvement measures	TBC	Dumfries and Galloway Council		Ongoing
Bikes on Rural Buses	Development of policy with operators	TBC	Dumfries and Galloway Council, Bus Operators		To be included in new Regional Transport Strategy.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

Dumfries Southern Bypass					
Construction of a new bypass south of Dumfries with a specific emphasis on improved connectivity to the critical Crichton area and the health and education services located there.					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Dumfries Southern Bypass	Construction of a new bypass south of Dumfries with a specific emphasis on improved connectivity to the Crichton area (includes improvements to radial routes)	£56 million (2002 prices)	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Government, Developers	STAG Part 1 complete, STAG Part 2 complete. Not included in STPR2.	Further Board consideration may be required.

Dumfries Town Centre Bus Station					
Development of a new bus station in Dumfries town centre which acts as a key transport node for the wider region. This includes compensatory parking to replace spaces lost to the redevelopment of existing parking stock for the bus station and associated traffic management measures					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Dumfries Town Centre Bus Interchange	Development of a new bus station in Dumfries town centre, possibly at a site of an existing car park with compensatory relocated parking	£4,000,000	Scottish Government, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Study completed. Public consultation exercise completed. Council opted not to progress.	To be included in new Regional Transport Strategy

APPENDIX 1 a -

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES

Dumfries Town Centre Public Realm Improvements Including Walking and Cycling Enhancements					
Package of measures improving the quality of transport infrastructure in Dumfries town centre. This includes public realm improvements, improved access to the rail station and improvements to walking and cycling routes in Dumfries designed to stimulate further regeneration of the regional capital					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Dumfries Town Centre Public Realm Improvements	Series of improvements to the attractiveness and amenity of the town centre including transport links.	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Private Sector	Friars Vennel, Bank Street, Plainstones and Burns Statue complete.	Complete
Crichton Access Roads	Improved road access to the Crichton	£2,000,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council	Included with Dumfries Southern Bypass	
Dumfries Bus Priority	Improvements on key bus routes in Dumfries	£1,000,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Bus Operators	Concluded with report to Council	
Sustainable Transport Initiatives	Opportunities in Dumfries from development of Southern Bypass	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Bus Operators, Forums	Elements completed as part of GoSMART Dumfries	
Cycling/Walking Improvements Dumfries	Improvements to the cycling/ walking network	£1,000,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Cycling Scotland, Sustrans	Maxwelltown Cycle Path including Connect2 Queen of the South Viaduct complete. Facilities provided as part of GoSMART Dumfries	Further projects being progressed in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway Council aligned with the new Active Travel Strategy.
Dumfries Town Centre – Rail Station Access	Improve access arrangements to Dumfries railway station	£300,000	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Completed as part of GoSMART Dumfries	ScotRail published the Dumfries Station Travel Plan in 2019.
Dumfries Park and Choose Network	Development of a series of Park and Choose sites around Dumfries	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Scottish Government, Operators	Substantial development as part of GoSMART Dumfries	
Dumfries Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town	Partnership with Scottish Government and Dumfries & Galloway Council	£6.8 million	Scottish Government, Dumfries & Galloway Council, other partners	Complete	

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

Rail Services Upgrade Enhanced rail services on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and the Glasgow and South Western Line (GSWL)					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Improved Lockerbie – Glasgow Service	Improved rail services between Lockerbie and Glasgow	N/A	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council		Continue to lobby for improved services from Lockerbie station. Lockerbie Station Liaison Group reconvened March 2020.
Improved Lockerbie – Edinburgh Service	Improved rail services between Lockerbie and Edinburgh	N/A	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Some improvements to services realised.	Potential for further improvements.
GSW Service Frequency / Journey Time Enhancements Combined with Gretna Annan Doubling	Improved rail services between Carlisle and Glasgow	N/A	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Timetable improvements from May 2022.	Large gaps within Dumfries – Glasgow timetable now addressed. SWestrans submitted a paper detailing the rail timetable needs to Transport Scotland as part of their PFG commitment to review rail in SW Scotland.
	Reinstatement of double track between Gretna and Annan	£36,000,000		Complete	Complete

APPENDIX 1 a -

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

<p>Stranraer Line Frequency / Journey Time Enhancements</p>	<p>The introduction of additional trains and local line improvements</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council</p>	<p>Community Rail Partnership established. Partnership study with SPT, Transport Scotland and Passenger Focus for section between Ayr and Stranraer complete</p>	<p>Stranraer Line position paper agreed by Board in 2017 and shared with relevant decision-makers.</p>
<p>Rail Services to Prestwick Airport via GSWL</p>	<p>Improved rail services to Prestwick Airport from Dumfries and Galloway</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council</p>	<p>Partnership study with SPT, Transport Scotland and Passenger Focus for section between Ayr and Stranraer complete</p>	

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

Regionwide Rail Stations Strategy					
New rail stations at Thornhill, Eastriggs, Beattock and Dunragit / Glenluce area and accessibility improvements at Lockerbie and Kirkconnel stations					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Region-wide Stations Strategy	New rail stations at locations across the region including Thornhill, Eastriggs, Dunragit/ Glenluce area and Beattock	£7m - £12m	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Original STAG Studies complete for Thornhill and Eastriggs, and submitted to Transport Scotland. Response received. Advised that new STAG studies required to progress.	STAG Appraisals completed for Eastriggs, Beattock and Thornhill and submitted to Transport Scotland. Further addendums submitted following conclusion of STPR2.
Accessibility Improvements – Lockerbie Station	Improved access to Lockerbie station, particularly for wheelchair users to the southbound platform	£1,400,000	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Disabled Access project complete	Complete
Accessibility Improvements – Kirkconnel Station	Improved access to Kirkconnel station, particularly for wheelchair users to the southbound platform	TBC	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Network Rail has been asked to consider accessibility improvements. Study into alternatives to a bridge and lifts option being progressed	LRDF bid accepted and Case for Change submitted to Transport Scotland.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

Stranraer Waterfront and Town Centre Public Realm Improvements Including Public Rail / Bus Interchange Hub and Walking and Cycling Enhancements					
Package of measures improving the quality of transport infrastructure in Stranraer town centre and waterfront area. This includes public realm improvements, improved walking and cycling linkages between the town centre and the waterfront and the development of integrated public transport interchange and associated multi-modal rail / bus / ferry links					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Integrated Public Transport Interchange, Stranraer, and Associated Multi-modal Rail / Bus / Ferry Links	Development of integrated public transport interchange for rail, bus and ferry users. Undertake further study to review possible extension of railway line to Cairnryan	£2,350,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Transport Scotland, Scottish Government, Network Rail, EU-ERDF	StenaLine relocation complete 2011.	Budget allocation for interchange removed and absorbed within regeneration project.
Stranraer Town Centre/ Waterfront Links	Package of measures improving the quality of transport infrastructure in Stranraer town centre including public realm improvements and improved walking and cycling linkages between the town centre and the waterfront and ferry terminals	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Private Sector	StenaLine relocation complete.	Project being taken forward by Dumfries and Galloway Council with assistance from SWestrans officers.

**REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

Regionwide Cycling / Walking and Sustainable Travel Projects Including Completion of the National Cycle Network					
Completion of the National Cycle Network – NCR 73 Newton Stewart – Cairnryan to link NCN Network in Scotland to NCN in Northern Ireland via the Loch Ryan ferry terminals. Involves completion of the Dunragit Bypass and Innermessan to Drummuckloch and cycle / walking path between Beattock and Moffat and cycle / walking path between Lochmaben and Lockerbie. An East to West Cycleway along the line of the Southern Upland Way.					
Intervention	Description	Estimated Expenditure 2009-2024	Potential Partners	Progress to 2022/23	Timescale and Comments (2022/23)
Lockerbie to Lochmaben Cycle Route	Link to NCN and employment opportunities, providing alternative route to A709, requires bridge over River Annan	£1,000,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Cycling Scotland, Sustrans	Initial design, land issues and external funding opportunities continue to be investigated	The Board agreed to curtail work on this element at its meeting in March 2018.
Moffat to Beattock Cycle Route	Link to NCN extending link from Dumfries and providing off-road alternative to A701	£250,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Cycling Scotland, Sustrans	Path complete between Beattock and Hidden Corner.	Complete
National Cycle Network Completion	Completion of NCN linking Newton Stewart and Stranraer to Cairnryan, linking to ferry terminals and Northern Ireland	£900,000	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Cycling Scotland, Sustrans, Transport Scotland, EU-Interreg4	Works on Newton Stewart to Stranraer complete following the completion of the Dunragit Bypass.	Complete when Transport Scotland do Drummuckloch to Innermessan Scheme on A77.
Sustainable Travel Plan and Associated Projects	Travel Plans for staff of large businesses and public bodies. Marketing of DGTripshare. Bike Scheme. Active Travel Strategy. Consideration of Park & Cycle projects	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Dumfries South Travel Plan Group, Dumfries & Galloway College	Travel Plan for DGRI and Crichton Royal Hospitals complete. DGTripshare established. Dumfries & Galloway Council Travel Plan complete.	Potential for public sector travel plans in locations other than Dumfries.
Provision of Cycling / Walking Infrastructure at Various Locations across the Region	Cycling / Walking routes to link into National and Strategic routes	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Sustrans, ERDF, Cycling Scotland	Various facilities provided under previous expenditure programmes.	Further opportunities being taken forward by Dumfries & Galloway Council.
East – West Cycle Route along Southern Upland Way Corridor	Cycling/Walking route to link into national and strategic routes and communities	TBC	Dumfries & Galloway Council, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland	Design, land issues continue to be investigated.	On-going

DEVELOP TO DELIVER

1. Reason for Report

To inform the Board of a policy document prepared by Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) on the opportunities to maximise the role of the partnerships in delivering strategic transport improvements, working with others.

2. Background

2.1 The Chairs of Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships meet on a quarterly basis, to discuss matters of common interest and ensure a voice for all parts of the country. The Chairs previously agreed a policy paper in 2015 entitled "Develop to Deliver". It was agreed by the Chairs that this document required updating and instructed officers to bring back a report.

2.2 The attached paper (**Appendix 1**) entitled "Develop to Deliver – 2023 Refresh" was considered by the RTP Chairs at their meeting in Glasgow on 28 November 2023 and it was agreed to seek the endorsement of the report by the seven partnership boards. The paper will then be shared with CoSLA, the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) and Transport Scotland.

3. Key Points

3.1 The Develop to Deliver document sets out the RTPs' aspirations including a series of Recommendations and Actions, focussed on ten priorities:

1. Co-ordinating action on reducing emissions;
2. Delivering more effective and transparent, delivery-focused governance and roles and responsibilities;
3. Transforming active travel;
4. Helping make public transport more affordable;
5. Seizing the opportunity to ensure the true alignment of strategic transport and land use planning;
6. Working in partnership to Improve transport access to health and social care;
7. Ensuring our islands are better connected;
8. Delivering for the freight sector;
9. Promoting and delivering Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service;
10. Sustaining air services.

3.2 Although the document is deliberately concise and high-level, it provides some further discussion on each of these topics. The intention is to provide an opportunity for considering these issues and any others deemed necessary, reflecting the views of constituent local authorities and ensuring coordinated policy discussion across Scotland at a strategic level.

4. Implications	
Financial	There are no financial implications from this report.
Policy	Policy implications will be assessed and reported as appropriate as opportunities develop.
Equalities	No equalities implications from this report
Climate Change	No climate change implications from this report
Risk Management	Develop to Deliver recommendations and actions relate to the known risks: R03 – Strategic Direction R05 – RTS Delivery

Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.
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5. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:

- 5.1 note the “Develop to Deliver – 2023 Refresh” document at the Appendix; and
- 5.2 endorse the principles of collaboration, opportunities for regional coordination and role of Regional Transport Partnerships in enabling liaison between national and local authorities.

<p>Report Author: Douglas Kirkpatrick Tel: 01387 260136</p> <p>Date of Report: 12 February 2024 File Ref: SW2/Meetings/2024</p>	<p>Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN</p>
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APPENDIX – Develop to Deliver - 2023 Refresh



REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS

Develop to Deliver – 2023 Refresh

Maximising the Role of Regional Transport Partnerships in Furthering Improvements to Transport in Scotland

A report by the Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland

November 2023

About this report

This report has been prepared by the Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) of Scotland. It is a summary of work undertaken in seeking to 'refresh' the recommendations of the original 'Develop to Deliver' report* from 2015, and was approved by the Chairs at their meeting of 29 November 2023.

The report has not been approved by individual RTP Boards, and does not alter the policy content detailed in or status of each RTPs respective Regional Transport Strategy.

The report will be circulated to all relevant partners, and will be used to guide and progress future work by the RTP Chairs and their engagement with those partners, including the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, COSLA, operators and others. Further information and background on the report is available from the RTP Lead Officers – contact mark.speed@tactran.gov.uk .

* <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/10266/sg-rtp-working-group-report-final-august-2015-pdf.pdf>

Foreword – A New Future for Regional Transport Partnerships

Transport in Scotland is at a crossroads.

The challenges we face are significant: from addressing island connectivity and achieving a sustainable model for rural transport, through to widespread bus service withdrawals across our towns and cities.

Opportunities are there too. Our strategies, at national, regional and local levels are, for the first time, in almost complete alignment.

We know what we need to do. We just need to get on with doing it.

But there are many options and permutations of the path we need to take from that crossroads to get to the optimal results we all desire.

We believe that the Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland hold the key to collectively guiding us down the right path.

There is no ‘magic bullet’, no ‘one size fits all’ solution to the transport issues we face. We all know that.

But the RTPs’ unique and wide-ranging perspective - from the local to the strategic, cross-party, urban and rural – our partnership-focused approach, and crucially, capability to deliver, can give us a head-start in making a real positive difference for the people and communities we are here to serve.

The original “Develop to Deliver” report in 2015 set out a growth strategy for RTPs. When we had our first meetings as RTP Chairs after the May 2022 council elections, we realised we needed to take stock, revisit that report, refresh it, and set out an up-to-date vision of how RTPs could help in a much-changed world and address head-on the challenges our sector faces.

This 2023 Refresh sets out that vision.

We commend it to you, and hope that it triggers a transformation in strengthening RTPs to lead and support the right solutions for Scotland’s transport challenges, working with our partners towards delivering the world-class sustainable transport system our communities want, need and deserve.

The Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland

November 2023

Introduction and Context

Taking the conclusions of the original “Develop to Deliver” as its base, set out below are a series of recommendations and actions showing how the RTP Chairs believe the RTPs could further help improve transport in Scotland. Development of the report has been based on the range of significant work undertaken by RTPs and partners over recent years – from Regional Transport Strategies to development and delivery of projects on the ground. The recommendations are intended to stimulate discussion, accelerate progress and delivery, and to sit alongside and complement each RTP’s Regional Transport Strategy.

The recommendations and actions of the 2023 Refresh are:

1. Co-ordinating action on reducing emissions

There is an opportunity for RTPs to play a stronger, co-ordinating role in reducing emissions, and accelerating climate adaptation and resilience, working with Transport Scotland, councils, operators, Electric Vehicle (EV) manufacturers and infrastructure providers, and others. RTPs can play an important role as a conduit between partners to deliver at a regional scale, bringing efficiencies and a complementary approach across boundaries. This approach will be especially important in infrastructure provision, in rural and island areas and areas of deprivation where, for example, enhanced support may be required.

Action: Through dialogue with Transport Scotland and others, the RTPs will seek a lead role in co-ordinating future actions on initiatives and infrastructure to reduce emissions to ensure maximum effects and an efficient approach.

Progress / Case Studies: SPT is working with partners through the Climate Ready Clyde Partnership and has established a transport resilience group to share best practice and work together to coordinate and align actions on adaptation. This has the potential to be replicated in other RTP areas to drive good practice and innovation. Similarly, Nestrans has signed the Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge. The pledge is a commitment by the organisations and people of the City of Aberdeen to act within their own organisations and lives to contribute towards the Net Zero Aberdeen Route map and Aberdeen Adapts Climate Adaptation Framework.

2. Delivering more effective and transparent, delivery-focused governance and roles and responsibilities

Building on the earlier findings of the NTS Roles and Responsibilities workstream, the recent report¹ by the Scottish Parliament’s Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee, and work and consultation undertaken by RTPs in the recent preparation of their Regional Transport Strategies, the RTPs offer a potential route to lead and co-ordinate work to identify any required change in governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities in transport across Scotland, working with partners at national and local levels. This work would be focused on delivery of the Regional Transport Strategies, and will consider enhanced powers for the right partners where needed to ensure and accelerate that delivery.

Action: RTPs will seek to co-ordinate any future work on changes to transport governance / roles and responsibilities in their areas.

Progress / Case Studies: The report by the Scottish Parliament’s Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee noted that: “The Committee supports a stronger Regional Transport

¹ <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/NZET/2023/1/23/2c9752ff-eb3f-4273-8f78-e726676a3b6e/NZET062023R1.pdf>

Partnership model to help enable positive behavioural change. RTPs should be empowered and resourced to be lead decision-takers on achieving a more joined up and strategic approach to public transport and active travel at regional level: one reflective of actual travel or commuting patterns, which do not stop at Council boundaries, and to achieve better integration on transport policy between member Local Authorities. This in turn requires RTPs to be higher profile, more transparent and more responsive organisations, with clearer processes for public engagement.”

3. Transforming active travel

RTPs are supportive of the partnership model proposed as a result of Transport Scotland’s Active Travel Transformation Programme (ATTP). We believe this will form the framework for greater regional co-ordination of active travel project development and delivery. With our experience, RTPs are ideally placed to lead on these partnerships as required, building on the successful Regional Active Travel Grant process and regional active travel strategies currently being developed. Working with our councils and others, we believe this approach will ensure delivery of regional active travel projects of a significantly enhanced scale to ensure effective and efficient utilisation of the expected big increase in active travel funding by Transport Scotland over coming years.

Action: RTPs to continue work with TS and others to ensure a robust, regional approach to the new partnership model of funding, developing and delivering active travel improvements.

Progress / Case Studies: Hitrans “Hi-Bike” system offers e-bikes to residents and visitors in Inverness and Fort William. It’s easy, fun and comfortable, and allows the Scottish highlands to join the active transportation revolution by offering a sustainable new transit option for people to get around the two towns. Hi-Bike is available 24/7 and is perfect for commuting, errands, or recreation. At present, there are 11 bike stations and around 90 bikes available.

4. Helping make public transport more affordable

Current ticketing and fare structures are too complex and confusing, As we await the outcome of the Fair Fares Review, RTPs are in a key position to work collectively with operators and Transport Scotland on more affordable fares and integrated, multi-modal smart ticketing, in line with our respective Regional Transport Strategies. Specifically, and potentially utilising the provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and reflecting the continuing significant public sector investment in supporting bus services and infrastructure – and support during the pandemic - there is a real opportunity to grow bus patronage back to pre-Covid levels and beyond through working with operators on fares. Similarly, we believe there is the opportunity for innovative pathfinder projects to examine new ways to promote more affordable fares.

Action: Building on the outcomes of the Fair Fares Review when published, RTPs will seek to co-ordinate any action to reduce fares or offer incentives to travel in their respective areas.

5. Seizing the opportunity to ensure the true alignment of strategic transport and land-use planning

Through our statutory RTSs, and our formal role as ‘key agencies’ in the development planning and management process, RTPs are already working hard to achieve the much-longed for goal of integrated transport and land-use planning. This ambition has never been more important given our collective targets to reduce car travel, grow the use of public transport and active travel, and achieve such initiatives as 20-minute neighbourhoods. RTPs present an opportunity to strengthen regional involvement in planning and development, both in terms of

transport and land-use, through a 'co-production' approach to the development of Regional Spatial Strategies, working with councils and other partners.

Action: RTPs to seek discussion with the Scottish Government, local authorities and regional planning teams to establish a more effective framework in which economic growth, land use and transport can co-exist and more effectively align, and secure a co-production approach to development of Regional Spatial Strategies.

6. Working in partnership to Improve transport access to health and social care

RTPs remain committed to working with partners across the Scottish Government, NHS, local authorities, Scottish Ambulance Service, transport operators including the Community and Voluntary Transport sectors and representatives of patient groups to deliver improved transport outcomes for people accessing healthcare, and in particular those who find access most challenging. RTPs have recently delivered successful pilot schemes in this regard. However, we believe much more could be done, and believe we need to bring relevant partners together to focus on stepping up improvements and efficiencies in transport access to healthcare facilities.

Action: RTPs to request the Scottish Government convene a Transport Access to Health and Social Care Ministerial Group to help co-ordinate national, regional and local leadership and action.

Progress / Case Studies: A report² by MACS in 2019 made 27 recommendations on improving transport access to health and social care. The recommendations included:

- One organisation needs to take accountability for the lead strategic planning role to ensure ambulance, hospital, community and public transport provision meets demand and is accessible, available and affordable to all
- All local authorities should have an accessible transport strategy and targets, which encourages and facilitates more disabled people and older people being able to use public transport to attend medical appointments.

7. Ensuring our islands are better connected

The ferry services which ensure our islands remain connected are a genuine lifeline service for the people and businesses which need them. But the challenges facing the sector are significant, and there is regular negative coverage in the media of issue on our ferry network. RTPs have done their best to help in this area, but want to do more in supporting Transport Scotland, local communities, and operators to secure a sustainable future for our ferries.

Action: RTP Lead Officers to scope out an enhanced role for RTPs in this important area. This consideration should take place alongside the work to implement improved Governance of ferry services that has been committed to by Ministers through the Project Neptune process.

Progress / Case Studies: An example of the work RTPs are doing in this area is the collaboration between HITRANS, ZetTrans, Shetland Islands Council and Orkney Islands Council between 2013 and 2015 and the follow-on studies in Orkney and Shetland. The Shetland Inter Island Transport Study (SIITS), published in December 2016, was developed by Shetland Islands Council and ZetTrans. The study reviewed connectivity across the Shetland Islands and developed a Strategic Business Case for future of inter-island transport services and infrastructure covering 30 years. The study provided the basis for successfully

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47020/subgroup-transport-to-health-report.pdf>

securing additional funding for the costs of ferry services of £5.0 million in 2018/19 and a further £5.2 million for 2019/20 with the current funding sitting at £23 million in 2023/24.

To secure longer term funding for the running of services and the building of new infrastructure, Shetland Council and ZetTrans are undertaking an update of their 2016 study in the form of an Inter-Island Transport Connectivity Business Case to include detailed work on fixed links which will also contribute to considering solutions in addition to ferries in other areas of the Highlands and Islands.

8. Delivering for the freight sector

RTPs want to support the major freight operators and Transport Scotland to encourage the reduction of diesel mileage by 20% in line with Scottish Government aspirations, including the electrification of rail freight services and development of electric Heavy Goods Vehicles. The impact of Freeports on the 20% diesel mileage reduction aspirations and the costs associated with decarbonisation of the railway will be key factors to be considered as we progress these matters.

Action: RTPs will work with the freight sector, Transport Scotland and other partners to build on existing and promote more sustainable freight approaches including Consolidation Centres, Cyclelogistics, drone testing, and decarbonisation of fleets.

9. Promoting and delivering Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) are and will play a crucial role over coming years to improve travel options for people including some of our most vulnerable passengers. It will be important that RTPs work with a range of transport and wider partners to identify, promote and implement best practice across Scotland while recognising different solutions will be required for different geographies and demographics. Strong leadership at a national and regional level will be critical to this process to drive progress and provide a clear pathway forward.

Action: RTPs are committed to playing their role in the promotion and delivery of MaaS and DRT and we are keen to improve engagement across the sectors and with Transport Scotland to establish an appropriate Framework on which to build progress.

Progress / Case Studies: There are examples of DRT across Scotland including Aberdeenshire's A2B Dial-a-Bus, SPT's MyBus and Fife Dial-a Ride. Combining DRT and MaaS has also been taken forward by HITRANS and Tactrans as part of a joint project. The RTPs received around £1 million of funding from the Transport Scotland MaaS Investment fund to implement MaaS trials which include key elements of modern DRT. To further develop these projects and turn the MaaS concept into reality will require further investment but there is no doubt that MaaS and Digital DRT present a huge opportunity to reduce private car use and promote more sustainable travel in rural areas.

10. Sustaining air services

Protecting Scotland's air services including essential links to wider markets in England, UK and beyond is essential to the wellbeing of our communities. Internal flights are a lifeline service and must be protected and enhanced to ensure our rural and island economies can share in opportunities and prosperity. RTPs are a crucial voice in calling for more investment in air services and have the potential to be at the forefront of exploring innovative new technology to decarbonise the sector, starting with internal flights.

Action: RTPs would welcome a new partnership along with Transport Scotland, local authorities, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the aviation sector to support the growth of new decarbonised technologies to support the sector, grow Scotland's connectivity and meet the needs of its residents for access to services.

Progress / Case studies: Air links from and between Scotland's Islands make up the vast majority of Scotland's internal scheduled air services and provide islanders access to healthcare, employment, education and access to friends and family. Air services also deliver vital freight supplies essential to the viability of island communities. We often see air travel as being additional to our normal daily lives or link it in our minds with leisure travel but island air services including intra island services are integral to the daily life of islanders particularly those living on some of our most remote island communities. Looking further afield, access to slots at Heathrow Airport are essential to communities and economies including those for Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee and the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney to enable onward travel for people and goods to the wider world. It is recognised that air services must play their full part in efforts to decarbonise the transport sector, in-turn reducing the significant emissions currently experienced. The greatest opportunity to affect change in the medium term is to explore and develop low carbon and electric aircraft to serve internal flights. Progress is already being made in testing low carbon aviation solutions and the Highlands and Islands air networks offer real potential for a switch to low carbon solutions in the early stages of this journey.

LOCAL BUS NETWORK REVIEW

1. Reason for Report

To provide an update on the outcomes and findings of the school and local bus network review and to provide recommendations to progress with securing a sustainable transport network.

2. Background

2.1 A full transport network review to establish a more sustainable longer term approach to the provision of school and local bus networks was commissioned, under the direction provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council at their Full Council meeting in June 2023 and by the SWestrans Board at its meeting on 30 June 2023.

2.2 A subsequent report to the Council's Finance, Procurement and Transformation Committee in August 2023 provided the specification and agreement to the progression of a strategic commission with Stantec UK to provide the necessary professional advice/support for this review.

2.3 Stantec UK were appointed in September 2023 and this report provides the Board with the key findings and recommendations arising from the independent school and local bus network review.

2.4 In June 2021, both this Board and the Council's Communities Committee agreed a new sustainable public transport model for the region to ensure that an appropriate and affordable travel option is available to all residents and visitors no matter where they are or which travel mode they use to access services. The 3 tier framework agreed for delivering the new model is outlined below:

Tier 1 – Community Level Provision: made up of a number of tailored and flexible services providing travel opportunities at community level linking directly to amenities/services or to a more structured/timetabled public transport option. This tier will take the learning and structures developed through the Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) and expand across the region. This 'mainstreaming' of the PSP learnings will be a critical building block for the delivery of needs-based transport.

Tier 2 – Supported Local Bus and Community Transport Services: made up of supported bus services provided by bus operators, DGC Buses and Community Transport. This would include fixed or semi-fixed bus routes along with Demand Responsive Transport services that would either complement the current supported routes or be an alternative to these routes. One of the major aims of Tier 2 services would be to increase patronage of Tier 3 services through the development of Hub and Spoke feeder services to assist with the overall sustainability of commercial routes.

Tier 3 – Commercial Local Bus and Rail Services: made up of commercial bus routes and rail services. They would operate on the main corridors where there is high passenger demand for these services. Tier 3 services would be operated, in the main, by the commercial bus sector and Train Operating Companies.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The timescales for the review of school and local bus services required a complete review report to be provided in February 2024. This was to allow time for revised contracts to then be procured where supply chains were ready, in April 2024 to ensure that revised arrangements were in place by the end of the current contract extension periods in August 2024.

3.2 Current school and local bus contracts are in place until August 2024 and the intention of the current school and local bus review was to have:

- a new sustainable network designed/agreed to enable procurement in Spring 2024.
- contracts would be for a period of between 5 and 7 (+ 3) years to provide opportunities which enable operators to secure vehicle investment, stability, reliability, environmental efficiency, and provide an improved customer experience.

3.3 Stantec UK has completed the review and has provided the report attached as the **Appendix**. The report includes a detailed analysis of the current and future position of the school and local bus network, key findings and recommendations of actions now required to improve the overall sustainability of the supply chain and transport model for the region.

3.4 A summary of the main findings is provided below:

- There is already a high degree of efficiency with local bus services aligned around statutory home to school transport.
- Peak vehicle requirement (PVR) for school journeys makes cashable savings more challenging.
- The fragile position of the bus industry in Dumfries and Galloway is acute.
- Resilience is at a historic low and the risk of further degradation is significant.
- Any withdrawal of service/operator capacity would have a major impact.
- There are limited numbers of operators and no interest from the wider market to undertake work in the region. This limits the ability to provide a competitive solution, particularly in the West of the region where only one operator is available.
- Some routes have identified a particularly high subsidy level per passenger based on the current model and demand.
- Taxi/Private Hire and Community Transport also face cost pressures however the overall costs to run are lower and opportunities to further utilise these models in areas with a high passenger subsidy level could generate efficiencies to offset other additional costs in the network. However, this will require development work to extend the capacity in these sectors.
- Introduction of asymmetric school week from 2025/26 would influence the provision of both statutory school and local bus service delivery.

3.5 In addition to the findings arising from the review there are other Council transformation projects and influences that have progressed during the time of the

review that could have significant impact over the transport network and potential solutions developed through the review; in particular:

- the possible move to an asymmetric school week from 2025/26 (as listed above in the main findings).
- possible School mothballing that will increase PVR.
- risk of removal of commercial bus routes.
- Levelling Up Fund (LUF) transport infrastructure approved.

3.6 The review recommends delivery in line with the agreed Public Transport Model, as follows:

- Expansion of Tier 1 community level provision – requires close working with and support of community organisations to build the sector capacity. Realism that costs are not dissimilar to commercial bus operator costs.
- Extension of Council operation within Tier 2 – expand delivery on an incremental basis towards setting up DGC Buses as a PSV Operator in areas where it is an appropriate intervention. Careful consideration of impact on the commercial sector and realistic view of the time/capacity challenges to achieve any expansion. A separate review and report will follow on the consideration of DGC buses as a PSV operator.
- The original timescale for retendering in spring 2024 for new contracts in operation in late summer 2024 will be challenging, particularly as the local bus market continues to be highly unsettled and the demand for home to school transport services potentially changes fundamentally. We consider that the actions needed to deliver a sustainable public transport network require careful planning and effective engagement and can only be fully achieved with a longer lead-in timescale such as to summer 2025. This would require extension of current contracts for 12 months as an interim measure while the optimised network and delivery models are organised.

3.7 SWestrans is responsible for the local bus transport contracts with the Council responsible for the school bus contracts. To provide the opportunity to take forward the actions as set out at section 3.8 of this report, a contract extension for a further 12 months would be implemented in accordance with Procurement Standing Orders.

3.8 The key actions to be taken forward, in partnership with the Council, between April 2024 and February 2025 to ensure sustainable school and local bus networks can be procured in Spring 2025 will include the following:

- Initial detailed route by route assessment with existing operators of the independent recommendations provided on both the school and local bus networks through individual sessions and group workshop sessions.
- Ongoing operator liaison and regular updates to Committee/SWestrans Board.
- A full operational review of routes undertaken by DGC Buses with recommended outcomes to target provision across Tiers 1 and 2.
- Detailed assessment and mapping of opportunities presented by the LUF investment.
- Close working with the officers leading the Timetable Alignment Working Group who are developing the asymmetric school day options to ensure the full implications of any change are understood and embedded in the designed networks prior to procurement of longer-term school and local bus provision.
- Development of the Community Transport Sector with the aim of enhancing Tier 1 operations.

- Develop the capacity of the under 8 seat sectors through direct engagement with taxi/private hire operators.
- Develop minibus (D1) and bus (PCV) training opportunities to enhance delivery capacity and resilience across the region.
- 2 joint Member Seminars with the Council (1 pre-recess 2024; 1 early 2025) including operator representatives.
- Network options designed and presented to the Council and the SWestrans Board early 2025.
- Community engagement (early 2025).
- Procurement specifications designed and issued Spring 2025.

4. Implications	
Financial	The financial implications are indicated in the report.
Policy	SWestrans has a statutory duty to determine the policy and provision of socially necessary bus services within the budget it has available.
Equalities	<p>Older people would be disproportionately affected by reductions in services. At a minimum, services would be reduced for personal activity and retail, removing non-peak journeys. Older people tend to use these services, and many rely on the national concessionary fare scheme for their travel.</p> <p>Disabled people who rely on public transport for their travel needs would face an increased lack of accessibility.</p> <p>Our own research shows that women are more reliant on public transport than men and have lower levels of access to private vehicles. Pregnant women and mothers of younger children also tend to rely more heavily on public transport for accessing health and retail, and other facilities.</p> <p>Service reduction will have a potential impact on the mental and physical health of residents who will suffer reduced access to facilities.</p> <p>Service reduction will impact those in more isolated areas who cannot access alternative transport.</p> <p>Research indicates that those members of society on lower income rely heavily on public transport for access to all essential services; any reduction in provision could result in increased hardship and greater inequality.</p>
Climate Change	Bus service provision can have a positive impact on climate change objectives by reducing emissions associated with car usage.
Risk Management	Local bus provision relates to the known risks: R02 – Public Image R05 – RTS Delivery R07 – Revenue Funding R08 – Bus Contracts Prices R13 – Lack of Bus Operators and Drivers

Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.
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5. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members of the Board:

- 5.1 note the outcome of the school and local bus review at the Appendix; and
- 5.2 approve the key actions to be taken forward at set out at paragraph 3.8.

Douglas Kirkpatrick - Report Author Tel:01387 260136 Date of Report: 04 March 2024 File Ref:	Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower, Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG1 8PN
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Appendix – Network Review (12 March 2024)

PUBLIC



NETWORK REVIEW

12 March 2024

Prepared for:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

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Project Number:
332610616

PUBLIC

Network Review

Version	Description	Author	Date	Quality Check	Date	Independent Review	Date
1	First draft	FL/JC	19.01.24	AM	22.01.24	BP	23.01.24
2	Second draft	FL/JC	19.02.24	AM	20.02.24	BP	20.02.24
3	Final	FL	11.03.24	AM	12.02.24	BP	12.03.24

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 Objectives.....	1
1.3 Report Structure	2
2 CONTEXT.....	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 Policy Overview	3
2.3 Finance.....	9
2.4 Demographics and Social Conditions	9
2.5 Economy.....	11
2.6 Supply.....	11
2.7 Need and Demand	12
3 MARKET ANALYSIS.....	13
3.1 Introduction	13
3.2 Current Situation.....	13
3.3 Market Trends	18
3.4 Opportunities	18
3.5 Conclusions	21
4 LOCAL BUS NETWORK.....	23
4.1 Introduction	23
4.2 Demand Analysis.....	23
4.3 Demographic Analysis.....	24
4.4 Service Design	29
5 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT	32
5.1 Introduction	32
5.2 Demand Analysis.....	32
5.3 Service Design	34
6 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS TRANSPORT.....	35
7 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS.....	38
7.1 Introduction	38
7.2 Current Situation.....	38
7.3 Benchmarking.....	42
7.4 Summary	43
8 CONCLUSIONS.....	44
8.1 Summary	44
8.2 Next Steps	44

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2-1: Assessment of meeting the SNTS Aims.....	5
Table 2-2: Assessment of meeting the SRTS Objectives	6
Table 2-3: Assessment of meeting the DGC Plan Aims	7
Table 2-4 Agreed Travel Need Factors.....	8
Table 3-1: Stagecoach Services in Dumfries and Galloway.....	14
Table 3-2: Supported Services Provided by Other Operators	15
Table 3-3: Home to School Transport.....	16
Table 3-4: Stagecoach Dedicated School Bus Services	17
Table 7-1: Subsidy Summary by Contract	40
Table 7-2 Comparison of Tender Prices with and without Competition.....	42



Table 7-3: Comparison of Subsidy by Area	42
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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1: Sustainable Delivery Model	8
Figure 2-2: Scottish Government Urban – Rural Classification of SWestrans Region	10
Figure 3-1: Supported and Commercial Services Coverage	13
Figure 4-1: PowerBI Output Example	24
Figure 4-2: SIMD Map - Wigtownshire	25
Figure 4-3: SIMD Map – A75 Corridor	26
Figure 5-1: Distribution of Home Postcodes Attending Schools (Excluding Primary)	33
Figure 6-1: ASN Schools.....	35
Figure 7-1: Cumulative Subsidy and Patronage by Contract.....	41

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A LOCAL BUS SERVICE ANALYSIS AND PROPOSALS	1
A.1 Wigtownshire	1
A.1.1 Service 359: Newton Stewart & Girvan	1
A.1.2 Service 365: Stranraer Local	1
A.1.3 Service 367: Stranraer & Portpatrick	1
A.1.4 Service 407: Stranraer & Drummorie	1
A.1.5 Service 408: Stranraer & Kirkcolm	2
A.1.6 Service 410: Stranraer – New Luce – Glenluce	2
A.1.7 Service 411: Stranraer – Knock – Portpatrick	2
A.1.8 Service 412: Stranraer – Ervie	2
A.1.9 Service 415: Newton Stewart & Whithorn / Port William	2
A.1.10 Service 416: Newton Stewart, Whithorn & Stranraer	3
A.2 Stewartry	3
A.2.1 Service 431: Gatehouse & Kirkcudbright	3
A.2.2 Service 500a: Dumfries & Stranraer	3
A.2.3 Service 501: Dumfries & Kirkcudbright.....	3
A.2.4 Service 502a: Castle Douglas & Kirkcudbright	4
A.2.5 Service 502c: Dumfries & Castle Douglas	4
A.2.6 Service 503: Dumfries, Kirkpatrick Durham, Castle Douglas.....	4
A.2.7 Service 505: Kirkcudbright & Dalbeattie / Dumfries	4
A.2.8 Service 512: Castle Douglas Local	4
A.2.9 Service 515: Castle Douglas & Mosssdale	4
A.2.10 Service 516: Castle Douglas & Auchencairn	5
A.2.11 Service 517: Kirkcudbright & Borgue	5
A.2.12 Service 520: Castle Douglas & Dalmellington.....	5
A.2.13 Service 521: Castle Douglas, New Galloway & Dumfries	5
A.2.14 Service 555: Kirkcudbright & Dumfries.....	5
A.3 Nithsdale.....	6
A.3.1 Service 200: Thornhill & Durisdeer.....	6
A.3.2 Service 202: Dumfries & Thornhill.....	6
A.3.3 Service 212: Thornhill & Moniaive.....	6
A.3.4 Service 213: Thornhill & Dumfries.....	6
A.3.5 Service 221: Kirkconnel, Sanquhar, Wanlockhead	6
A.3.6 Service 236: Dumfries & Thornhill.....	6
A.4 Dumfries	7
A.4.1 Service D4A: Dumfries & Lochvale	7
A.4.2 Service D5A: Dumfries & Crichton	7
A.4.3 Service D6A: Dumfries & Caerlaverock	7
A.4.4 Service D7: Dumfries & Troqueer	7
A.4.5 Service D8A: Dumfries & Broomlands	7
A.4.6 Service D9A: Dumfries & Summerhill.....	8



A.4.7	Service 14: Dumfries & Marchfields	8
A.4.8	Service 111: Dumfries Town – D&G Royal Infirmary	8
A.4.9	Service 115: Dumfries – Ae Village	8
A.4.10	Service 372: Dumfries Town – Dalbeattie	8
A.4.11	Service 373: Dumfries – Shawhead	9
A.5	Annandale & Eskdale	9
A.5.1	Service 104: Lockerbie Town / Corrie	9
A.5.2	Service 112: Eskdalemuir – Boreland – Lockerbie	9
A.5.3	Service 117: Lockerbie & Hightae	9
A.5.4	Service 120: Langholm Town	9
A.5.5	Service 122:	10
A.5.6	Service 123: Langholm – Canobie – Annan	10
A.5.7	Service 124: Langholm & Eskdalemuir	10
A.5.8	Service 127: Newcastleton to Langholm	10
A.5.9	Service 379: Dumfries & Carlisle	10
A.5.10	Service 380: Moffat – Lockerbie	11
A.5.11	Service 381: Dumfries to Lockerbie	11
A.5.12	Service 382: Lockerbie – Gretna / Carlisle	11
A.5.13	Services 388/390: Annan Local	11
A.5.14	Service 384: Waterbeck – Ecclefechan – Annan	12
A.5.15	Service 385: Dumfries – Carrutherstown – Dalton – Annan	12
APPENDIX B HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROPOSALS		2
B.1	Stranraer Academy	2
B.2	Douglas Ewart High	3
B.3	Kirkcudbright Academy	4
B.4	Castle Douglas High	5
B.5	Dalbeattie High	6
B.6	Wallace Hall Academy	7
B.7	Annan Academy	8
B.8	Lockerbie Academy	9
B.9	Moffat Academy	10
B.10	Langholm Academy	11
B.11	Sanquhar Academy	12
B.12	Dumfries	12



Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Stantec was commissioned in August 2023 to conduct a network review of Dumfries & Galloway Council and SWestrans supported local bus services and home to school transport to identify a sustainable operation that would discharge the authorities' statutory duties and achieve their relevant policy goals.

The study has involved extensive investigation of current use, including detailed analysis of patronage and ticketing information, market supply analysis and detailed consultation and engagement with operators.

2. Context

The bus industry is facing unprecedented challenges because of changing travel behaviour post pandemic, a shortage of qualified drivers and cost pressures far in excess of general inflation. These forces affect the bus market nationally and have led to several operators ceasing to trade.

In Dumfries and Galloway, the situation is particularly acute due to inherent low demand and fragility of revenue while the limited number of operators means low competition for Council/SWestrans contracts. Other transport providers, such as licenced taxis and private hire operators as well as the community transport sector, who in theory could provide additional capacity and a 'safety net' working alongside conventional bus operators, have faced similar challenges in the last decade and particularly post pandemic.

It is therefore not an overstatement to suggest that market resilience is at an historic low and that the risk of further degradation of the public transport offer in Dumfries and Galloway is significant, possibly where just one substantive withdrawal of services or operator capacity would have a major impact.

3. Operator Consultation

We conducted individual meetings with bus operators to understand their views of the future, the challenges they face and whether there are ways in which the Council/SWestrans could support their businesses. Operators are generally committed to working through current difficulties and are motivated by delivering needed services to their communities, but the financial challenges are onerous.

Operators were strongly in favour of longer contract periods, minimum 5 years but preferably 7+ years, to give them (and lenders) confidence to invest in newer, more efficient, and environmentally friendly buses while Council/SWestrans facilitation of new driver training would address a common problem.

We also sought the views, through email surveys, of taxi and private hire operators, as well as community transport organisations. It was important to understand the key current operating, staffing, finance, and contract issues that they face, any mitigation that would help them provide more capacity and their appetite for growth, but also risk. There was a limited number of operators willing to expand

their businesses to meet new demand, primarily in school transport, and it was generally seen as a medium to long term aspiration.

4. Network Design

We reviewed the bus network and recommended changes where demand was low and the cost of operation high, using subsidy per passenger as an indicator of value for money. Average subsidy per passenger is £3.17 with a range from £0.59 to £43.21, reflecting substantial variation in service performance. For example, 50% of the supported bus service budget funds services that carry 80% of users which means the other 50% benefits just 20% of users. More significantly, 66% of the budget (£2.4m) funds services for 90% of users, meaning that one third of the budget (£1.3m) benefits only 10% of users.

In our review of the network, it was clear that there is a high degree of efficiency already with public service buses aligned around statutory school travel. This integration makes it difficult to achieve significant savings when the buses are still required for school work, and we therefore then investigated the alternative delivery models set out in Section 5 as a route to lowering costs.

Our review has not taken account of the possible move to an asymmetric school week from 2025/26 which will have a significant impact on statutory school and local bus service delivery.

5. Delivery Models

We recommend amending the delivery model for some services in line with the agreed Sustainable Public Transport Model, as follows:

- Expansion of Tier 1 community level provision – there are some services with exceptionally low passenger numbers, but which are essential for those users. Building on the Community Transport Public Social Partnership, such services could be provided flexibly and tailored to users' needs at lower cost.

Delivery requires close working with and support of community organisations to enable them to gear up for their expanded role, including logistics and mobilisation. There is a resource cost, of staff time, administrative, legal, and financial support, which can be considered as part of a 'spend to save' package. This may be one off in the new financial year but could also be ongoing as the sector capacity is built over time. We expect that this would be funded either through existing funding streams agreed at the budget setting or from the removal of funding for current supported services that move to Tier 1 community services.

There also must be realism about the cost model that community transport can apply, as costs may be lower than conventional local bus operation but are unlikely to be half or a quarter, as the fundamentals of operation – vehicles, fuel, maintenance, are often not significantly lower than a PSV operation.

- Extension of Council operation within Tier 2 – DGC Buses already provides several local bus services, but its activity is restricted by the Section 46 legislation under which it operates. The operation could be expanded, potentially on an incremental basis, under a section 22 permit or using the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 power to set up a PSV Licenced Operator.

This delivery model offers a safeguard to the Council/SWestrans against the risk of operators raising tender prices to unaffordable levels or, even, withdrawing altogether from the local bus market, supported or commercial. The lack of competition for tenders in some areas illustrates the existential risk to services if an incumbent operator declines to bid.

Delivery requires confirmation of the legal entity to be used then establishment of governance arrangements, finance, management, logistics and mobilisation. As with building community transport sector capacity there would be a significant impact on officer time, within the DGC transport teams but also across finance, governance, legal and procurement services in the Council.

It also must be recognised that while DGC Buses can act as a market moderator, introducing competition, it also can effectively transfer market capacity from the private sector to the public sector, where existing suppliers may exit the market if DGC are perceived to have an advantage in securing future work. The long-term effect may be a net loss in market capacity through rebalancing.

6. Next Steps

The delivery models described above both offer a more sustainable public transport network but timescales for implementation are of the order of 12 months minimum. Our assessment therefore suggests that the original timescale for retendering in spring 2024 for new contracts in operation in late summer 2024 will be challenging.

In addition to the findings arising from the review there are other transformation projects and influences that have progressed during the time of the review that could have significant impact over the transport network and potential solutions developed through the review; in particular:

- the possible move to an asymmetric school week from 2025-26 (as noted in section 4 above).
- possible school mothballing that will increase demand for transport and require additional buses to deliver.
- risk of removal of commercial bus routes.
- Levelling Up Fund transport infrastructure approved.

Given the above and the fact that the local bus market continues to be highly unsettled, we consider that the actions needed to deliver a sustainable public transport network require careful planning and effective engagement and can only be fully achieved with a longer lead-in timescale such as to summer 2025. This would require extension of current contracts for 12 months as an interim measure while the optimised network and delivery models are organised.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Network Review report has been prepared on behalf of Dumfries and Galloway Council ('the Council') and the South West Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) to assess the post-covid transport needs of our residents and to deliver the desired outcomes of an affordable, stable and sustainable model (based on the proposed new PT Model structure) that meets the needs of our communities whilst developing the relevant supply chains to support this.

The review involves:

- overview of the existing model that covers the SWestrans local service network, Council awarded school and Additional Support Needs (ASN) contracts, DGC Buses and use of taxis and testing against alternative delivery models.
- understanding the needs of the service users and designing solutions that meet those needs efficiently, effectively and sustainably.
- development of the supply chain by identifying barriers to expansion, scope for new entrants to the market and investigating opportunities for the Council to facilitate greater competition for contracts.

The outcome of the study is a passenger transport network that is financially sustainable going forward and that gives confidence to the Council and SWestrans, local communities and residents, and suppliers in the stability and longevity of the network.

1.2 Objectives

This Network Review report has been prepared to meet the following study requirements:

1. Assess the existing transport network, commercial and supported bus service and make recommendations on any changes which could improve the service in relation to the following objectives and outcomes:
 - a. Reduce inequalities – providing fair and equitable access to services required, easy to use for all and affordable for all (targeting areas on the deprivation index)
 - b. Identify new transport links to communities not already on the existing bus service
 - c. Takes climate action – contributes to net zero targets, promote greener and cleaner choices (this should increase equalities and be delivered to support a 'just transition')
 - d. Enhanced links between modes of transport (supporting the NTS2 transport hierarchy)
 - e. Helps deliver inclusive economic growth – will be reliant, efficient and high-quality service, use of beneficial innovation

Network Review

1 Introduction

- f. Improves our health and wellbeing – safe and secure for all, enables us to make healthy travel choices and help make our communities great places to live
 - g. Supports community wealth building
 - h. Supports all sectors of the local economy
 - i. Increased patronage – provide a viable alternative to the private car and use data to match service supply with latent demand to increase patronage. This can help to increase usage among existing customers and attract new customers, including under 22s
 - j. Improved customer satisfaction
 - k. Determine opportunities for new commercial bus services
 - l. Maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the publicly subsidised bus services in Dumfries and Galloway ensuring integration, removing overlap with other bus services
 - m. Improve data sharing between Dumfries and Galloway council, neighbouring authorities and transport operators
 - n. Identify an appropriate model for a single coordinating body (individual or forum) to review and continually improve the network
2. Ensure all relevant stakeholders and communities are engaged and are given the opportunity to provide views on what an improved bus service would look like
 3. Create a monitoring and evaluation framework
 4. Implement a revised network and operating model dependent on review recommendations
 5. Assess the impact of any changes through monitoring and evaluation

1.3 Report Structure

The report is structured with the following sections:

- **Section 2** outlines the context including policy, finance, demographics, economy and demand
- **Section 3** provides a market analysis including the current situation, trends and opportunities
- **Section 4** analyses local bus network demand and provides the proposed service design
- **Section 5** details Home to School transport in the region
- **Section 6** details Additional Supported Needs (ASN) in the region
- **Section 7** outlines the financial situation and the proposed spend to support bus usage
- **Section 8** summarises the report and outlines recommended next steps.

2 Context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the context within which the study has been undertaken. This includes summarising the Council's and SWestrans relevant policies and strategies and reporting on the key financial dimensions and budgets. Regarding the external environment, the key demographic, social and economic factors within the Dumfries and Galloway area are outlined and their influence on bus service demand is examined. Recent trends for demand post-pandemic are also observed. Finally, service supply is considered, and the recent trends locally and nationally are reviewed.

2.2 Policy Overview

This section discusses the network review in the context of the local, regional, and national policies. These policies outline a bold vision of modernisation, decarbonisation, and economic inclusion which align with Dumfries and Galloway's own objectives for public transport. The following documents outlines this vision:

- National policies and plans
 - UK Transport Investment Strategy
 - UK Future of Transport programme
 - UK Transport Decarbonisation plan
 - Scotland's National Transport Strategy
 - Public Sector Procurement Guidance
 - Scotland Bus Policy and Guidance
- Regional policies and plans
 - SWestrans Draft Regional Transport Strategy 2023 to 2042
- Local policies and plans
 - Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) Plan 2023-28

2.2.1 NATIONAL POLICIES AND PLANS

Transport Investment Strategy (July 2017)

The Department for Transport (DfT) produced the UK's Investment Strategy to outline the long-term plan for the UK to improve living standards and economic growth nationally. Public transport is at the centre of the strategy, with specific aims to:

- Increase reliability, reduce congestion, and create a better-connected transport network;
- Improve productivity and respond to local growth priorities;
- Enhance global competitiveness – the transport system can attract investment and jobs; and
- Support the creation of new housing.

Network Review

2 Context

The investment strategy recognises the importance of prioritising financially sustainable transport networks. The strategy favours projects that have high potential for social, environmental, and economic benefits, such as enhancing accessibility and supporting growth. These projects in turn can help to create opportunities for local communities. This policy therefore emphasizes the necessity of Dumfries and Galloway Council through SWestrans supporting the improvement of the existing Dumfries and Galloway bus network to improve the connectivity between communities and provide fair and equitable services that align with the local economic growth.

Future of Transport Programme (November 2020)

The Future of Transport Programme was published by DfT, Office for Low Emission Vehicles, and Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. The main objectives of the programme include:

- Stimulating innovation in the transport sector
- Create new transport markets;
- Secure a 21st-century transport system; and
- Secure the UK's position as a world-leading innovator, decarbonising the transport system for the benefit of all society.

Supporting the bus network can contribute to these objectives by adopting innovative technologies and services to enhance accessibility, customer experience and operational efficiency. The collaboration with the local authority and sharing data enables an innovative and coordinated transport solution to be delivered that incorporates travel patterns to tailor the service to the local needs. A tailored approach allows for improved long term financial stability as the bus network will be designed to the local demand to improve financial efficiency.

Transport Decarbonisation Plan (July 2021)

'Decarbonising Transport: a Better, Greener Britain' was produced by DfT and sets out commitments towards achieving a more sustainable transport network with a key goal of decarbonising all forms of transport by delivering zero emission buses and coaches.

The potential for investment into new zero emission buses to replace the current fossil fuel vehicles in Dumfries and Galloway will directly contribute to achieving the DfT's decarbonisation plan.

Scotland's National Transport Strategy (SNTS) (February 2020)

The SNTS puts forward a vision for a sustainable, accessible, safe, and inclusive transport system that will contribute towards a more prosperous Scotland. Table 2-1 assesses how well improving the bus network will meet the aims of the SNTS through a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) table.

Network Review

2 Context

Table 2-1: Assessment of meeting the SNTS Aims

SNTS Aims	Contribution of improving the DGC bus network	RAG
Reduce inequalities	Expanding depot coverage and the bus service network enables greater outreach to isolated areas, enabling a greater access to employment, healthcare, and education opportunities. Bus services are limited in having significant impacts on income and economic growth or inequality.	
Deliver inclusive economic growth		
Take climate action	Fossil fuel buses will be replaced with alternative ultra-low emission buses	
Improve health and wellbeing	Improving individuals' access to health services. Public transport plays a vital role in social interactions and inclusion	

Public Sector Procurement Guidance

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's policy for driving fair work practices across the labour market in Scotland. Amongst other criteria, Fair Work First policy includes the consideration of the real Living Wage and is being applied as part of the procurement process for contracts being awarded across the public sector.

On 14 October 2021 it was announced that companies bidding to win Scottish Government contracts will have to pay the real Living Wage. It was stated in this announcement that¹:

"To be considered for most Scottish Government contracts in the future, companies must agree to pay at least the real Living Wage... rates are announced annually by the Living Wage Foundation... Individual public authorities determine when it is appropriate to include fair work conditions in tenders, in tandem with other important sustainable outcomes like reaching net zero emissions and creating a positive impact on the local economy."

Scotland Bus Policy and Guidance

Scotland Bus Policy and Guidance is produced by bus operators, local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, and regulatory authorities, and outlines the national framework in Scotland for buses. This bus policy and guidance aims to:

- Provide the environment for bus services to act as an effective economic enabler by providing competitive, high quality public transport;
- Enable buses to provide an effective alternative to the car by improving reliability, average bus speed, and encouraging improvements to the quality of services and infrastructure;

¹ Scottish Government, 2021: [Supporting fair work practices - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/collections/documents/Supporting-fair-work-practices-gov-scot-2021.pdf)

Network Review

2 Context

- Encourage investment in more efficient vehicles that produce less greenhouse gases and contribute to the targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; and
- Link communities, people, places of business and employment and essential services through encouraging the maintenance and development of the bus network in Scotland.

The Dumfries and Galloway network review supports Scotland's bus policy and guidance by improving the access to business and essential services in rural areas; reducing isolation; and supporting commercial challenges for operators. Improving connectivity and regularity to essential services will encourage higher passenger patronage and assure long term financial security. It will also improve the health and wellbeing of the local community and enhance social connection.

2.2.2 REGIONAL POLICY AND PLANS

Draft SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy (SRTS)

The SRTS has been developed in line with Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Guidance (2006) and Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) to provide a framework for transport management and investment in the region. The SRTS was agreed by the SWestrans Board in June 2023 and is currently with Scottish Ministers for approval. The RTS identifies the transport challenges that Dumfries and Galloway face and provides 6 key strategic objectives. The objectives address how transport will facilitate the improvement of the Dumfries and Galloway area. Table 2-2 assesses the contribution of improving the bus network for each SRTS objective.

Table 2-2: Assessment of meeting the SRTS Objectives

SRTS Strategic Objectives	Contribution of improving the DGC bus network	RAG
Facilitate and encourage safe active travel for all by connecting communities and travel hubs	The bus service can increase active travel by providing an alternative mode of transport that is more environmentally friendly, healthy, and cost-effective than driving a car. Most bus journeys start / finish with some form of active travel.	Yellow
Improve the quality and sustainability of public transport within and to / from the region	Optimising the bus network will match the local demand and therefore will improve the reliability and accessibility. Optimised bus routes reduce fuel used on unnecessary trips.	Green
Reduce the negative impact of transport on the people and environment of the region		
Widen access to, and improve connectivity by public transport within and to / from the region	The investment to improve the bus network will help to improve connectivity across the region and enables greater outreach to isolated areas, enabling a greater access to employment, healthcare, and education opportunities.	Green
Improve integration between all modes of travel and freight within and to / from the region	Improving the bus network will provide convenient, affordable, and sustainable transport to other modes of transport including bus and train stations. The bus network will not improve integration for freight.	Yellow

Network Review

2 Context

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.	DGC can develop new interurban links, building on existing demand to increase accessibility The improved bus network will be designed to meet long term mobility demands, provide accessibility and be at a fair price. The buses will be efficient, inclusive and provide safe accessibility for all.	
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2.2.3 LOCAL POLICY AND PLANS

Dumfries and Galloway Council (DGC) Plan (2023 – 2028)

The DGC Plan establishes the Council's vision and outcomes to strengthen the local economy and to create greater opportunities and help to support local communities in Dumfries and Galloway. Table 2-3 assesses the contribution of the improved DGC bus network for each DGC Plan aim.

Table 2-3: Assessment of meeting the DGC Plan Aims

DGC Plan Aims	Contribution of improving the DGC bus network	RAG
Address the climate emergency	Provides an alternative mode of transport. Efficient bus network routes based on demand will improve the networks fuel efficiency. In the medium-term fossil fuel buses will be replaced with alternative ultra-low emission buses.	
Put customers at the heart of services	The bus network will be designed to satisfy the local demand and improve passenger experience through an efficient service and improved local connectivity.	
Invest to enable change	Investment in a more reliable bus service may attract new investment within the region and may provide people with more opportunities. Investment in staff to improve the quality of service and deliver the best results for the region.	
Make best use of resources with a focus on improvement to deliver the best outcomes for local people.		
Organise services and workforce to ensure the Council plan's strategic outcomes are delivered	Additional CPC managers, PCV and CPC qualified drivers, and more garage and mechanical staff will create a more efficient and organised supply base in Dumfries and Galloway.	

Supported Bus Services Policy

Following an extensive public and stakeholder consultation in 2011, the agreed policy established by SWestrans on what constitutes a social necessary service was underpinned by the Travel Need Factors (TNF) shown in Table 2-4, the TNF have been reviewed and continue to be a robust framework indicating travel need.

Network Review

2 Context

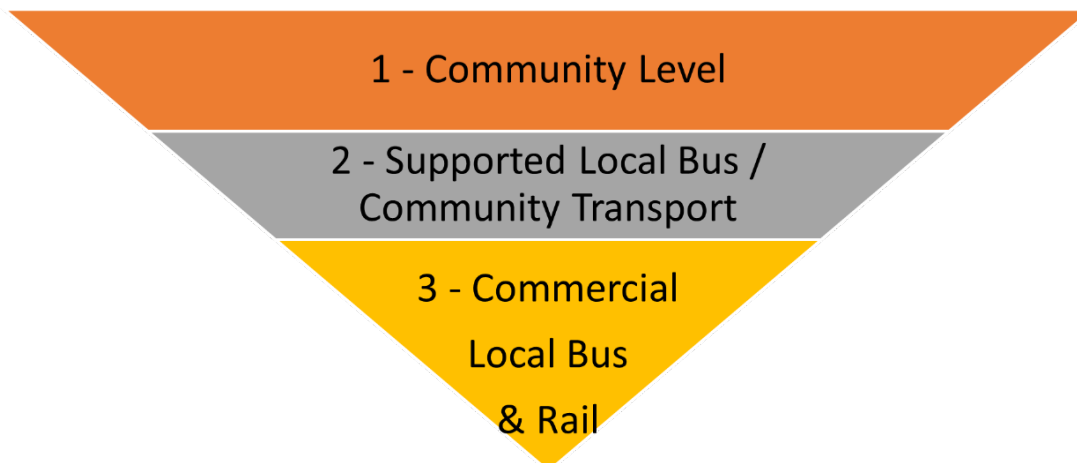
Table 2-4 Agreed Travel Need Factors

Rank	Purpose	Weight
1.	Employment	3.0
2.	Education	2.0
3.	Health	2.0
4.	Retail	1.5
5.	Transport Links	1.0
6.	Personal Activity	0.5

Public Transport and Travel Transformation Programme

Public Transport and Travel was one of the Council's Transformation Programmes, agreed at the Finance, Procurement and Transformation Committee on 3 March 2020. In 2021, both the Council (Communities Committee June) and SWestrans (Board June) agreed a new sustainable public transport model for the region to ensure that an appropriate and affordable travel option is available to all residents and visitors no matter where they are or which travel mode they use to access services. The 3 tier framework for delivering the new model is shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1: Sustainable Delivery Model



Tier 1 consists of community level provision, made up of a number of tailored and flexible services providing travel opportunities that link directly to amenities/services or to a more structured/timetabled public transport option. This tier takes the learning and structures developed through the Community Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) and expands it across the region. This 'mainstreaming' of the PSP learnings will be a critical building block for the delivery of needs-based transport.

Tier 2 comprises supported local bus and community transport services provided by bus operators, DGC Buses and Community Transport, including fixed or semi-fixed bus routes along with Demand Responsive Transport services that would either complement the current supported routes or be an alternative to these routes. One of the major aims of Tier 2 services would be to increase patronage of Tier 3 services through the development of Hub and Spoke feeder services to assist with the overall sustainability of commercial routes.

Tier 3 comprises commercial local bus and rail services that operate on the main corridors where there is high passenger demand with services operated, in the main, by the commercial bus sector and Train Operating Companies

Network Review

2 Context

2.3 Finance

Local bus service contracts in Dumfries and Galloway are procured by SWestrans as the Regional Transport Partnership and Dumfries and Galloway Council is responsible for providing the funding for its day-to-day operation under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. Home to school transport procurement is the direct responsibility of the Council for both mainstream education and ASN.

The SWestrans total budget allocated in 2022/23 was £4,780,671. In 2022/23, the Council provided £100K (£100k in 2021/22) as match funding to a Scottish grant for core running costs, a capital grant of £266k (£264k in 2021/22) and a further £4.301million (£4.027million in 2021/22) was requisitioned by the Transport Partnership to cover the operating costs for 2022/23.

SWestrans does not employ its own staff and during 2022/23 Dumfries and Galloway Council charged SWestrans £214k (£209k in 2021/22) in respect of staff support, supplies and other supported services. 90% of SWestrans spend is related to the provision of supported local bus services.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for pupils beyond the statutory walking distance. The overall net cost to provide these services is £6.7million.

The Council's sources of funding (2022/23) are made up of:

- Council tax income - £73.5million
- National Non-Domestic Rates Pool - £58.9million
- Revenues Support Grant - £282.9million
- Capital Grants and Contributions - £21.4million

2.4 Demographics and Social Conditions

This section discusses the demographic and social conditions within the Dumfries and Galloway area that influence the need for a sustainable bus network and determined its route strategy.

An estimated 148,290 people were resident in the region in 2020 according to Scottish Government Statistics. This equates to 2.7% of the total population of Scotland which was 5,466,000 in 2020. Dumfries and Galloway covers 6,426 square kilometres which is 8.1% of the total 78,789 square kilometres land mass of Scotland. The population density of the region is just 23 people per square kilometre compared to the national average of 69 people per square kilometre. Dumfries is the major centre of population accounting for nearly 30% of the total population of Dumfries and Galloway as of 2021².

This low population density in South West Scotland has implications for the provision of effective and efficient transport. In particular, it is difficult to provide commercially viable public transport services in areas with dispersed populations and modes like walking and cycling are generally suited to shorter, local trips in more densely urbanised areas. This is further illustrated by the Scottish Government's

² NRS Small Population Estimates, 2021

Network Review

2 Context

Urban – Rural Classification shown here which classifies much of the region as either ‘Accessible Rural’ or ‘Remote Rural’³.

The population of the region is also projected to decline by 4% between 2018 and 2032. This could have further implications for the viability of public transport and other essential services, with resultant potential implications for people with disabilities, although recent NRS data suggests a small increase in population between 2020 and 2021 potentially linked to out migration from urban areas driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, there is a higher elderly population and lower working age population compared to Scotland as a whole, which could place additional demands on health and social care and the need for access to it. This is likely to be further exacerbated by the fact that the proportion of residents in bad health or very bad health is higher than the Scottish average.

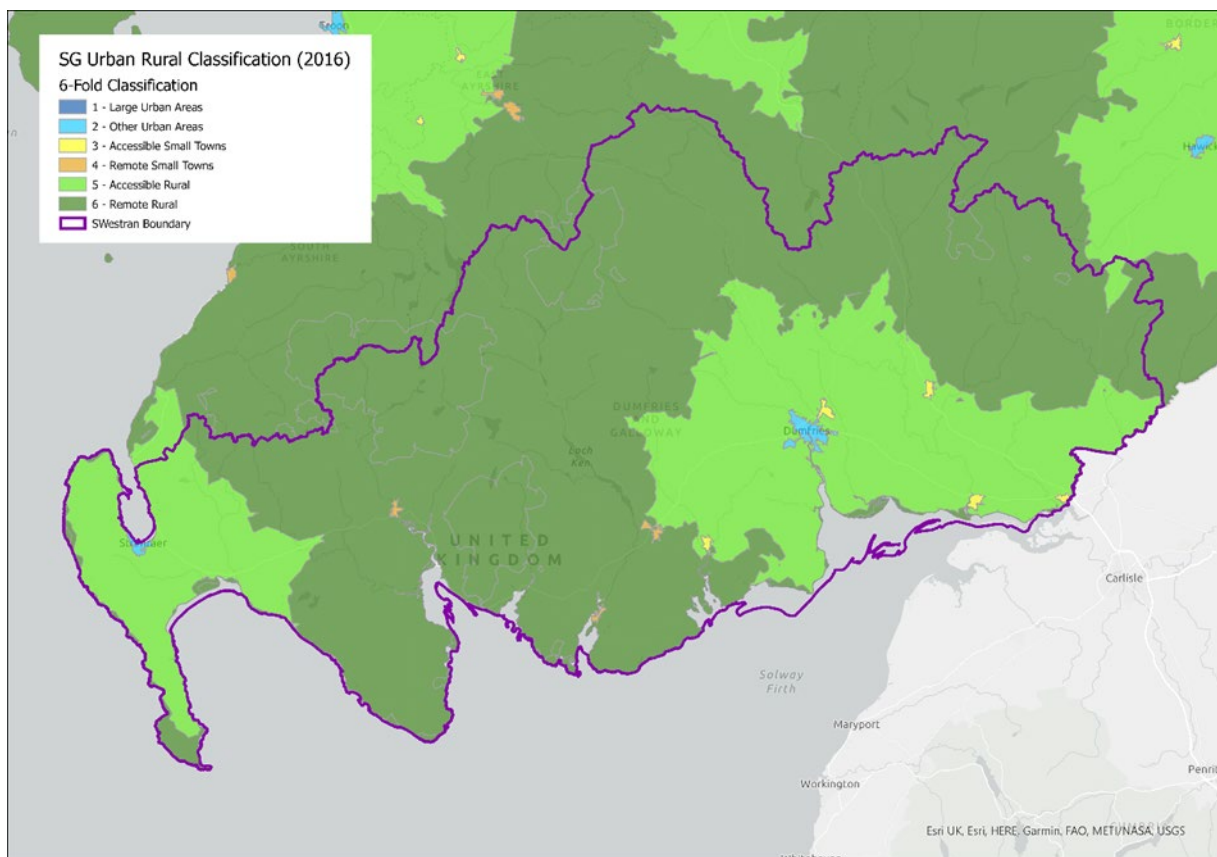


Figure 2-2: Scottish Government Urban – Rural Classification of SWestrans Region

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation⁴ (SIMD) compares small areas of Scotland on a range of deprivation domains such as income and education. They are measured by examining a range of indicators such as pupil attainment. The domains are combined to form one overall index of multiple

³ Accessible Rural: Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more. Remote Rural: Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.

⁴ Scottish Government, 2020: [Introduction - Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020: introduction - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/introduction-simd-2020/pages/introduction-simd-2020-introduction.aspx)

Network Review

2 Context

deprivation in the form of a rank, with 1 being the most deprived. An analysis of SIMD data looking at key corridors in the region can be found in Section 4.2 of this report.

2.5 Economy

This section discusses the economic circumstances in the Dumfries and Galloway area that influence the need for a sustainable bus network and determined its route strategy. Dumfries and Galloway faces many economic challenges including tackling the lowest wage economy in Scotland; low economic productivity; and growing evidence of underemployment.

The local economy of Dumfries and Galloway has historically been based on agriculture and forestry, however now a range of light industries and tourism also significantly contribute to the economy. The Dumfries and Galloway area benefits from a range of economic opportunities; an outstanding natural environment; and large potential for business growth. Public transport infrastructure is critical for the region to tackle these challenges and pursue opportunities as they arise.

Agriculture accounts for 70% of the area with woodland covering another 25%, meaning the region has a low population density. Dumfries is the largest town in the region with a population of 31,600, the two other main towns are Stranraer (10,800) and Annan (8,300)⁶. All other settlements have populations of 4,500 or less meaning there are many small settlements spread throughout the Dumfries and Galloway area.

Employment within the Dumfries and Galloway area is lower compared to both Scotland and Great Britain with 73.9% of the population economically active. Of those not economically active 22.3% want a job⁷. An effective and efficient bus network will aid those using the network for commuting and broaden the opportunities for those seeking employment, especially in more rural isolated areas.

The largest industries by employee jobs in the Dumfries and Galloway area are Human Health and Social Work Activities (20.0%); Wholesale and Retail Trade (16.4%); and Accommodation and Food Service Activities (10.9%)⁷. Many of these industries are located in towns or larger villages where there are hospitals; schools; and commercial and retail buildings. The Dumfries and Galloway bus network provide links from the smaller rural residential villages to the larger villages and towns where employment opportunities are. Furthermore, over 80% of both enterprises and businesses are classified as micro (0 – 9 employees)⁷ and therefore rely more on public transport, cycling and walking rather than leasing private vehicles and car sharing as larger businesses may do.

2.6 Supply

There are 94 local bus routes in Dumfries and Galloway, comprising commercial and supported services and Council operated DGC buses. There are eight bus operators providing services in the Council Area, with Stagecoach being the largest. SWestrans provides a cumulative subsidy of approximately £3.7million per annum, equating to a total subsidy of £3.17 per customer.

In addition to local bus services, there are 48 dedicated school bus contracts procured by the Council at a total value of some £1.52million. Statutory transport support for pupils is provided by the Council at an overall net cost of £6.6million per annum, comprising local and school bus services, minibuses and taxis, parent transport, and ASN transport.

Network Review

2 Context

Bus service supply in Dumfries and Galloway has been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as rising operational costs and low competitiveness for rural services. For a number of operators in the region there are concerns relating to financial sustainability and lack of incentivisation for investments.

2.7 Need and Demand

The journeys made on local bus services in Scotland has been on a steady decline since the 1960s and this has continued recently with a 12% decline in bus use from 2015-2020⁵. One of the reasons for this trend is due to longer journey times caused by greater congestion from the increase in private car use. This reduces the bus journey speeds and reliability, which impacts patronage levels and revenues for bus companies fall causing an increase in fares resulting in an even greater drop in demand.

The bus sector has been facing severe challenges as a result of extraordinary factors including the Covid-19 pandemic, global economic instability, the war in Ukraine and Brexit. The combination of these events has adversely affected bus operator performance in several ways:

- Shortage of qualified bus drivers due to:
 - Transfer of labour to the road haulage sector which has significantly increased wage rates to address its own shortages
 - Loss of drivers from the EU after the Brexit vote
 - Drivers leaving the industry post-lockdown for welfare and lifestyle reasons
- Increased payroll costs as wage rates have been raised to address the driver shortage
- Increased input costs for fuel, spare parts and new buses
- Higher interest rates
- Lower revenue due to changed travel behaviour post-pandemic including working from home, online shopping and reluctance of some in older age groups to return to bus travel

The net effect of these issues has been to significantly reduce or even eliminate operator profits, which in turn has led to much increased tender prices. When bus service contracts were tendered by SWestrans in April 2022 as part of the normal tender cycle, submitted bids were considerably higher than the previous contracts awarded in 2020.

⁵ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-no-39-2020-edition/chapter-2-bus-and-coach-travel/>

⁶ [Dumfries & Galloway | Scotland.org](https://www.dumfriesgalloway.gov.uk/)

⁷ ONS Annual Population Survey

3 Market Analysis

3.1 Introduction

This section reviews the existing bus network in Dumfries and Galloway, including local bus services, home to school services and ASN transport. The market analysis also investigates the current market trends in the bus industry and the opportunities for expansion or entry into the market by existing or new PSV and non-PSV operators. An anonymised summary of the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement exercise is also provided in the Opportunities section.

3.2 Current Situation

3.2.1 LOCAL BUS SERVICES

There are 94 local bus routes covering over 10 million Km per annum in Dumfries and Galloway. These comprise:

- **Commercial** (45% of network) – there are 19 services which receive no funding support from SWestrans, and where delivery, including route, timetable, fares and vehicles used is in the full control of the private operator;
- **Supported** (51% of network) – socially necessary services procured by SWestrans which as a Model III Regional Transport Partnership has a statutory duty to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as it considers appropriate to meet any public transport requirements within its area which would not be met apart from any action taken by it for that purpose. These are procured through competitive tendering and the route, times and vehicles used are specified by SWestrans;
- **Council Operated DGC Buses** (4% of network) – provided under S.46 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981. The route, times and vehicles are determined by the Council. These are also considered to be part of the supported services total.



Figure 3-1: Supported and Commercial Services Coverage

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

There are eight local bus operators providing services in Dumfries and Galloway. These operators are listed below:

- Andersons of Langholm;
- Brownriggs LLP;
- Stagecoach Cumbria;
- DGC Buses;
- Houstons Coaches;
- McCalls Coaches;
- Telfords Coaches; and
- Stagecoach West Scotland.

Stagecoach West Scotland (Stagecoach) is the largest bus operator in Dumfries and Galloway and has two depots, in Dumfries and Stranraer, currently employing some 150 full-time staff as either drivers, mechanics, engineers, shunters, admin, management or cleaners with two thirds of staff being drivers.

12 of the 19 commercial bus services in Dumfries and Galloway are operated by Stagecoach West Scotland. Stagecoach additionally operates 14 services supported by SWestrans at an annual cost of some £1.6m. The supported and commercial services are listed in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1: Stagecoach Services in Dumfries and Galloway

Operation	Service	Destination / Service	Subsidy (per Annum)
Commercial	246	Dumfries – Cumnock	-
	501	Dumfries – Castle Douglas	-
	74	Dumfries – Moffat	-
	81	Dumfries – Lockerbie	-
	D1	Locharbriggs – Dumfries Town Centre	-
	D10	Lochside – Dumfries Town Centre	-
	D12	Lincluden – Dumfries Town Centre	-
	D2	Heathhall – Dumfries Town Centre	-
	D3	Georgetown – Dumfries Town Centre	-
	D4	Lochvale – Dumfries Town Centre	-
	X74	Dumfries – Moffat – Glasgow	-
	X75	Stranraer – Newton Stewart	-
Supported	246	<i>Sunday extension</i>	£1,092
	420	Newton Stewart Town	£80,818
	359	Machars – Girvan	£265,830
	407 / 408	Drummore – Stranraer / Kirkcolm - Stranraer	£244,848

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

	367	Stranraer - Portpatrick	£64,138
	5	Crichton	£106,290
	365	Stranraer Town	£57,681
	415 / 416	Machars – Newton Stewart / Machars - Stranraer	£313,253
	500	Dumfries – Stranraer	£280,677
	4 / 5 / 7 / 8 / 9	Tronqueer (7); Cargenbridge / Summerhill (8 / 9) Evening / Sunday extension (4 / 5 / 7 / 9);	£183,760

The remaining SWestrans managed services in Dumfries and Galloway are outlined in Table 3-2 below. SWestrans also contributes funding to cross-boundary services managed by SPT (101/102 Dumfries to Edinburgh / 358 Stranraer to Ayr) and Scottish Borders Council (X95 Galashiels to Carlisle / 127 Newcastleton to Carlisle). Combining all supported services, SWestrans provides a cumulative subsidy of approximately £3.7million per annum equating to a total subsidy of £3.17 per customer. A full financial analysis can be found in Section 7.

Table 3-2: Supported Services Provided by Other Operators

Service	Destination / Service	Subsidy (per Annum)
502	Kirkcudbright – Castle Douglas	£68,998
111	Dumfries Town Centre - DGRI	£75,600
381	Dumfries - Lockerbie	£43,120
380	Lockerbie - Moffat	£91,252
236	Dumfries – Kirkton – Thornhill	£49,996
6A	Caerlaverock - Dumfries	£57,100
372	Dumfries - Sandyhills	£184,900
382	Lockerbie – Carlisle	£68,943
431	Gatehouse – Kirkcudbright (Town)	£59,565
505	Dalbeattie – Kirkcudbright	£49,764
236	Dumfries – Kirkton - Thornhill	£53,900
501	Dumfries - Kirkcudbright	£83,498
104	Lockerbie Town / Corrie	£29,100
503; 512; 520	Dumfries – Castle Douglas; Town; Dalmellington	£208,193
127	Newcatleton - Langholm	£54,460
379	Carlisle - Dumfries	£38,806
112	Lockerbie – Samye Ling	£49,672
123; 388; 390	Langholm – Annan; Back of the Hill; Powfoot	£30,474
382	Lockerbie – Gretna / Annan	£135,500
221	Wanlockhead – Sanquhar - Kirkconnel	£93,127
383	Lockerbie – Annan	£28,996
202	Moniaive - Dumfries	£75,600
373	Dumfries - Shawhead	£33,640

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

385	Annan - Dumfries	£69,497
115	Dumfries – Ae Vil	£36,650
120	Langholm Town	£8,374
410; 411; 412	Glenluce – Stranraer; Knock; Ervie	£39,975
521	Laurieston - Dumfries	£46,481
117	Lockerbie - Hightae	£31,800
212	Moniaive - Thornhill	£49,950
502	Dumfries – Castle Douglas	£96,987
124	Langholm – Samye Ling	£76,400

3.2.2 HOME TO SCHOOL SERVICES

There are currently 48 dedicated school bus contracts procured by the Council at a total annual value of some £1.52million. Although school transport and local bus transport are separate functions of the Council and SWestrans, their delivery is intrinsically linked with each fundamentally impacting on the other.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for pupils living beyond the statutory walking distances. Transport for both mainstream and ASN pupils are provided either as dedicated school transport or through the provision of seats on registered local bus services. The overall net cost to provide these services is £6.6million per annum, as shown in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3: Home to School Transport

Delivery	Routes	No. of Pupils	Cost (per Annum)	Cost per Pupil
Local bus	41	588	£558,000	949
School bus	44	1,337	£1,484,000	1,110
Internal (DGC Buses)	35	683	£1,544,000	2,261
Minibus / taxi	85	401	£1,135,000	2,830
Parent	43	50	£183,000	3,660
ASN	92	187	£1,662,000	8,433
Total		3,246	£6,566,000	

All current school bus contracts are due to expire in July 2024. Minibus/Taxi and ASN spends have been identified within the procurement compliance action plan to be reprocurd at the earliest opportunity.

Stagecoach School Bus Services

Stagecoach provide 5 dedicated school bus contracts carrying some 200 entitled pupils at a total annual cost of £273,358. These contracts are summarised below.

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

Table 3-4: Stagecoach Dedicated School Bus Services

Route	Cost (to SWestrans)
Mouswald – Dumfries	£34,098
Monreith – Newton Stewart	£67,351
Isle of Whithorn – Newton Stewart	£58,697
Port William – Newton Stewart	£48,881
Whithorn – Newton Stewart	£64,331

Some 160 entitled pupils also travel to/from school on six SWestrans supported local bus service routes operated by Stagecoach:

- 358 Cairnryan to Stranraer;
- 359 Glentroll to Newton Stewart;
- 407 Drummore to Stranraer;
- 408 Kirkcolm to Stranraer;
- 415 Isle of Whithorn to Whithorn; and
- 500 Dumfries to Stranraer.

A further 70 pupils travel to/from school on 4 Stagecoach routes operated on a commercial basis:

- 1 Locharbriggs to Dumfries;
- 81 Lockerbie to Dumfries;
- 246 Kirkconnel to Sanquhar; and
- X75 Stranraer to Newton Stewart.

There are also a significant number of non-entitled pupils accessing school on both commercial and supported local bus services within Dumfries and Stranraer towns as well as to/from Wallace Hall Academy from Dumfries.

3.2.3 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) are primarily provided with assistance with their travel, arranged by the Council, through taxi or minibus contracts, with some DGC Buses support and parental payments also offered. These taxi contracts are required to be more dynamic, with changing pupil needs resulting in frequent changes and emergency or one-off taxi movements being booked. Discussions with DGC procurement and taxi licencing officers confirm that there is limited capacity in the taxi and private hire market, particularly outwith the main urban areas, which is an increasing cause for concern and a factor in increasing costs.

It is a misconception to assume that all ASN transport requires wheelchair facilities, but for those pupils with physical challenges specialist vehicles may be needed. This can also be a factor in

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

shortages of market capacity or cost premiums. The availability and cost of pupil escorts can also be a factor impacting on the supply of ASN transport.

ASN transport movements are unlikely to transfer to conventional local bus services or be integrated with mainstream school contracts, but the current review of ASN travel could result in additional taxi operators bidding for work or older pupils transferring to local bus as part of independent travel training programmes.

3.3 Market Trends

Across the country, the bus industry has been under increasing pressure since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain financial performance, initially in the face of revenue loss which required large scale government grant funding during 2020-21 and 2021-22. Since April 2022, government has substantially and progressively reduced this financial support despite demand generally not recovering to pre-Covid levels and costs escalating due to global and national economic factors.

This has left many core bus operations exposed as unit costs for labour, energy and insurance costs have risen at almost double-digit rates during the past two years. Typical responses by bus operators when margins are reduced are to:

- Cut their unit costs, but inflation is making this difficult
- Raise fares but bus patronage has not recovered so a fares' increase will make this problem worse
- Deregister routes to either stop operational losses or bring more subsidy to the network. The consequences are explained in later paragraphs

Two of the UK's largest transport groups have been sold to infrastructure investors (Stagecoach to DWS and Arriva to I Squared). These new owners have heavily leveraged these acquisitions to increase the return on investment to their investors, but debt also adds to interest charges, which the operating companies are expected to fund. The consequence is that these operating companies have a shorter-term planning horizon with considerably less concern regarding the medium-term health of local bus networks.

The outcome from these two influences is that the larger bus operators are seeking more subsidy payments for supported routes and are considering deregistration of previously commercial services. These statements are being made in different parts of the country affecting both individual routes and sometimes the sustainability of an entire depot.

3.4 Opportunities

3.4.1 CURRENT PSV LICENSED SUPPLIERS

The following section provides an anonymised summary of the engagement exercise with bus operators in Dumfries and Galloway.

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on bus operations in Dumfries and Galloway and many services, both commercial and supported, have still not recovered to pre-Covid patronage. This has put strain on some commercially registered services in the region, which may be no longer operating sustainably (financially) and are therefore at risk. The reduced patronage on services has also reduced income on tendered services where over 60s form a greater proportion of demand but have been seen to be more reluctant to return to bus travel post Covid.

In addition to loss of revenue, bus operators are also experiencing unprecedented increases in operating costs. Global factors have affected supply chains, interest rates and the cost of oil while persistent driver shortages have forced up pay rates. A combination of the availability of better paid and less stressful lorry driving jobs, lifestyle choices post-Covid and a lack of younger workers willing to join the bus industry to replace retiring drivers mean that driver recruitment and retention continue to be serious issues.

Another factor influencing rising operating costs for bus operators is the real Living Wage. As outlined in Section 2.2, it was announced that all companies bidding for Scottish Government contracts must now agree to pay the real Living Wage. It was understood from operators that the real Living Wage will drastically increase their operating costs, which can be challenging for smaller operators. This is because they consider that it would not just be a case of raising pay rates for staff currently paid below the real Living Wage but to maintain differentials potentially increasing pay rates across the board. As these wages are recalculated each year, there is further uncertainty in planning for future costs and adjusting to changing conditions.

Uncertainty was a recurring concern with bus operators in the region, in particular relating to contract length. It was understood from some operators that they would prefer to have contracts which extend over multiple years as this would help to provide more certainty for operators, allowing them to invest more confidently and plan for future conditions, in turn enabling them to offer more competitive prices. Operators did make clear that there would need to be some form of inflation index built into longer period contracts; that would be simple to set up and a number of local transport authorities already use a bus industry inflation index that captures key cost elements.

Smaller operators made the point that they have fewer resources available when compared to larger companies for administrative and peripheral activities. The burden of 'red tape' was cited as adding to the workload of business owners; it was not something they could afford to recruit to cover as there was no income gain, so it led to longer working hours for the business principals or the de-prioritisation of other tasks.

It was suggested by one operator that there is an oversaturation of bus routes and capacity in Dumfries and Galloway, leading to services being operated with very low patronage. They suggested that by reducing some services, resources can be better allocated on regional corridors which can then be supported by community transport.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) was mentioned by multiple operators as a solution to the challenge of providing public transport services in rural areas. It was suggested that DRT could act as a feeder to mainline routes along key corridors. The key drawbacks, however, were that the main cost element is the driver which would not change and that the close integration of schools and local service timetables meant that the size of vehicle was often dictated by the work it undertook at peak,

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

i.e. school, times. It was argued by one operator that DRT services cannot operate sustainably and will require continuous support from the Council.

School bus services comprise an integral part of Dumfries and Galloway's bus network. All bus operators in the region provide school services, with the key challenge being capacity and efficiency of vehicle usage. In peak AM and PM school periods, the passenger demand is provided with larger vehicles and more services. These periods are followed by off-peak periods where there is more capacity than demand. This can be problematic for some operators where vehicles may not be utilised throughout the day, reducing operational efficiency. A proposal supported by some operators was to 'stagger' school opening times so that vehicles could be used to transport pupils to school more efficiently. It was, however, noted by an operator that this change would be very unlikely to happen and may be challenged by the education sector.

3.4.2 OTHER PSV LICENSED OPERATORS

We considered the scope to encourage new suppliers into the market. There are no other licensed PSV operators within the Dumfries and Galloway Council area that are not already listed in the previous section. Due to the distances involved, operators in neighbouring Council areas are too far away to operate any contracts feasibly or economically.

There was some interest expressed in the taxi sector in expanding into PSV operation (see section 3.4.6).

3.4.3 PUBLIC SECTOR PSV OPERATOR

A separate study was undertaken by the Council to assess whether the business-as-usual model of commercial routes plus significant Council supported bus services can be effective at recovering passengers in a post-Covid environment. The Council assessed this against a range of options including establishing a public sector bus operator, a bus partnership where DGC Buses work with the commercial sector and a franchise model. The business case concluded that establishing a public sector bus company provided the best option going forward, which the Council will continue to investigate.

3.4.4 DGC BUSES

Any expansion to DGC Buses would potentially be on an incremental basis, under a section 22 permit or using the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 power to set up a PSV Licenced Operator. Aside from this, it is not envisaged that DGC Buses will expand due to the constraints imposed by the section 46 exemption under which it is licensed. This restricts operation to times when vehicles are not required for schools operation which largely rules out peak period and weekend operation.

3.4.5 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SECTOR

Dumfries and Galloway has a well-established community transport sector, with a strategic coordinating body established in 2016, the Dumfries and Galloway Community Transport Public Social Partnership. One of its core aims was to support existing and new operators to build capacity to offer more services for a wider variety of passenger groups. From this initiative the region now has

Network Review

3 Market Analysis

CT operators providing not just traditional community-based services, but also home to school transport and scheduled local bus services, for example Galloway Community Transport.

Our discussions with DGC officers and the sector have confirmed that some operators, albeit not all, could provide more capacity to fill gaps where local bus services are no longer viable with conventional bus operation or compete for school contracts. Local links are provided by community buses and/or car schemes, generally in the off-peak period and meeting social, retail and healthcare trip demands. In recent years some CT schemes in Scotland have expanded their operations to provide transport for ASN pupils, adult social care clients and meeting public transport demands in particularly remote communities.

Following the trial projects of PSP and the work of the Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway organisation there must, however, be realism about the pressures that can arise and the practical issues, particularly for volunteer led organisations, to enter new markets and serve different types of users and trip demands. It is recognised that the Council will need to offer support and assistance to CT organisations that want to grow, not just financial or resources but in training, administrative, legal and operational skills. However, the cost of such support may still be lower than that required to build capacity with existing (or new) bus or coach operators.

In the local bus services review it was identified that there are some poorly utilised services around Stranraer and Newton Stewart in particular and the Castle Douglas local service, that carry an average of <2/day. Such services are not sustainable in the long run as local buses. So the alternative of local CT provision will be assessed as part of the potential future procurement options.

3.4.6 TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE OPERATORS

Working with the Council's taxi licensing officer, a short survey was issued to all current taxi and private hire licence holders, seeking their views on the market and specifically asking whether they would be able to provide additional vehicles and drivers, and would bid for new contracts for home to school transport (or local bus work). They were asked what they viewed as barriers to entry and what support they would require, from the Council or other agencies, to participate in the emerging market. The operators were also questioned on their appetite for risk and how they viewed investment in their business.

By the closing date seven positive responses were received, where operators stated they would consider expanding their fleet or operating in new areas. This information has been shared with Council officers and a dialogue can commence to understand the opportunities to increase overall supply.

3.5 Conclusions

Bus services in Dumfries and Galloway have faced numerous challenges over the past few years including the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, rising operational costs and low competitiveness for rural services. For a number of operators in the region there are concerns relating to future financial sustainability and the lack of incentivisation for making investments into new and existing services.

Commercial services comprise 45% of the bus network in the region, although there is a risk that these services may become less viable, leading to an increased reliance on SWestrans support or services being withdrawn altogether. This, combined with changing market trends has led to an

Network Review
3 Market Analysis

'uncertain' future for the commercial network in Dumfries and Galloway. Any curtailment of existing commercial services will significantly increase the funding pressure on the already fragile network. The potential opportunities to address these challenges, and the current demand in the region are detailed in the following sections.

4 Local Bus Network

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the baseline conditions of the local bus network, providing a detailed analysis of patronage using Electronic Ticket Machine (ETM) data provided by local bus operators. The Demand Analysis section demonstrates the outcome of the data analysis task and is followed by the Service Design, which includes the proposed network design and routes which may require intervention.

4.2 Demand Analysis

4.2.1 METHODOLOGY

Ticketing data was collected from bus operators in Dumfries and Galloway and was subsequently input into a Microsoft PowerBI output, which allows the user to toggle various filters and adjust the outputs and calculations accordingly. An example of the PowerBI output is shown in Figure 4-1 Figure 4-1below. The Bus Ticketing Matrix calculates the average number of passengers per scheduled start time. The filters located at the bottom left of the output allow the user to view different operators, services, scheduled start times and time periods.

The data collected covers the period between:

- 28 May 2023 to 24 June 2023; and
- 23 July 2023 to 19 August 2023.

Due to the limitations of the data received by some operators, not all services have a full level of functionality in PowerBI. Other variables such as ticket type and ticket price were included in the datasets, although as the analysis was more focused on demand and patronage, financial information from the ETM data was not investigated in detail.

Where datasets were lacking in any respect, we reverted to the original journey by journey data to complete the analysis. This analysis is summarised in Appendix A where we present proposals on a service by service basis with supporting demand justification.

Network Review
4 Local Bus Network

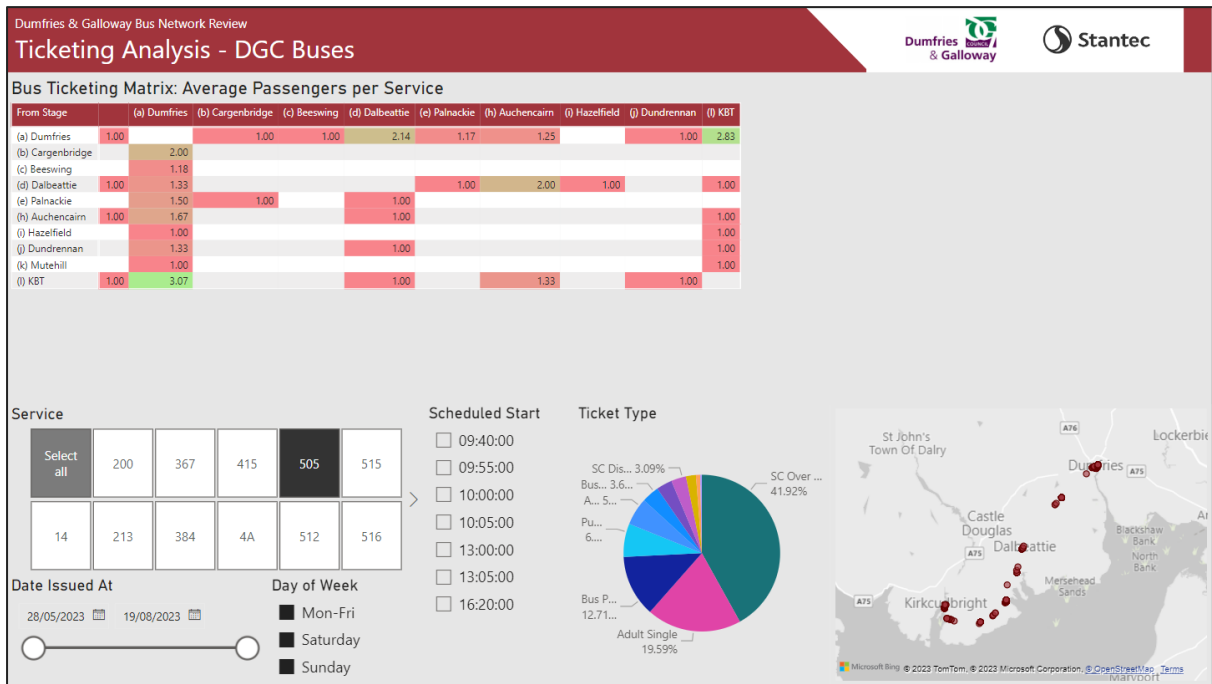


Figure 4-1: PowerBI Output Example

4.3 Demographic Analysis

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data were analysed across key areas and corridors in the region to understand and identify where services may be essential. Populations in more deprived areas may have an increased reliance on public transport services and as such it is crucial to ensure that essential bus services are identified and provided for. The following figures outline SIMD rankings against public transport routes.

Network Review 4 Local Bus Network

Area 1: Wigtownshire

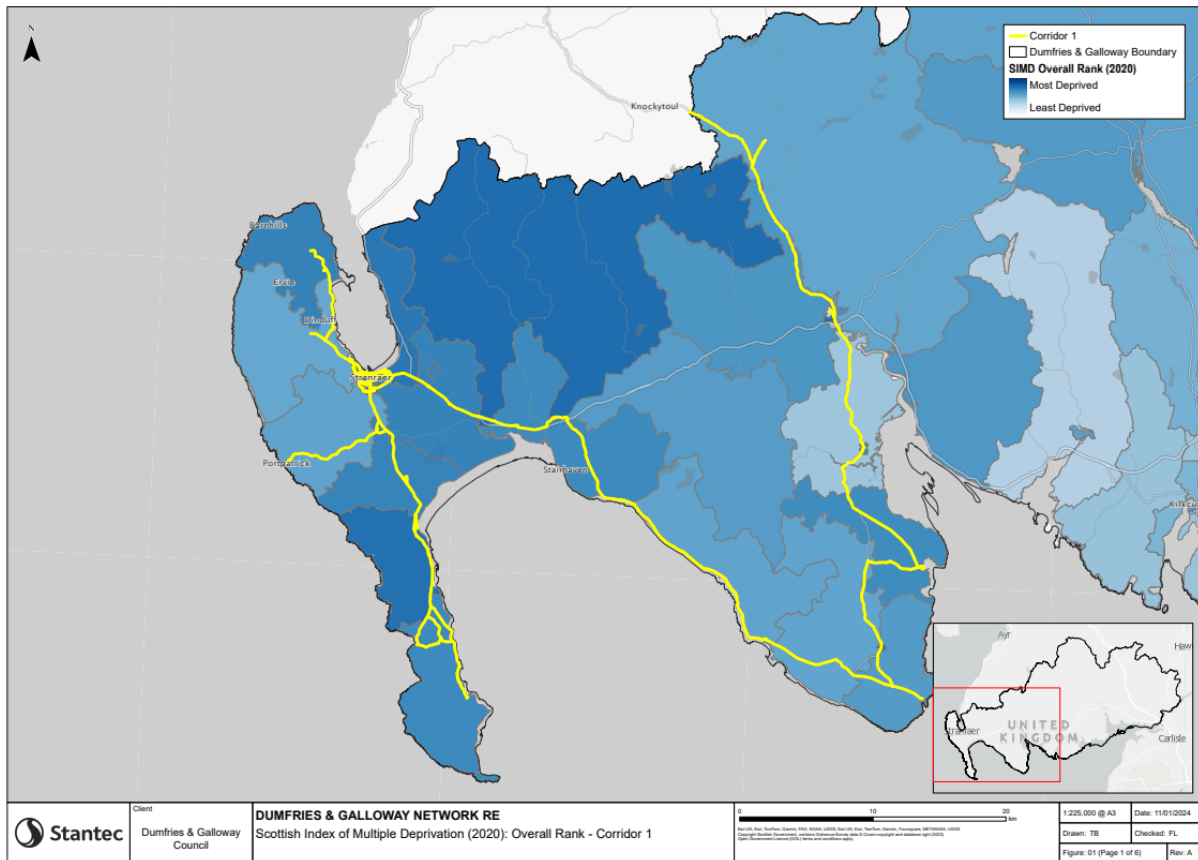


Figure 4-2: SIMD Map - Wigtownshire

There are multiple areas of high deprivation within the Wigtownshire area; thus supported bus services provide essential public transport services for residents.

Within the overall area, the following districts are noteworthy:

- Area between Leswalt and Barnhills, north west of Stranraer, the area has high deprivation and is one of the most income deprived areas with poor access to services within Dumfries and Galloway.
- Area between Sandhead to Terally, this is also one of the most deprived areas with high deprivation regarding income, employment, and health, and has poor access to services.
- Dunragit and Glenluce area, villages on the A75 corridor. Buses do not serve the deprived area to the north of these villages which has a low population density. Excluding New Luce, there are few villages to serve in this area.

**Network Review
4 Local Bus Network**

Area 2: A75 Corridor

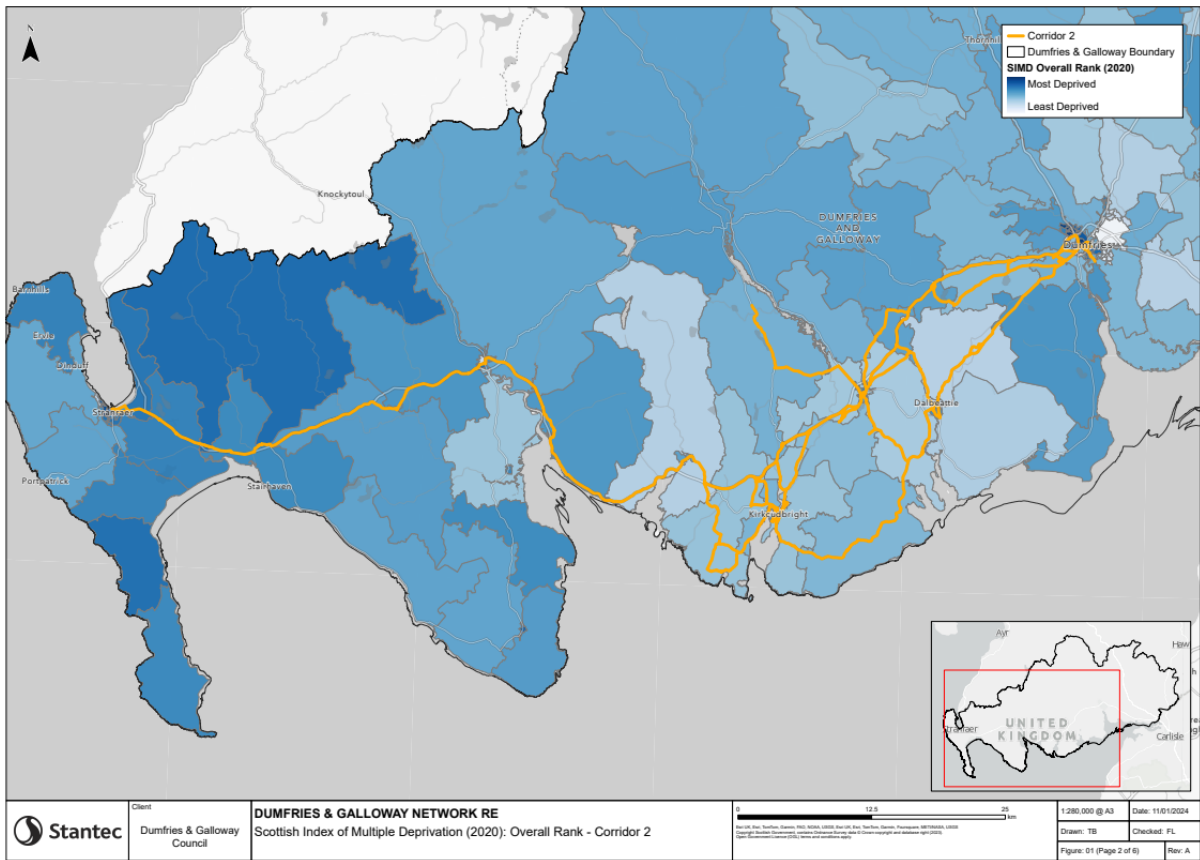


Figure 4-3: SIMD Map – A75 Corridor

The A75 corridor traverses between Dumfries to the east and Stranraer to the west, travelling close to notable towns such as Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright, Gatehouse of Fleet, and Newton Stewart. In general, the west of the Dumfries and Galloway area is overall more deprived, and the A75 corridor and supported service 500 is a key link to connect the west to the less deprived area in the east and the regional centre of Dumfries.

The A75 corridor and service 500 also serve the deprived area between Stranraer and Newton Stewart; this large area varies from relatively deprived to some of the most deprived areas in the Dumfries and Galloway area. Distinctively, this area is particularly income deprived and has poor access to services.

The A75 corridor navigates south from Newton Stewart through the deprived area east of Creetown. This area is deprived in terms of income, employment, and has poor access to services.

To the west of Dumfries, there are several deprived areas that the A75 and supported services link to the centre of Dumfries. The areas surrounding Beeswing and Crocketford are deprived in terms of income, employment, and have poor access to services.

**Network Review
4 Local Bus Network**

Area 3: Dumfries and Nithsdale

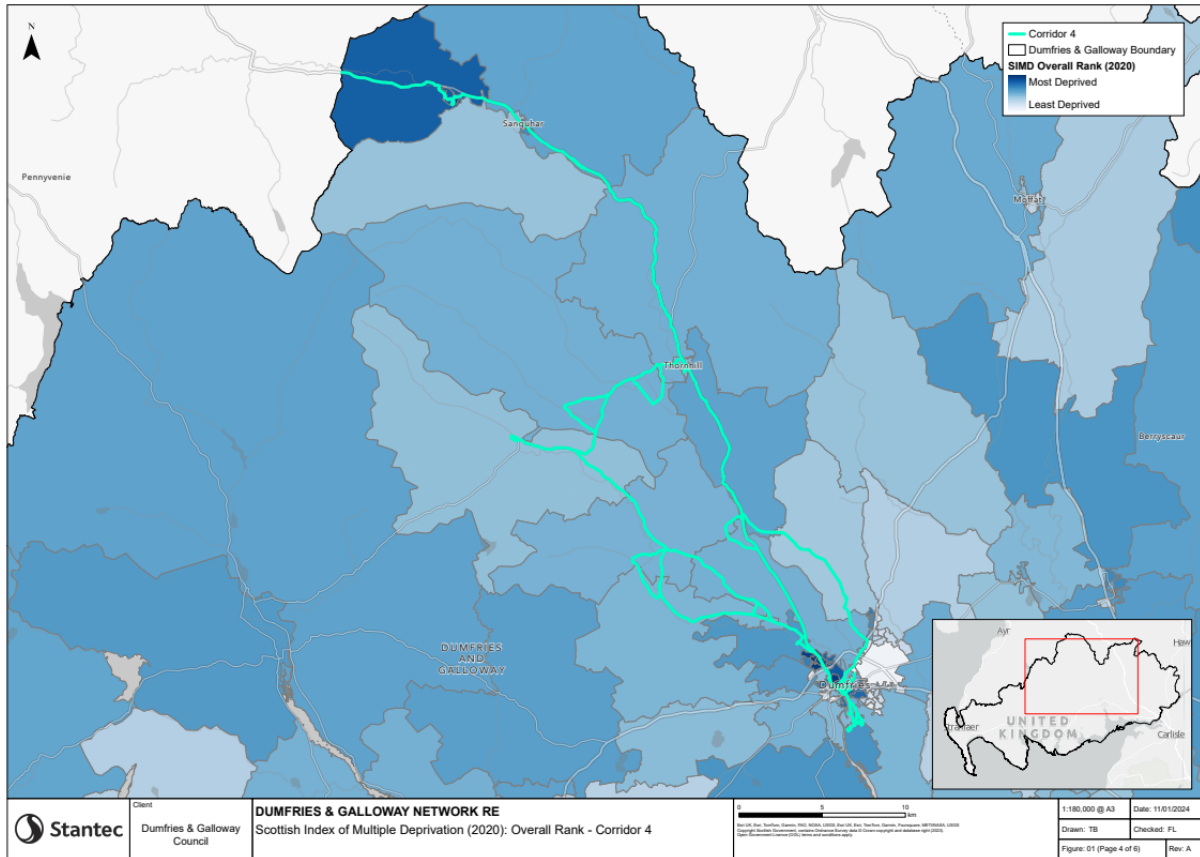


Figure 4-4: SIMD Map – Dumfries and Nithsdale*

* Routes D4a, D6, D7 and D8 are not shown.

The Dumfries and Nithsdale area includes the area from north west of Sanquhar to Loaningfoot, south of Dumfries. Commercial service 246 provides a key link from the north of the Dumfries and Galloway area to Dumfries. Along the corridor there are two main areas of deprivation; the area north west of Sanquhar and the area between Holywood and the centre of Dumfries.

The area north west of Sanquhar is severely deprived in terms of income, employment, and health. The area surrounding Holywood is deprived in terms of income, employment, and health.

**Network Review
4 Local Bus Network**

Area 4: Lockerbie

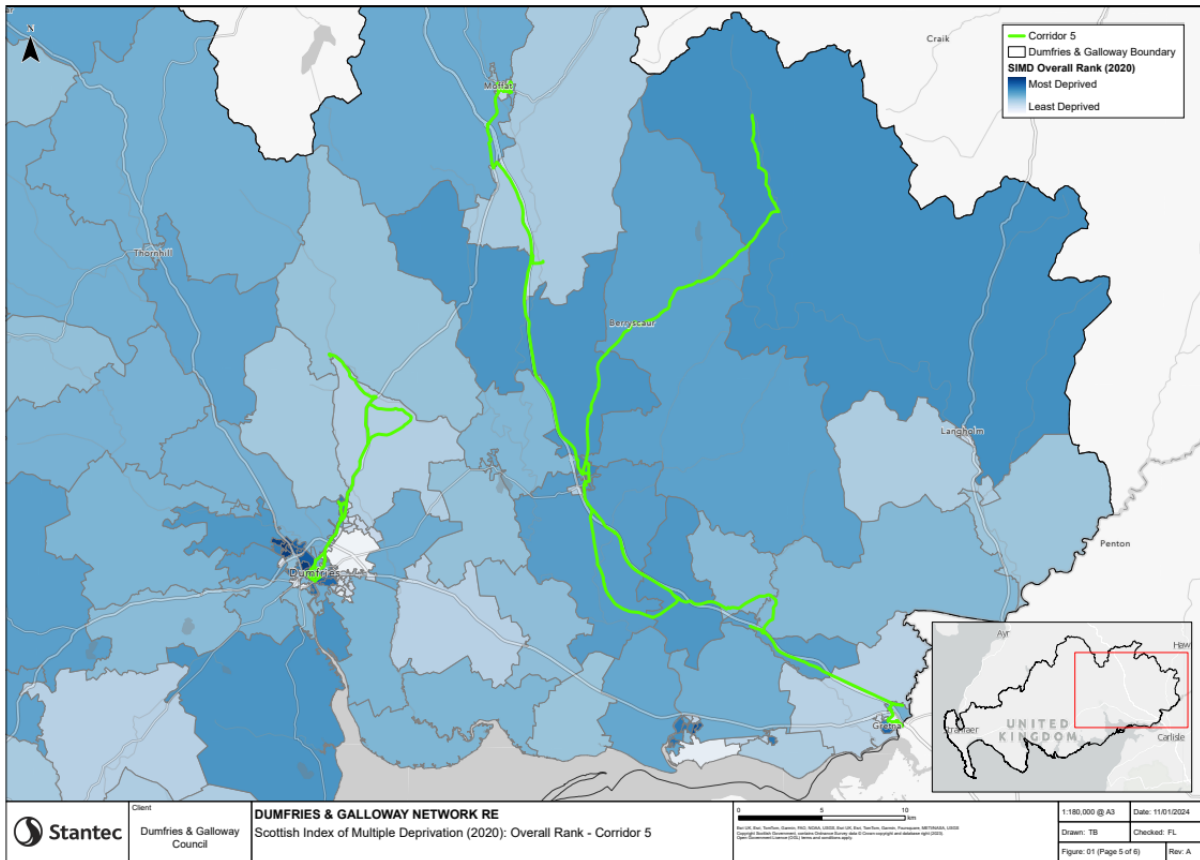


Figure 4-5: SIMD Data - Lockerbie

Area 5 is centred on Lockerbie and covers the area east of Dumfries, including Moffat and Garwald to the north and traverses to Gretna to the south east. It also includes the area between Ae Village and Dumfries.

The areas along the longer route between Newton Wamphray and Kirkpatrick-Fleming are relatively deprived in terms of employment. In particular, Lockerbie and Ecclefechan are deprived in terms of income, and health.

The shorter route serves areas with minimal deprivation although connects to the centre of Dumfries that has deprivation in terms of income, employment, and health.

**Network Review
4 Local Bus Network**

Area 5: Annan and Langholm

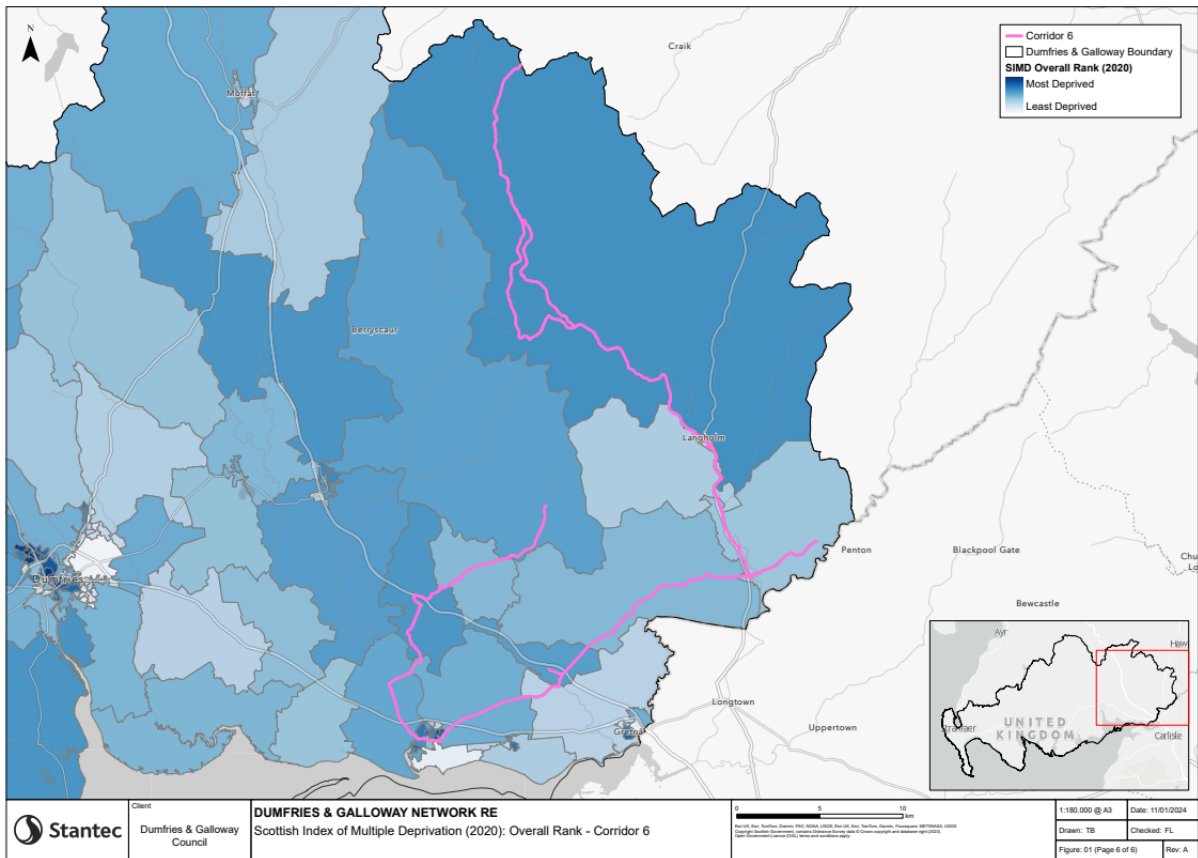


Figure 4-6: SIMD Map – Annan and Langholm

Area 5 covers the east area of the Dumfries and Galloway area. The area includes the north east area to Fingland and traverses south towards Langholm and Canobie. The area connects Canobie to Annan in the south and further travels back northbound to Kirtleton House.

The northern section from Fingland to Langholm has high deprivation in terms of income, employment, and has poor access to services.

In the south, the area surrounding Ecclefechan and the area surrounding Kirkpatrick-Fleming are also deprived, particularly in terms of employment and health.

4.4 Service Design

4.4.1 CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

Established practice in SWestrans is for the Authority to prepare detailed specifications for local service contracts, including timetable, route and vehicle size. Provided that a compliant tender submission is made, tenderers may also submit alternative specifications where they consider that they could offer a better service or more efficient solution. SWestrans considers such alternatives on their merits.

Network Review

4 Local Bus Network

We gave consideration to an alternative methodology of contract specification that could give more flexibility to bus operators. The proposed contract would not specify a timetable, but the number of journeys required for a service at different times of the day and week. Operators would subsequently produce their own timetables in their tender submissions for the Authority to review. This proposal would allow operators to adjust timetables to their existing operations, helping to improve efficiency and allow greater flexibility.

In our engagement with operators, some expressed interest in principle in this approach while others stated that they did not have the available resource to prepare timetables and as such preferred the current methodology. Even those who were in favour pointed out that the timescales required for thorough development of options would be lengthy and incompatible with procurement timescales.

4.4.2 DIGITAL DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT (DDRT)

We have investigated the potential for the introduction of services operating on a demand responsive basis, supported by digital booking and scheduling systems. Known as DDRT, under this model aspects of the service specification are flexibly determined, based on user requests for travel. This flexibility may relate to the timing of journeys and/or the specific points served within a given area or route. The service typically uses minibuses to deliver the flexibility of service and to allow greater penetration of residential areas with narrower streets.

The model involves intending users booking their travel in advance, generally via a website or mobile phone app, although telephone bookings are also accepted to avoid excluding users who don't have access to the relevant technology. Scheduling software is then used to optimise vehicle movements and, if necessary, to suggest amendments to the original booking request if it cannot be fulfilled as sought. The concept is intended to provide a more bespoke service to meet users' needs and to avoid unnecessary vehicle movements.

Although there have been many DDRT trials around Britain, many of them publicly funded but also some commercial initiatives, very few have survived beyond the initial period of pump priming. Costs are not appreciably lower than conventional bus services because the key cost elements are still incurred:

- driver wages – the driver needs to be paid whilst on duty, whether driving or on 'standby'
- vehicle costs – while minibuses are cheaper to buy than full size buses, they have a shorter working life so annual depreciation is similar. There will be some savings in fuel and maintenance, but insurance, licensing etc will still be incurred

Additionally, software providers will charge a fee based on a standing charge per year and a 'per booking' element. This can offset or even outweigh any savings from the use of smaller vehicles.

For these reasons, we do not recommend introduction of DDRT or conversion of existing services to this format. However, should the Scottish Government seek to coordinate and fund a national model for DDRT this could be a valuable addition to the delivery of needs based transport in our more rural areas.

Network Review

4 Local Bus Network

4.4.3 SERVICE ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

The methodology adopted for service analysis and design was, firstly, to review the costs and benefits of each service by using a metric of subsidy per passenger journey as a measure of value for money. This highlighted services which had high levels of subsidy, either due to low passenger numbers or high tender prices or a combination of both; these were the top priority for review.

We analysed all services on a journey by journey basis and, where appropriate, designed new timetables to better match demand and improve value for money. We also developed options that improved interchange opportunities between bus and rail and between different bus services where this could be achieved without incurring additional costs.

Full details of proposed services including full timetables and route descriptions are provided in Appendix A.

4.4.4 MOBILE PHONE SERVICE ANALYSIS

Mobile phone data was reviewed to provide insights into travel patterns of people and communities. By analysing the location, speed, and direction of mobile devices, inferences can be made about where people are going, how they are traveling, and why they are making trips.

Analysis of the mobile phone data was undertaken across Dumfries and Galloway. The purpose of this exercise was to identify if there were significant travel flows that were not picked up by the existing local bus network and hence whether there were any opportunities to grow the bus market. In general, the bus network reflected the main travel flows identified in the mobile phone data, although at a much lower level of activity. It is this low activity by bus that makes it difficult to justify investment in new or additional bus services or journeys; the proportion of trips undertaken by bus is consistently relatively low, even where there are regular frequency services. At a time of budget pressure, investment in speculative new bus services would not represent the best use of public funds and the available budgets are better directed towards maintaining existing services that fulfil community needs.

5 Home to School Transport

5.1 Introduction

Due to the rural nature of Dumfries and Galloway, pupils are heavily reliant on home to school transport to ensure they have equitable access to education. As such, ensuring that the school bus system is operating efficiently and effectively is key for this network review.

5.2 Demand Analysis

5.2.1 METHODOLOGY

Anonymised postcode data was analysed and mapped to identify pupils' journeys to and from school or college. The figure below shows the home postcodes for pupils in Dumfries and Galloway and have been colour coded by school. The figure excludes primary schools as the majority of home to school transport caters for secondary pupils. This is due to the nature of primary schools generally being smaller and located more locally than secondary schools. Transport for primary school pupils has still been included in this network review, although the proposals are at a much smaller scale than for secondary education.

The figure exemplifies the rural distribution of students in the region, which can be challenging in the provision of bus services as there are fewer population centres from which to draw significant patronage. As with the service design for local bus services, the assessment of school services in Dumfries and Galloway have been split into the following regions:

- Annan;
- Dumfries;
- Kirkconnel;
- Kirkcudbright;
- Lockerbie;
- Stranraer; and
- Thornhill.

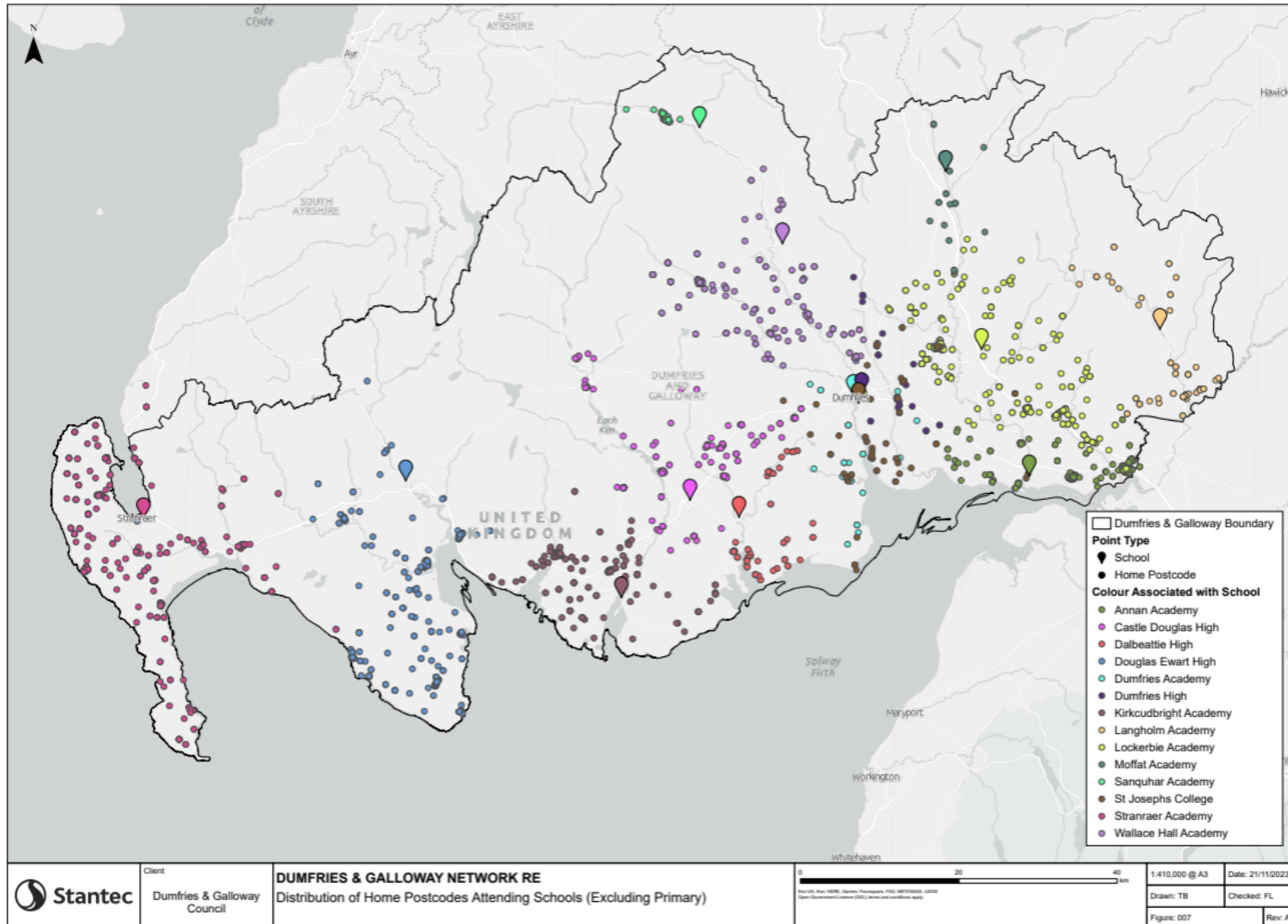


Figure 5-1: Distribution of Home Postcodes Attending Schools (Excluding Primary)

5.3 Service Design

School bus routes were drawn from scratch using the above postcode data to best connect students to their respective schools. Routes were drawn under the criteria of students being within the statutory two to three mile catchment areas. The newly designed network was then compared against the existing network and route adjustments were made where appropriate.

It was also considered, where possible, to integrate home to school contracts with regular bus services. This would be appropriate where routes have a similar geography or follow a similar alignment. The aim of this was to improve the efficiency of the network and reduce the number of contracts going out to tender. The combined contracts were designed to be flexible, where the number of potential pupils is indicated as suppose to the number of vehicles required. This provides the tenderer more freedom in allocating resources to supply the specified demand.

As with local bus services, established practice in the Council is for the Authority to prepare detailed specifications for school service contracts, including timetable, route and vehicle size. Full details of proposed home to school services including full timetables and route descriptions are provided in Appendix B.

6 Additional Support Needs Transport

In the case of children and young people with additional support needs (ASN), special transport arrangements will be considered which are appropriate to pupils' needs, through the Child's Plan process. In Dumfries and Galloway consideration of the needs of children with ASN, including home to school transport, is undertaken within the framework of the 'Getting It Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) guidance from the Scottish Government.

A child or young person with additional support needs is defined under the terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 and 2009.

As with many other Councils in Scotland (and across the UK) the key pressures on home to school transport budgets are primarily arising through growth in demand and increasing unit costs for ASN transport. The figure below shows the anonymised home postcodes of ASN pupils and their respective schools.

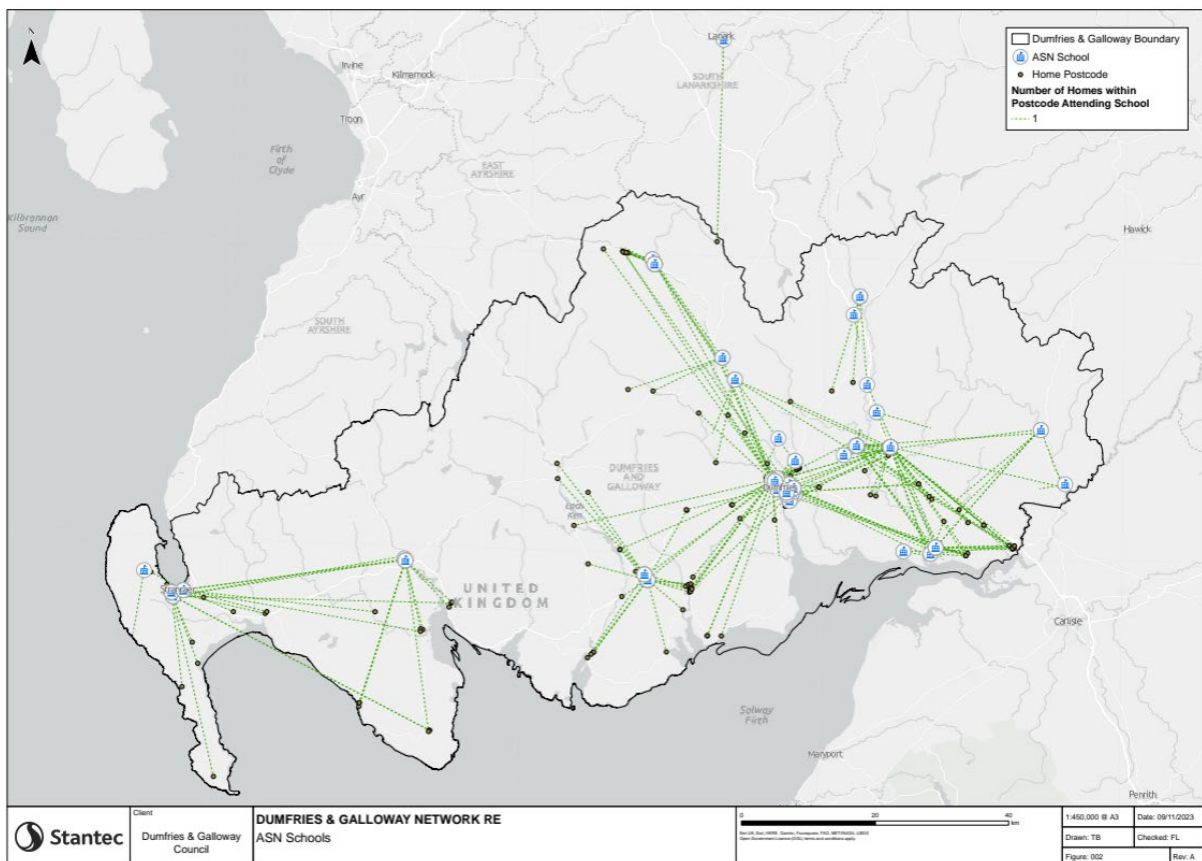


Figure 6-1: ASN Schools

For pupils with Additional Support Needs the growth in demand and costs are such that in many local authorities, particularly in urban areas, the ASN sector requires 75% or more of the total home to school transport budget. ASN pupil travel costs typically are now 5-6 times higher than mainstream pupil costs, as a result of:

- increasingly more complex physical or medical needs, requiring adapted vehicles and escort support
- more challenging behaviours, requiring separate taxi provision in some cases
- more children with Care Plans
- the limited number of special schools or specialist provision in mainstream schools resulting in longer journeys, often outwith the area

Halting or slowing the growth of ASN transport costs and provision is a challenge faced by most local authorities and while it is recognised as a trend that cannot be sustained there is currently no additional funding available from the Scottish Government or generally transferable within the Council's own budgets.

Dumfries and Galloway Council therefore needs to consider a range of options which could be developed to achieve a balance between meeting greater pupils needs while managing significant budget growth and service demands.

Although not the prime focus of this network review we have assessed opportunities within the general procurement of new local bus and mainstream home to school transport to support and improve the ASN transport service.

Late in 2023 an internal working group of Council education and transport officers considered ASN transport and the specific pressures facing the service, both in terms of cost and demand. This group reported to two Scrutiny Review workshops in October and November 2023, setting out the challenges and options to be considered. Of note is the increase of pupils classified as ASN in the last decade, from 10% to 33% and in particular the significant rise in the number of children and young people with social, emotional and educational needs (SEBN) – since 2018 an increase of 24.18% in primary education and 35.13% in secondary.

As noted at the second workshop there are currently 280 ASN pupils receiving travel assistance, with over half carried by taxis. The perception may be that physical mobility and extra personal care is required on all contracts but in fact only 16% require wheelchair access and 41% have escorts. Minibus provision is significant and offers economies of scale. However, the debate about ASN is driven by escalating costs of provision, with a current average cost per pupil of £6,800 (£37 per day) in Dumfries and Galloway.

It is not the role of this review to make policy recommendations for ASN transport, but as part of procuring a better overall home to school and public transport network there could be benefits in a new integrated approach.

By transporting more ASN pupils on mainstream home to school transport or local buses it could free up taxi resources for the other ASN pupils, particularly those with SEBN. In both mainstream and ASN travel needs assessments we believe there should be a dialogue with parents and children, schools and education staff to ascertain the optimal travel choice to meet their needs, but in a fully informed framework of clear information on travel times, costs and other factors. The process starts with rethinking the advice given to parents and pupils as they enter the system, in guidance notes and with in-person advice, so that there is no assumption that a taxi or bus will be provided as a matter of course – it may still be optimal, but only when all options are equally considered.

The outcome of a more nuanced approach may be a slight increase in resources (more advice, discussion, negotiation) but over the child's period at school a more dynamic approach will ensure the best match of travel choices with the child's abilities and the support that parents can give, every year. In many respects this can be particularly useful with ASN pupils, where travel to school in itself can be stressful and challenging, and more tailored approaches do not necessarily result in increased cost – for example the use of parental payments and some forms of independent travel can be significantly less than escorted taxi journeys, and can have value in later years as pupils prepare to leave secondary school.

On the supply side the benefits of the network review are achieved as capacity is freed up as taxis are used for those pupils with the greatest need and increased use of minibuses and local buses reduces the unit cost per pupil and per mile, as well as offering new entrants to the market opportunities to transport pupils at a lower overall cost to the local authority.

7 Financial Analysis

7.1 Introduction

In this section, we have analysed SWestrans £3.7m subsidy support for the local bus network by route and combined this data with each bus services' annual patronage levels. Using the average subsidy per customer for each route, we can make observations regarding opportunities to achieve similar outcomes with a lower total subsidy or to stimulate the bus market and achieve a substantial increase bus usage.

This financial analysis is undertaken in the context of considerable local authority budgetary pressures, as well as suppliers cost base increases post Covid (as discussed in chapter 3).

7.2 Current Situation

In shows where 50% of cumulative subsidy is reached and the orange highlighted row shows where 90% of cumulative subsidy is reached.

As the table shows, subsidy varies from £0.59 for the Stranraer local service (365) to £43.21 for the Langholm to Eskdalemuir service (124). The average subsidy per passenger across the supported network is £3.71.

Table 7-1, there is an analysis showing each of the subsidised bus services ranked in ascending order of average subsidy per customer. The yellow highlighted row shows where 50% of cumulative subsidy is reached and the orange highlighted row shows where 90% of cumulative subsidy is reached.

As the table shows, subsidy varies from £0.59 for the Stranraer local service (365) to £43.21 for the Langholm to Eskdalemuir service (124). The average subsidy per passenger across the supported network is £3.71.

Table 7-1: Subsidy Summary by Contract

Contract No.	Description	Tender Bids	Subsidy (£)	Cumulative Subsidy	Cum. %	No of Customers	Cumulative Customers	Cum. %	Annual Km	Subsidy / km	Subsidy / Customer
SW/22/365/X	365 Stranraer Town	1	£57,681	£57,681	2%	97,712	97,712	8%	69,000	£0.84	£0.59
SW/22/502/A	502 Kirkcudbright to Castle Douglas	2	£68,998	£126,679	3%	57,486	155,198	13%	139,400	£0.49	£1.20
SW/22/005/X	D5 Crichton to Dumfries Town Centre	2	£106,290	£232,969	6%	80,967	236,165	20%	30,000	£3.54	£1.31
SW/22/111/X	111 Dumfries Town Centre to DGRI	2	£75,600	£308,569	8%	55,783	291,948	25%	76,300	£0.99	£1.36
SW/22/381/A	381 Dumfries to Lockerbie	2	£43,120	£351,689	9%	29,367	321,315	27%	48,400	£0.89	£1.47
SW/22/380/A	380 Lockerbie to Moffat	2	£91,252	£442,941	12%	52,234	373,549	32%	159,800	£0.57	£1.75
SW/22/500/A	500 Dumfries to Stranraer	1	£280,677	£723,618	19%	153,006	526,555	45%	593,200	£0.47	£1.83
SW/22/DF18/D	D4A Lochvale / D7 Troqueer / D8 Cargenbridge / D9 Summerhill	2	£183,760	£907,378	24%	96,447	623,002	53%	90,600	£2.03	£1.91
SW/22/236/A	236 Dumfries to Kirkton to Thornhill	2	£49,996	£957,374	26%	21,593	644,595	55%	23,100	£2.16	£2.32
SW/22/06A/A	6A Caerlaverock to Dumfries	1	£57,100	£1,014,474	27%	21,697	666,292	57%	51,500	£1.11	£2.63
SW/22/372/A	372 Dumfries to Sandyhills	2	£184,900	£1,199,374	32%	69,680	735,972	63%	309,100	£0.60	£2.65
SW/22/382/A	382 Lockerbie to Carlisle	2	£68,943	£1,268,317	34%	25,051	761,023	65%	92,800	£0.74	£2.75
SW/22/431/A	431 Gatehouse to Kirkcudbright (Town)	2	£59,565	£1,327,882	36%	21,437	782,460	67%	55,200	£1.08	£2.78
SW/22/505/A	505 Dalbeattie to Kirkcudbright	2	£49,764	£1,377,646	37%	16,250	798,710	68%	96,700	£0.51	£3.06
SW/22/236/B	236 Dumfries to Kirkton to Thornhill	3	£53,900	£1,431,546	39%	15,951	814,661	69%	122,600	£0.44	£3.38
SW/22/501/A	501 Dumfries to Kirkcudbright	2	£83,498	£1,515,044	41%	23,920	838,581	71%	70,500	£1.18	£3.49
SW/22/104/A	104 Lockerbie Town / Corrie	2	£29,100	£1,544,144	42%	7,709	846,290	72%	33,100	£0.88	£3.77
SW/22/CV18/A	503 Dumfries to Castle Douglas / 512 Town / 520 Dalmellington	1	£208,193	£1,752,337	47%	54,964	901,254	77%	376,900	£0.55	£3.79
SW/22/127/A	127 Newcatleton to Langholm	1	£54,460	£1,806,797	49%	13,546	914,800	78%	21,600	£2.52	£4.02
SW/22/379/A	379 Carlisle to Dumfries	2	£38,806	£1,845,603	50%	9,378	924,178	79%	46,600	£0.83	£4.14
SW/22/367/X	367 Stranraer to Portpatrick	1	£64,138	£1,909,741	51%	14,062	938,240	80%	44,600	£1.44	£4.56
SW/22/NZ19/A	415 Machars to Newton Stewart / 416 Stranraer	1	£313,253	£2,222,994	60%	63,614	1,001,854	85%	505,200	£0.62	£4.92
SW/22/112/A	112 Lockerbie to Samye Ling	2	£49,672	£2,272,666	61%	9,763	1,011,617	86%	87,400	£0.57	£5.09
SW/22/123/A	123 Langholm to Annan / 388 Back of the Hill / 390 Powfoot	2	£30,474	£2,303,140	62%	5,877	1,017,494	87%	38,700	£0.79	£5.19
SW/22/382/B	382 Lockerbie to Gretna/Annan	2	£135,500	£2,438,640	66%	24,960	1,042,454	89%	185,100	£0.73	£5.43
SW/22/221/X	221 Wanlockhead to Sanquhar to Kirkconnel	2	£93,127	£2,531,767	68%	17,030	1,059,484	90%	69,100	£1.35	£5.47
SW/22/383/A	383 Lockerbie to Annan	2	£28,996	£2,560,763	69%	4,511	1,063,995	91%	17,500	£1.66	£6.43
SW/22/202/A	202 Moniaive to Dumfries	2	£75,600	£2,636,363	71%	11,544	1,075,539	92%	123,600	£0.61	£6.55
SW/22/373/A	373 Dumfries to Shawhead	2	£33,640	£2,670,003	72%	4,758	1,080,297	92%	35,100	£0.96	£7.07
SW/22/385/A	385 Annan to Dumfries	2	£69,497	£2,739,500	74%	9,815	1,090,112	93%	125,200	£0.56	£7.08
SW/22/115/A	115 Dumfries to Ae Village	2	£36,650	£2,776,150	75%	5,135	1,095,247	93%	42,600	£0.86	£7.14
SW/22/120/A	120 Langholm Town	2	£8,374	£2,784,524	75%	1,046	1,096,293	93%	2,600	£3.22	£8.01
SW/22/SV19/A	407 Stranraer to Drummole / 408 Kirkcolm	1	£244,848	£3,029,372	81%	30,525	1,126,818	96%	144,700	£1.69	£8.02
SW/22/359/A	359 Newton Stewart to Girvan	1	£265,830	£3,295,202	89%	24,333	1,151,151	98%	174,700	£1.52	£10.92
SW/22/410/A	410 Glenluce to Stranraer / 411 Knock / 412 Ervie	1	£39,975	£3,335,177	90%	3,458	1,154,609	98%	27,600	£1.45	£11.56
SW/22/521/A	521 Laurieston to Dumfries	2	£46,481	£3,381,658	91%	3,718	1,158,327	99%	32,200	£1.44	£12.50
SW/22/117/A	117 Lockerbie to Hightae	2	£31,800	£3,413,458	92%	2,028	1,160,355	99%	51,400	£0.62	£15.68
SW/22/420/A	420 Newton Stewart Town	1	£80,818	£3,494,276	94%	5,016	1,165,371	99%	15,900	£5.08	£16.11
SW/22/212/A	212 Moniaive to Thornhill	1	£49,950	£3,544,226	95%	3,026	1,168,397	100%	38,900	£1.28	£16.51
SW/22/502/C	502 Dumfries to Castle Douglas	2	£96,987	£3,641,213	98%	2,899	1,171,296	100%	90,500	£1.07	£33.46
SW/22/124/A	124 Langholm to Samye Ling	2	£76,400	£3,717,613	100%	1,768	1,173,064	100%	89,000	£0.86	£43.21

Network Review

To illustrate what the table shows: the average journey on the service 365 (Stranraer Town) costs £0.59 and that the average trip on service 124 (Langholm to Samye Ling) has a subsidy of £43.21.

The table has two coloured rows to illustrate how much subsidy might be available to the authority should it chose to support bus usage in alternative ways.

Row 20 is shaded in yellow and roughly divides the subsidy of £3.72m into two equal parts of £1.84m and £1.87m. Whilst the cost of each group approximates to 50%, the number of customers is divided 79% in the upper part of the table and 21% in the lower section. It is evident that most contract subsidies per kilometre are within a relatively narrow band but customers numbers per kilometre falls dramatically in the lower part of the table.

In a similar way, row 27, shaded in terracotta shows that 31% (100%-69%) of the subsidy is paid to carry just 9% (100%-91%) of the network’s annual patronage. This outcome indicates that there should be a detailed review of the 14 contracts in rows 28 to 41 whose subsidy totals £1.15m and the average journey is costing £10.41/trip. The aim would be to check that these services are offering value for money compared to alternative ways to meet the social needs of the contracts’ bus users.

In Figure 7-1 below, the graph compares the cumulative cost of the authority’s subsidy with the cumulative number of customers carried. This shows that the gradient of subsidy curve is generally consistent, leading to an approximate straight line for all 41 rows/services in the network. By contrast the gradient of the customer line flattens at around row 8 (service group D4A, D7, D8 and D9).

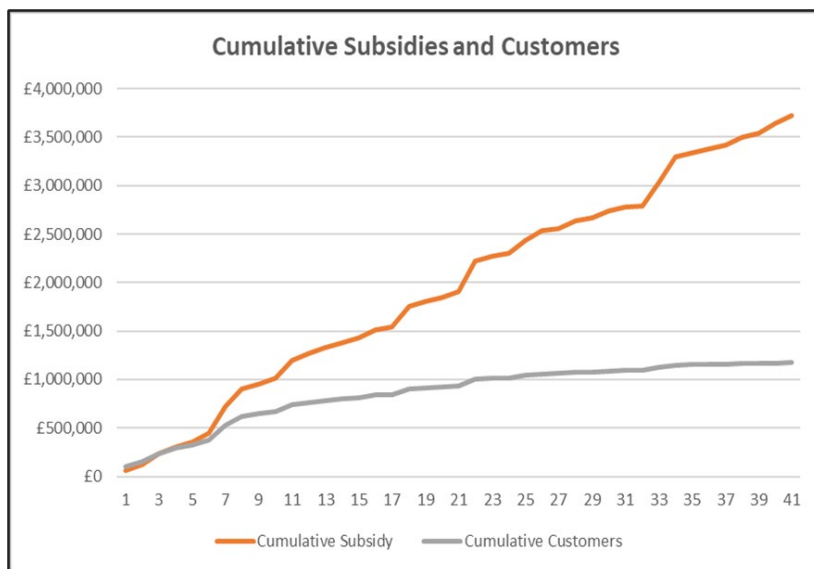


Figure 7-1: Cumulative Subsidy and Patronage by Contract

Taken together these two ways of looking at the network indicates that from row 9 to 41 the network’s subsidy is focused on the perceived need of bus users with probably no alternative form of transport available, rather than to encourage bus use by customers that might have a choice of mode of transport. The overall subsidy being paid to support these 33 routes is

Network Review

£2.8m. This figure means that each of these routes' journey is being subsidised at an average cost of £5.11/ trip.

7.3 Benchmarking

We have conducted further analysis of the cost of tenders to understand how these vary across the Council's area and whether competition (or lack of it) is having an impact on prices. In the most recent tendering exercise, 29 local service contracts attracted more than one bid and there were 12 contracts where only one bid was received.

Table 7-2 Comparison of Tender Prices with and without Competition

Description	Subsidy	No of Passengers	Annual Km	Subsidy / km	Subsidy / Passenger	Passengers / km
Tenders with 2 or more bids	£2,000,690	688,105	2,384,200	£0.84	£2.91	0.29
Tenders with only 1 bid	£1,716,923	484,959	2,063,800	£0.83	£3.54	0.23

The similarity in subsidy per km is interesting as it suggests that the level of competition for contracts is not a material factor in determining pricing. There is a marked difference in subsidy per passenger in the two scenarios, however, with competitively bid contracts on average requiring 82% of the subsidy per passenger of non-competitive contracts. The similarity in cost per km and the disparity in cost per passenger suggests that it is the number of passengers that is driving the difference. We therefore calculated the number of passengers per km for each contract and this showed that the average for competitive contracts was 0.29 and for non-competitive contracts was 0.23. The difference in results is therefore related to demand and not to the presence or absence of competition.

We also compared costs between areas within the Council as shown in Table 7-3.

Table 7-3: Comparison of Subsidy by Area

Area	Subsidy	No of Passengers	Annual Km	Subsidy / km	Subsidy / Passenger	Passengers / km
Wigtownshire	£1,147,220	391,726	1,574,900	£0.73	£2.93	0.25
Stewartry	£757,186	210,532	994,400	£0.76	£3.60	0.21
Nithsdale	£856,813	373,753	879,500	£0.97	£2.29	0.42
Annandale and Eskdale	£756,394	197,053	999,200	£0.76	£3.84	0.20

The table shows that subsidy per km is consistent across most of the Council area at £0.73 to £0.76 but higher in Nithsdale at £0.97, largely attributable to lower average bus speeds in Dumfries which means fewer miles are covered per bus hour. As noted above, subsidy per passenger seems to reflect demand: the area with the lowest average subsidy has the highest passenger numbers (Nithsdale, £2.29 per passenger and 0.42 passengers per km) and the area with the highest average subsidy has the lowest passenger numbers (Annandale & Eskdale, £3.84 per passenger and 0.20 passengers per km).

Comparable data is not readily available for other authorities but by way of external benchmarking comparison, average subsidy per passenger in Scottish Borders Council is



Network Review

very similar at £3.65⁶ while SPT has a target maximum subsidy per passenger of £4.50 for rural services⁷.

In England, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) has supported bus service subsidy per passenger that ranges from £1.01 to £9.49 following a 2023 review⁸, while Essex and Kent now have maximum subsidy per passenger of £10.00⁹ and £3.00¹⁰ respectively.

7.4 Summary

The 14 contracts with the highest average subsidy per customer are predominately operated by independent bus operators and in our previous report we were able to show that subsidies to these businesses are reasonable for the work being undertaken. The underlying problem is that these bus services have so few users that the average net journey cost is **five times** that of the best 14 contracts.

Increasing the frequencies of buses has been shown to improve ridership and if 63% of the £1.15m was devoted to doubling frequencies on the seven contracts with the lowest cost per trip at a total cost of £723,618pa, then the patronage might rise by up to 50% (gross). If achieved, then there could be around 250,000 additional bus journeys per annum.

The potential loss of 109,000 trips who use the most expensive (per trip) contracts might be mitigated by using the balance of c£430,000pa to find alternative ways to meet the social needs of these bus customers.

⁶ Transport Presentation, Scottish Borders Council Berwickshire Area Partnership, 6.2.2020

⁷ Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Framework for Supporting Local Bus Services (August 2021)

⁸ Supported Bus Services: Contract Decisions, WECA, 18 January 2023

⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cmlgmz18knno>

¹⁰ <https://futuretransport-news.com/subsidies-per-passenger-the-3-challenge/>



8 Conclusions

8.1 Summary

We have reviewed in detail the performance of the local bus network supported by SWestrans and the home to school transport procured by the Council and recommended changes where demand was low and the cost of operation high, using subsidy per passenger as an indicator of value for money. Average subsidy per passenger is £3.17 with a range from £0.59 to £43.21, reflecting substantial variation in service performance. It is telling that 66% of the supported service budget (£2.4m) funds services for 90% of users, meaning that one third of the budget (£1.3m) benefits only 10% of users.

In our review of the network, it was clear that there is a high degree of efficiency already with public service buses aligned around statutory school travel. While we have identified some opportunities for further integration of the two networks where school and public services run in parallel, it is difficult to achieve significant savings when the buses are still required for school work.

It should be recognised that the bus network in Dumfries & Galloway is in a fragile position due to rising costs and weak demand. This has the direct effect of increasing tender prices, but also raising the risk of the cancellation of commercial services that are no longer viable for the operator. Any such cancellation would need to be addressed by SWestrans, incurring additional costs in the process and likely knocking on to cuts to existing supported services.

Recognising this significant risk, we have investigated alternative delivery models for some services in line with the agreed Sustainable Public Transport Model, as follows:

- Expansion of Tier 1 community level provision – there are some services with exceptionally low passenger numbers, but which are essential for those users. Building on the Community Transport Public Social Partnership, such services could be provided flexibly and tailored to users' needs at lower cost.
- Extension of Council operation within Tier 2 – DGC Buses already provides several local bus services, but its activity is restricted by the Section 46 legislation under which it operates. The operation could be expanded, potentially on an incremental basis, under a section 22 permit or using the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 power to set up a PSV Licenced Operator.

8.2 Next Steps

The models described above both offer more sustainable public transport delivery but timescales for implementation are of the order of 12 months minimum. Our assessment therefore suggests that the original timescale for retendering in spring 2024 for new contracts in operation in late summer 2024 will be challenging, particularly as the local bus market continues to be highly unsettled and the demand for home to school transport services potentially changes fundamentally. We consider that the actions needed to deliver a sustainable public transport network require careful planning and effective engagement and can only be fully achieved with a longer lead-in timescale such as to summer 2025. This would require extension of current contracts for 12 months as an interim measure while the optimised network and delivery models are organised.



Network Review

With any significant change in services provided by the Council it is important to seek the views of users and communities that may be affected. By the nature of the changes proposed here, which are dependent on tender outcomes, the approach should be one of stakeholder engagement rather than formal consultation. The engagement should be designed to raise awareness of potential changes, explain the reasons for the actions being taken and set out next steps. If ultimately services have to be withdrawn or significantly revised it is at that point that more formal consultation with interested parties should be undertaken.

It would be possible therefore to address the early engagement of users, communities, and wider stakeholders through an online survey, promoted through council websites and bus companies, as well as provided in a paper copy format recognising the need to ensure it is accessible to all. The draft Communications and Engagement Plan sets out further ideas for the approach to raising awareness of the potential for service change.



APPENDICES



Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

A.1 Wigtownshire

A.1.1 Service 359: Newton Stewart to Girvan

Performance: high subsidy per pax (£10.92) with moderate Travel Needs Factor (TNF) serving most journey purposes.

Demand: low cross-boundary demand (2 pax/journey), low on journeys to/from Whithorn (0-2 pax), except Sat ($\pm 8-10$ pax).

Proposal: revise to a one bus working with two return journeys to Girvan, two to Barrhill and retention of existing school-related journeys to Glentool. Withdraw Whithorn-Newton Stewart section.

A.1.2 Service 365: Stranraer Local

Performance: strongest performing local service with low subsidy of £0.59 per pax with high TNF serving all journey purposes.

Demand: average of 313 pax per day, Mon-Sat with first and last journeys on Mon-Fri and Sat reasonably or well used.

Note: low competition, only one bid received.

Proposal: no change

A.1.3 Service 367: Stranraer to Portpatrick

Performance: moderate subsidy at £4.56 per pax with high TNF.

Demand: average of 30 to 50 pax per day Mon- Sat and 20-40 on Sun. Late journey (2020 ex Stranraer, 2040 ex Portpatrick) busy on Mondays & Saturdays and ± 4 the rest of the week

Note: low competition, only one bid received for service contract with DGC Buses running the school journeys.

Proposal: combine school and local bus contracts and add mid-morning journey to replace ser 411. Hub and spoke option created to improve bus-rail and bus-bus interchange at Stranraer.

A.1.4 Service 407: Stranraer to Drummore

Performance: high subsidy at £8.02 per pax (joint contract with ser 408) with high TNF, serving all journey purposes.

Demand: limited use of off-peak journeys

Note: low competition, only one bid received.

Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation with separate closed door school contract. Otherwise, no change. Hub and spoke option created to improve bus-rail and bus-bus interchange at Stranraer.

A.1.5 Service 408: Stranraer to Kirkcolm

Performance: high subsidy at £8.02 per pax (joint contract with ser 407) with high TNF, serving all journey purposes.

Demand: very low use outside school journeys (± 4 pax per bus).

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation with separate closed door school contract. Total peak demand = 66 scholars and ± 2 fare paying. Retime Sat & School holiday journey to match schooldays. Hub and spoke option created to improve bus-rail and bus-bus interchange at Stranraer.

Note: low competition, only one bid received.

A.1.6 Service 410: Stranraer to New Luce to Glenluce

Performance: high subsidy of £11.56 per pax (joint contract with 411/412) with low TNF due to limited timetable. Not sustainable as a conventional local bus service.

Demand: average of 2-3 pax for TThF off-peak return journey.

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.1.7 Service 411: Stranraer to Knock to Portpatrick

Performance: high subsidy of £11.56 per pax (joint contract with 410/412) with low TNF due to limited timetable. Not sustainable as a conventional local bus service.

Demand: majority is on 367 route with 1-2/week on unique Knock section. Total demand = 45-70/week.

Proposal: withdraw standalone service and replace with additional journey on service 367.

A.1.8 Service 412: Stranraer to Ervie

Performance: high subsidy of £11.56 per pax (joint contract with 410/411) with low TNF due to limited timetable. Not sustainable as a conventional local bus service.

Demand: typically carries 1-2 pax per day.

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.1.9 Service 415: Newton Stewart to Whithorn / Port William

Performance: fairly low subsidy of £4.92 per pax (joint contract with 416) with moderate TNF.

Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

Demand: Whithorn service has consistent demand across journeys and days of the week, apart from last return trip on Sundays. Port William via Mochrum service has low demand, <4 pax per day and some days with zero.

Proposal: withdraw Sun 1630 ex Port William and return; otherwise no change to Whithorn service. Transfer Port William via Mochrum service to Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.1.10 Service 416: Newton Stewart, Whithorn to Stranraer

Performance: fairly low subsidy of £4.92 per pax (joint contract with 416) with moderate TNF.

Demand: service well used with daily average of 56 passengers (for three return journeys).

Proposal: no change

A.2 Stewartry

A.2.1 Service 431: Gatehouse to Kirkcudbright

Performance: low subsidy per passenger of £2.78

Demand: strong demand on all services with 73-74 pax/day. Very high demand for school services on weekdays.

Proposal: no change

A.2.2 Service 500a: Dumfries to Stranraer

Performance: high performing service with average subsidy per pax of £1.83 and high TNF.

Demand: strong demand across all journeys and days of the week

Proposal: no change to service frequency but some timing adjustments to give a generally consistent hourly headway with ser 503 between Dumfries and Castle Douglas (two journeys need to be slightly off-pattern for scheduling reasons unless service was to interwork with 503). Comfort break introduced at Gatehouse of Fleet. Investigate a core of express limited stop journeys between Stranraer and Dumfries.

A.2.3 Service 501: Dumfries to Kirkcudbright

Performance: fairly low subsidy of £3.49 per pax with low TNF for Mon-Sat evening and Sunday journeys.

Demand: strong demand on almost all journeys, although late evenings (2200 ex Kirkcudbright, 2326 ex Dumfries) are single figures early in the week.

Proposal: no change.

Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

A.2.4 Service 502a: Castle Douglas to Kirkcudbright

Performance: strongly performing service with low subsidy of £1.20 per pax and moderate TNF.

Demand: consistently high on Monday to Saturday, but Sunday weaker with daily average of 18-20 pax.

Proposal: retain Mon-Fri service level with minor timing adjustment to give fully clockface timetable in both directions. Withdraw first return trip on Saturday (demand of 0-2) and also Sunday service due to low use and low TNF score.

A.2.5 Service 502c: Dumfries to Castle Douglas

Performance: exceptionally high subsidy per passenger of £33.46 per pax and high TNF meeting all journey purposes.

Demand: journey by journey averages: Ex Dfs 0810 5, 1015 2, 1215 8, 1415 8, 1630 2; Ex CD: 0858 14, 1103 4, 1303 3, 1503 3, 1718 2. Sat broadly similar but more evenly spread. Most of route covered by 500 and 503.

Proposal: withdraw, replaced by revised timetable on services 500 and 503.

A.2.6 Service 503: Dumfries, Kirkpatrick Durham to Castle Douglas

Performance: package contract with 512 and 520 so difficult to discern.

Demand: consistent throughout Monday to Friday and Saturday services with 62 pax/day and 46 pax/day respectively.

Proposal: revised timetable to replace 502 and co-ordinate with 500. No change to level of service.

A.2.7 Service 505: Kirkcudbright to Dalbeattie / Dumfries

Performance: fairly low subsidy of £3.06 per pax with moderate TFN.

Demand: peak 15, others 2-3 pax/journey, circa 8-10 on DGC Buses off-peak return journey (each way) although Kirkcudbright-Dundrennan return journey at 0940 carries 0-1 pax.

Proposal: remove placing journeys and 0940 return, otherwise no change to timetables.

A.2.8 Service 512: Castle Douglas Local

Performance: package contract with 503 and 520 so difficult to discern.

Demand: very low at circa 5 pax/day

Proposal consider Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.2.9 Service 515: Castle Douglas to Mossdale

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Moderate TNF score.



Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

Demand: almost entirely on school journeys (± 20 per journey). Remaining journeys carry 0 or 1 pax.

Proposal: retain school journeys and withdraw remainder of service.

A.2.10 Service 516: Castle Douglas to Auchencairn

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Moderate TNF score.

Demand: very low at circa 13 pax/day. No evidence of travel at school times.

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.2.11 Service 517: Kirkcudbright to Borgue

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Moderate TNF score.

Demand: very low at circa 8 pax/day.

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.2.12 Service 520: Castle Douglas to Dalmellington

Performance: package contract with 503 and 520 so difficult to discern, but subsidy per pax is £3.79 which is close to the average for the region. Moderate TNF.

Demand: arrivals in Castle Douglas before 1030 and departures after 1500 average circa 12-20 pax/journey, off-peak journeys average circa 5 pax/journey. Very low demand to Carsphairn and Dalmellington (<2/day each).

Proposal: withdraw Dalry – Dalmellington section apart from school journeys to/from Carsphairn. Timetable revised accordingly.

A.2.13 Service 521: Laurieston, New Galloway to Dumfries

Performance: high subsidy of £12.50 per pax with moderate TFN given low service level.

Demand: very low, typically circa 3 pax/journey. Wed & Sat return trip performs slightly better at circa 5 pax/journey.

Proposal: consider Tier 1 community operation or withdraw.

A.2.14 Service 555: Kirkcudbright to Dumfries

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Moderate TNF score.

Demand: average of 20 pax/day for two return journeys but majority of trips could be accommodated by interchange at Castle Douglas between 500 and 502, sometimes more quickly or on DGC Buses service 505 without interchange. Rhonehouse generates an average of 0.9 pax per day.

Proposal: withdraw.



Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

A.3 Nithsdale

A.3.1 Service 200: Thornhill to Durisdeer

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Low TNF.

Demand: very poorly used service with only 4 passengers using the service over the month, for an average of 0.2 passengers per day of the Mon-Fri service.

Proposal: withdraw.

A.3.2 Service 202: Dumfries to Moniaive/Thornhill

Performance: high subsidy of £6.55 with high Travel Needs Factor (TNF).

Demand: from Mon-Sat has average of 40 pax/day with consistent demand throughout the day, with the most popular services being to/from Moniaive and Whitesands.

Proposal: reduce the Mon-Sat service.

A.3.3 Service 212: Thornhill to Moniaive

Performance: very high subsidy of £16.51 with low Travel Needs Factor (TNF).

Demand: average demand of 10 pax/day.

Proposal: reduction in number of journeys to reflect low demand.

A.3.4 Service 213: Thornhill to Dumfries

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Moderate Travel Needs Factor (TNF).

Demand: average demand of 29-30 pax/day from Mon-Fri, typically 3/journey off-peak.

Proposal: reduce off-peak frequency

A.3.5 Service 221: Kirkconnel, Sanquhar to Wanlockhead

Performance: high subsidy of £5.47 per pax with moderate Travel Needs Factor (TNF).

Demand: note etm data may be unreliable. Service averages 17.5 pax/day (for 11 journeys); Wanlockhead average of 1.0 pax/day.

Proposal: Tier 1 community operation or withdraw. Alternative facilities between Kirkconnel and Sanquhar on Stagecoach 236/246 with short walking distances to stops no longer served in Glenwhargan Ave, Crawick Multiverse and Deer Park.

A.3.6 Service 236: Dumfries to Thornhill/Penpont

Performance: fairly low subsidy per pax of £2.32 with high TNF.

Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

Demand: There is strong demand of 60 pax/day on the Mon-Fri services, this falls to a demand of 32.5 pax/day on Saturday services. Strong demand for school services of 32 pax/day.

Note: Service 236 is provided by two contracts, operated by McCalls and Houstons, with McCalls running school services.

Proposal: combine into single contract with timetable change to withdraw later journeys: 1540 ex Dumfries (2 pax), 1625 ex Thornhill (0 pax) and 1833 ex Penpont (0 pax).

A.4 Dumfries

A.4.1 Service D4A: Dumfries to Lochvale

Performance: low subsidy of £1.91 per pax with a moderate TNF.

Demand: average demand of 50 pax/day for Sun service.

Proposal: no change.

A.4.2 Service D5A: Dumfries to Crichton

Performance: very low subsidy of £1.31 per pax with a high TNF.

Demand: Very high demand of 224 pax/day on the Mon-Fri services, and demand levels of 35 pax/day and 53 pax/day for Saturday and Sunday services respectively.

Proposal: Withdraw 0635 on Saturdays (1 pax in 4 weeks). Consider withdrawal of DGC Buses 5a (Georgetown-Crichton) with average 2.5 pax/day (max = 5).

A.4.3 Service D6A: Dumfries to Caerlaverock

Performance: low subsidy of £2.63 per pax with a high TNF.

Demand: strong, with average demand of 24 pax/day on the DGC Mon-Fri service and 30 pax/day on the Houston's 6A service.

Proposal: no change.

A.4.4 Service D7: Dumfries to Troqueer

Performance: low subsidy of £1.91 per pax with a low TNF.

Demand: high demand of 75 pax/day from Mon-Sat with services relatively well used throughout the day.

Proposal: no change.

A.4.5 Service D8A: Dumfries to Broomlands

Performance: low subsidy of £1.91 per pax with a moderate TNF.



Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

Demand: high demand on Mon-Fri services with 100 pax/day. This falls to 78 pax/day on Saturday and 27 pax/day on Sunday. Sunday service demand is concentrated on the Cargenbridge and Town Centre stops.

Proposal: no change.

A.4.6 Service D9A: Dumfries to Summerhill

Performance: low subsidy of £1.91 per pax with a moderate TNF.

Demand: high demand of 119 pax/day from Mon-Fri. Significantly lower demand of 17 pax/day on Sunday services.

Proposal: no change.

A.4.7 Service 14: Dumfries to Marchfields

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Low TNF.

Demand: very poor level of demand with 0.2 pax/day.

Proposal: withdraw service.

A.4.8 Service 111: Dumfries Town to D&G Royal Infirmary

Performance: low subsidy at £1.36 per pax with high TNF for health and employment.

Demand: average demand circa 10 – 15 pax/journey for the Monday to Friday service, the demand is relatively consistent throughout the day. Saturday and Sunday services are fairly low at circa 5 – 6 pax/journey, with demand lowest early in morning and late in evening.

Proposal: no change.

A.4.9 Service 115: Dumfries to Ae Village

Performance: high subsidy at £7.14 per pax with high TNF.

Demand: average demand circa 8 pax/journey for the Monday to Friday service, with peak of circa 10 pax/journey between 0900 – 1430. The Saturday service has a lower demand with circa 5 – 6 pax/journey, with a peak of circa 13 pax/journey between 0900 – 1130. For all services, the majority of pax travel to Dumfries.

Proposal: integrate with school contract and withdraw late afternoon journeys (low demand of <1 pax/bus and only 1 adult in entire 4-week period).

A.4.10 Service 372: Dumfries to Sandyhills/Dalbeattie

Performance: fairly low subsidy at £2.65 per pax

Demand: high demand circa 30 pax/journey for the Monday to Friday service, the demand is relatively consistent throughout the day. Average demand for the Saturday and Sunday service with circa 22 –



Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

27 pax/journey, majority of weekend journeys are to Dumfries. No evidence of any use of Dalbeattie local journeys.

Proposal: withdraw 1730 ex Dalbeattie (7 pax in 4 weeks) and Dalbeattie local journeys (zero demand).

A.4.11 Service 373: Dumfries to Shawhead

Performance: high subsidy at £7.07 per pax with high TNF.

Demand: average demand circa 12 pax/day with 0805 and 1600 journeys busiest.

Proposal: withdraw 1305 and return; retained journeys enable all day or half day visits to Dumfries.

A.5 Annandale & Eskdale

A.5.1 Service 104: Lockerbie Town / Corrie

Performance: fairly low subsidy at £3.77 per pax with moderate TFN.

Demand: average demand circa 5 – 10 pax/journey for the Monday to Friday service, less demand during the afternoon service. Saturday service has lower average demand (4 – 5 pax/journey) which is relatively consistent throughout the day.

Proposal: withdraw journeys after 1440 Mon-Sat and also 0845 on Sat.

A.5.2 Service 112: Eskdalemuir to Boreland to Lockerbie

Performance: moderate subsidy at £5.09 per pax with high TFN.

Demand: high demand circa 60 – 70 pax/day for the Mon – Fri service. Average demand circa 25 – 30 pax/day for the Saturday service.

Proposal: withdraw 1720 ex Lockerbie and return on Saturday.

A.5.3 Service 117: Lockerbie to Hightae

Performance: high subsidy at £15.68 per pax

Demand: low. Only the 0931 ex Hightae and the Dumfries journeys have averages of more than 1.5 pax. No demand apparent for Annan.

Proposal: reduce to two return journeys, extending to Dumfries on two days per week as now. Consider Tier 1 community operation

A.5.4 Service 120: Langholm Town

Performance: high subsidy at £8.01 per pax with moderate TNF score.

Demand: very time-skewed demand with 8-10 pax/journey between 1000 and 1100, circa 3 pax/journey between 0900-1000 and 1100-1400 and very low thereafter.

Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

Proposal: withdraw journeys after 1500. Retain Monday to Saturday service. Consider Tier 1 community operation

A.5.5 Service 122: Langholm to Rowanburn

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Moderate TNF (education).

Demand: relatively low demand of 6 pax/day focused on school journeys. No evidence of use of other journeys.

Proposal: Withdraw or combine contract with ser 123. Also consider Tier 1 community operation.

A.5.6 Service 123: Langholm to Canobie to Annan

Performance: high subsidy at £5.19 per pax with low TNF.

Demand: average demand circa 8 – 12 pax/journey for the single round trip Monday to Saturday, relatively consistent demand throughout the week. Service also facilitates an average 6 pax/day on sers 388 & 390.

Proposal: retain as currently timetabled but consider operating on fewer days per week: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday are consistently almost double the patronage on Monday and Thursday with Saturday more variable. Also consider Tier 1 community operation.

A.5.7 Service 124: Langholm to Eskdalemuir

Performance: very high subsidy at £43.21 per pax with moderate TNF.

Demand: average demand circa 8 – 10 pax/day with no journey having an average load above 1.25. No apparent demand for Bailliehill diversion.

Proposal: reduce to two return journeys. Consider Tier 1 community operation

A.5.8 Service 127: Newcastleton to Langholm

Performance: fairly low subsidy at £4.02 per pax with low TNF.

Demand: high demand for school journeys, other journeys average <1 pax/day

Proposal: retain school journeys and withdraw rest of service.

A.5.9 Service 379: Dumfries to Carlisle

Performance: moderate subsidy per pax of £4.14 with low TNF. Late evening journeys on daytime commercial service.

Demand: consistent across journeys at circa 10.

Proposal: no change.

Network Review

Appendix A Local Bus Service Analysis and Proposals

A.5.10 Service 380: Moffat to Lockerbie

Performance: low subsidy at £1.75 per pax with high TNF.

Demand: very high demand circa 40 pax/journey for the Monday to Friday service, the demand is consistent throughout the day. High demand circa 20 pax/journey for the Saturday service, the demand is consistent throughout the day. Average demand circa 15 pax/journey for the Sunday service, relatively consistent throughout the day, with slightly higher demand in the afternoon.

Proposal: no changes to Mon-Sat timetable; no change to Sunday service level but retime two journeys to improve efficiency.

A.5.11 Service 381: Dumfries to Lockerbie

Performance: low subsidy at £1.47 per pax with high TNF

Demand: high demand circa 30 – 40 pax/journey for the Monday to Saturday service, the demand is consistent throughout the day. Average demand circa 10 – 15 pax/journey for the Sunday service, the demand is consistent throughout the day. 0715 journey (separate contract) has average demand of 6 pax.

Proposal: no changes to this service

A.5.12 Service 382: Lockerbie to Gretna / Carlisle

Performance: low subsidy of £2.75/pax for Carlisle contract and relatively high subsidy of £5.43 for the Gretna contract, both with high TNF.

Demand: high demand of circa 40 pax/journey for the Monday to Friday service, consistent throughout the day. Average demand of circa 18 – 20 pax/journey for the Saturday service again consistent throughout the day. Average demand of circa 13 – 15 pax/journey for the Carlisle Sunday service. Only Sunday Gretna journey with more than a couple of pax is 1600 ex Lockerbie which runs with a Carlisle journey. 1530 ex Lockerbie shows on contract spec but does not appear to operate.

Gretna-Annan workings on ser 379 have reasonable demand on Mon-Fri but very low on Saturday.

Proposal: no changes to Monday to Friday, withdraw 0645 ex Lockerbie on Saturday and Lockerbie-Gretna journeys on Sunday. Unlikely to achieve a saving by withdrawing Sat 379 journeys due to co-ordination between 380 and main 379 timetables which would make rescheduling the 380 difficult, but negligible demand justification to retain.

A.5.13 Services 388/390: Annan Local/Powfoot

Performance: packaged with ser 123 with high subsidy of £5.09/pax and low TNF.

Demand: average of circa 6 pax/day.

Proposal: retain as currently timetabled but consider operating on fewer days per week to align with ser 123. Also consider Tier 1 community operation.

Network Review

A.5.14 Service 384: Waterbeck to Ecclefechan to Annan

Performance: DGC Buses operation, no contract data. Low TNF.

Demand: very low with circa 4 -5 pax/day, most of whom travel on the journeys to/from Annan.

Proposal: retain existing journeys to/from Annan and withdraw remainder of service.

A.5.15 Service 385: Dumfries to Carrutherstown to Annan

Performance: high subsidy of £7.08 per pax for local service contract (school journey is currently a separate contract).

Demand: very low with an average of 24 pax/day. Early and late journeys not used.

Proposal: combine with school contract, reduce to four journeys in each direction using one PVR.

Appendix B Home to School Transport Proposals

Note: all maps are indicative

Note: estimated pupils per settlement does not represent potential patronage along the entire route

B.1 Stranraer Academy



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils at Key Settlements
Kirkcolm & Stranraer Academy	See service 408	AM Arr: 08:42 PM Dep: 15:30	Leswalt – 19 Kirkcolm – 15
Portpatrick & Stranraer Academy	See service 367	AM Arr: 08:47 PM Dep: 15:23	Lochans – 14* Portpatrick – 19
Drummore & Stranraer Academy	See service 407	AM Arr: 08:35 PM Dep: 15:30	Lochans – 14* Stoneykirk – 7 Sandhead – 27 Drummore – 15
Glenluce & Stranraer Academy	See service 500	AM Arr: 08:51	Dunragit – 14**



		PM Dep: 15:30	Glenluce – 26**
Auchenmalg & Stranraer Academy	See service 416	AM Arr: 08:50 PM Dep: 17:00	Dunragit – 14** Glenluce – 26** Auchenmalg – 8
* Lochans served by 367 and 407			
** Dunragit and Glenluce served by 500 and 416			

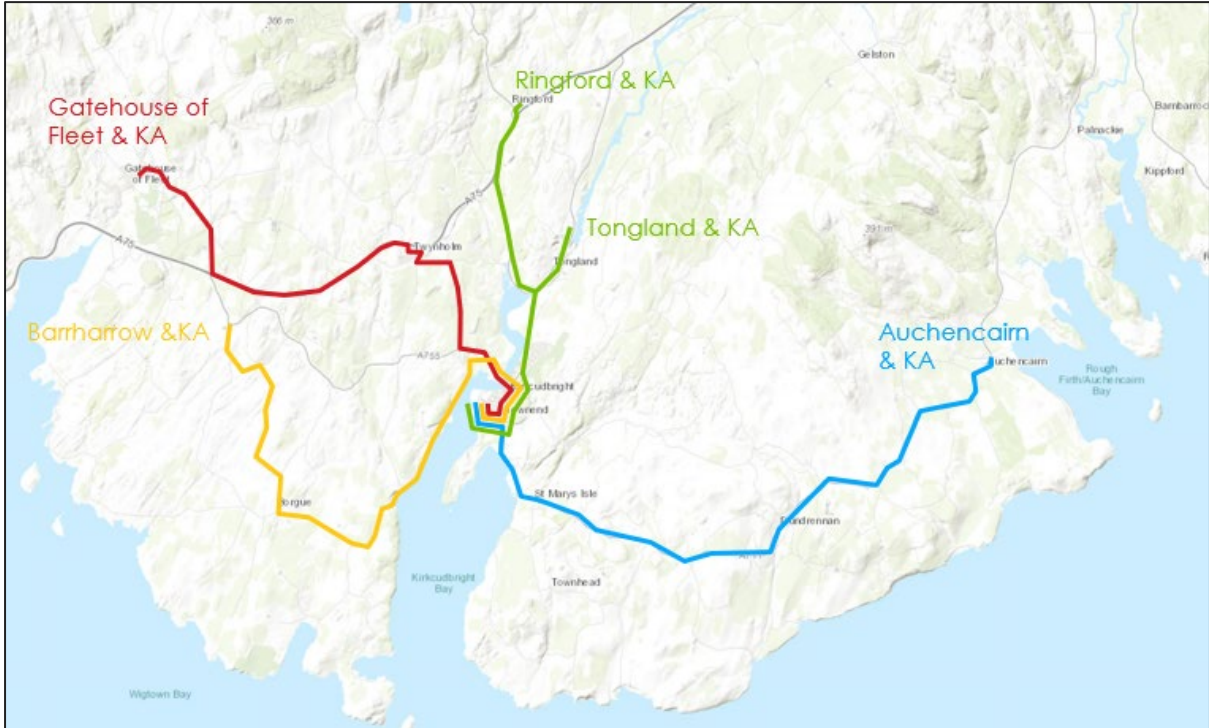
B.2 Douglas Ewart High



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Stranraer & Douglas Ewart High	See service X75	AM Arr: 08:43 PM Dep: 15:33	Kirkcowan – 25
Monreith & Douglas Ewart High	See service 415	AM Arr: 08:09 PM Dep: 15:55	Whigtown – 59* Whauphill - 11 Port William – 25 Monreith – 8
Isle of Whithorn & Douglas Ewart High	See service 415	AM Arr: 08:09 PM Dep: 15:55	Whigtown – 59* Garlieston – 12 Sorbie – 6 Whithorn – 40 Isle of Whithorn – 9
Creetown & Douglas Ewart High	See service 500	AM Arr: 08:03	Creetown – 37

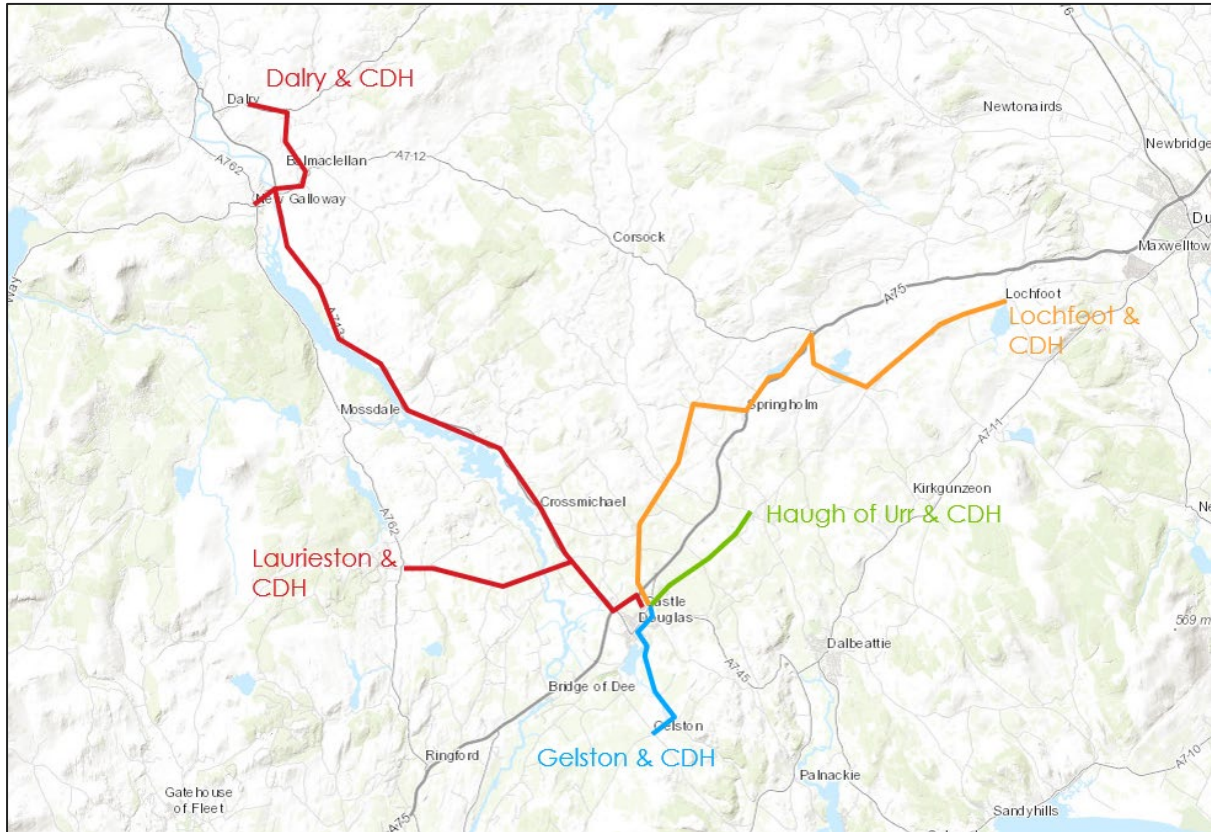
		PM Dep: 15:03 / 17:43	
* Wigtown served by 415 (Monreith) and 415 (Isle of Whithorn)			

B.3 Kirkcudbright Academy



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Gatehouse of Fleet & Kirkcudbright Academy	See service 431	AM Arr: 0845 PM Dep: 1535	Gatehouse of Fleet – 53 Twynholm – 17
Barrharrow & Kirkcudbright Academy	See service 517	AM Arr: 0845 PM Dep: 1535	Barrharrow – 13 Borgue – 14
Ringford & Kirkcudbright Academy	See service 857	AM Arr: 08:45 PM Dep: 15:35	Ringford – 11
Tongland & Kirkcudbright Academy	See service 502	AM Arr: 08:22 PM Dep: 15:40	Tongland – 8
Auchencairn & Kirkcudbright Academy	See service 505	AM Arr: 08:39 PM Dep: 15:30	Auchencairn – 9

B.4 Castle Douglas High



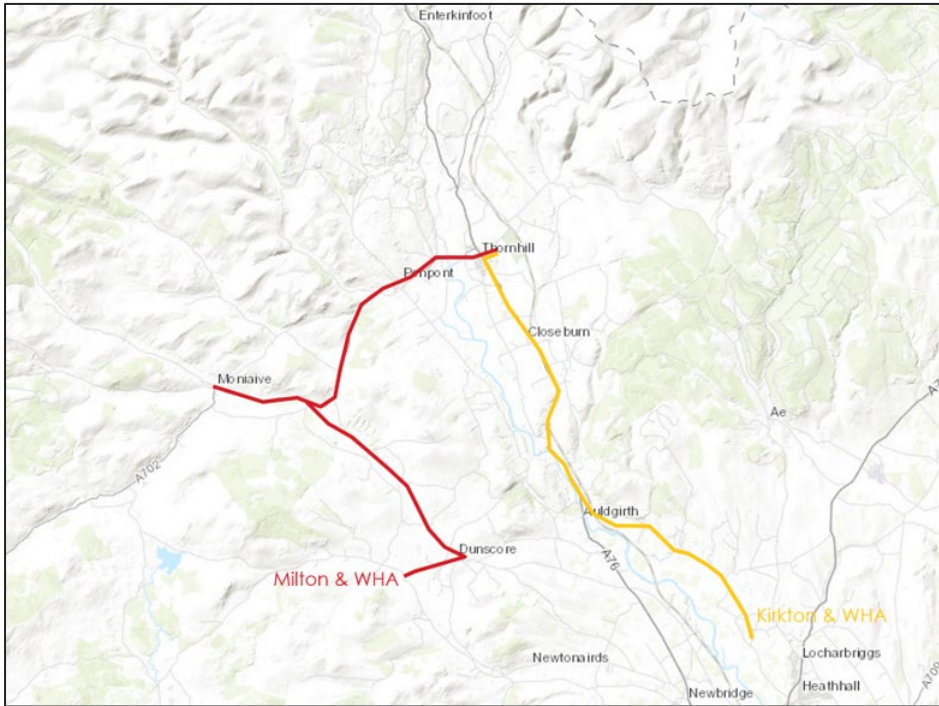
Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Dalry & Castle Douglas High	See service 520	AM Arr: 08:38 PM Dep: 15:30	St John's of Dalry – 8 New Galloway – 10 Crossmichael – 21
Laurieston & Castle Douglas High	See service 515	AM Arr: 08:30 PM Dep: 15:35	Laurieston – 13
Lochfoot & Castle Douglas High	See service 503	AM Arr: 08:50 PM Dep: 15:35	Lochfoot – 17 Crocketford – 6 Springholm – 18 Kirkpatrick Durham – 12
Haugh of Urr & Castle Douglas High	See service 501	AM Arr: 08:42 PM Dep: 16:00	Haugh of Urr – 12
Gelston & Castle Douglas High	See service 516	AM Arr: 08:47 PM Dep: 16:02	Gelston – 10

B.5 Dalbeattie High



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Palnackie & Dalbeattie High	See service 505a	AM Arr: 08:45 PM Dep: 15:30	Palnackie – 13
Sandyhills & Dalbeattie High	See service 372a	AM Arr: 08:27 PM Dep: 15:40	Sandyhills – 5 Rockcliffe – 7 Kippford – 9
Beeswing & Dalbeattie High	See service 796	AM Arr: 08:50 PM Dep: 15:37	Beeswing – 11 Kirkgunzeon - 12

B.6 Wallace Hall Academy



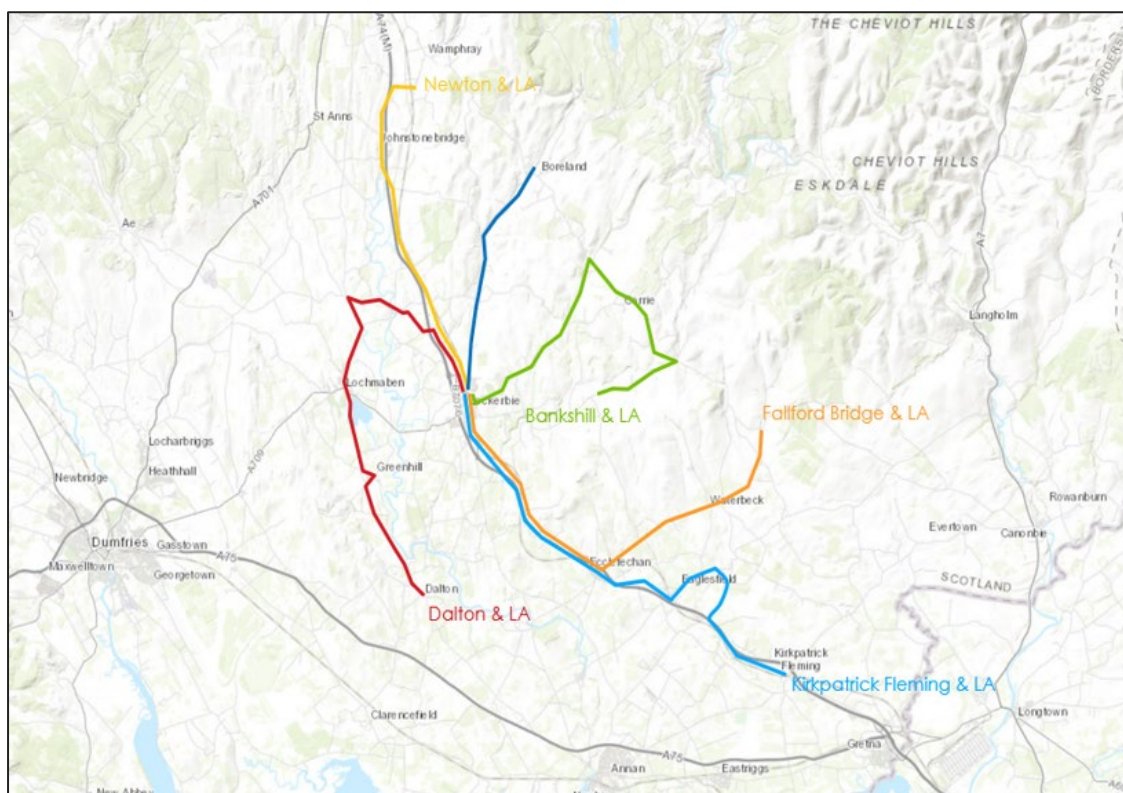
Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Milton & Wallace Hall Academy	See service 202 / 212	AM Arr: 08:45 PM Dep: 15:30	Dunscore – 13 Moniaive – 35
Kirkton & Wallace Hall Academy	See service 236	AM Arr: 09:00 PM Dep: 15:55	Kirkton – 20 Auldgirth – 11

B.7 Annan Academy



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Clarencefield & Annan Academy	See service 79	AM Arr: 08:25 PM Dep: 15:25 / 16:03	Clarencefield – 7 Cummertrees / Powfoot – 12 Newbie – 12
Brydekirk & Annan Academy	See service 383	AM Arr: 08:36 PM Dep: 15:45	Brydekirk – 9
Gretna / Springfield & Annan Academy	See service 79	AM Arr: 08:47 PM Dep: 15:50	Springfield – 15 Gretna – 167 Eastriggs – 85

B.8 Lockerbie Academy

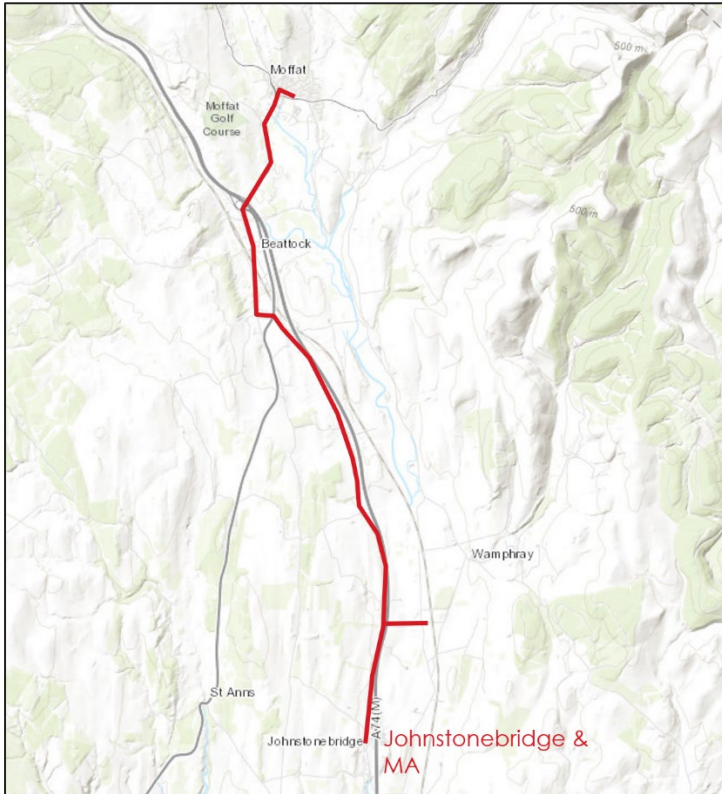


Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Newton Wamphray & Lockerbie Academy	See service 380	AM Arr: 08:30 PM Dep: 15:35	Newton Wamphray – 3 Johnstonebridge – 6
Boreland & Lockerbie Academy	See service 112	AM Arr: 08:42 PM Dep: 15:20	Boreland – 5 Sibbaldie – 7
Bankshill & Lockerbie Academy	See service 113	AM Arr: 08:45 PM Dep: 15:37	Paddockhole – 3 Gillenie – 4
Fallford Bridge & Lockerbie Academy	Fallford Bridge, B722, Waterbeck, B725, B7076, Ecclefechan, B7076, B723, B7068, Lockerbie Academy.	AM Arr: 08:40 PM Dep: 15:30	Waterbeck – 4 Kirtleton House / Fallford – 9 Ecclefechan – 52*
Kirkpatrick Fleming & Lockerbie Academy	See service 382	AM Arr: 08:45 PM Dep: 15:40	Kirkpatrick-Fleming – 16 Kirtlebridge – 7 Eaglesfield – 38 Ecclefechan – 52*
Dalton & Lockerbie Academy	See service 117	AM Arr: PM Dep:	Hightae – 14 Lochmaben – 128*
Lochmaben & Lockerbie Academy	See service 724	AM Arr: 08:48 PM Dep: 15:37	Lochmaben – 128*

* Ecclefechan served by Fallford Bridge service and 383

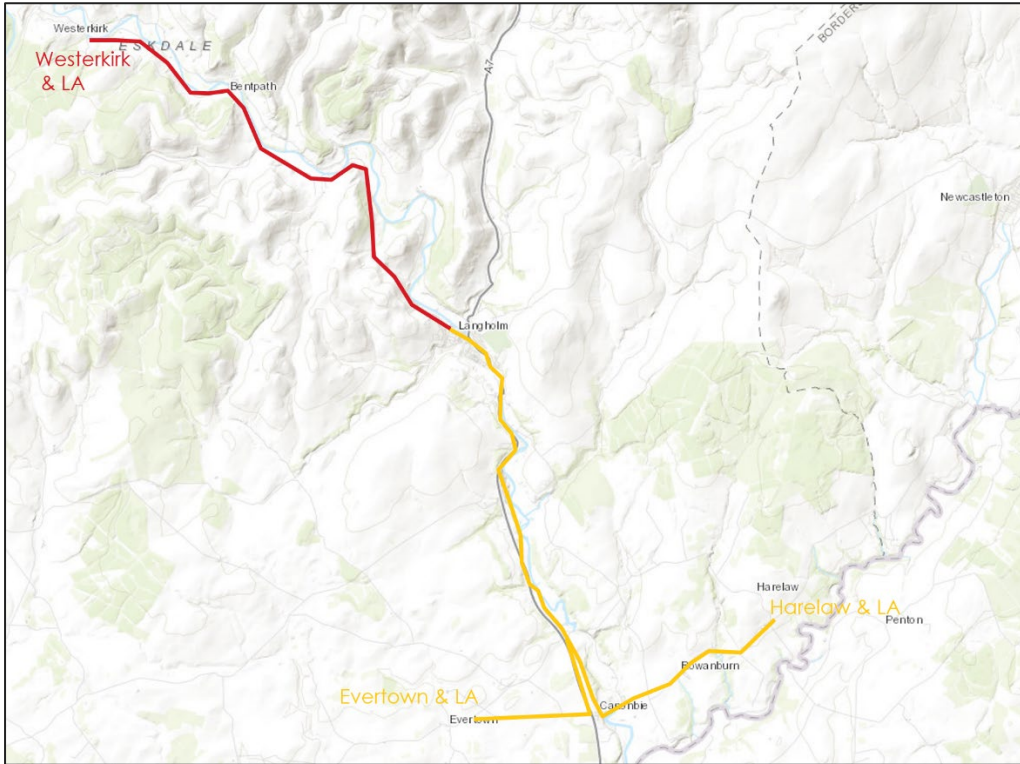
** Lochmaben served by 117 and 724

B.9 Moffat Academy



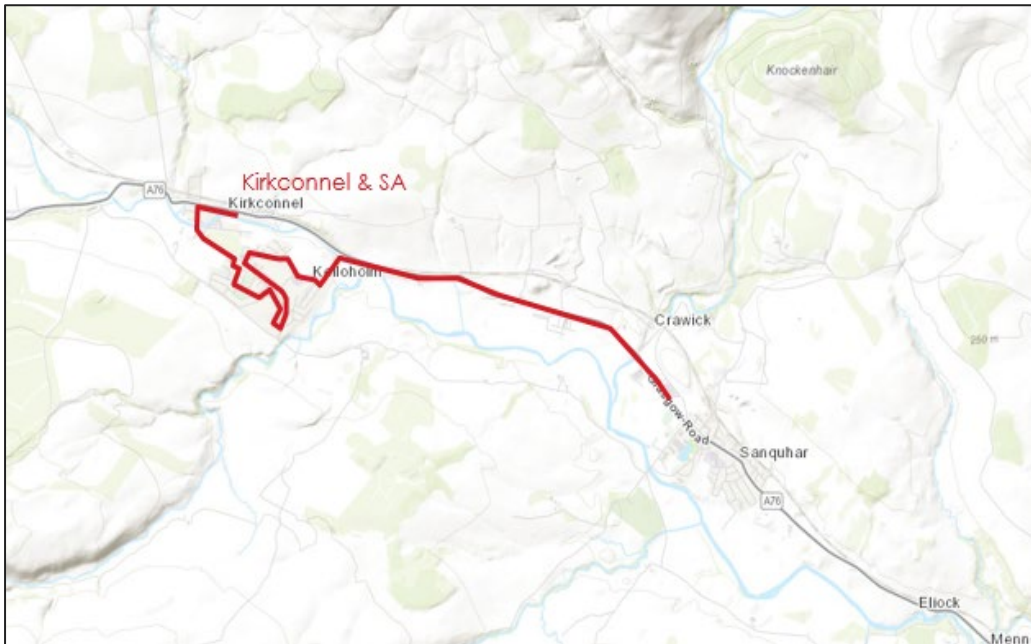
Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Johnstonebridge & Moffat Academy	See service 380	AM Arr: 08:35 PM Dep: 15:45	Johnstonebridge – 2

B.10 Langholm Academy



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Westerkirk & Langholm Academy	See service 124	AM Arr: 08:55 PM Dep: 15:25	Westerkirk / Bentpath – 5
Harelaw & Langholm Academy	See service 127	AM Arr: 08:37 PM Dep: 15:36	Harelaw – 2 Rowanburn – 7 Canonbie – 13
Evertown & Langholm Academy	See service 122	AM Arr: 08:52 PM Dep: 15:35	Milltown – 5 Evertown – 2

B.11 Sanquhar Academy



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Kirkconnel & Sanquhar Academy	See service 221X	AM Arr: 08:40 PM Dep: 15:25	Kirkconnel – 113

B.12 Dumfries

Note: Dumfries schools includes Dumfries Academy, Dumfries High and St Joseph's College.



Route	Description	Est. School Arr/Dep	Est. Pupils per Settlement
Southernness & Dumfries	See service 372	AM Arr: 08:40 PM Dep: 15:40	Southernness – 5 Kirkbean – 4 New Abbey – 19
Glencaple & Dumfries	See service 6a	AM Arr: 08:35 PM Dep: 15:45	Glencaple – 10 Bankend – 5 Kelton – 4
Ae Village & Dumfries	See service 115	AM Arr: 08:35 PM Dep: 15:35	Ae Village – 7 Amisfield – 7
Lochmaben & Dumfries	See service 81	AM Arr: 08:28 (81) PM Dep: 15:40	Lochmaben – 6 Torthorwald – 13
Mouswald & Dumfries	See service 879	AM Arr: 08:35-40 PM Dep: 15:30-40	Mouswald – 5 Collin – 21

RAIL UPDATE

1. Reason for Report

To update Members of the Board on the following rail matters:

- TransPennine Express services on the West Coast Main Line
- Grand Union Trains new service on the West Coast Main Line
- Stranraer Rail Line update

2. Background

The region is served by three railway lines:

- The Glasgow and Southwestern Line (GSWL) which runs down the Stranraer Line which connects the far west of the region into the Central Belt network at Ayr, and with services on to Kilmarnock.
- The Glasgow and Southwestern Line (GSWL) which runs down the Nith Valley. Stations in Dumfries and Galloway include Kirkconnel, Sanquhar, Dumfries, Annan, and Gretna.
- The West Coast Main Line (WCML) passing through the east of the region, with a station at Lockerbie.

3. TransPennine Express WCML Services

3.1 TransPennine Express has notified officers that from June 2024 the WCML timetable will be changing, with services increasing from 34 trains to 40 trains per day. This will see a return to a full-service timetable after reductions to services in 2023.

3.2 Attached as **Appendix 1** to this report is the TransPennine Express WCML timetable from June 2024. The timings highlighted green are the reinstated services which include some to/from Lockerbie including the return of the Glasgow to Liverpool service.

4. Grand Union Trains Service

4.1 The Office of Road and Rail (ORR) gave the go-ahead on 7 March 2024 for Grand Union Trains, an open access operator, to start a new train service between London and Stirling, from June 2025. The ORR's decision will offer more choice to passengers, bring private sector investment to the railway, and increase competition.

4.2 Grand Union Trains will introduce four new return services per day between London Euston and Stirling stations. These services will also call at Milton Keynes Central, Nuneaton, Crewe (subject to agreement between Grand Union Trains and Network Rail), Preston, Carlisle, Lockerbie, Motherwell, Whifflet, Greenfaulds and Larbert.

4.3 ORR found that the proposed services would increase choice for passengers, significantly increasing direct journey opportunities to and from London and central and southern Scotland, while making use of existing capacity on the network.

4.4 The new services will be the first run by an open access operator on the WCML. Open access operators run services independently of government funding as they do not have a franchise agreement with government.

5. Stranraer Rail Line Update

5.1 Officers have been in communication with Transport Scotland officials on the GSWL Stranraer Line to provide the Board with the fullest information available on the operation of rail services to/from Stranraer following the fire at Ayr Station and the subsequent closure of the line at Ayr station.

5.2 While it had been hoped that services could have recommenced South of Ayr in April there have been further developments in relation to South Ayrshire Council safety related works on the Ayr Station Hotel building, with the Council recently confirming on social media that its programme of works would now go into April due to identifying a supporting beam that on closer inspection has fully burnt through.

5.3 The Board may wish to note that in a recent response to a Parliamentary Question (S6O-03171) lodged by Sharon Dowey MSP regarding the restoration of services South of Ayr, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport confirmed that the restoration of services was dependent on the completion of the Councils safety related works, and only when there is certainty around the completion date of these works will the rail industry start to communicate regarding the timings for services being restored.

5.4 Services not operating to/from Stranraer is an ongoing concern but SWestrans has received assurances from the Cabinet Secretary in the letter dated 14 December 2023, attached as **Appendix 2** to this report, 'that there is no risk to the future of the Stranraer Railway'.

5.5 There is also a commitment within the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2), at recommendation 40 provided in full below, that consideration should be given to upgrading or relocating Stranraer railway station and we would expect this to feature in the STPR2 Delivery Plan when it's published.

Recommendation 40: Access to Stranraer and the ports at Cairnryan is specific to our region and the Ayrshire and Arran region. STPR2 recommends that safety, resilience and reliability improvements are made on the A75 and A77 strategic road corridors, in turn supporting placemaking opportunities. This would include, but is not limited to enhancing overtaking opportunities, widening or realigning carriageways and improving junctions. To encourage greater use of public transport and enable regeneration activities, consideration would also be given to upgrading or relocating the railway station in Stranraer. These would provide more resilient connections to the draft Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) national developments at Stranraer Gateway, Chapelcross Power Station Redevelopment and the ports at Cairnryan.

5.6 Given the fluidity of the current situation on the GSWL Stranraer Line officers will be receiving regular updates from Transport Scotland. The Board will be provided with a further update at the next SWestrans Board meeting on 28 June 2024 and earlier through normal communication once updates are available.

6. Implications	
Financial	No financial implications associated with this report.
Policy	No change in SWestrans policy.
Equalities	A reduction in rail services associated with poor performance will have a negative impact on equity of access and may disproportionately impact those with protected characteristics if mitigation measures not fully compliant.
Climate Change	Decrease in travel choice due to poor public transport performance may result in modal shift to private vehicles and negatively impact on climate change aims
Risk Management	This work relates to the following risks: R02 – Public image R05 – Failure to progress RTS Delivery Plan
Impact Assessment	The report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy or propose a service change and it is therefore not necessary to complete an impact assessment.

<p>7. Recommendations</p> <p>Members of the Board are asked to note the update on:</p> <p>7.1 TransPennine Express West Coast Main Line rail services;</p> <p>7.2 Grand Union Trains Services; and</p> <p>7.3 the Stranraer Rail Line.</p>

<p>Report Authors: Douglas Kirkpatrick/ Kirsty Dunsmore Tel: 01387 260136/ 07734073391 Date of Report: 13 March 2024 File Ref: SW2/meetings/2024</p>	<p>Approved by: Douglas Kirkpatrick Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower, Garroch Business Park, Dumfries, DG2 8PN</p>
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Appendix 1 - TransPennine Express WCML June 2024 timetable

Appendix 2 – Letter from Cabinet Secretary dated 14 December 2023

June 2024: Planned Service Improvements

Anglo-Scottish Route M-F: Southbound



Edinburgh	Dep				0612			0812		1011			1212		1412		1611			1812	2012	
Haymarket	Dep				0617u			0816u		1017u			1217u		1417u		1617u			1817u	2017u	
Glasgow Central	Dep			0452		0711	0745		0906		1107	1204		1309		1508		1611	1707			
Motherwell	Dep					0726			0924		1125	1221		1325		1524		1627	1725			
Lockerbie	Dep			0608	0713	0812	0900	0910	1010	1110	1209	1306	1311	1409	1511	1609	1711	1717	1810	1911	2110	
Carlisle	Arr			0629	0733	0832	0921	0930	1032	1131	1229	1327	1332	1430	1531	1629	1731	1740	1831	1932	2131	
Carlisle	Dep			0630	0735	0834	0925	0932	1035	1133	1233	1328	1334	1434	1533	1631	1734	1742	1834	1934	2132	
Penrith North Lakes	Dep			0645	0750	0849	0940	0947	1050	1148	1248	1343	1349	1449	1549	1646	1748	1757	1849	1949	2147	
Oxenholme Lake District	Dep		0628	0643	0709	0813	0913	1004	1011	1114	1212	1312	1407	1413	1513	1613	1712	1812	1821	1913	2013	2211
Lancaster	Dep	0628	0643	0724	0831	0928	1022	1026	1130	1227	1327	1422	1428	1528	1628	1727	1827	1837	1929	2028	2226	
Preston	Arr	0645	0702	0742	0848	0946	1040	1044	1149	1245	1346	1441	1446	1546	1646	1746	1846	1856	1947	2045	2244	
Preston	Dep	0647	0704	0748	0850	0949	1051	1047	1150	1247	1349	1453	1448	1548	1648	1747	1848	1858	1949	2047	2246	
Wigan North Western	Arr		0716				1102					1504					1909					
St. Helens Central	Arr		0731				1119					1520					1924					
Liverpool Lime Street	Arr		0757				1146					1546					1946					
Bolton	Arr					1006s		1106s	1207s	1306s	1406s		1506s	1606s		1805s	1906s		2006s	2106s		
Manchester Oxford Road	Arr	0722		0823	0922	1022		1122	1222	1322	1422		1522	1622	1722	1822	1922		2022	2122	2321	
Manchester Piccadilly	Arr	0726		0827	0926	1026		1126	1226	1326	1426		1526	1626	1726	1826	1926		2026	2126	2325	
Manchester Airport	Arr	0745		0844	0944	1044		1144	1244	1344	1444		1544	1644	1745	1844	1944		2045	2146	2343	



June 2024: Planned Service Improvements Anglo-Scottish Route M-F: Northbound



Manchester Airport	Dep		0603	0704		0804	0904	1004	1104	1204		1304	1404	1504		1604	1704	1804		2004	2104
Manchester Piccadilly	Dep	0457	0622	0721		0821	0921	1021	1121	1222		1321	1421	1521		1621	1721	1821		2022	2119
Manchester Oxford Road	Dep		0625	0725		0824	0924	1024	1124	1225		1324	1424	1524		1625	1724	1824		2025	2123
Bolton	Dep		0638u				0938u	1038u	1138u	1238u		1338u	1439u	1539u						2038u	
Liverpool Lime Street	Dep				0812						1212				1612				2013		
St. Helens Central	Dep				0828						1232				1628				2030		
Wigan North Western	Dep				0842						1250				1643				2044		
Preston	Arr	0534	0700	0759	0857	0900	0959	1057	1159	1258	1306	1400	1459	1559	1659	1701	1759	1859	2059	2102	2206
Preston	Dep	0536	0704	0800	0858	0903	1006	1059	1203	1259	1309	1405	1503	1602	1701	1704	1803	1905	2100	2105	2208
Lancaster	Dep	0552	0720	0816	0914	0919	1022	1114	1219	1315	1326	1421	1519	1618	1717	1722	1820	1921	2116	2121	2224
Oxenholme Lake District	Dep	0606	0734	0830	0928	0933	1036	1128	1233	1329	1341	1435	1533	1632	1731	1736	1834	1935	2130	2135	
Penrith North Lakes	Dep	0631	0759	0856	0953	0958	1101	1153	1258	1355	1406	1500	1559	1658	1756	1801	1859	2001		2201	
Carlisle	Arr	0647	0815	0911	1009	1014	1118	1209	1314	1410	1422	1516	1614	1713	1811	1816	1915	2016		2216	
Carlisle	Dep	0651	0816	0913	1010	1016	1119	1210	1315	1415	1424	1518	1616	1715	1813	1818	1916	2018		2218	
Lockerbie	Dep	0710	0835	0933	1029	1035	1138	1229	1334	1434	1443	1537	1635	1735	1831	1837	1935	2037		2237	
Carstairs	Arr	0744																			
Motherwell	Dep	0801		1018	1114		1223		1421		1531	1622		1822		2022					
Glasgow Central	Arr	0822		1035	1131		1239		1439		1548	1639		1839	1949	2039					
Haymarket	Arr		0933s			1132s		1327s		1531s			1734s		1934s		2133s		2336s		
Edinburgh	Arr		0940			1137		1332		1537			1740		1940		2138		2341		



June 2024: Planned Service Improvements

Anglo-Scottish Route SAT: Southbound



Edinburgh	Dep				0613		0810			1011			1211		1408		1611		1811	
Haymarket	Dep				0618u		0816u			1017u			1216u		1413u		1615u		1816u	
Glasgow Central	Dep			0452		0709		0810	0909		1107	1208		1309		1508		1612	1709	
Motherwell	Dep					0725u		0826	0924		1124			1325		1524		1628	1725	
Lockerbie	Dep			0554	0712	0810	0911	0916	1010	1110	1210	1306	1311	1409	1509	1610	1709	1716	1810	1911
Carlisle	Arr			0616	0733	0835	0931	0937	1032	1131	1231	1327	1332	1430	1529	1630	1730	1737	1831	1931
Carlisle	Dep			0623	0734	0837	0933	0938	1033	1133	1233	1328	1334	1433	1534	1633	1733	1741	1833	1934
Penrith North Lakes	Dep			0644	0749	0852	0948	0953	1048	1148	1248	1343	1349	1448	1549	1648	1748	1756	1848	1949
Oxenholme Lake District	Dep		0630	0708	0813	0916	1012	1017	1112	1212	1312	1407	1413	1512	1613	1712	1812	1821	1912	2013
Lancaster	Dep	0628	0645	0723	0828	0931	1027	1032	1130	1227	1327	1422	1428	1528	1628	1727	1827	1837	1929	2028
Preston	Arr	0645	0703	0740	0846	0949	1044	1050	1149	1245	1345	1441	1446	1546	1646	1744	1846	1855	1947	2045
Preston	Dep	0647	0705	0747	0848	0950	1047	1052	1150	1246	1347	1453	1448	1548	1648	1747	1848	1857	1949	2047
Wigan North Western	Arr		0717					1104				1504						1908		
St. Helens Central	Arr		0732					1119				1520						1923		
Liverpool Lime Street	Arr		0757					1146				1546						1946		
Bolton	Arr					1007s	1106s		1207s	1306s	1406s		1506s	1606s		1806s	1906s		2006s	2106s
Manchester Oxford Road	Arr	0725		0823	0922	1022	1122		1222	1322	1422		1522	1622	1722	1822	1922		2022	2122
Manchester Piccadilly	Arr	0729		0827	0926	1026	1126		1226	1326	1426		1526	1626	1726	1826	1926		2026	2126
Manchester Airport	Arr	0745		0844	0944	1044	1144		1244	1344	1444		1544	1644	1744	1844	1944		2045	2146



June 2024: Planned Service Improvements

Anglo-Scottish Route SAT: Northbound



Manchester Airport	Dep		0603	0704		0804	0904	1004	1104	1204		1304	1404	1504		1604	1704	1804		2104
Manchester Piccadilly	Dep	0457	0622	0721		0821	0921	1021	1121	1221		1321	1421	1521		1621	1721	1821		2119
Manchester Oxford Road	Dep		0625	0725		0824	0924	1024	1124	1224		1324	1424	1524		1624	1724	1824		2123
Bolton	Dep		0638u				0938u	1038u	1138	1238u		1338u	1439u	1539u						
Liverpool Lime Street	Dep				0812						1212				1612					2013
St. Helens Central	Dep				0828						1229				1628					2029
Wigan North Western	Dep				0842						1245				1643					2043
Preston	Arr	0534	0700	0759	0857	0901	0959	1058	1159	1258	1306	1400	1459	1559	1659	1701	1759	1859	2058	2207
Preston	Dep	0536	0704	0801	0858	0903	1003	1059	1204	1259	1309	1405	1503	1602	1701	1704	1803	1905		
Lancaster	Dep	0552	0720	0818	0914	0919	1023	1115	1220	1315	1325	1421	1519	1618	1717	1722	1819	1921		
Oxenholme Lake District	Dep	0606	0734	0832	0928	0933	1037	1128	1234	1329	1341	1435	1533	1632	1731	1736	1833	1935		
Penrith North Lakes	Dep	0631	0759	0857	0954	0959	1102	1153	1259	1355	1406	1500	1559	1658	1756	1801	1859	2001		
Carlisle	Arr	0647	0815	0913	1009	1015	1118	1209	1315	1410	1422	1516	1614	1713	1812	1817	1914	2016		
Carlisle	Dep	0648	0817	0914	1011	1016	1118	1210	1315	1415	1425	1517	1616	1715	1813	1818	1915	2018		
Lockerbie	Dep	0707	0836	0935	1029	1035	1138	1229	1335	1434	1444	1537	1635	1734	1832	1837	1935	2037		
Carstairs	Arr	0743																		
Motherwell	Dep	0804		1022			1223		1420		1530	1622		1821			2021			
Glasgow Central	Arr	0823		1039	1130		1242		1439		1546	1642		1839	1948		2038			
Haymarket	Arr		0934s			1131s		1327s		1533s			1732s			1933s		2135s		
Edinburgh	Arr		0940			1137		1333		1539			1738			1939		2141		



June 2024: Planned Service Improvements

Anglo-Scottish Route SUN: Southbound



Edinburgh	Dep				1013			1212			1412		1614		1813		2014
Haymarket	Dep				1018u			1217u			1417u		1618u		1819u		2019u
Glasgow Central	Dep			0916		1013			1312	1401		1505		1703		1847	
Motherwell	Dep			0932		1031			1329	1418		1524		1719		1904	
Carstairs	Dep			0948													
Lockerbie	Dep			1022	1111	1117		1310	1414	1502	1510	1613	1712	1804	1912	1954	2112
Carlisle	Arr			1043	1132	1138		1331	1434	1523	1531	1634	1733	1824	1933	2015	2133
Carlisle	Dep			1044	1134	1139		1333	1436	1524	1533	1635	1735	1828	1935	2016	2135
Penrith North Lakes	Dep			1059	1149	1154		1348	1451	1539	1548	1650	1750	1843	1950	2031	2150
Oxenholme Lake District	Dep			1123	1213	1218		1412	1515	1603	1612	1714	1814	1907	2014	2055	2214
Lancaster	Dep		1047	1138	1228	1235		1427	1530	1618	1627	1729	1829	1923	2029	2112	2229
Preston	Arr		1105	1156	1245	1252		1445	1547	1637	1645	1747	1847	1940	2046	2129	2246
Preston	Dep	0854	1107	1157	1247	1255		1446	1549	1638	1647	1748	1848	1945	2048	2131	2248
Wigan North Western	Arr	0905				1306				1650						2144	
St. Helens Central	Arr	0921				1321				1705						2159	
Liverpool Lime Street	Arr	0943				1343				1728						2220	
Bolton	Arr		1124s		1305s			1504s	1606s		1704s	1805s	1905s	2005s	2106s		
Manchester Oxford Road	Arr		1139	1238	1321			1520	1620		1720	1820	1921	2020	2120		2318
Manchester Piccadilly	Arr		1143	1242	1326			1524	1624		1724	1824	1925	2024	2124		2322
Manchester Airport	Arr		1158	1258	1344			1542	1642		1742	1842	1942	2042	2142		2342



June 2024: Planned Service Improvements

Anglo-Scottish Route SUN: Northbound



Manchester Airport	Dep	0905		1010	1110	1212	1313		1410		1610	1710		1810	2010	2059	
Manchester Piccadilly	Dep	0924		1026	1125	1226	1327		1426		1626	1726		1826	2026	2114	
Manchester Oxford Road	Dep	0928		1030	1129	1230	1331		1430		1630	1730		1830	2030	2118	
Bolton	Dep	0944u		1043u	1144u	1244u			1444u		1644u	1745u		1843u			
Liverpool Lime Street	Dep		1012					1412					1812				2239
St. Helens Central	Dep		1028					1428					1828				2255
Wigan North Western	Dep		1044					1443					1843				2308
Preston	Arr	1004	1059	1105	1203	1303	1403	1458	1503		1703	1805	1857	1902	2101	2159	2327
Preston	Dep	1017	1100	1108	1205	1305	1404	1459	1505		1705	1807	1859	1904	2103		
Lancaster	Dep	1037	1116	1125	1221	1321	1422	1515	1521		1721	1823	1915	1920	2119		
Oxenholme Lake District	Dep	1051	1132	1139	1235	1336	1436	1529	1535		1735	1837	1929	1934	2133		
Penrith North Lakes	Dep	1117	1158	1204	1301	1401	1501	1555	1600		1801	1902	1954	1959	2159		
Carlisle	Arr	1132	1213	1220	1316	1417	1517	1610	1616		1816	1918	2010	2015	2214		
Carlisle	Dep	1134	1215	1221	1318	1418	1517	1612	1617		1818	1919	2011	2017	2216		
Lockerbie	Dep	1152	1234	1240	1337	1437	1537	1631	1637		1837	1938	2030	2036	2235		
Motherwell	Dep	1237	1319		1424		1625	1716				2023	2116		2328		
Glasgow Central	Arr	1254	1336		1444		1643	1733				2040	2133		2347		
Haymarket	Arr			1338s		1533s			1736s		1933s			2133s			
Edinburgh	Arr			1343		1539			1742		1939			2139			





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Councillor John Campbell
douglas.kirkpatrick@dumgal.gov.uk

Our Reference: 202300384471
Your Reference: SW4/DK101123

14 December 2023

Dear Councillor Campbell,

Thank you for your letter of 10 November 2023 regarding Stranraer Rail Service.

You may be aware that I met with the Leader of South Ayrshire Council on 11 October to discuss the emerging situation at the site. All parties are sensitive to the impacts the situation, as a result of vandalism, is having on both the economy and travel in Ayr and the wider region and are working collectively to restore services and other travel options to normal, as soon as it is safely possible to do so.

I welcome the commencement of shuttle services between Ayr and Prestwick Town from 4 December which coincides with the opening of Station Road Bridge to pedestrians. Unfortunately services through Ayr station southwards are not possible at this time due to the ongoing works in relation to the Hotel building. I can, however, assure you that there is no risk to the future of the Stranraer Railway. Our focus remains on restoring through rail services as soon as safely possible.

ScotRail services will continue to be impacted until the relevant authorities have advised ScotRail it is safe to restart full services.

Whilst any temporary line closure is disappointing, even when, like in the case of services in Ayr currently, such closure is necessary to maintain the safety of the passengers and railway staff alike, please be assured that the Scottish Government is committed to encouraging people to travel by train instead of car.

The Scottish Government brought ScotRail into public ownership to ensure that ScotRail focuses its delivery on the needs of all Scottish passengers. It is important that ScotRail plays its part in delivering the Scottish Government's ambitions for its success and that includes attracting passengers back to rail.

You may wish to note that from Monday 20th November, some significant improvements have been made on Stranraer to Glasgow route, which improved replacement bus connectivity as well as significantly reduced the travel time for the passengers.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot



ScotRail will monitor performance of the new timetable and if it isn't meeting customer needs it will consider making more radical changes. We are hopeful trains will be running on the route again within a few weeks.

I'm aware that we are due to meet early in the New Year, however, if in the interim it would be helpful to have a discussion with representatives from the rail industry and South Ayrshire Council in relation to the impacts of the situation at the Ayr Station Hotel I can ask officials to make those arrangements.

Yours sincerely

FIONA HYSLOP
Minister for Transport

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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