

SWESTRANS ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24

The Annual Report of South West of Scotland Transport Partnership,
outlining its resources and outputs for financial year 2023/24.

SWestrans 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 2023/24.

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 2023/24 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 2008 Regional Transport Strategy. The Partnership's Officers and Board members have continued to participate in the development of active travel, bus, rail, and road interventions in Dumfries and Galloway and in the development of 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 2023 to 31 March 2024.

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.

Throughout 2023/24 the members of SWestrans Board were-

- 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
- Willie Scobie- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Keith Walters- Dumfries & Galloway Council
- Andrew Wood- Dumfries & Galloway Council

The Council Member substitutes were:

- 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 2023 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 and West Dumfries

4. MEETINGS

4.1 Dates

There were 5 Meetings of SWestrans Board between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 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:

- 30 June 2023
- 27 October 2023
- 24 November 2023
- 2 February 2024
- 22 March 2024

4.2 Agendas

Item	30 June 2023
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest

3	Minute of Meeting on 31 March 2023
4	RTS 2023-2042
5	STAG Update
6	Revenue Outturn Report 2022/23
7	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 For the Period ending 31 May 2023
8	Capital Expenditure Outturn Report 2022/23
9	Draft Capital Expenditure Programme 2023/24- 2025/26
10	Draft Annual Unaudited Accounts 2022-23
11	Calendar of Meetings
12	Rail Update
13	External Audit Plan 2022/23
14	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
15	Local Bus Contracts (confidential)

Item	27 October 2023
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minute of Meeting on 30 June 2023
4	Report by External Audit on the 2022/2023 Audit of SWestrans
5	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 For the Period ending 30 September 2023
6	Capital Expenditure Programme 2023/2024- 2025/26 Update
7	RTS 2023-2042
8	Rail Update
9	Standing Orders Review
10	Calendar of Meetings
11	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision

Item	24 November 2023
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minutes of Meeting on 27 October 20223
4	Presentation from A77 Campaign Team
5	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 For the Period ending 31 October 2023
6	Climate Change Duties Reporting 2022-23
7	Capital Expenditure Programme- Community Bus Fund/Bus Shelters
8	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision

Item	2 February 2024
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest
3	Minutes of Meeting on 24 November 2023
4	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 For the Period ending 31 December 2023
5	Capital Expenditure Programme 2023/2024- 2025/26 Update
6	STAG Update
7	Risk Management
8	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
9	Active Travel Funding (confidential)

Item	22 March 2024
1	Sederunt and Apologies
2	Declarations of Interest

3	Minutes of Meeting on 2 February 2024
4	External Audit Plan 2023/24
5	Draft Revenue Expenditure Budget 2024/25
6	Internal Audit Report of South West Scotland Transport Partnership
7	Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042
8	Procurement Standing Orders
9	SWestrans Annual Report 2022/23
10	Develop to Deliver
11	Local Bus Network Review
12	Rail Update
13	AOB which the Chairman may decide urgent due to the need for a decision
14	Active Travel Funding (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 2023/24

Draft Annual Accounts for 2023/24 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 2024, and to Audit Scotland, 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 2023/24 was £4,504,289. 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.
- Dumfries and Galloway Council non-recurring funding £57,000
- Other contributions totalling £ 4,088,039 from Dumfries and Galloway Council for the subsidised local bus network.

5.4 Internal Audit

An internal audit was carried out during 2023/24.

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.

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

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.

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 2023/24 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.

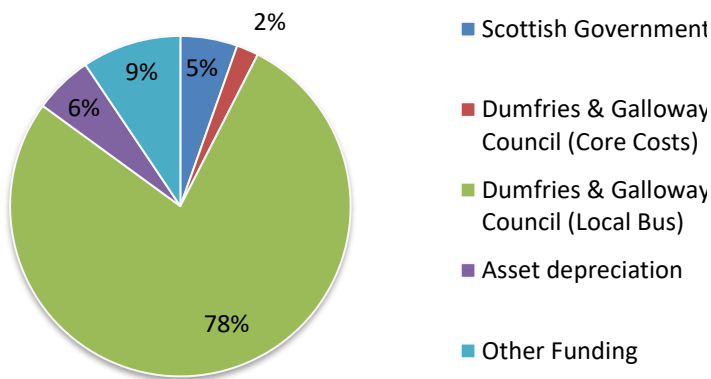
The International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA 260) requires auditors to communicate matters relating to the audit of the financial statements to those charged with the governance of a body

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.

The external auditor's report on the audit of SWestrans' 2023/24 Annual Accounts to the Board, (in line with the requirements of the International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA 260)), was presented to the Board for approval on 27 September 2024.

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.

SWestrans Funding Sources 2023/24



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.

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 public transport 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 2023/24 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
- Procurement.

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

John Campbell has been the Chair of SWestrans Board since June 2022.

7.5 Vice-Chair of the Board

Karen Jackson has been the Vice-Chair of SWestrans Board since June 2022.

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.

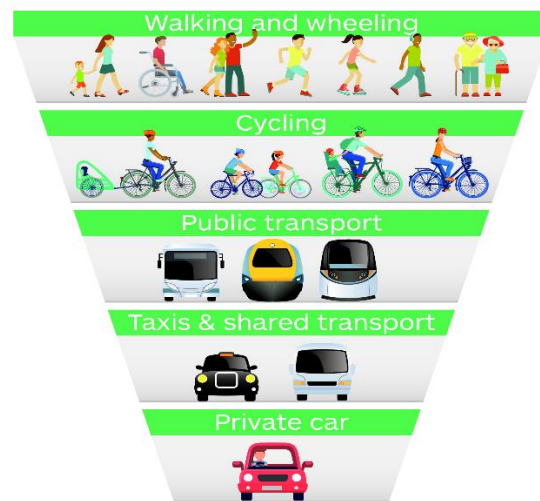
Importantly, overarching all the policies, to address the challenges and achieve the priorities there is an embedded Sustainable Travel Hierarchy for decision making which will promote walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private 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.

The 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

The STPR2 recommendations that have implications for the Dumfries and Galloway region are as follows.

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 traveler 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 2008 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 2023/24 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 55% of the bus network requiring subsidy, SWestrans provides vital lifeline connectivity and social inclusion to many communities.

There are a relatively small number of local bus operators serving Dumfries and Galloway, and once again this year the Board and officers were made aware of 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 2023/24, work has continued to develop social and community transport with regional partners.

8.3 Key Sectors/Themes

The 2008 Regional Transport Strategy also identifies several 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 2023/24 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 2023/24.

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.

SWestrans continues to lobby for the re-opening of rail stations at Beattock, Thornhill and Eastriggs.

Community Transport

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 Strategic Development Group continued to make progress throughout 2023/24.

The strategic group 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 (TSDG). The specific aims of the group are to develop a genuine and lasting partnership to support the remodelling of 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

The Community Transport will be a critical building block of any new model of sustainable public transport.

Walking and Cycling

During 2023/24, SWestrans continued to fund active travel infrastructure through its Capital Programme. Several walking/cycling infrastructure opportunities to improve functional active travel were progressed.

Health

Regional Transport Strategies 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 2008 SWestrans 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 was provided with 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.

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 24 November 2023, Members of the Board agreed the submission of the 2022-23 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 2023/24 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	15,203
Payments exceeding £25,000 - Payments to bus operators (total of 39 payments exceeding £25,000 to bus operators)	3,584,741
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 Public Social Partnership (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 June 2024.

SWestrans has a statutory duty to draw up a strategy for transport within its region and has worked with consultants Stantec throughout 2023/24 on the publication of a new RTS for 2023-42. It is hoped the final RTS will be published in summer 2024, following sign off from the Transport Minister.

9.2 Revenue Budget

A detailed summary of the elements of the Revenue Budget 2023/24 is set out in the following table:

	Final Outturn 2022/23	Adjusted Budget 2023/24	Actual Expenditure to 31/03/24	Variance
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs	138,745	244,712	244,712	0
Administration Costs	30,854	33,830	33,830	0
Payments	4,301,098	4,116,100	4,116,100	0
Central Support	44,071	44,494	44,494	0
Capital Charges	265,903	322,104	322,104	0
Total Expenditure	4,780,671	4,761,240	4,761,240	0
INCOME				
Scottish Government	259,250	259,250	259,250	0
D&G Council	100,00	100,000	100,000	0
Other Contributions	4,421,421	4,401,990	4,401,990	0
Total Income	4,780,671	4,761,240	4,761,240	0
NET EXPENDITURE	0	0	0	0

9.3 Capital Expenditure Programme

Expenditure on the elements of the Capital Expenditure Programme 2023/24 was as follows:

Item	£
Local Bus Network	86,964
Rail Station Parking	465,414
Active Travel Network	443,184
Total	995,562

9.4 External Funding

No external funding was drawn down in 2023/24.