



SWestrans REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2023-42

Easy Read

In partnership with:  **Stantec**



1 Background

1.1 What is this Strategy about?

This Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) sets out the long-term strategic framework for the development of transport in Dumfries and Galloway up to 2042.

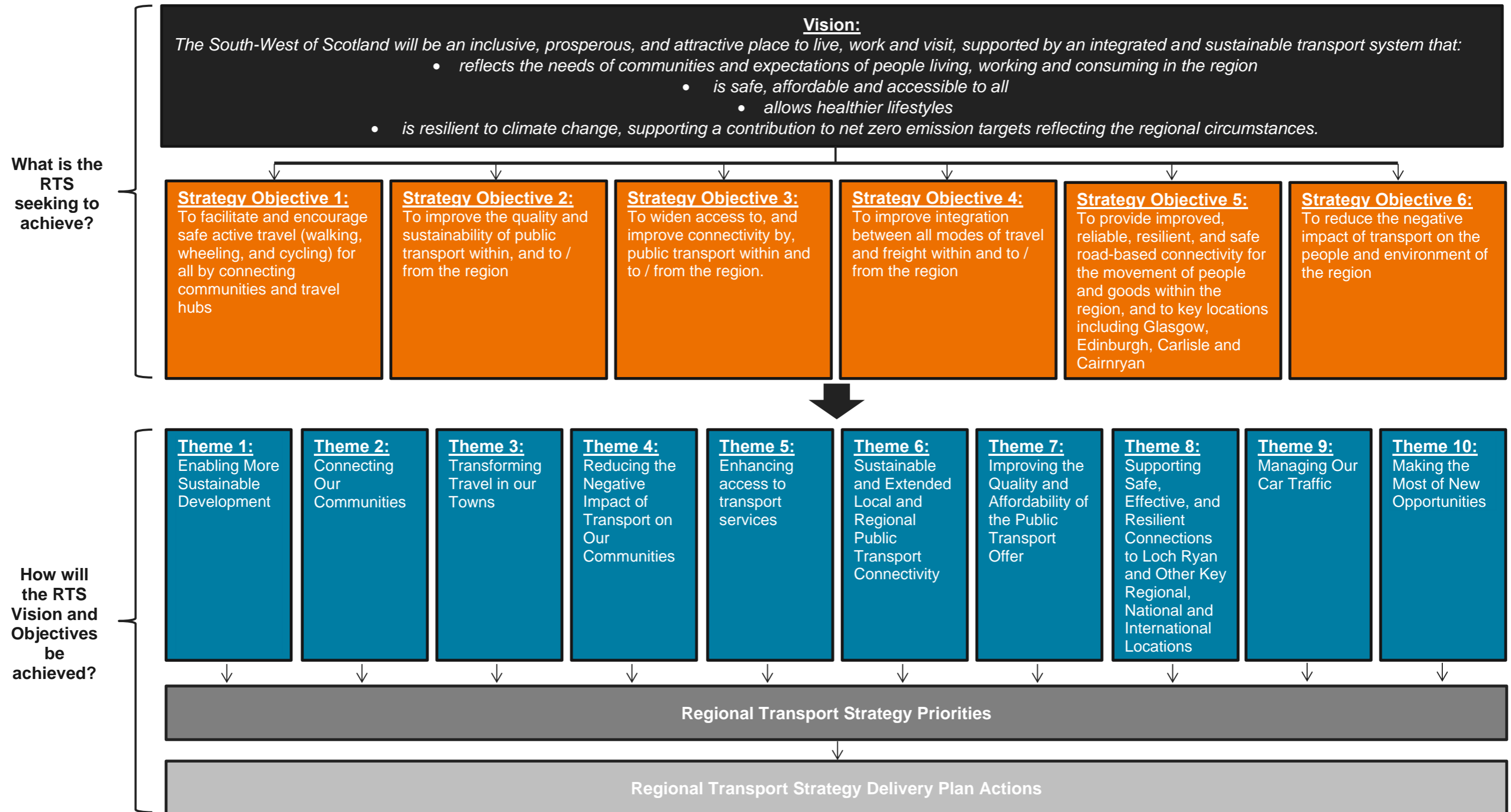
1.2 Who produced this Strategy?

The RTS was produced by SWestrans, the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for South West Scotland.



2 Strategy Overview

The RTS includes the elements shown in the diagram below.



3 Strategy Objectives

The 6 Strategy Objectives of the RTS are outlined below.

Strategy Objective 1: To facilitate and encourage safe active travel (walking, wheeling, and cycling) for all by connecting communities and travel hubs



What are we aiming to do?

- Improve the physical environment for active travel for all groups
- Improve existing and provide new active travel connections between settlements and linking transport hubs and communities
- Better promote walking, wheeling, and cycling for travel and leisure
- Widen access to bicycles and potentially micro-mobility

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Improved access to jobs, schools, colleges, shops and other services
- Reduced car travel and emissions
- Increased tourism
- Increased health and wellbeing

Strategy Objective 2: To improve the quality and sustainability of public transport within, and to / from the region



What are we aiming to do?

- Improve the quality and accessibility of vehicles
- Improve the quality and accessibility of stations and stops
- Make travel information easier to understand
- Improve the punctuality and reliability of services
- Ensure that services are provided without frequent changes to routes and timetables so people can rely on services being there over time

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Improved access to jobs, schools, colleges, shops and other services, particularly for minority and disadvantaged groups
- Reduced social exclusion
- Reduced car travel and emissions
- Improved health and wellbeing, particularly for minority and disadvantaged groups

Strategy Objective 3: To widen access to, and improve connectivity by public transport within and to / from the region



What are we aiming to do?

- Improve the coverage of bus and rail services so they serve more areas
- Improve bus and rail timetables so services run earlier / later and on more days of the week
- Improve the frequency of bus and rail services
- Reduce public transport journey times

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Improved access to jobs, schools, colleges, shops and other services
- Reduced social exclusion
- Reduced car travel and emissions
- Increased tourism
- Increased health and wellbeing

Strategy Objective 4: To improve integration between all modes of travel and freight within and to / from the region



What are we aiming to do?

- Improve integration between buses and between buses and trains
- Improved travel planning and real time information
- Carriage of bikes on buses / trains where possible
- Inter modal facilities for freight

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Improved access to jobs, schools, colleges, shops and other services
- Reduced car travel and emissions
- Increased tourism

Strategy Objective 5: To provide improved, reliable, resilient, and safe road-based connectivity for the movement of people and goods within the region, and to key locations including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Carlisle and Cairnryan



What are we aiming to do?

- Improve journey times and journey time reliability
- Improve road safety
- Improve the ability of the road network to cope with extreme weather / climate change
- Provide rest areas / parking for freight

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Helping the economy of the region
- Improving access to labour and customers for business
- Encouraging tourism and business investment
- Reduced personal injuries associated with traffic collisions on the road network

Strategy Objective 6: To reduce the negative impact of transport on the people and environment of the region



What are we aiming to do?

- Reduce traffic levels
- Improve road safety
- Decarbonise the transport system
- Protect and enhance ecosystem services

What will the impact be if we achieve this objective?

- Reduced car travel
- Reduced carbon emissions and other pollutants
- Reduced noise and vibration for affected communities
- Reduced personal injuries associated with collisions on the road network
- Improved health and wellbeing

4 Themes and Priorities

To achieve the RTS Vision and Objectives, SWestrans and its partners will need to undertake a range of activities. These are described in the **Themes** and **Priorities** of the RTS. These are discussed below.



4.1 Themes

Theme 1: Enabling More Sustainable Development

- Locating new development in locations which reduce the need to travel or are served by existing active travel and public transport links, or where this is not possible, provide new active travel and public transport links
 - Providing on site facilities such as showers / changing rooms etc., at new and existing developments
 - Incorporating the concept of 'local living / liveability¹' and '20-minute neighbourhoods²' into all future development and land-use planning processes
- Applying an 'Infrastructure First³' approach to major new developments

Theme 2: Connecting our Communities

- Improving existing and providing new active travel routes in line with the Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy.
 - Working to high standards in accordance with relevant technical guidance such as Cycling by Design and Designing Streets
 - Reviewing and updating the Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy
 - Undertaking promotional activities and community engagement to encourage use of active travel modes
- Spending at least 50% of the SWestrans capital budget on active travel

¹ The basic principle of 'local living / liveability' is providing people with the opportunity to meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home. The concept is broader than the '20-minute neighbourhood' concept and reflects the needs for a more flexible approach, particularly in more rural locations.

² The basic principle of the '20-minute neighbourhood' concept can be summarised as people having all of their daily needs (employment, education, shopping, etc) available within 20 minutes of their home, by using sustainable forms of transport: walking, cycling or public transport. The concept is a useful tool in community planning. However, there is a recognition that the delivery of '20-minute neighbourhoods' which adhere strictly to this definition may not be achievable or indeed appropriate in rural settings and this is reflected in NPF4 through a wider emphasis on 'local liveability'.

³ Defined in NPF4 as "putting infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking", where infrastructure includes existing and planned transport infrastructure and services, water management, communications, energy supplies / energy generation, health and social care services, education, green and blue infrastructure, and spaces for play and recreation.

Theme 3: Transforming Travel in our Towns

- Re-allocating roadspace from cars to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport in locations where detailed analysis suggests this is appropriate
- Interventions may include:
 - Active Travel - widening footways; segregated active travel routes alongside the carriageway; bike lane provision; conversion of advisory bike lanes to mandatory bike lanes; advanced stop lines; protected right turns and cycle priority at junctions; reviewing junction geometries to slow turning traffic
 - Buses - bus priority measures including priority signalling, dedicated bus only routes, bus advance areas, bus lanes and gates, and bus only corridors

Theme 4: Reducing the Negative Impact of Transport on Our Communities

- Investigating the feasibility of bypasses for Crocketford and Springholm on the A75 as well as other communities on the A7, A75, A76, A77 and A709 including Dumfries
- Supporting the decarbonisation of the car, taxi and commercial vehicle fleet through investigation and delivery, as appropriate, of measures such as electric vehicle charging points, including for commercial vehicles; regional electric vehicle carsharing; grants / loans for electric / hybrid vehicles; low emission zones (LEZs); new rail freight hubs; alternative fuels e.g., green hydrogen, including for commercial vehicles

Theme 5: Enhancing access to transport services

- Exploring opportunities to improve the customer experience when using public transport, particularly for vulnerable users
- Making travel information available in various formats
- Improving information on active travel, including wayfinding information
- Facilitating access to bicycles, including e-bikes through grants / loans and a regional cycle hire scheme
- Improving the availability of real time information at stations, stops, and on board services
- Prioritising improving accessibility to railway stations at Annan, Dumfries, Kirkcubrecht and Sanquhar Stations
- Improving connectivity to stations by bus and active travel

Theme 6: Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity

- Delivering a new engagement led needs-based public transport model⁴
- D&G Council to undertake work to develop a business case for DGC Buses to become a Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) Operator⁵
- Further analysis of the potential to provide a bus station in Dumfries
- Creating a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP⁶) in D&G
- Consideration of rail network upgrades to improve journey times / capacity
- Exploring opportunities to run a local service on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) between Carlisle and Edinburgh / Glasgow; quadruple track the WCML through Lockerbie and other locations; and relocating the station at Stranraer
- Consideration given to re-instating the Castle Douglas and Dumfries Railway / extending the Borders Railway
- Support for the re-opening of stations at Beattock, Eastriggs and Thornhill

⁴ This model is being developed and will involve a three-tier framework focuses around community level provision, supported local bus and community transport services, and commercial local bus and rail services

⁵ This would enable DGC Buses to provide local bus services on behalf of SWesttrans if commercial bus services cease to operate

⁶ BSIPS involve local transport authorities and commercial bus operators working together to deliver transport solutions

Theme 7: Improving the Quality and Affordability of the Public Transport Officer

- Exploring opportunities to expand the eligibility of existing concessionary travel schemes / extend to cover rail
- Exploring new rail fare structures
- Seeking opportunities to deliver new integrated and multi-journey ticketing for bus, rail, and ferry
- Improving integration between modes
- Enhancing bus stops to improve accessibility and security
- Taking forward the replacement of the bus fleet with low emission vehicles and supporting the decarbonisation of the rail network
- Exploring opportunities for enabling the carriage of bikes on buses
- Supporting the replacement of rail rolling stock (trains) and considering proposals for electrification

Theme 8: Supporting Safe, Effective, and Resilient Connections to Loch Ryan and Other Key Regional, National and International Locations

- Enhancing the strategic road network to improve safety, journey times, and diversionary routes
- Safety improvements, including junction improvements, installation of speed cameras, and creation of 20mph zones etc.
- Enhanced programme of road resurfacing focused on major routes
- Exploring opportunities for additional dedicated HGV rest areas / shifting goods from HGVs to rail through new rail freight hubs and an intermodal freight hub at Cairnryan / Stranraer
- Exploring opportunities to improve connectivity to Lockerbie Station by a variety of modes

Theme 9: Managing Our Car Traffic

- Improving active travel, public transport, shared mobility⁷ and digital infrastructure to provide an effective alternative to car travel, with a particular focus on reducing single occupancy car journeys
- Proportionate application of parking measures to support modal shift to more sustainable and healthier modes. These may include reducing parking supply, introducing parking charges, adopting Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE⁸), reviewing waiting restrictions in town centres.

Theme 10: Making the Most of New Opportunities

- Taking forward Mobility as a Service (MaaS) which enables users to plan, book, and pay for multiple types of mobility services on one platform
- Taking forward a range of shared mobility measures such as regional car / bike sharing and / or trip sharing schemes, peer to peer car lending, and electric scooter sharing
- Exploring opportunities to capitalise on the growth of micro mobility alongside the development of mobility hubs
- Introducing Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS⁹) to improve the safety and efficiency of the strategic road network

⁷ Shared mobility is an overarching term for transport schemes which involve people sharing either a journey (e.g., via formal and informal lift pooling schemes) or a vehicle (e.g., via car clubs or bicycle hire schemes etc)

⁸ DPE is a regime which enables a local authority to administer its own parking penalties, including the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles. In areas with DPE, stationary traffic offences cease to be criminal offences enforced by the police and instead become civil penalties enforced by the local authority

⁹ Intelligent transport systems use information and communication technologies to improve the efficiency and safety of transport

4.2 Priorities

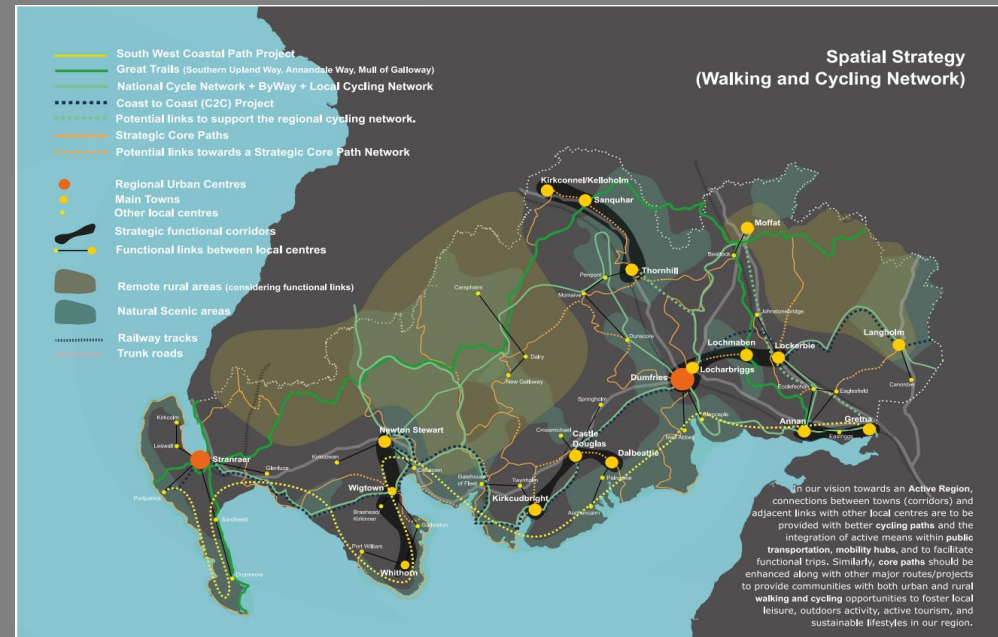
Theme 1: Enabling More Sustainable Development

1. Sustainably locate new developments to reduce the need to travel first and foremost
2. Locate new development where it can be easily served by existing active travel and public transport links or, if not possible, by new active travel and public transport links which are accessible to all
3. Sustainable transport measures and supporting ancillary infrastructure for new developments will be delivered through developer contributions as appropriate
4. The concept 'local living' and of '20-minute neighbourhoods' will be incorporated into all future development and land-use planning processes
5. Transport interventions should be carefully sited and designed to prevent and minimise negative environmental impacts
6. New major developments, including those proposed at Chapelcross Power Station and Stranraer Gateway, should apply an 'infrastructure first' approach
7. At existing developments sustainable transport and ancillary infrastructure measures should be introduced to encourage the uptake of more sustainable transport by coordinated engagement with employers and other large organisations



Theme 2: Connecting Our Communities

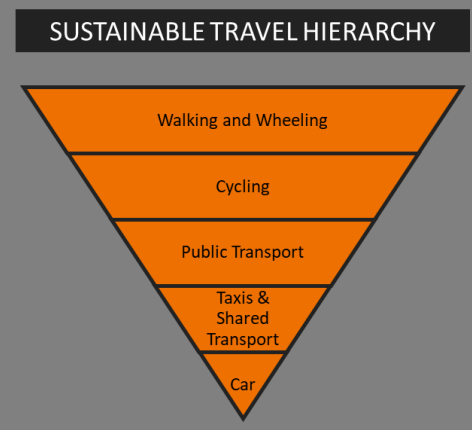
8. Improvements to the active travel network will be delivered through a combination of incremental improvements to existing routes and new bespoke routes where appropriate
9. The active travel network will be developed in accordance with Cycling by Design, Designing Streets and other relevant technical guidance
10. An integrated active travel network linking both within and between our settlements will be developed in line with the Spatial Strategy articulated in the Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2
11. The Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 will be kept under review and updated on a regular basis to ensure it is being effectively implemented
12. A dedicated Active Travel Team will work on prioritising, designing, and delivering schemes and projects in collaboration with funding partners
13. Awareness raising to facilitate behaviour change will be delivered through close community engagement and campaigns to encourage the use of active travel
14. SWestrans will spend at least 50% of its capital budget on active travel



Active Travel Spatial Strategy (Source: Dumfries and Galloway Active Travel Strategy 2 2022-2032)

Theme 3: Transforming Travel in Our Towns

- 15. Roadspace should be reallocated to prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport particularly within our towns and settlements in order to create a more attractive public realm across Dumfries and Galloway
- 16. The National Transport Strategy 2's Sustainable Travel Hierarchy should be applied to reprioritise the road network wherever possible
- 17. Detailed analysis should be undertaken to identify suitable locations and interventions for the reallocation of roadspace away from general traffic to active travel and public transport



Theme 4: Reducing the Negative Impact of Transport on Our Communities

18. Investigate the feasibility of bypasses for Crocketford and Springholm on the A75 as well as other communities on the A7, A75, A76, A77 and A709 including Dumfries
19. Support the decarbonisation of the car, taxi and commercial vehicle fleet through investigation and delivery, as appropriate, of measures such as:
 - Electric Vehicle charging points, including for commercial vehicles
 - Regional Electric Vehicle carsharing
 - Grants / loans for Electric / Hybrid vehicles
 - Low Emission Zones (LEZs)
 - New rail freight hubs
 - Alternative fuels e.g., green hydrogen, including for commercial vehicles



Theme 5: Enhancing Access to Transport Services

20. Opportunities to enhance the customer experience when using public transport should be explored, particularly for vulnerable users who may require additional assistance or chaperoning in order to make their journey
21. The public and active travel networks should provide equal access for all including vulnerable groups such as women, elderly and younger people, ethnic minorities, people with mobility impairments or disabilities as well as those on low incomes
22. Journey planning information should be available in various formats to meet the needs of differing users including online, traditional paper copies, braille, large print, and audio
23. Real Time Passenger Information should be made available for all public transport modes at stations, stops and on-board services wherever possible and practical
24. Soft measures should be implemented to encourage the use of active travel through measures such as additional information online and in the form of maps and signs within towns accompanied by public awareness campaigns
25. Access to bicycles, including e-bikes, should be facilitated through a combination of grants / loans for those that wish to purchase their own and provision of a regional cycle hire scheme for people that only require occasional access to a bike
26. Improving accessibility to railway stations should be prioritised in Annan, Dumfries, Kirkconnel and Sanquhar where access arrangements could be limited for some disabled users
27. Measures to encourage access to railway stations in line with the Scottish Government's Sustainable Travel Hierarchy should be taken forward
28. The security of taxi users should be improved by undertaking additional background checks prior to granting taxi licences



Theme 6: Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity

29. SWestrans and its partners will work to deliver a new public transport model based around an engagement led needs-based approach applying a three tier framework as follows:
 - a. Tier 1 – Community Level Provision
 - b. Tier 2 – Supported Local Bus and Community Transport Services
 - c. Tier 3 – Commercial Local Bus and Rail Services
30. Bus service improvements should be focused in areas identified as at greatest risk of both transport poverty and deprivation. This should be informed by further analysis to develop options to improve bus service connectivity such as increased service frequencies, new services, more direct services and / or more express services
31. Where no bus service exists, DRT solutions will be developed and operated by third sector community transport operators, DGC Buses and the community
32. Dumfries and Galloway council will undertake work to develop a business case for DGC Buses to become a Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) Operator as a prudent step should a bus operator of last resort be needed in Dumfries and Galloway
33. Further analysis should be undertaken to assess the potential to provide a bus station in Dumfries and, if found to be feasible and beneficial, partners should work together to facilitate its delivery
34. Opportunities to increase the carriage of bikes on buses will be explored
35. A network of mobility hubs should be developed and implemented across Dumfries and Galloway
36. A Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) should be created in Dumfries and Galloway using the powers set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and will entail SWestrans working in partnership with the commercial sector, DGC Buses, community transport and NHS Dumfries and Galloway along with other partners as appropriate



Theme 6: Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity (continued)

37. The development of business cases for improvements to rail services at stations where provision is poor should be taken forward in close coordination with key stakeholders including ScotRail and Transport Scotland
38. Opportunities should be investigated to run a local service on the WCML between Carlisle and Edinburgh / Glasgow through the development of a business case
39. Consideration should be given to rail network upgrades to decrease journey times and increase capacity, including the replacement of semaphore signalling, passing loops and upgrades to track geometry at key locations
40. Opportunities should be explored to improve the capacity on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) through Lockerbie and at other appropriate locations
41. The potential for more locally situated train crews should be investigated to provide additional resilience to staffing related service issues
42. While it is recognised that the necessary socio-economic case to justify progression of the reopening of stations at Beattock on the West Coast Mainline, and Eastriggs and Thornhill on the Glasgow and South West Line has not been evidenced, their reopening is supported and remains an ambition of SWestrans
43. The potential to relocate the station at Stranraer should be explored to provide easier access for rail users and better integrate it with the rest of the town centre
44. Consideration should be given to reinstating the Castle Douglas and Dumfries railway between Dumfries and Stranraer along with delivering an extension to the Borders Railway from Tweedbank serving Langholm and terminating at Carlisle with appropriate business case development being taken forward for each
45. Lighter rail solutions should be explored as an alternative to heavy rail where it may provide a more practical or affordable solution for fixed public transport links



Theme 7: Improving the Quality and Affordability of Our Public Transport Offer

46. Opportunities to expand the eligibility of existing concessionary travel schemes or to create new schemes to allow more users access to reduced / no fare journeys should be explored with key partners including Transport Scotland
47. Expansion of existing concessionary travel schemes to cover rail should be considered to enable more users to access affordable rail travel
48. The introduction of new rail fare structures should be explored to remove inequalities and to ensure that journeys to similar destinations incur similar costs which are affordable for all users
49. Integrated ticketing solutions should build upon and better promote existing schemes such as PlusBus and Rail and Sail as well as seeking new opportunities to deliver integrated and multi-journey ticketing measures for bus, rail and ferry in the region
50. Improving links between different modes of transport by reducing the distance between connecting modes and coordinating the timing of services should be taken forward as a priority wherever possible
51. Enhancements to existing bus stops will be implemented where practical to improve security, accessibility and the attractiveness of bus services for all users
52. Support the decarbonisation of the rail network in Dumfries and Galloway and explore along with rail industry partners opportunities to electrify the line south of Ayr to provide greater scope for through services and to accommodate increased demand from a relocated Stranraer Station
53. The replacement of the bus fleet with low emission vehicles will be taken forward in conjunction with partners
54. Replacement of rail rolling stock should be taken forward considering proposals for electrification of parts of the network in the region with the appropriate traction being based upon this and giving due consideration for the need to enhance the quality, accessibility and standard of rolling stock serving Dumfries and Galloway
55. Opportunities for the carriage of bikes on board trains should be explored as new rolling stock is procured, recognising that all new ScotRail trains will have spaces for bikes onboard

Theme 8: Supporting Safe, Effective and Resilient Connections to Loch Ryan and Other Key Regional, National, and International Locations

56. Increasing the connectivity to Lockerbie station by a variety of modes should be explored given its strategic importance to the region
57. Enhancements to the strategic road network including the A7, A75, A76, A77, A701 and A709 should be taken forward to improve safety, journey times, diversionary routes and improve access to key locations across the region
58. Opportunities should be sought to shift goods from HGVs onto the rail network by the creation of new rail freight hubs including the potential for the creation of an intermodal freight hub at Cairnryan / Stranraer
59. Junction improvements should be taken forward at locations of collision clusters
60. Appropriate road safety, traffic calming and management measures should be used to provide a safe environment for all road users
61. Improvements to the quality of the road network should be prioritised through an enhanced programme of resurfacing in Dumfries and Galloway initially focused on segments of road that have poor surfacing on major routes
62. Opportunities for additional dedicated rest areas and motorhome park-ups across the region should be explored and implemented as appropriate



Theme 9: Managing Our Car Traffic

- 63. Dumfries and Galloway will make its contribution to reducing car dependency and contributing to Scottish Government's target to reduce car km use by 20% by 2030 (measured in car km against a 2019 baseline) where possible and practical and subject to the updated route map to be published in Autumn 2024, reflecting the regional circumstances and rurality of our area
- 64. A combination of enhanced active travel, public transport, shared mobility and digital infrastructure will be used to provide an effective alternative to car travel with a particular focus on reducing single occupancy car journeys
- 65. Proportionate behaviour change, demand management and parking measures will be taken forward to support modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and reduce car dependency across the region



Theme 10: Making the Most of New Opportunities

66. The implementation of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) in Dumfries and Galloway will be taken forward in close coordination with the delivery of the new public transport model
67. A range of shared mobility measures should be taken forward across the region taking into account its varying characteristics and dispersed population to provide access to a variety of transport options without requiring ownership
68. Opportunities to capitalise upon the growth of micro mobility should be explored alongside the development of mobility hubs
69. Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) should be implemented alongside other enhancements to the strategic road network to improve the safety and efficiency of its operation



Delivery

70. SWestrans will develop a Delivery Plan which sets out a series of actions associated with each of the Priorities identified in this RTS and which contribute towards achieving the RTS Vision and Strategy Objectives.
71. The delivery of the RTS Priorities will have a focus on providing opportunities for home grown businesses, skills and employment for the region's population
72. The Delivery Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated throughout the lifetime of the RTS (2023-2042).



