
SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Meeting of Friday, 28th March, 2025
at 10.30 am in Council Hall - English Street, Dumfries

Members of the Board

John Campbell (Chair)	Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Karen Jackson (Vice-Chair)	South of Scotland Enterprise;
Jim H Dempster	Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Stephanie Mottram	NHS Dumfries and Galloway;
Willie Scobie	Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Keith Walters	Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Andrew S Wood	Dumfries and Galloway Council;

Simon Bradbury
Lead Officer, South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Meeting of Friday, 28th March, 2025
at 10.30 am on Council Hall - English Street, Dumfries

1. **SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
3. **MINUTE OF MEETING ON 31 JANUARY 2025** 1 - 6
FOR APPROVAL.
4. **UPDATE ON THE CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ON 10 MARCH 2025** 7 - 50

Members of the Board are asked to note the discussion at the COSS session and the draft outcomes identified.
5. **EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25** 51 - 70

Members of the Board are asked to note and comment on the external audit plan for 2024/25 in the Appendix.
6. **DRAFT REVENUE EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2025/26** 71 - 72

Members of the Board are asked to agree the draft revenue budget for 2025/26 as set out in Table 1.
7. **ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING** 73 - 76

Members of the Board are asked to: (1) note the strong demand for behaviour change funding from the local community and the collaborative work being done across Dumfries and Galloway Council; and (2) note the current work undertaken to allocate the funding to appropriate projects.
8. **OBSERVERS UPDATE** 77 - 78

Members of the Board are asked to note that an update of Observers is being undertaken by the Secretary and will report to the board in June.
9. **SWESTRANS BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26** 79 - 90

Members of the Board are asked to: (1) review and provide any comments on the content of the proposed Business Plan 2025/26; and (2) approve the Lead Officer to amend the draft considering

any comments and finalise for publication and circulation.

10. SWESTRANS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 91 - 128

Members of the Board are asked to: (1) agree the SWestrans Annual Report for 2023/24 attached as the Appendix for submission to Scottish Ministers, and (2) provide comments on what information they would like included in the Annual Report for 2024/25.

11. EQUALITIES REPORTING 129 - 148

Members of the Board are asked to: (1) note SWestrans duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations; (2) note the SWestrans Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2025 at Appendix 1; and (3) review and agree the draft SWestrans Equality Outcomes for 2025-2029 at Appendix 2.

12. SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL, REDUCING CAR KM - AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT 149 - 194

Members of the Board are asked to: (1) note the Audit Scotland Report on Sustainable Travel and await further updates on the implementation of the report's recommendations; and (2) agree to work towards the target of 20% reduction of car km by 2030 through the implementation of the RTS priority 9.1 and to update the board in future on action and progress.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIR DUE TO THE NEED FOR A DECISION

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND OBSERVERS

It is recommended that Members of the Board agree to consider the following items 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 and 9 (item 15) and paragraphs 6, 8 and 9 (item 16) of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

15. BUS NETWORK - HOMOLOGATED DECISION

Circulated to Board Members only.

16. LOCAL BUS NETWORK PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Circulated to Board Members only.

Lead Officer
South West of Scotland Transport
Partnership

Secretary
South West of Scotland Transport
Partnership

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SOUTH WEST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Meeting of Friday, 31st January, 2025
at 10.30 am in Council Hall - English Street, Dumfries

Present**Members**

John Campbell (Chair) – Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Karen Jackson (Vice-Chair) – NHS Dumfries and Galloway;
Richard Brodie (Substitute) – Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Keith Walters – Dumfries and Galloway Council;

Officials

Simon Bradbury – Lead Officer;
Claire Rogerson – Secretary to the Board;
Kirsty Dunsmore – Policy and Projects Officer;
Grant Coltart – Interim Transportation Manager;
Peter McCormick – Policy and Projects Officer;
Keith Munn – Policy and Projects Officer;
Janet Sutton – Finance Officer;
Linda Richardson – Public Transport Officer.

Apologies

Jim H Dempster – Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Stephanie Mottram – Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Willie Scobie – Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Andrew S Wood – Dumfries and Galloway Council;

Observers

June Hay – Outdoor Access Forum;
Laura Moodie – D&G Bus Users Group;

In Attendance

Karen Brownlie – Interim Assistant Director Transport and Infrastructure, Dumfries and Galloway Council;
Sean W Marshall – Substitute Board Member, Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Minutes		Minutes
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1 SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES

4 Board Members present and 4 apologies, noting that Richard Brodie was a substitute on behalf of Jim Dempster.

2 Board Members present at Dumfries and Galloway Council HQ, English Street, Dumfries being John Campbell and Keith Walters.

2 Board Members present via MS Teams being Karen Jackson and Richard Brodie as agreed by the Chair.

It was further noted the substitute Board Member Sean Marshall was in attendance.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NONE declared.

3 MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING 29 NOVEMBER 2024

Decision

APPROVED.

4 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2024/25 FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024

Decision

The Board **NOTED** the forecast outturn for the revenue budget as at 31 December 2024.

5 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME 2024/25- 2026/27 UPDATE

Decision

The Board **NOTED** the update on the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 as outlined in the report.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

Decision

The Board:-

6.1 **CONSIDERED** and **AGREED** the Risk Register for 2025/26 including as Appendix 1 of the report, noting that risks 9 and 18 (Loss of Staff)

Minutes		Minutes
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would be combined for future reporting;

NOTED

6.2 the changes to the 2024/25 Risk Register incorporated into the Risk Register for 2025/26; and

6.3 that as recommended in the internal audit, the Risk Register will be brought to the Board for review on a twice-yearly basis, with the September Board identified as the next opportunity for review.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIR DUE TO THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Decision

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

8 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND OBSERVERS

Decision

AGREED to consider the following item of business in private and excluded the Press, members of the public and Observers from the meeting given the reports contained confidential or exempt information in respect of paragraph 6 (item 9) and paragraphs 6,8 and 9 (items 10 and 11) of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

9 STRANRAER RAILWAY STATION

Summary of Report

This report updated the Board on proposals from Network Rail for Stranraer Railway Station.

Decision

The Board **NOTED** the proposals for Stranraer Railway Station.

10 LOCAL BUS NETWORK REVIEW UPDATE

Summary of Report

This report updated the Board on progress made since the last meeting with the process of retendering the Local Bus Network and set out key priorities and next steps over the coming months.

Decision

Minutes		Minutes
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The Board:-

NOTED

- 10.1 the progress made in the bus network retendering project since the last Board meeting;
- 10.2 the potential procurement approaches being considered for the retendering process;
- 10.3 **PROVIDED** feedback on the overall direction and progress with the project and next steps ahead of the next Board meeting; and
- 10.4 **FURTHER NOTED** the provision within Standing Orders for the delegation to be provided to the Lead Officer, after consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair to determine decisions where they are required to be expedited before the next scheduled board meeting. When that Standing Order is enacted a report would be presented to the next board for homologation of the decision by the Board.

DISSENT – Richard Brodie requested that his dissent be recorded in respect of the decision at 10.4 having failed to secure a seconder for his motion for a special board meeting to be arranged.

11 ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING

Summary of Report

This report advised the Board of further changes and rationalisation to the distribution and management of the behaviour change element of active travel funding from 2025/26 that concluded the Active Travel Transformation process. The report also advised the Board of the current work undertaken to update Transport Scotland on SWestrans delivery of this funding.

PROCEDURE – The Board was advised that there had been a slight increase in funding to SWestrans since the report had been written.

Decision

The Board:-

NOTED

- 11.1 the further change to the distribution, scope and management of the Behaviour Change element of active travel funding from 2025/26 and the addition of Sustainable Travel and Community Funding to the offer;
- 11.2 the current work undertaken to provide the necessary initial information to Transport Scotland on the SWestrans element of this funding; and
- 11.3 **AGREED** that officers continue to develop potential interventions including a community grant scheme in partnership with the other Regional Transport Partnerships, Transport Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

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UPDATE ON THE CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND ON 10 MARCH 2025

1. Reason for Report

1.1 This report provides an update on transport related discussions and agreed actions at the recent Convention of the South of Scotland (COSS) session that took place on Monday 10 March in Dumfries, chaired by Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP.

1.2 The report provides an opportunity for the SWestrans Board to consider the implications of actions agreed at the COSS meeting for SWestrans and transport connectivity in the South-West region.

2. Background to the Convention of the South of Scotland

2.1 The Convention of the South of Scotland meets twice a year “to bring together public bodies with a responsibility for growth and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on priorities and how to tackle key regional issues.”¹ Chaired by the Deputy First Minister, Kate Forbes MSP, each Convention agrees a series of actions following the discussion.

2.2 Discussion at recent Conventions has been focused on the three “grand challenges” of the region, identified by the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership² – housing, skills and transport – with the most recent Convention focused on transport.

2.3 March’s Convention was informed by the work of the REP’s Strategic Action Group for Transport (SAGT), chaired by Councillor Jenny Linehan, Scottish Borders Council’s Executive Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport, as well as officers from SWestrans and SEStran, both local authorities and SOSE participating. SAGT also includes other members of the REP from communities and the third sector.

3. Overview of topics considered at March’s Convention of the South of Scotland

3.1 COSS has recognised the transport challenges faced in the South of Scotland that are shaped by the region’s rural nature, current infrastructure and population density. It focused on four specific areas, to drive tangible actions that could be taken from the discussion. The themes were:

- data

¹ [Convention of the South of Scotland - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/convention-of-the-south-of-scotland/)

² <https://www.southofscotlandrep.com/>

- funding and alignment of the Local Bus Network,
- rail and,
- workforce issues.

3.2 Discussion was informed by a series of concise papers (see **Appendix 1**) on those four areas.

3.3 At COSS, each topic was introduced with a brief summary of the item (see **Appendix 2**), followed by a facilitated discussion designed to surface key actions. A summary of each of the four themes is described below.

1. Data

- Presented by Ewan Doyle, from the Edinburgh and South East Region City Deal, and focused on learnings from the Edinburgh & South East Scotland Workplace Mobility Project.
- Highlighted how data can be used to support transformation across the public sector, including transport provision and connectivity, by empowering high quality data-based decision making to inform the efficient and effective use of public sector funding.

2. Funding and alignment of the Local Bus Network

- Presented by Simon Bradbury, SWestrans Lead Officer, and focused on challenges and opportunities facing local bus services in the region
- Highlighted how Bus Network Reviews, greater collaboration across partners and legislative changes driving funding models could be used to improve the situation.

3. Rail

- Presented by Graeme Johnstone, Scottish Borders Council, and focused on challenges and opportunities facing rail services and connectivity in the region.
- Highlighted strategic stations and rail corridors in the region, how these could be better utilised to support communities and economic growth and illustrated opportunities for investment.
- Considered opportunities for better integration with other modes.

4. Workforce

- Presented by Professor Russel Griggs OBE, chair of SOSE and focused on challenges and opportunities facing the transport sector workforce in the region – with a special focus on bus driver recruitment & retention.
- Highlighted current initiatives (i.e. Transport Scotland National Driver Shortage sub-group) and opportunities for greater collaboration to address issues, including a greater role for Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

- Demonstrated the need for the skills sector to engage and reflect on changes in the transport sector workforce skills requirements in order to reach transport decarbonisation goals.

4. Key actions emerging from discussion

4.1 The discussion led to a series of actions that the COSS secretariat is currently finalising for agreement with COSS members. These are likely to cover:

1. Data

- Data driven analytics need to form part of decision making, with it being built into how we make decisions
- Identify good practice from the Workforce Mobility Project to create a best practice transport hub, using the data analysis to provide consistent high quality data which everyone would have access to
- Ongoing data work to share best practice – identify what data partners have (education) and how this can be effectively shared
- Consider how to capture data to understand unrealised journeys across the region – not just currently happening but where the latent potential is (i.e. Chapelcross; Eyemouth port development).
- Partners to illustrate how robust data can inform strategic decision making and investment.

2. Local Bus Network

- Develop a business case for expanded bus network provision in the region – built on a strengthened approach to data collection. This should be done through the lens of bus as a growth sector.
- Work with Transport Scotland to find innovative means to make use of the existing funding model for bus provision to better support rural bus services and connectivity.
- Look at how to apply for funding for financial support to better expand and improve bus networks
- Increase collaborative efforts for the promotion of existing ticketing for local bus services and other transport modes and connections - including Scottish Borders & Dumfries & Galloway - to see what is possible. Scotrail and regional bus operators to be engaged and participate in promotional efforts.
- Transport Scotland to inform local authorities when they are able to access the Bus Infrastructure Fund for next financial year, including the eligibility criteria
- Partners to gather and pool other funding opportunities for strategic use to improve bus infrastructure and wider transport connectivity (i.e. Community benefit funds; Section 75)

3. Rail

- Partners to look at how to maximise the impact of existing infrastructure, including the investment in the station at Reston
- Increase collaborative efforts for the promotion of existing integrated ticketing for local bus services and other transport modes and connections - including Scottish Borders & Dumfries & Galloway - to see what is possible. Scotrail and regional bus operators to be engaged and participate in promotional efforts.
- Agreement to collaborate on representations to UK Government to ensure we maximise opportunities at key stations in the regions – such as at Reston – and make the strategic case for increased service delivery and further infrastructure investment.
- Explore opportunities to enhance marketing of rail services in the SoS – adding weight in a digital age and making the most of the unique selling point of the region.
- Partners to clarify regional (across the South) transport priorities and timings of what should come first – i.e. resourcing data collection & analysis, extension of rail network, services and infrastructure at stations, bus provision, active travel. Partners to be realistic about what and when and ensure an agile and nimble approach, with opportunities to do some things sooner rather than later. Partners to ensure joined up approach to promotion of positive activity and people are made aware of work taking place.

4. Workforce

- Partners to work with the skills sector and develop plan to remedy bus driver workforce gaps with the Skills Development Scotland committing to working on key areas around certification
- Opportunity to promote transport sector and bus driver careers and demonstrate what good looks like - i.e. career path, incentives, what does growth look like, work life balance, career opportunities etc.
- Explore opportunities for people at different stages in their working life
- Transport Scotland to share bus task force activities and action. Ensure that South of Scotland are fully represented.

5. Implications	
Financial	Consider outcome of discussion and impact on SWestrans resourcing and participation with SAGT and future COSS sessions
Policy	Consider outcome of discussion and impact on SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy and current activity
Equalities	Any reduction in public transport will have a negative impact on equity of access and may disproportionately impact those with protected characteristics.

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	There are no direct risks related to this report.

6. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:

6.1 Note the discussion at the COSS session and the draft outcomes identified.

<p>Report Author – Tom Bishop, Strategy Manager, Infrastructure & Investment, South of Scotland Enterprise</p> <p>Date of Report: 19 March 2025 File Ref: SW2/Meetings/2025</p>	<p>Approved by: Simon Bradbury Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN</p>
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Appendices

1. Papers shared with COSS attendees for 10 March session
2. Slide deck from COSS session on 10 March

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CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

MONDAY 10 MARCH 2025

[Paper 4]

Title: Transport

Authors: John Curry, Director of Infrastructure and Environment, Scottish Borders Council, and representative of South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership Strategic Action Group – Transport; and Fiona Brown, Director of Transport Strategy and Analysis, Transport Scotland

Introduction

The Convention of the South of Scotland presents a key opportunity in strengthening the collaborative regional partnership between Team South of Scotland, Transport Scotland, and the Scottish Government.

This partnership has the opportunity to deliver an integrated transport vision for the region through coordinated policy and action. Collectively working to tackle mobility challenges, and enhance connectivity by improving the availability, accessibility and affordability of public transport. Developing innovative rural pilot solutions to maximise economic opportunities by leveraging the region's strategic location and natural resources. Building on the existing efforts to integrate ticketing and enhance bus services and capitalising on strategic infrastructure like the Borders Railway.

Improving transport infrastructure in the South of Scotland could significantly boost economic growth. By attracting new businesses, particularly in emerging sectors like renewable energy, and supporting the expansion of existing ones, better connectivity should enhance the region's competitiveness. This, in turn, can lead to job creation and greater economic resilience.

Enhanced transport options can reduce social isolation by connecting residents to essential services, employment, and education. This improved mobility can lead to higher educational attainment and better skills development, which are crucial for the region's overall progress.

Transitioning to electric and low-carbon fuels helps meet climate goals and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, promoting active travel, such as cycling and walking, not only supports environmental sustainability but also contributes to better health outcomes for people.

Tourism stands to gain significantly from improved transport infrastructure. By addressing key transport priorities like road signage and establishing a reliable network of electric vehicle chargers, the region can attract more visitors, thereby boosting the local economy. This growth in tourism can create new jobs and further economic opportunities.

There are opportunities for developing drone technology and producing green fuels, which can create new industries and jobs in the region. Moreover, using data-driven decision-making and smart infrastructure can enhance transport efficiency and user experience.

Improved transport options can enhance access to healthcare and recreational activities, promoting overall well-being. Reliable and affordable transport options improve the quality of life by providing greater mobility and access to opportunities. Additionally, better transport safety reduces accidents, ensuring safer travel for both people and freight.

Better transport connectivity strengthens community cohesion. Enhanced infrastructure supports inclusive growth and ensures equitable access to services, fostering a sense of community and social engagement.

In October 2024, the Convention considered the unique transport challenges faced in the South of Scotland due to its low population density and rural expanse and it considered three key priorities for further focus, those were: Improved Data; Integration; and Connectivity.

Discussion Format

Transport is a multifaceted subject and it is not possible to adequately cover all aspects in one discussion, so the March 2025 Convention will focus on four themes:

Discussion 1: Data

Discussion 2: Funding and alignment of the Local Bus Network

Discussion 3: Rail

Discussion 4: Workforce

Each theme is introduced within this report. Each introduction concludes with a starter question(s). The starter questions will form the basis of the discussion at the Convention and attendees are strongly encouraged to consider their responses in advance of the discussion taking place.

The objective is to stimulate a positive, solution-oriented discussion that enables a series of actions and next steps to be agreed upon, driving the region towards a prosperous and sustainable future.

Discussion 1: Data

The Workforce Mobility Project has showcased 'best practice' examples of data-driven decisions and action across Scotland. The project demonstrates how data can deliver more effective and efficient use of public sector funding and resources to support the economic ambitions of the region, while linking Transport, Spatial Planning and Economic Development decision making. It has helped deliver operational efficiencies that support communities and maximise the economic ambitions of the South of Scotland, aligned to the principles of National Transport Strategy 2, National Planning Framework 4, SEStran Regional Transport Strategy, Regional Prosperity Framework, SoS Regional Economic Strategy, and the Draft Vision for Public Sector Data.

The Edinburgh City Region is recognised as the Data Capital of Europe with the most productive innovation economy outside the golden triangle (Oxford, Cambridge and London) and can drive innovation, investment and the adoption of technology to seize the opportunities of a future economy. As part of the City Region Deal the Workforce Mobility Project has supported LA partners to demonstrate that data can inform transport decision making and support an 'infrastructure first' approach to spatial planning and economic development investments. The project has also developed data analysis tools that can assess the accessibility of key sites and inform the future investment decision making of the public sector (example shown in Figure 1 below). The project has just scratched the surface of the potential for data and collaborative working across Scotland and there is a risk that the 'best practice' will not continue at the same pace within Local Authorities after the current project funding ends in March 2027.

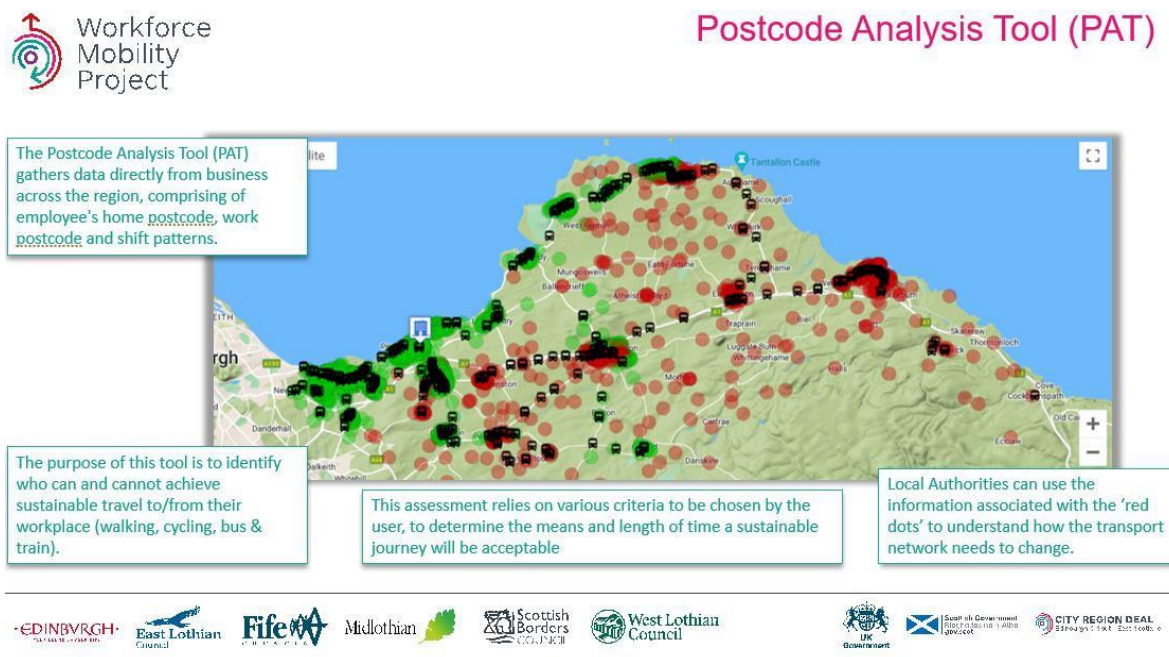


Figure 1 – Employee travel demand assessment tool.
Map data (c) Microsoft, sourced from Bing Maps

As an example, working with Scottish Borders Council on the Bus Network Review project, the Workforce Mobility Project has utilised national and bespoke data sets to build a network business plan. By designing bus services to cater for known demand rather than just serving key corridors, with the aim of better serving communities and growing patronage, the project has successfully supported the Passenger Transport team in sustaining and enhancing services within the current constrained resources (example shown in Figure 2 below). This collaboration showcases the data expertise and commercial acumen that exists in the South of Scotland, exemplifying new ways of working that could potentially expand and be adopted nationally within the context of public sector reform.

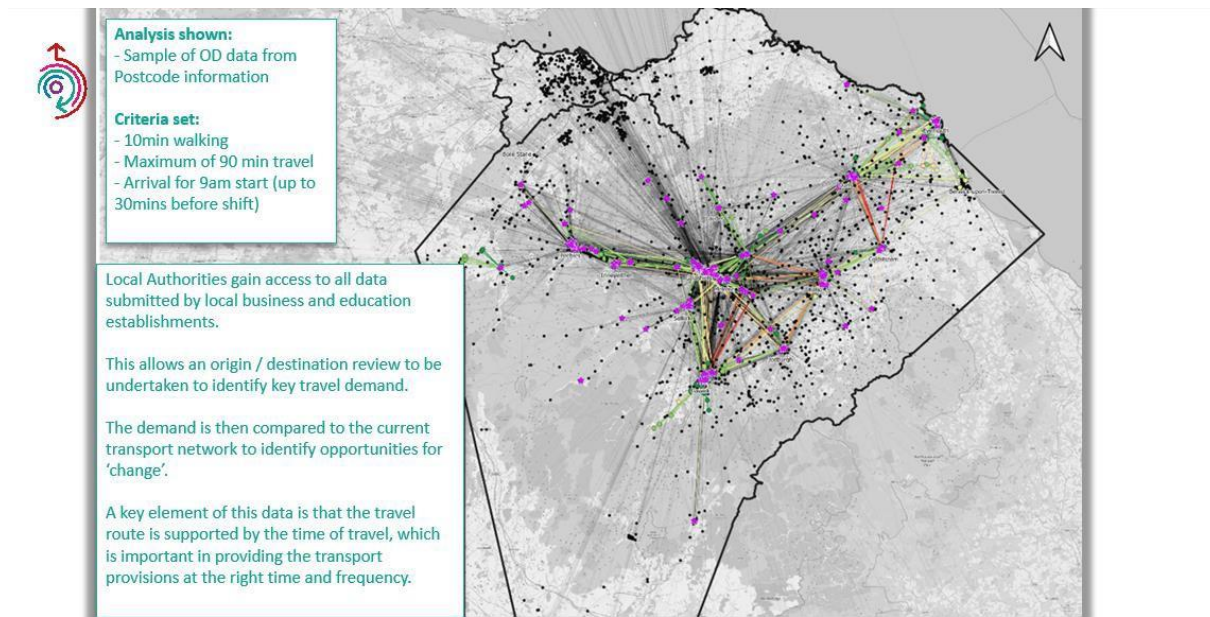


Figure 2 – Employee travel demand analysis to inform transport solutions.
 Map data (c) Microsoft, sourced from Bing Maps

The Workforce Mobility Project has also been working with economic development and spatial planning teams across the City Deal Region to optimise economic investment zones with public transport networks and identify LDP sites that are supported by current sustainable transport, and where new sites should be developed to support the viable expansion of public transport (example provided in Figure 3 below).

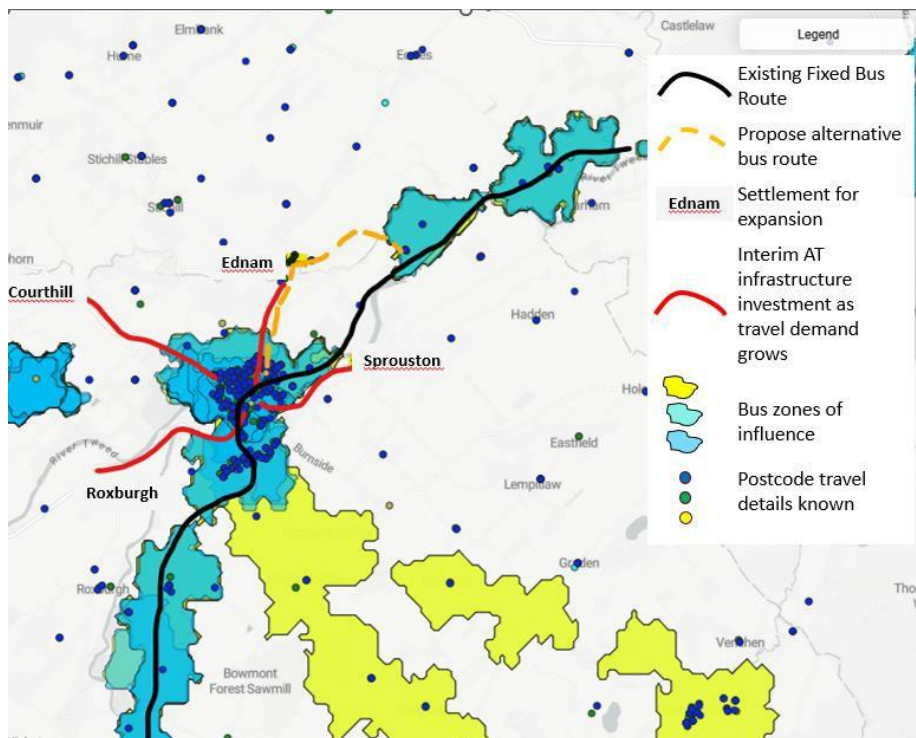


Figure 3 – LDP site identification to support public transport expansion
 Map data (c) Microsoft, sourced from Bing Maps

A potential opportunity exists for the Workforce Mobility Project Team and Scottish Borders Council, to work with Transport Scotland and the Digital Directorate at the Scottish Government to develop a case for change in transport data collection and analysis (local, regional & national

data), from what has been demonstrated in the Scottish Borders and across the City Region. The project will demonstrate the benefits of:

- Centralising and aggregating data collection to remove duplication, deliver economies of scale, coordinate efficient data collection and accessibility;
- Centralising data analysis support for LAs to deliver efficiencies and consistency;
- Centralising data controls to safeguard data, but also maximise the potential influence of the data collected;
- Leadership for embedding consistent data standards across the public sector;
- Central resources to increase the availability and sustainability of quality data and analysis for the public sector; and
- Providing data and analysis in forms that don't need bespoke training, software and skills (increase accessibility); and
- Identify commercial opportunities from the data analysis tools developed.

Overall, the objective will be to support transformation across the public sector, by empowering high quality data-based decision making to inform the efficient and effective use of public sector funding, building on the investment that has already been made to establish and prove the concepts of the Workforce Mobility Project to date.

The region is also exploring the potential of a "regional intelligence hub" developing capacity to make more use of data and evidence in a rural setting, to drive economic growth and unlock opportunity in the South. While more general and regional in focus, it would be a valuable complement to the work on transport data.

Starter Questions

1. What innovative data-driven solutions can we use to improve outcomes for people and businesses in the region or to improve service planning and decision making; economic inactivity, transition to net zero; or land use planning?
2. In what ways can we ensure the sustainability and continuity of data-driven projects like the Workforce Mobility Project and what role should different stakeholders play in this process?

Theme 2: Funding and Alignment of the Local Bus Network

Bus services play a vital part in connecting communities across the South of Scotland. To provide an example of current services, in the Scottish Borders, there are over 2.5m bus journeys a year, with 80% of bus services supported by the Council. The Council provide £1.3m in revenue funding annually to support the delivery of vital transport links for employment, access to healthcare, social activities and leisure. An additional £250k is invested by Scottish Borders Council in demand responsive transport solutions.

Buses connect the region with towns and cities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Carlisle and Berwick-upon-Tweed and enables the main bus operators to maintain commercial bus services on across the network. Without the supported network, commercial services would be unviable.

The recent network review undertaken by Scottish Borders Council, highlighted a need to improve frequencies across the region, specifically in improving evening services in key towns, links to the Borders General Hospital, and enhance links into rail at Galashiels, Tweedbank and Reston.

In 2024, Dumfries and Galloway Council also undertook a Bus Network Review of the Council and SWestrans' supported local bus services and home to school transport, to identify a sustainable future operation that would discharge the authorities' statutory duties and achieve relevant policy goals. There are 94 local bus routes covering over 10 million km per annum in Dumfries and Galloway. The review identified how the instability of the bus network in Dumfries and Galloway is 'particularly acute, due to inherent low demand and fragility of revenue, while the limited number of operators means low competition for contracts'. As with the Scottish Borders Council bus network review, the study identified the need for better connectivity with employment hubs and rail stations but also identified opportunities for more transformational changes to the model of bus service delivery in a highly rural area.

At present, there is no additional revenue funding available to support the delivery of additional services which in turn would deliver growth. However, there may be opportunities to deliver better connected network through changing the way funds such as Network Support Grant (NSG) and concessionary fare reimbursement scheme are used to support services.

It is estimated that there is around £850k in NSG support for Borders Services and an additional £5m in concessionary fares reimbursement invested in the Borders. The South of Scotland would like to explore the potential for greater flexibility in the way that the NSG support is provided. For example, it is worth exploring if the Councils could receive NSG payments directly in compliance with subsidy control requirements, potentially redirecting available funding, which could deliver improved coverage and frequencies across the South of Scotland, benefitting communities, unlocking socio-economic and wellbeing opportunities, and stimulating greater revenue growth.

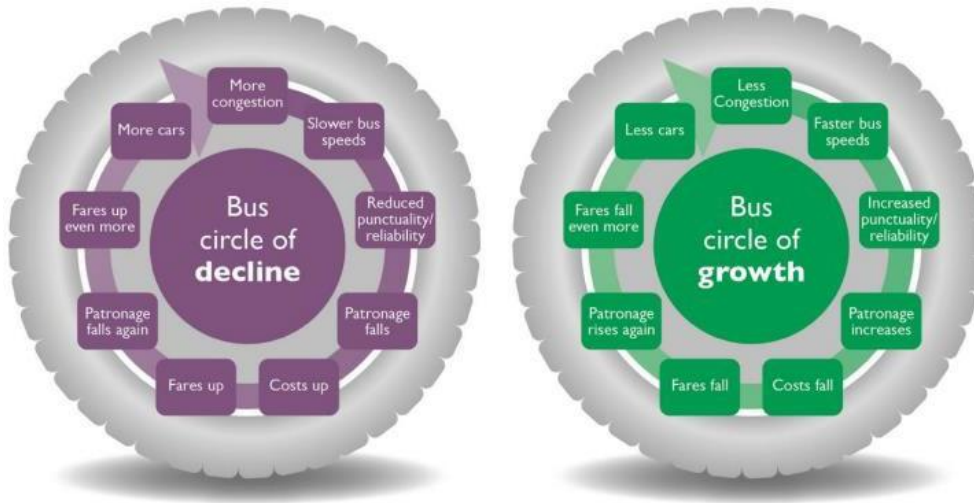
Improving connections between bus and train at key interchanges such as Tweedbank, Galashiels, Reston, Dumfries, Lockerbie and Stranraer could be made more attractive through the adoption of integrated ticketing such as [One Ticket](#). This would connect modes of transport to reduce running cost, speed up journey times, enhance the passenger experience, making public transport a more attractive option.

There is an opportunity for Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries & Galloway Council, SEStran and SWestrans to work collaboratively with Transport Scotland and bus operators to develop options and a case for change that explores greater flexibility and/or the redistribution of funding to improve (expand or increase) service frequencies, equality of provision, network range, and drive patronage up, all to inform future policy development.

This work would be supported and complemented by the Bus Network Reviews and SEStran's emerging Regional Bus Strategy¹, which will be published in July 2025, both of which would inform the business

¹ <https://sestran.gov.uk/projects/regional-bus-strategy/>

case. Further, the National Transport Strategy highlights the virtuous cycle that bus investment can bring, as well as the increased congestion caused by allowing the status quo to continue.



2

The options study and case for change would establish potential patronage, income and costs, initial investment, ongoing financial support for operators, and legislative change. It would include interventions to promote and market the bus network and demand management measures. Obvious mechanisms that will be considered will include the rate and processes of NSG and NEC reimbursement; frequency and network range; bus infrastructure and interchanges; and user wellbeing. It would also consider risks, impacts and mitigations to any alternative solutions including impact on commercially operated services. Finally, it would reflect on the statutory nature of national travel concession schemes, and subsidy controls. The outcomes of the study will make a valuable contribution to future policy development on supporting growth and improvement of bus services and plans to test new approaches across Scotland.

Starter Questions

1. How can we optimise the use of public sector funding to enhance bus service coverage and frequencies in Scotland, particularly in rural areas?
2. What innovative approaches can we adopt to improve the integration of bus and rail services at key interchanges, and how can integrated ticketing systems like One Ticket be effectively implemented to enhance the passenger experience?
3. In what ways can we support the sustainability and growth of bus services in the South of Scotland, considering the challenges of low demand and revenue fragility, and what role should different stakeholders play in this process?
4. What potential projects for bus infrastructure are there in the region that would benefit from funding?
5. Where could powers under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 be targeted initially?

² National Transport strategy Figure 6, Pg 25-
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>

Theme 3: Rail

To achieve car use reduction and net zero in Scotland by 2045, the South of Scotland believe that people need to be provided the opportunity and encouraged to use public transport. Removing the barriers, by making rail easier to access and use, would encourage rural areas to shift towards more sustainable mass transit initiatives, away from private car, and strengthening the commercial viability of such services. This aligns with the national policy and would help justify the investment already made and the nationalisation of the railway in Scotland.

There has been significant investment of over £20m in the Scottish Borders to deliver the new station at Reston, with SBC having provided approximately £3m.

The initial modelling work indicated that a regular local service on the East Coast Mainline (ECML) would be achievable. The extended platform design at the station was intended to allow long distance carriers such as LNER and TransPennine to call on an irregular basis, supplementing a local ScotRail service.

Since opening in May 2022, there has been concern about the low number of trains calling at the station daily. The low frequency does not encourage people to use the station. The existing ScotRail Service terminates at Dunbar. ScotRail has suggested that there are significant costs associated with extending the service and possibly turning at Berwick-upon-Tweed, meaning that a local service has not materialised, and there is doubt regarding the capacity of the ECML to support a local ScotRail service, despite the modelling that supported the business case.

In addition, there is significant allocation in the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan for housing and mixed-use development opportunities at Reston and surrounding areas including Eyemouth. The lack of housing is a key national issue, for the South of Scotland, it is a particular barrier to attracting new employers and investment.

There has recently been significant funding from UK Government (via Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Partnership) for Eyemouth Port Masterplan and there is collective efforts underway positioning Eyemouth and Reston to be classified as one of the key locations in the South of Scotland for potential investors. The intention is to seize the economic opportunities afforded by offshore wind investment in the North Sea, realising sufficient port infrastructure and supply chain resilience to support renewable energy ambitions in the North Sea.

While it is understood that timetable changes in December 2025 will see an increase in train frequencies, a more significant transformational opportunity would be the introduction of a local regular and frequent ScotRail service. This, alongside a sustained and targeted marketing campaign, would more effectively realise the benefits envisaged in the Reston Station business case and realise a more significant return on investment.

Beyond Reston, following the recent decision from the UK Department for Transport to match the Scottish Government's commitment, the Borderlands Growth Deal funding of £10m (£5m from Scottish Government and £5m from the UK Department for Transport) has recently been confirmed and the appointment of a Senior Project Manager to lead the business case work is currently being procured.

The Borders Railway Reference Group will reconvene after the appointment of a Senior Project Manager and momentum is expected to build from then. Team South of Scotland is keen to continue to strengthen our partnership with Scottish Government and Transport Scotland and look forward to their continued support for the business case and feasibility work to extend the Borders Railway from Tweedbank to Hawick and Carlisle via Langholm. The recent announcement that Centre Parcs will develop their first Scottish site north of Hawick amplifies the significant economic and tourism opportunities and related benefits that a railway extension could unlock for the South of Scotland and Scotland more widely.

Lack of rail connectivity is a key issue for Dumfries and Galloway too, both in terms of rail service frequency and coverage. This has a detrimental impact in encouraging people of working age to move to the area, which in turn impacts on economic growth and vitality of the region.

The SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy outlines a number of rail related priorities associated with the objective to improve 'Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity'. There are several stations within Dumfries and Galloway that have a poor rail service, which if improved would improve connections to economic, leisure and some health and community facilities.

The ambition to relocate the rail station at Stranraer continued to be explored to provide easier access for rail users and better integrate it with the rest of the town centre. Dumfries and Galloway Council and SWestrans remain in close contact with Network Rail to explore this option further as part of feasibility work being developed.

Improving strategic east-west connectivity in the region remains a priority and consideration should be given to reinstating the Castle Douglas and Dumfries Railway between Dumfries and Stranraer. Reopening the railway line between Dumfries and Stranraer along a similar route to the previous one would provide a sustainable alternative to the A75 enabling modal shift.

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 yet been evidenced, their reopening is supported and remains an ambition of SWestrans.

The development of new rail lines provides an opportunity to move both people and freight from road to rail leading to less emissions and a reduction in the other negative impacts associated with high traffic flow across the region.

Starter Questions

1. What actions could we undertake to explore an increase in the frequency and reliability of train services at new and existing stations like Reston?
2. How can we ensure that rail and bus services are integrated to meet the needs of local communities and support economic growth?
3. What collaborative approaches can we adopt to address the challenges of low rail service frequency and coverage in Dumfries and Galloway, and how can we ensure these efforts align with broader regional and national transport strategies?

Theme 4: Workforce

In our ongoing efforts to develop a transport system that supports the South of Scotland's economic ambitions, we must address a critical dependency: a skilled workforce. The transport sector, which includes roles such as drivers, mechanics, infrastructure engineers, planners, and designers, has faced significant challenges in securing a skilled workforce in recent years.

This issue was highlighted during a regional transport skills workshop held in 2023, where net zero initiatives were examined and how this might drive changes in workforce skills requirements, particularly in relation to the decarbonisation of transport. More details about this challenge, along with actions taken by the Scottish Government can be found in the [draft Transport Just Transition plan \(TJTP\)](#), published for public consultation on 24 February. While we have a base of skills provision in place, it is crucial for skills providers to stay abreast of developments and adapt accordingly.

One area of particular concern is bus driver recruitment and retention. The rurality of the South of Scotland exacerbates this issue, as a tight labour market has led individuals with in-demand skills to move to sectors offering better pay and conditions. Additionally, barriers such as age, the cost of insurance and access to affordable housing makes it difficult for young people to obtain driving jobs. In response to the acute shortage of bus drivers in 2022, a national working group was established to examine the issues and develop actions to address them.

The Driver Shortage Sub-group identified three key workstreams: improving licence and process efficiencies, exploring alternative recruitment opportunities, and raising the profile of bus driving as a career. This was supported in the Scottish Borders with the development of the Bus Drivers Careers Website delivered by the Workforce Mobility Project [Bus Driver Careers Helix](#), and a series of recruitment roadshows to promote the sector and career progression opportunities. These efforts have led to positive changes, with operators in Scotland reporting an improved resourcing position.

A further challenge for operators is in dealing with anti-social behaviour. This has a negative impact it has staff morale, wellbeing and retention. It also causes disruption to maintaining services levels when vehicles are removed from fleet for repairs. This pressure is compounded by disruption caused by road works which can further disrupt service levels and demand additional resources for commercial operators.

The attractiveness of the sector, rather than skills per se, is perhaps the most significant issue. However, the challenge lies in convincing people that bus driving is a positive career and supporting employers to make their opportunities more attractive.

The public sector can play a role in business support, addressing issues and promoting the sector. They can enable the developing sustainable business models for operators to ensure they can reward and support their staff. They can work with operators and partners to create conditions for successful and sustainable commercial operators that enhance local services contributing to key policy goals related to climate change, NSET, NTS2 and decarbonisation.

Starter Questions

1. What specific measures can we take to support commercial operators maintain bus service levels and business continuity?
2. What further support can the public sector provide to operators to support commercial bus services?
3. What specific actions can we take to make the bus industry more attractive to potential recruits and to passengers?
4. What lessons can we learn from other industries and sectors?

Convention of the South of Scotland

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Maxwell House, University of Glasgow,
Bankend Road, Dumfries

Monday 10th March 2025
13.45 – 16.45

Convention of the South of Scotland

Opening Remarks 13.45 – 13.55

*Cllr Gail Macgregor, Leader, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport*

Convention of the South of Scotland

Review of Outcomes 13.55 – 14.00

Paper 1: Actions Dashboard

Convention of the South of Scotland

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Formal approval of refreshed Terms of Reference

14.00 - 14.05

Paper 2: CoSS Terms of Reference

Convention of the South of Scotland

Regional Economic Partnership update

14.05 – 14.15

Paper 3: REP Update

Convention of the South of Scotland

Transport Introductions 14.15 - 14.25

*Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport
Cllr Jenny Linehan, Chair, REP's Strategic Action Group on Transport*

Paper 4: Transport

Background paper 1: Transport update from Autumn 2024 CoSS

Convention of the South of Scotland

Introduction to discussion 1: Data 14.25 - 14.30

Ewan Doyle, Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland City Region Deal

The Workforce Mobility Project has showcased ‘best practice’ examples of data-driven decisions and action across Scotland.

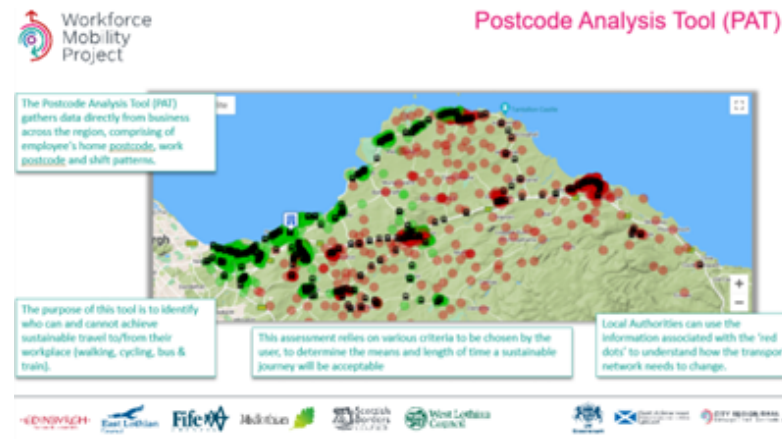
Demonstrates how data can deliver more effective and efficient use of public sector funding and resources

Linking Transport, Spatial Planning and Economic Development decision making (‘infrastructure first’ approach).

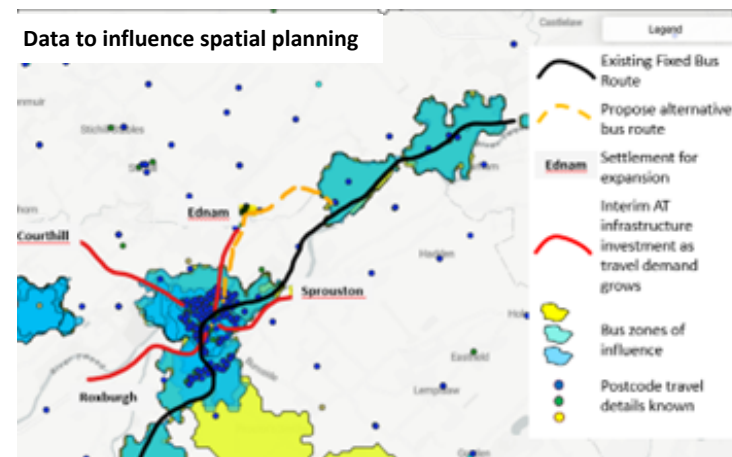
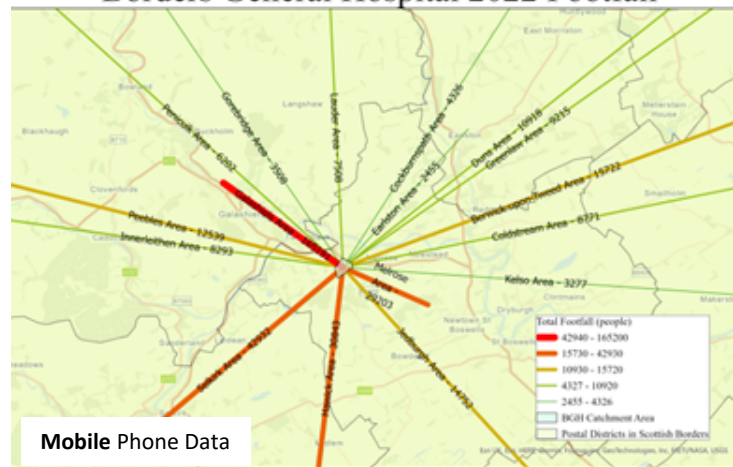
Aligned to the principles of National, Regional and Local strategies & policy.

The collaboration with SBC showcases the data expertise and commercial acumen that exists in the South of Scotland, to deliver change that benefits our communities.

There is a risk that the ‘best practice’ will not continue at the same pace within Local Authorities after the current Workforce Mobility project funding ends in March 2027.



Borders General Hospital 2022 Footfall

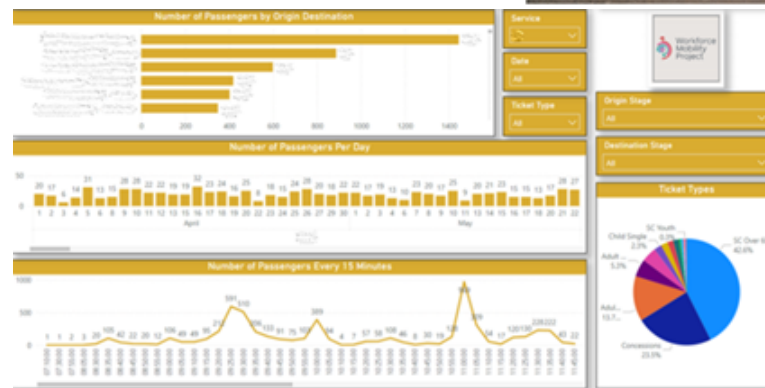


Develop a case for change in transport data collection and analysis (local, regional & national data) from what has been demonstrated in the Scottish Borders and across the City Region.

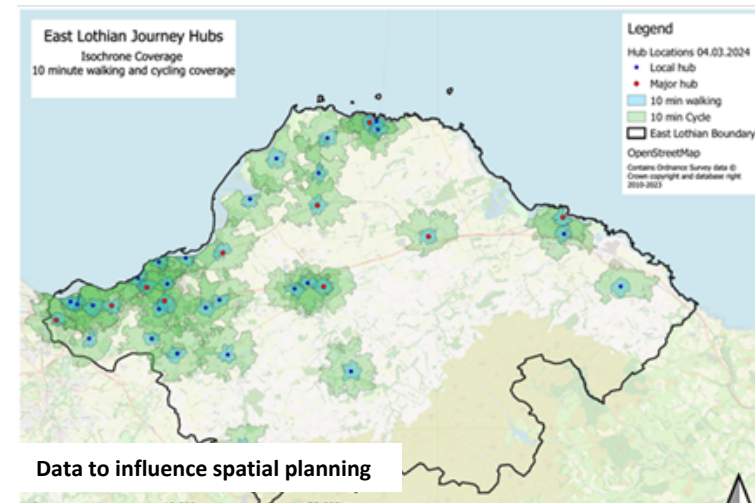
The project will demonstrate the benefits of:

- Centralising and aggregating data collection to remove duplication, deliver economies of scale, coordinate efficient data collection and accessibility;
- Centralising data analysis support for LAs to deliver efficiencies and consistency;
- Centralising data controls to safeguard data, but also maximise the potential influence of the data collected;
- Leadership for embedding consistent data standards across the public sector;
- Central resources to increase the availability and sustainability of quality data and analysis for the public sector; and
- Providing data and analysis in forms that don't need bespoke training, software and skills (increase accessibility); and
- Identify commercial opportunities from the data analysis tools developed.

Overall, the objective will be to support transformation across the public sector, by empowering high quality data-based decision making to inform the efficient and effective use of public sector funding.



Bus Service Data Dashboards



Data to influence spatial planning

Discussion 1: Data

14.30 - 14.55

Starter Questions

1. What innovative data-driven solutions can we use to improve outcomes for people and businesses in the region or to improve service planning and decision making; economic inactivity, transition to net zero; or land use planning?
2. In what ways can we ensure the sustainability and continuity of data-driven projects like the Workforce Mobility Project and what role should different stakeholders play in this process?

Convention of the South of Scotland

Introduction to discussion 2: Funding and Alignment of the Local Bus Network

14.55 - 15.00

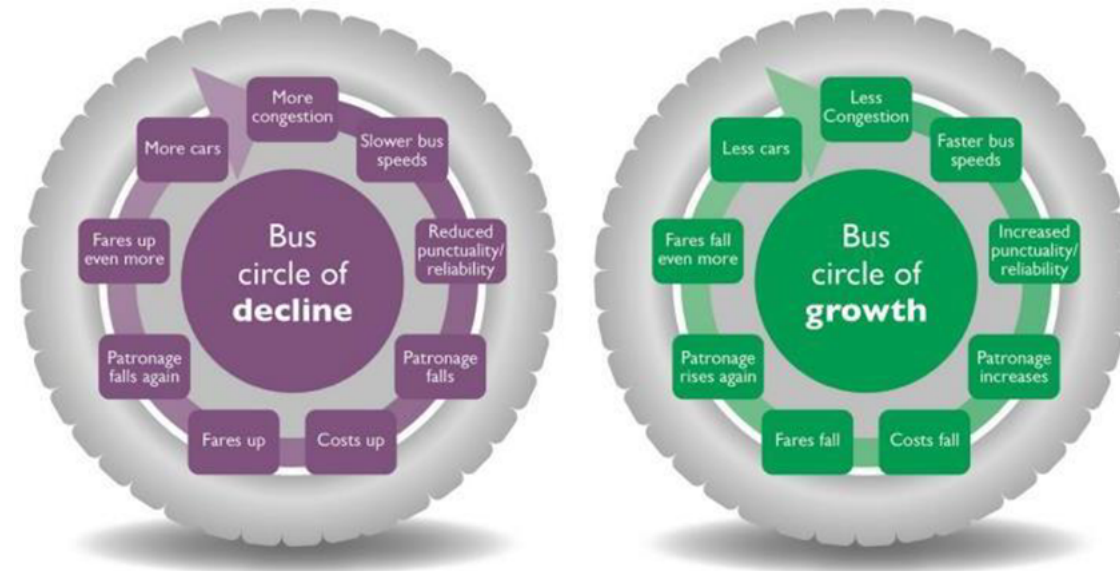
Simon Bradbury, D&G Council Strategic Transport Advisor

- **Bus services are vital** for connecting rural communities in the South of Scotland - over 4 million bus journeys annually across the region
- However, there are **numerous (and increasing) challenges** facing the operation of the bus network:
 - increasing pressure on local authority budgets
 - rising costs of contracting bus services
 - lack of operators and drivers in the region
 - unique challenges in a mostly rural environment

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Bus Network Reviews identified **opportunities to reverse the ‘circle of decline’** in the bus network

- Improved frequencies, especially evening services, enhanced links to hospitals, employment hubs and transport interchanges and integrated ticketing all present opportunities
- A ‘circle of growth’ for bus travel could exist, to provide an alternative to travel by private car and a boost to rural communities



- The National Transport Strategy 2 highlights the **benefits of bus investment**
- Through **collaboration and partnership working**, local authorities, bus operators and government could review the model for delivery and funding allocation
- We could scope what a better integrated, more attractive and connected public transport network looks like, what it costs and how it could provide a viable alternative to the private car, whilst serving rural communities
- **Legislative changes, and a review of funding models** (Network Support Grant and concessionary fare reimbursement) may be necessary, but we could target potential patronage, income, and benefits to the region
- Promotion and marketing of the bus network would further complement and enhance investment

Discussion 2: Funding and Alignment of the Local Bus Network

15.00 - 15.25

Starter Questions

1. How can we optimise the use of public sector funding to enhance bus service coverage and frequencies in Scotland, particularly in rural areas?
2. What innovative approaches can we adopt to improve the integration of bus and rail services at key interchanges, and how can integrated ticketing systems like One Ticket be effectively implemented to enhance the passenger experience?
3. In that ways can we support the sustainability and growth of bus services in the South of Scotland, considering the challenges of low demand and revenue fragility, and what role should different stakeholders play in this process?
4. What potential projects for bus infrastructure are there in the region that would benefit from funding?
5. Where could powers under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 be targeted initially?

Convention of the South of Scotland

Introduction to discussion 3: Rail 15.25 - 15.30

Graeme Johnstone, SBC Place and Enterprise Manager

Reston Station – Eyemouth Harbour



Stranraer Station East Riggs



Borders Railway Extension



Discussion 3: Rail

15.30 - 15.55

Starter Questions

1. What actions could we undertake to explore an increase in the frequency and reliability of train services at new and existing stations like Reston?
2. How can we ensure that rail and bus services are integrated to meet the needs of local communities and support economic growth?
3. What collaborative approaches can we adopt to address the challenges of low rail service frequency and coverage in Dumfries and Galloway, and how can we ensure these efforts align with broader regional and national transport strategies?

Convention of the South of Scotland

Introduction to discussion 4: Workforce 15.55 – 16.00

Russel Griggs, Chair, South of Scotland Enterprise

Key Workforce Issues

- Many roles are in high demand - drivers, mechanics, infrastructure engineers, planners, and designers - but one area of particular concern is **bus driver recruitment and retention.**
- The tight labour market has led to workforce movement to sectors offering **better pay and conditions.**
- The **attractiveness of the sector**, rather than skills, is the most significant issue. The challenge is promoting bus driving as a positive career and **supporting employers** to make their **opportunities more attractive.**

Public Sector Support

- National Driver Shortage sub-group workstreams: improving **licence efficiencies**, exploring **alternative recruitment opportunities**, and raising the **profile of bus driving as a career**. The Scottish Borders saw development of a **bus drivers careers website**, and **recruitment roadshows** to promote the sector and career progression opportunities.

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Sectoral net zero initiatives were collectively examined and how this might drive changes in workforce skills requirements, particularly in relation to the **decarbonisation of transport**, an area that the skills sector will need to support the industry.

- Public sector can play a role in **business support, addressing issues and promoting the sector**. They can enable the **developing sustainable business models** for operators to ensure they can reward and support their staff.
- Public sector can work with operators to **create conditions for sustainable commercial operators** that enhance local services, contributing to key policy goals related to climate change, NSET, NTS2 and decarbonisation.

Discussion 4: Workforce

16.00 - 16.25

Starter Questions

1. What specific measures can we take to support commercial operators maintain bus service levels and business continuity?
2. What further support can the public sector provide to operators to support commercial bus services?
3. What specific actions can we take to make the bus industry more attractive to potential recruits and to passengers?
4. What lessons can we learn from other industries and sectors?

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Summary of Transport discussion
16.25 – 16.30

Convention of the South of Scotland

Forward Look
16.30 – 16.40

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AoB, summarise and close
16.40 – 16.45

Convention of the South of Scotland

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Thank you for your attendance and participation

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EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25

1. Reason for Report

1.1 SWestrans external auditors have published the plan of work they intend to undertake for the 2024/25 financial year, based on their analysis of risks facing SWestrans.

1.2 The plan highlights the audit work necessary to ensure that 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 understand the control environment in operation within SWestrans and 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 third year they will be providing the service to SWestrans.

3. Key Points

3.1 The External Audit plan is attached as the appendix and has been prepared to 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 the wider scope area of financial sustainability and a review of the Annual Governance Statement
- consideration of Best Value arrangements.

3.3 The audit plan identifies the main risks associated with 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 (Finance) has been consulted and is in agreement with its terms.

5. Implications	
Financial	The fee which has been agreed for the SWestrans 2024/25 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

6. Recommendation

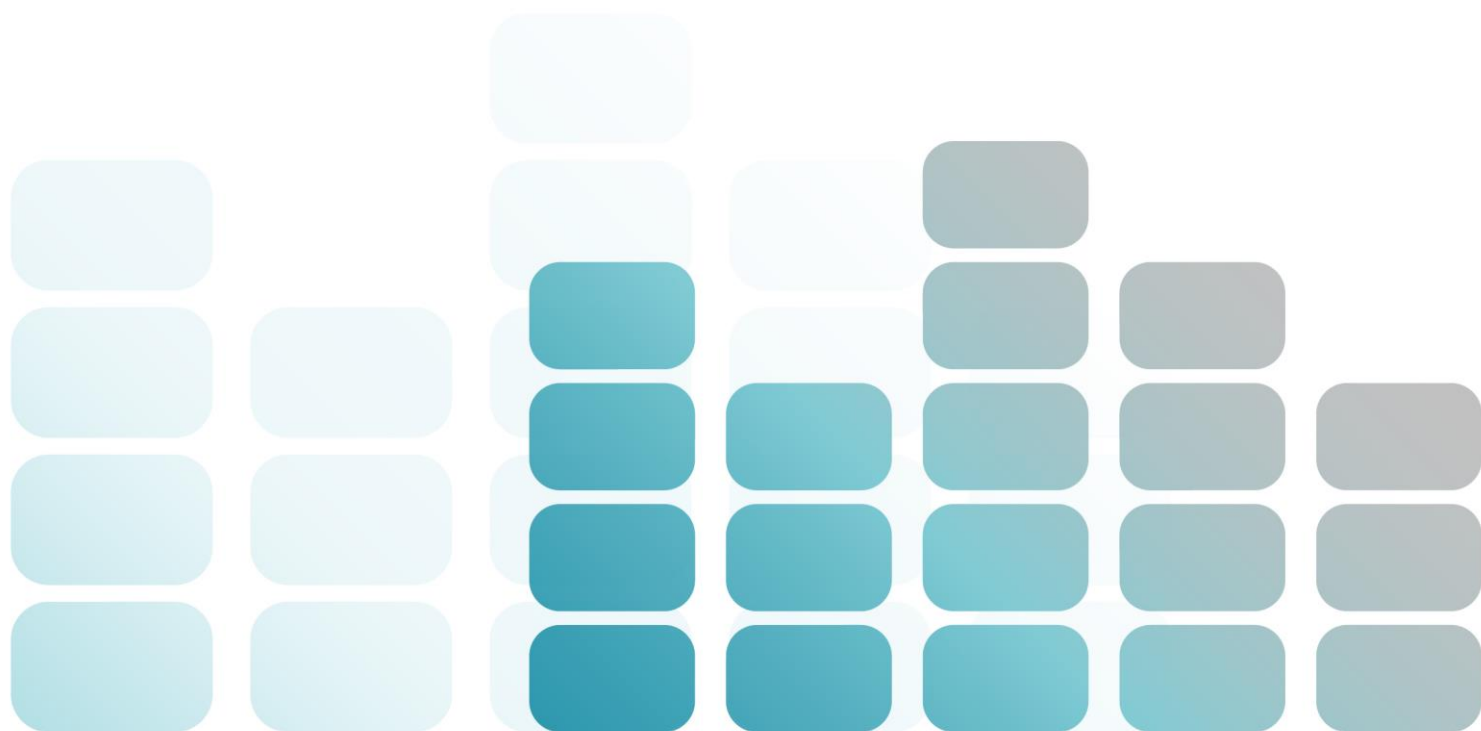
Members of the Board are asked to note and comment on the external audit plan for 2024/25 in the Appendix.

Janet Sutton - Report Author Finance Officer Tel: 01387 260105 Date of Report: 06 March 2025 File Ref:	Approved by: Simon Bradbury Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG1 8PN
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APPENDIX – External Audit Plan 2024/25

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Annual Audit Plan 2024/25



Prepared for South West of Scotland Transport Partnership
March 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
Audit scope and responsibilities	4
Audit of the annual accounts	6
Wider scope and Best Value	10
Reporting arrangements, timetable and audit fee	12
Other matters	15

Accessibility

You can find out more and read this report using assistive technology on our website www.audit.scot/accessibility.

Introduction

Purpose of the Annual Audit Plan

1. The purpose of this Annual Audit Plan is to provide an overview of the planned scope and timing of the 2024/25 audit of the South West Scotland Transport Partnership's (SWestrans) annual accounts. It outlines the audit work planned to meet the audit requirements set out in [auditing standards](#) and the [Code of Audit Practice](#), including supplementary guidance.

Appointed auditor and independence

2. Peter Lindsay, of Audit Scotland, has been appointed by the Accounts Commission as external auditor of SWestrans for the period from 2022/23 until 2026/27. The 2024/25 financial year is therefore the third of the five-year audit appointment.

3. Peter Lindsay and the audit team 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. Audit Scotland has robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance with ethical standards. The arrangements are overseen by the Executive Director of Innovation and Quality, who serves as Audit Scotland's Ethics Partner.

4. The Ethical Standard requires auditors to communicate any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the audit team. There are no such relationships pertaining to the audit of SWestrans to communicate.

Audit scope and responsibilities

Scope of the audit

5. The audit is performed in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, including supplementary guidance, International Standards on Auditing (UK), and relevant legislation. These set out the requirements for the scope of the audit which includes:

- An audit of the financial statements and an opinion on whether they give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement.
- An opinion on statutory other information published with the financial statements in the annual accounts, the Management Commentary and the Annual Governance Statement.
- Concluding on the financial sustainability of SWestrans and a review of the Annual Governance Statement.
- Reporting on SWestrans's arrangements for securing Best Value.
- Provision of an Annual Audit Report setting out significant matters identified from the audit of the annual accounts and the wider scope areas specified in the Code of Audit Practice.

Responsibilities

6. The Code of Audit Practice sets out the respective responsibilities of SWestrans and the auditor. A summary of the key responsibilities is outlined below.

Auditor's responsibilities

7. The responsibilities of auditors in the public sector are established in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. These include providing an independent opinion on the financial statements and other information reported within the annual accounts, and concluding on SWestrans's arrangements in place for the wider scope areas.

SWestrans's responsibilities

8. SWestrans has primary responsibility for ensuring proper financial stewardship of public funds, compliance with relevant legislation and establishing effective arrangements for governance, propriety and regularity that enables it to successfully deliver its objectives. The features of proper financial stewardship include:

- Establishing arrangements to ensure the proper conduct of its affairs.
- Preparation of annual accounts, comprising financial statements and other information that gives a true and fair view.
- Establishing arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and irregularities, and bribery and corruption.
- Implementing arrangements to ensure its financial position is soundly based.
- Making arrangements to secure Best Value.
- Establishing an internal audit function.

Audit of the annual accounts

Introduction

9. The audit of the annual accounts is driven by materiality and the risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, with greater attention being given to the significant risks of material misstatement. This chapter outlines materiality, the significant risks of material misstatement that have been identified, and the impact these have on the planned audit procedures.

Materiality

10. The concept of materiality is applied by auditors in planning and performing an audit, and in evaluating the effect of any uncorrected misstatements on the financial statements or other information reported in the annual accounts.

11. Broadly, the concept of materiality is to determine whether matters identified during the audit could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users of the financial statements. Auditors set a monetary threshold when determining materiality, although some issues may be considered material by their nature. Therefore, materiality is ultimately a matter of the auditor's professional judgement.

12. The materiality levels determined for the audit of SWestrans are outlined in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1

2024/25 Materiality levels for SWestrans

Materiality	Amount
Materiality – based on an assessment of the needs of users of the financial statements and the nature of SWestrans's operations, the benchmark used to determine materiality is gross expenditure based on the audited 2023/24 financial statements. Materiality has been set at 2% of the benchmark.	£101,500
Performance materiality – this acts as a trigger point. If the aggregate of misstatements identified during the audit exceeds performance materiality, this could indicate that further audit procedures are required. Using professional judgement, performance materiality has been set at 65% of planning materiality.	£66,000

Materiality	Amount
Reporting threshold – all misstatements greater than the reporting threshold will be reported.	£5,000

Source: Audit Scotland

Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

13. The risk assessment process draws on the audit team’s cumulative knowledge of SWestrans, including the nature of its operations and its significant transaction streams, the system of internal control, governance arrangements and processes, and developments that could impact on its financial reporting.

14. Based on the risk assessment process, significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements have been identified and these are summarised in [Exhibit 2, page 8](#). These are the risks which have the greatest impact on the planned audit approach, and the planned audit procedures in response to the risks are outlined in [Exhibit 2](#).

15. The risk assessment process is an iterative and dynamic process. The assessment of risks set out in this Annual Audit Plan and [Exhibit 2](#) may change as more information and evidence is obtained over the course of the audit. Where such changes occur, these will be reported to SWestrans and those charged with governance, where relevant.

Exhibit 2

Significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements

Risk of material misstatement	Planned audit response
<p>Fraud caused by management override of controls</p> <p>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>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate 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. • Test journals entries, focusing on those that are assessed as higher risk, such as those affecting revenue and expenditure recognition around the year-end. • Evaluate significant transactions outside the normal course of business. • Assess the adequacy of controls in place for identifying and disclosing related party relationships and transactions in the financial statements. • Assess changes to the methods and underlying assumptions used to prepare accounting estimates and assess these for evidence of management bias.

Source: Audit Scotland

Key audit matters

16. The Code of Audit Practice requires public sector auditors to communicate key audit matters. Key audit matters are those matters, that in the auditor's professional judgement, are of most significance to the audit of the financial statements and require most attention when performing the audit.

17. In determining key audit matters, auditors consider:

- Areas of higher or significant risk of material misstatement.
- Areas where significant judgement is required, including accounting estimates that are subject to a high degree of estimation uncertainty.
- Significant events or transactions that occurred during the year.

18. The matters determined to be key audit matters will be communicated in the Annual Audit Report. [Exhibit 2](#) outlines the significant risks of material misstatement to the financial statements that have been identified, including those that have greatest impact on the planned audit procedures and require most attention when performing the audit.

Wider scope and Best Value

Introduction

19. Reflecting the fact that public money is involved, the Code of Audit Practice requires that public audit is planned and undertaken from a wider perspective than in the private sector. The wider scope audit set out by the Code of Audit Practice broadens the audit of the annual accounts to include consideration of additional aspects or risks in four wider scope areas, which are summarised below:

- **Financial Management** – this means having sound budgetary processes. Factors that can impact on SWestrans’s being able to secure sound financial management include the strength of the financial management culture, accountability, and arrangements to prevent and detect fraud, error and other irregularities, bribery and corruption.
- **Financial Sustainability** – this means looking forward over the medium and longer term in planning the services to be delivered and how they will be delivered effectively. This is assessed by considering SWestrans’s medium- to longer-term planning for service delivery.
- **Vision, Leadership and Governance** – this means having a clear vision and strategy, with set priorities within the vision and strategy. This is assessed by considering the clarity of plans in place to deliver the vision and strategy and the effectiveness of the governance arrangements to support delivery.
- **Use of Resources to Improve Outcomes** – this means using resources to meet stated outcomes and improvement objectives through effective planning and working with partners and communities. This is assessed by considering SWestrans’s arrangements for ensuring resources are deployed to improve strategic outcomes, meet the needs of service users, and deliver continuous improvement.

20. 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 2024/25 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 2024/25 annual audit report.

Duty of Best Value

21. The [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) (SPFM) explains that Accountable Officers have a specific responsibility to ensure that arrangements have been made to secure Best Value. [Best Value in public services: guidance for Accountable Officers](#) is issued by Scottish Ministers and sets out their duty to ensure that arrangements are in place to secure Best Value in public services.

22. Consideration of the arrangements SWestrans has in place to secure Best Value will be carried out alongside the wider scope audit, and a conclusion on the arrangements SWestrans has in place will be reported in the Annual Audit Report.

Significant wider scope and Best Value risks

23. No significant risks in the wider scope areas or Best Value were identified from the risk assessment process.

Development of a medium-term financial plan

24. We highlighted in our 2022/23 Annual Audit Report that SWestrans has been limited in its ability to prepare medium or long-term financial plans by the annual funding settlement arrangements in place with its parent, Dumfries and Galloway Council (the council). This arrangement restricts SWestrans ability to strategically plan solutions to financial sustainability challenges or to build up reserves.

25. SWestrans does however manage the rolling 3-year capital expenditure programme that operates in partnership between SWestrans and the council, which provides medium-term planning of the use of resources to be spent on the local bus network, active travel network, and development of Lockerbie rail station parking facilities.

26. In our 2022/23 Annual Audit Report we recommended that SWestrans and the council should explore funding arrangements that would facilitate the medium-term financial planning of SWestrans expenditure on supported bus services. Management responded by stating that it is recognised that medium term financial planning would significantly improve financial sustainability in relation to supported bus services and officers will work closely with the council's Senior Leadership Team to develop medium to long term budget plans, however, this may take some time to fully implement due to the annual funding settlement in place with Dumfries and Galloway Council. The target date for the agreed management action is March 2025 which has not yet passed. We will follow up our recommendation in 2024/25.

Reporting arrangements, timetable and audit fee

Audit outputs

27. The outputs from the 2024/25 audit include:

- This Annual Audit Plan.
- An Independent Auditor's Report to SWestrans and the Accounts Commission setting out opinions on the annual accounts.
- An Annual Audit Report to SWestrans and the Accounts Commission setting out significant matters identified from the audit of the annual accounts, conclusions from the wider scope and Best Value audit, and recommendations, where required.

28. The matters to be reported in the outputs will be discussed with SWestrans for factual accuracy before they are issued. All outputs from the audit will be published on Audit Scotland's website, apart from the Independent Auditor's Report, which is included in the audited annual accounts.

29. Target dates for the audit outputs are set by the Accounts Commission. In setting the target dates for the audit outputs, consideration is given to the target date for approving the annual accounts, which is 30 September 2025 for local government bodies.

30. The Independent Auditor's Report and Annual Audit Report are planned to be issued by the target date of 30 September 2025.

Audit timetable

31. Achieving the timetable for production of the annual accounts, supported by complete and accurate working papers, is critical to delivery of the audit to agreed target dates. [Exhibit](#) includes a timetable for the audit, which has been agreed with management. Agreed target dates will be kept under review as the audit progresses, and any changes required, and their potential impact, will be discussed with SWestrans and reported to those charged with governance, where required.

Exhibit 3

2024/25 audit timetable

Audit activity	SWestrans target date	Audit team target date	SWestrans Board date
Issue of Annual Audit Plan		31 March 2025	28 March 2025
Annual accounts:			
• Consideration of unaudited annual accounts by those charged with governance	27 June 2025		27 June 2025
• Submission of unaudited annual accounts and all working papers to audit team	27 June 2025		
• Latest date for audit clearance meeting	29 August 2025	29 August 2025	
• Issue of draft Letter of Representation, proposed Independent Auditor's Report, and proposed Annual Audit Report		5 September 2025	26 September 2025
• Agreement of audited and unsigned annual accounts	5 September 2025	5 September 2025	
• Approval by those charged with governance and signing of audited annual accounts	26 September 2025		26 September 2025
• Signing of Independent Auditor's Report and issue of Annual Audit Report		26 September 2025	

Source: Audit Scotland

Audit fee

32. SWestrans's audit fee is determined in line with Audit Scotland's fee setting arrangements. The agreed audit fee for the 2024/25 audit is £12,800 (2023/24: £12,560).

33. In setting the audit fee, it is assumed that SWestrans has effective governance arrangements in place and the complete annual accounts will be provided for audit in line with the agreed timetable. The audit fee assumes there will be no significant changes to the planned scope of the audit. Where the audit cannot proceed as planned, for example, due to

incomplete or inadequate working papers, the audit fee may need to be increased.

Other matters

Internal audit

34. SWestrans is responsible for establishing an internal audit function as part of an effective system of internal control. As part of the audit, the audit team will obtain an understanding of internal audit, including its nature, responsibilities, and activities.

35. While internal audit and external audit have differing roles and responsibilities, external auditors may seek to rely on the work of internal audit where it is considered appropriate. We will review the internal audit plan for 2024/25 and the results of internal audit's work. While we are not planning to place formal reliance on the work of internal audit in 2024/25, we will review internal audit reports and assess the impact of the findings on our financial statements and wider scope audit responsibilities.

Audit quality

36. Audit Scotland is committed to the consistent delivery of high-quality audit. Audit quality requires ongoing attention and improvement to keep pace with external and internal changes. Details of the arrangements in place for the delivery of high-quality audits is available from the [Audit Scotland website](#).

37. The International Standards on Quality Management (ISQM) applicable to Audit Scotland for 2024/25 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. Audit Scotland's SoQM consists of a variety of components, such as: governance arrangements and culture to support audit quality, compliance with ethical requirements, ensuring Audit Scotland is dedicated to high-quality audit through engagement performance and resourcing arrangements, and ensuring there are robust quality monitoring arrangements in place. Audit Scotland carries out an annual evaluation of its SoQM and has concluded it complies with this standard.
- ISQM (UK) 2, which sets out arrangements for conducting engagement quality reviews, which are performed by senior management not involved in an audit, to review significant judgements and conclusions reached by the audit team, and the appropriateness of proposed audit opinions on high-risk audits.

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

39. 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 monitored on a regular basis by Audit Scotland's Quality and Ethics Committee.

40. Audit Scotland may periodically seek the views of SWestrans on the quality of audit services provided. The audit team would also welcome feedback at any time.

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Annual Audit Plan 2024/25



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www.audit.scot

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DRAFT REVENUE EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2025/26

1. Reason for Report

To seek agreement to the draft revenue budget for the financial year 2025/26 to provide Board members with the authority to spend up to the budgeted level.

2. Background

2.1 At the time of writing, The Scottish Government grant funding letter has not been received. It has been assumed that the funding will remain at the same level as in 2024/25 (£246,287), should this position change, it will be reported to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

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 2025, agreed its budget for 2025/26. At this meeting the ongoing funding available to Swestrans remained the same as prior years, the total budget available to Swestrans is £4,361,429.

2.4 At its meeting of 27 June 2024 Dumfries and Galloway Council agreed the request for an additional one-off uplift; to fund the supported bus network until August 2025. This uplift will be provided in year but has been excluded from the table below, which represents the recurring budget available to Swestrans.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The total available draft revenue funding of £4,361,429 is as indicated in Table 1.

Item	Cost £
Staff Costs	249,348
Administration Costs	31,428
Procured Services	4,031,903
Central Support	48,750
TOTAL	4,361,429

Table 1 – 2025/26 Revenue Funding

3.2 It is intended to provide monitoring reports to Board meetings on a regular basis throughout financial year 2025/26, highlighting any variations against or to the budget.

4. Implications	
Financial	This report provides information covering Swestrans revenue budget for 2025/26 and monitoring reports will be provided during the year.
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
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5. Consultation

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

6. Recommendation

Members of the Board are asked to agree the draft revenue budget for 2025/26 as set out in Table 1.

Janet Sutton - Report Author Tel:01387 260105 Date of Report: 18 March 2025 File Ref:	Approved by: Simon Bradbury Lead Officer The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG1 8PN
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ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To update the Board on the current position of active travel funding available within the SWestrans region.

2. Background

2.1 Following the Budget (Scotland) Act 2024 being passed by Scottish Parliament on 25 February 2024, Transport Scotland is finalising proposals and intended budgets for this year's active and sustainable travel funding. Its current position with funding is outlined below.

3. Key Issues – Transport Scotland Funding - Tier 1, 2 and People and Place

3.1 Dumfries and Galloway Council has agreed to allocate a proportion of this years 2025/26 Transport Scotland Tier 1 funding to Local Authorities for capital spend on active travel infrastructure to SWestrans for delivery of its capital programme. As this funding is now part of the block grant, Dumfries and Galloway Council also is able to carry forward any underspend from the 2024/25 allocations a proportion of which will also be allocated to SWestrans.

3.2 Dumfries and Galloway Council had previously applied to Sustrans for funding to take the Sustrans funded Annan Paths programme forwards the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) technical and design stages 3-4. As Sustrans received no further funding from Transport Scotland for this round of applications, Transport Scotland has initially considered these applications as part of the Tier 2 funding and have awarded Dumfries and Galloway Council funding to take this forward. SWestrans continues to offer guidance on this project to ensure alignment to its own programme.

3.3 SWestrans is currently receiving £420k Tier 2 funding for Phase 1b of the Penpont to Thornhill path, that should be complete by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. SWestrans is also exploring funding opportunities to complete the link to Thornhill in conjunction with Dumfries and Galloway Council.

3.4 SWestrans has made 2 applications directly to Transport Scotland for RIBA stage 3-4 funding to take forwards the Dumfries Better Streets project at a cost of £310k, and the Cross Michael to Castle Douglas Path costing £150k.

3.5 Transport Scotland has indicated that the SWestrans allocation of the People and Place fund will be £391,822 RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits) and £597,541 CDEL (Capital Departmental Expenditure Limits), totalling £989,362. As agreed in the confidential Board paper on 31 January 2025, as well as negotiating with the suppliers of successful projects, expressions of interest have been sought for

this funding, and SWestrans has received over £2m of requests. Officers are currently assessing the most strategically appropriate projects to fund for greatest impact. With a greater focus on local delivery they will be assessed for:

- Eligibility
- Alignment to core programme
- Duplication
- Support for new infrastructure
- Deliverability
- Scale and Impact
- Affordability
- Additional benefit

This is being done with extensive liaison across the Council to ensure that SWestrans complements the council's work and ensures that projects that are not eligible for funding through this programme are where appropriate signposted to other funding opportunities.

3.6 Transport Scotland has confirmed that the Local Authority Direct Award (LADA) will be awarded under the People and Place banner and has now indicated that with the Scottish Budget passing Stage 3 on 25 February and its internal clearance process continuing, its intended funding distribution for Dumfries and Galloway Council is £129.3k. SWestrans is working with them to identify the most appropriate use of this funding to support the SWestrans People and Place Programme.

4. Implications	
Financial	The financial implications are indicated in the report. Any emerging implications will be managed in partnership with the other RTPs and Dumfries and Galloway Council.
Policy	Priorities on active travel behaviour change from our Regional Transport Strategy and the Active Travel Strategy.
Equalities	Interventions under the Accessibility and Inclusion theme will engage with groups not currently reached by active travel interventions and seek to co-design approaches with people that have lived experience.
Climate Change	Enhancing the uptake of active travel can have a positive impact on climate change objectives by reducing emissions associated with car usage.
Risk Management	The ATPPP provision relates to the known risks: R02 – Public Image R04 – Capital Funding R05 – RTS Delivery R07 – Revenue Funding R10 – Procurement

5. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:

- 5.1 note the strong demand for behaviour change funding from the local community and the collaborative work being done across Dumfries and Galloway Council; and
- 5.2 note the current work undertaken to allocate the funding to appropriate projects.

Peter McCormick –Author
Tel:01387 260133

Date of Report: 19 March 2025
File Ref: SW2/meetings/2025

Approved by: Simon Bradbury, Lead Officer
South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Cargen Tower, Garroch Business Park
Dumfries DG2 8PN

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OBSERVERS UPDATE

1. Reason for Report

This report provides an update on the process for the appointment and review of Observers to the SWestrans board.

2. Background

In accordance with the legislation, Observers are appointed by the board for a period of 4 years. Observers can be appointed to the board at any meeting, as and when required. However, as most current Observers were appointed in June 2021 a review is now due to be undertaken, so that any reappointments can be considered at the next meeting, in June 2025.

3. Key Points

3.1 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 provides for observers to the Regional Transport Partnership. Observers being persons that may participate in the proceedings of the partnership but may not hold office in it or participate in its decisions. In accordance with the legislation, each Partnership may appoint such numbers of observers as they consider appropriate to the Partnership.

3.2 The guidance on Membership of Regional Transport Partnerships provides further information on the role of Observers, referring to them as advisers, and that the RTP should consider appointing individuals who can make a valuable contribution.

3.3 As it is an individual and not an organisation that is appointed as an observer, to be considered it is not a requirement to be a representative of a group. However, it is common that an observer would be put forward on the basis that they are a member of an organisation that is a stakeholder in the work of the board – such as a public transport operator, sustainable travel representative or Youth Council.

3.4 In accordance with the legislation, official guidance and as reflected in the SWestrans' Guidance for Observers, the Board when appointing observers to the Board should consider the following:

- Will the proposed individual have a useful input and make a valuable contribution?
- Does the individual represent a specific interest group?
- Does the individual bring a particular knowledge or expertise?

3.5 There is a clear difference in legal and formal status between Board Members and observers. Observers do not carry any responsibility and are likely to be drawn from either specific interest groups or to bring a particular knowledge or expertise.

They may therefore not be expected to participate in all discussions or all meetings, only those for which their particular knowledge or interest is relevant. It is for the RTP to specify in Standing Orders the roles and rights of observers at Board meetings.

3.6 Standing order 24 of SWestrans Standing Orders provides the following detail:-

“An observer may only address a meeting of the Transport Partnership on the invitation of the Chairperson.

An observer may not vote on any matter

An Observer may not attend any part of meeting of the Transport Partnership from which the press and the public are excluded.”

3.7 As well as approaching current observers for reappointment it is proposed that organisations that have perhaps been represented in the past are approached as to whether they wish to put forward an individual for appointment as an observer. The board may also have suggestions for the Secretary of organisations / and or individuals to approach for potential consideration.

3.8 As part of this review the opportunity will also be taken to ensure that the SWestrans' Guidance for Observers is up to date. As much of the provisions are set out in legislation it is envisaged that any updates will be of an administrative nature.

4. Implications	
Financial	None.
Policy	None.
Equalities	None
Climate Change	None
Risk Management	None.

5. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:-

5.1 note that an update of Observers is being undertaken by the Secretary and will report to the board in June.

Claire Rogerson - Report Author	Claire Rogerson Secretary to the Board The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership English Street Dumfries DG1 2DD
Date of Report: 12 March File Ref: SW2/meetings/2025	

SWESTRANS BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26

1. Reason for Report

To seek the views of the SWestrans Board on the proposed Business Plan for 2025/26.

2. Background

2.1 The purpose of the Business Plan is to align strategy, activity and reporting more closely to improve future planning and operational effectiveness and help inform the SWestrans Board of the plans of the RTP for the financial year.

2.2 The report covers the operational and financial year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. It includes the SWestrans team's workplan and will be provided to Dumfries and Galloway Council and others who have provided funding for visibility.

3. Key Points

3.1 The draft Business Plan for the next financial year from April 2025 to March 2026 is shown in the **Appendix**.

3.2 The plan has been divided into separate sections:

- Strategy – including RTS development and monitoring
- Partnership Working
- Projects

3.3 Note the draft budget for the plan period outlined in the Business Plan.

3.4 Any slippage in the Capital Budget in the final accounts for 2024/25 will be added to the budget for 2025/26 and will be used to deliver Business Plan activity.

3.5 If approved by the Board, the Business Plan will be monitored through the Council's Service Business Plan and performance report which will be presented to the Councils Economy and Infrastructure Committee, with any issues brought to the attention of the SWestrans Board for review and action. The monitoring of SWestrans budget is separate to the monitoring of the Business Plan.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT WORK AND FUNDING

4.1 The Business Plan includes project proposals which have been submitted to potential funders and are awaiting a response. If successful, these will be added to the Capital and Revenue reporting and monitoring plan.

4.2 The Partnership will continue to explore funding opportunities for new projects that support the delivery of the RTS.

5. Implications	
Financial	The Business Plan will be subject to formal Board approval of proposed budgets in year 2025/26 and subsequent years.
Policy	This Business Plan will align with SWestrans' established and emerging policies and delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy.
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.

6. Recommendation

Members of the Board are asked to:

6.1 review and provide any comments on the content of the proposed Business Plan 2025/26; and

6.2 approve the Lead Officer to amend the draft considering any comments and finalise for publication and circulation.

Report Author: Grant Coltart Tel: 07813980749	Approved by: Simon Bradbury Lead Officer South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN
Date of Report: 13 March 2024 File Ref: SW2/meetings/2025	

APPENDIX 1 – SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

Background

The South West of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SWestrans) is established under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and is statutorily required to develop and deliver a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The RTS aims to provide a strategic framework for transport management and investment for the Partnership area. The Partnership area has a boundary consistent with Dumfries and Galloway Council and it should seek to perform its transport functions in line with the RTS. An estimated 148,290 people resided in the SWestrans area 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. The Partnership area 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 km¹.

SWestrans' Vision

The RTS vision outlines what type of region we want Dumfries and Galloway to be, along with how transport can help to facilitate that. It draws upon national, regional and local policy aspirations. It also provides an overarching context for the strategy objectives.

The South-West of Scotland will be an inclusive, prosperous, and attractive place to live, work and visit, supported by an integrated and sustainable transport system that:

- Reflects the needs of communities and expectations of people living, working and consuming in the region
- Is safe, affordable and accessible to all
- Allows healthier lifestyles

Regional Transport Strategy

The key purpose of the RTS is to identify the transport challenges in Dumfries and Galloway and to set out a long-term approach to address them. This has been informed by an extensive review of policy documentation, data analysis and consultation and subsequently evidenced in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Case for Change and Options Appraisal Reports. The strategy covers the period 2023-2042 and is reviewed on a regular basis, along with a delivery plan that is developed and monitored on an annual basis by the SWestrans Board.

¹ NRS Small Population Estimates 2021

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

Regional Transport Strategy Objectives

The objectives of the RTS are as follows:

Strategy Objective 1: To facilitate and encourage safe active travel for all by connecting communities and travel hubs.

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

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

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

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

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

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

SWestrans Activity 2025/26

The table below contains the key workstreams that the SWestrans team will work on across 2025/26. Throughout the next year this table may be added to depending on the nature of the opportunity, capacity of the team and the urgency of a particular project. The SWestrans Board will be kept aware of these updates via Board meetings throughout the year.

The activity of SWestrans in 2025/26 is structured by Strategy, Partnership Working and Projects. The SWestrans team will also publish an Annual Report for 24/25, scheduled for the Board meeting in June.

The RTS Actions quoted are taken directly from the RTS Delivery Plan.

Strategy

Activities	RTS Actions	RTS Objectives	Project Goals	Project Actions	Project Outcomes	
RTS Delivery Plan 2025/26						
1.0	Circulate and allocate priorities and actions to SWestrans partners including Dumfries & Galloway Council (DGC), NHS and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)	Raise awareness of RTS and roles and responsibilities of delivery partners	All	Partners will take ownership and plan delivery of the priorities that relate to their areas of work.	Partners will provide a implementation plan	The RTS Delivery Plan will be updated and populated with partners' actions and date for completion of priorities.
Convention of the South of Scotland						
2.0	Improve transport in the South of Scotland	Work with colleagues from Scottish Borders Council (SBC), SOSE and others in the Regional Economic Partnership Strategic Action group for Transport (SAGT) to support delivery of the D&G RTS	All	Working closely with the Strategic Action Group – Transport as part of the REP we will explore mutual opportunities to improve data accumulation and analysis to help identify improvements in transport systems in the South of Scotland.	Set up a data and knowledge library for all to share and access. Reconsider concessionary fares and multi-modal ticketing.	More informed decision-making on transport in the South of Scotland. Unique funding model that allows affordable access to public transport for all that will be more frequent and connected with other transport modes

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

Activities		RTS Actions	RTS Objectives	Project Goals	Project Actions	Project Outcomes
				SWestrans will share best practice on Community Transport and explore alternative funding models for the Bus Network to trial.		
Contribute to Local Place Plans						
3.0	Attend public engagements to learn local communities' transport aspirations and seek transport solutions where reasonably practical to help those communities to deliver on transport priorities	Engage with planning department and communities to (i) ensure forthcoming LDP3 & IRSS includes inputs reflecting the RTS and (ii) provide a regional transport perspective to planning decisions with respect to existing allocations	All	Communities will take ownership of actions with help and support from SWestrans and DGC	Communities draw up an investment and delivery plan.	Raise awareness of the help and support available for Communities to deliver transport solutions tailored to the Local Place Plan transport needs

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

Partnership Working

Activities	RTS Actions	RTS Objectives	Project Goals	Project Actions	Project Outcomes	
Physical Activity Strategy						
4.0	Adopt and roll out D&G Physical Activity System based Strategy throughout 25/26. Strategy was developed through Multi-Agency involvement including SWestrans on Active Travel strand	SWestrans will continue to provide contribution to the Active Travel Team SWestrans will contribute to the Active Travel Team initiatives in this area	1,4,5,6	Through using SWestrans Active Travel Behavior Change People and Place Programme, SWestrans is looking to reach those work places, schools and increase accessibility and inclusivity for Physical Activity/Muscle Strengthening programmes	Funding projects that encourage Physical Activity and modal shift.	Each project will complete Monitoring and Evaluation with the outcome of increasing physical activity within the region
Community Transport in D&G						
5.0	There is a clear need for communities to have an input on local transport and the design of what that looks like them. SWestrans will continue to work in partnership with the Community Transport Sector to develop provision across the region	Develop and implement the needs-based public transport delivery model as listed. Community Transport solutions will be developed where appropriate and presented for approval as part of the overall public transport model	All	Provide an umbrella Social Enterprise organisation for Community Transport providers within the region.	Work with those Community Transport providers who wish to expand and identify the resources required to help with expansion.	A self-sustainable Community Transport model throughout the region that meaningfully contributes to local needs and the public transport network.
Rail Transport Forum						
6.0	Stakeholder meeting with SWestrans, Scotrail, Network Rail, TransPennine Express and Transport Scotland providing updates and allowing a forum for SWestrans to raise issues on existing and future Railway issues in D&G	Lobby the UK and Scottish Governments to increase rail provision Undertake STAG / business case work to promote specific initiatives Engage with Government and Rail Industry partners to explore the potential of a local service Lobby the UK and Scottish Governments for network upgrades	All	To raise D&G profile as a rail region with commercial operators and Scot Govt	Ensure Rail stakeholders contribute to the RTS. Work in partnership to improve infrastructure, frequency of trains and reliability,	An effective voice for D&G residents, visitors, businesses that finds the forum responsive and collegiate.

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

		<p>Work with Network Rail to support upgrades Support and work with Network Rail to explore the feasibility of quadrupling the track Work with train operating companies to encourage more local recruitment and increase network resilience Continue to lobby Transport Scotland on the submitted STAG appraisals Support / undertake any further business case work required to deliver proposals</p>				
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SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

Projects

Activities	RTS Actions	RTS Objectives	Project Goals	Project Actions	Project Outcomes	
Levelling Up Fund (Awaiting confirmation from UK Government)						
7.0	SWestrans with its knowledge and experience will be working closely to deliver a number of components with D&G Council's Levelling Up Fund Project Team.	Undertake a Feasibility Study for the development of mobility hubs across the region, drawing on best practice and experience from similar rural areas.	All	Prioritise Mobility Hubs across the region	<p>SWestrans with our knowledge and experience will be working closely to deliver a number of components with the council's Levelling Up Project Team including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Infrastructure (Bus Stops) • Installation of Bus EV Infrastructure. • Real Time Public Information • 9 x Electric Buses • Supporting Keir & Penpont Development Trust deliver final phase of Cycling by Design path to Thornhill • Support the installation of mobility hubs throughout the region. 	Installation of multi-modal mobility hubs throughout D
Bus Network Procurement						

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

8.0	Improve the Local Bus Network	Develop and implement a needs-based public transport delivery model.	1,	Work with partners to review and procure the Local Bus and Home to School Network	Listen, collate suggestions, design a network, update specifications and Terms and Conditions and then publish tenders for all routes	Provide a sustainable public transport network that delivers the region and community needs within available budget.
Active Travel Behavior Change						
9.0	Awareness raising to facilitate behaviour change will be delivered through close community engagement and campaigns to encourage the use of active travel and complement the Active Travel Infrastructure programme	SWestrans will contribute to the Active Travel Team initiatives in this area	1,4,5,6	Work with local and national partners to deliver behavior change in workplaces, schools, accessibility and inclusion, sustainable travel and capacity building.	Consult, develop, plan and fund various infrastructure projects and strategies	Monitoring and evaluation from delivery partners will be used to measure outcomes agreed prior to projects being approved.
Active Travel Infrastructure						
10.0	Increase the number of walking/cycling/wheeling paths throughout the region	Work with partners to agree appropriate implementation of relevant guidance and standards Take forward prioritised community path links as identified by SWestrans Board SWestrans to input into the ATS2 review process SWestrans will continue to provide contribution to the Active Travel Team SWestrans will contribute to the Active Travel Team initiatives in this area 50% of capital funding will be spent on Active Travel	1,4,5,6	Work with internal and external stakeholders to deliver Active Travel throughout the region	Consult, develop, plan and fund various infrastructure projects and strategies	Monitoring and evaluation from delivery partners will be used to measure outcomes agreed prior to projects being approved.

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

2025/26 Finance (Indicative figures)

SWestrans receives one-year annual budgets from Dumfries & Galloway Council and the Scottish Government.

A procurement exercise commences in early April 2025 to tender all Local Bus contracts.

Dumfries & Galloway Council has indicated that it will transfer some Tier 1 funding from the Verity Agreement (approx. £300,000) and the Local Authority Direct Award (LADA) for Active Travel Behaviour Change (£129,000) to SWestrans to deliver Active Travel projects for 25/26 on behalf of the council.

2025/26 Revenue Budget

	2025/26
Staff Costs	249,348
Administration Costs	31,428
Procured Services	4,031,903
Central Support	48,750
TOTAL	4,361,429

Capital Expenditure	2025/26
SWestrans Buses	840,000
Active Travel Infrastructure	900,000
Total Capital Expenditure	1,740,000

SWestrans Business Plan 2025/26

External Funding	2025/26
Active Travel People & Place Programme incl. LADA funding	950,000
DGC Active Travel Infrastructure Tier 1 Funding	300,000
SWestrans Active Travel Tier 2 Funding	600,000 tbc
Total Expenditure	1,850,000

SWESTRANS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

1. Reason for Report

To agree SWestrans Annual Report for 2023/24, which sets out progress and achievements of the Regional Transport Partnership in delivering the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) during the financial year.

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 2023 to 31 March 2024. 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 2023/24 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.

3.3 The SWestrans Annual Report for 2024/25 will be brought to the Board for consideration in June 2025. This report will be aligned with the newly adopted Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 and will have a revised format.

3.4 Officers would welcome comments from the Board on what they would like included in the new version of the Annual Report.

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:

5.1 agree the SWestrans Annual Report for 2023/24 attached as the Appendix for submission to Scottish Ministers; and

5.2 provide comments on what information they would like included in the Annual Report for 2024/25.

Report Author: Kirsty Dunsmore

Date of Report: 10 March 2025
File Ref: SW2/meetings/2025

Approved by: Simon Bradbury
Lead Officer

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership
Cargen Tower
Garroch Business Park
Dumfries
DG2 8PN

APPENDIX – SWestrans Annual Report 2023/24

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.

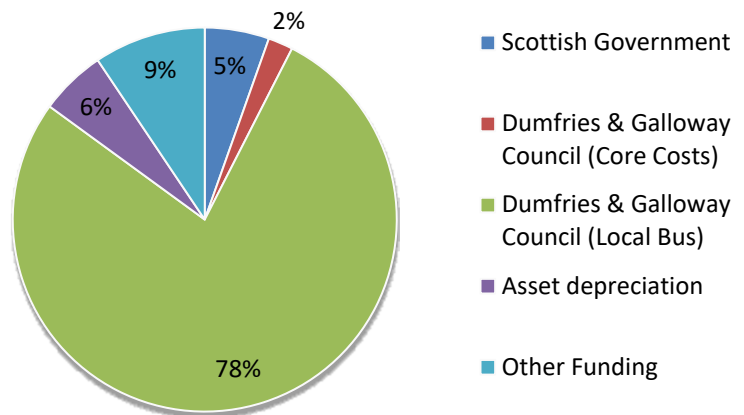
The external auditor is required to audit the Transport Partnership's financial statements in accordance with the relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Accounts Commission.

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.

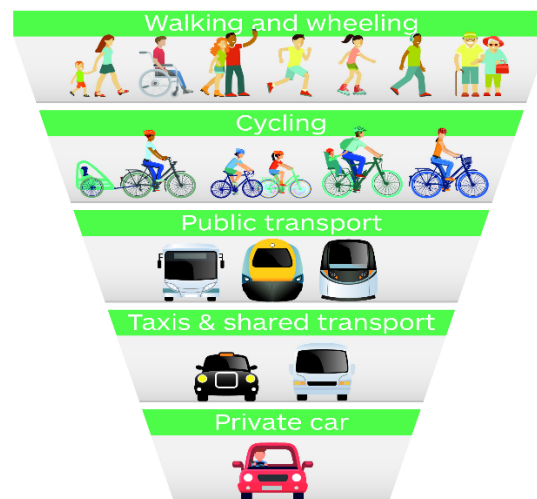
Importantly, overarching all the policies, to address the challenges and achieve the priorities there is an embedded Sustainable Travel Hierarchy for decision making which will promote walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private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

**2009-2023 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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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.

**2009-2023 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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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.

**2009-2023 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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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

**2009-2023 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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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.

**2009-2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES**

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	

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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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

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 PRIORITY INTERVENTION PACKAGES

					commitment to review rail in SW Scotland.
	Reinstatement of double track between Gretna and Annan	£36,000,000		Complete	Complete
Stranraer Line Frequency / Journey Time Enhancements	The introduction of additional trains and local line improvements	N/A	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Community Rail Partnership established. Partnership study with SPT, Transport Scotland and Passenger Focus for section between Ayr and Stranraer complete	Stranraer Line position paper agreed by Board in 2017 and shared with relevant decision-makers.
Rail Services to Prestwick Airport via GSWL	Improved rail services to Prestwick Airport from Dumfries and Galloway	N/A	Transport Scotland, Network Rail, Scotrail, Dumfries & Galloway Council	Partnership study with SPT, Transport Scotland and Passenger Focus for section between Ayr and Stranraer complete	

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**2009-2023 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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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.

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**2009-2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN
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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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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.

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**2009-2023 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 2023/24	Timescale and Comments (2023/24)
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

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EQUALITIES REPORTING

1. Reason for Report

To advise Members of our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations.

2. Background

2.1 SWestrans is a listed public body under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations, and as such SWestrans has a duty to publish an Equalities Mainstreaming Report, attached as **Appendix 1**, and a new set of Equality Outcomes, every 4 years, to enable the RTP to better perform the Equality Duty. SWestrans is also required to provide a progress update on the Equality Outcomes every 2 years.

2.2 The General Equality Duty requires public authorities to, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) covers the following protected characteristics - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3. Key Points – Equalities Outcomes

3.1 Under the Equalities Act 2010, all public authorities are required to implement and publish Equality Outcomes and to report on progress made towards achieving these outcomes.

3.2 As required, SWestrans Officers have been developing a new set of equality outcomes for the period 2025-2029. These draft outcomes are:

EO1: Those with protected characteristics will have equal access to public transport information, in a variety of formats.

EO2: Public transport services are more flexible to meet the travel needs of those who need them most.

EO3: Access and affordability issues are reduced through transport solutions developed with partners.

3.3 A report outlining these draft equality outcomes in more detail is attached as **Appendix 2**. The Board is asked to review and agree these draft equality outcomes for the period 2025-2029.

5. Implications	
Financial	There are no financial implications as this time. Any financial implications that will result from the Equality Outcome activities will be brought to the Board for consideration and agreement.
Policy	Any policy implications will be considered when individual activities are carried out to achieve the Equality Outcomes.
Equalities	Our statutory duties in respect of equalities are the subject of this report.
Climate Change	There are no climate change implications.
Risk Management	There are no risk management implications.

6. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:

- 6.1 note SWestrans duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations;
- 6.2 note the SWestrans Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2025 at Appendix 1; and
- 6.3 review and agree the draft SWestrans Equality Outcomes for 2025-2029 at Appendix 2.

Report Author: Kirsty Dunsmore	Approved by: Simon Bradbury Lead Officer
Date of Report: 10 March 2025	South West of Scotland Transport Partnership
File Ref: SW2/Meetings/2025	Cargen Tower Garroch Business Park Dumfries DG2 8PN

Appendices

Appendix 1 - SWestrans Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2025

Appendix 2 - SWestrans Equalities Outcomes 2025-2029



**Equalities
Mainstreaming
Report
2023- 2025**

1. Introduction

The Public Sector Equalities Duty was established by Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is referred to as the General Equality Duty. Specific duties were created by secondary legislation in the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The General Equality Duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from other people;
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate on public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics The Equality Act 2010 refers to are:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

As a statutory Regional Transport Partnership, SWestrans is a listed public body in The Equality Act 2010 and is subject to The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

The purpose of the specific duties in Scotland is to help those authorities listed in the Regulations in their performance of the General Equality Duty.

The specific duties require a listed public authority to:

- Report on mainstreaming the general equality duty;
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress;
- Assess new or revised policies and practices;

- Review existing policies and practices;
- Gather, use and publish employee information;
- Publish gender pay gap information;
- Publish an equal pay statement;
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.

SWestrans is committed to fulfilling the duties set out by The Equality Act 2010 and reporting on the areas which are relevant to the organisation as required by the Specific Duties 2012.

2. Regional Transport Partnership Equalities Duty

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 placed a duty on Scottish Ministers to create Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) covering the whole of Scotland. SWestrans is one of seven RTPs and covers an area contiguous within the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Partnership Board consists of five D&G Councillor members and two external members, one from South of Scotland Enterprise and one from NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

A number of individuals and representatives with a variety of interests have been appointed as Observers to the SWestrans Board, including from diversity groups, and the transport sector.

The Board is supported by SWestrans Officers, namely, Lead Officer, Governance Officer, Finance Officer, Team Leader, 3 Policy and Projects Officers, Public Transport Officer and Public Transport Assistant. SWestrans does not directly employ any staff, all staff are employed on its behalf by Dumfries and Galloway Council, and as such they are subject to Dumfries and Galloway Council policies and procedures. SWestrans is therefore exempt from the specific duties detailed in The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 in relation to employee information and pay. SWestrans has a responsibility to satisfy itself that Dumfries and Galloway Council is meeting the public sector equality duties in relation to employment on its behalf. SWestrans has determined that Dumfries and Galloway Council has a published Equalities Scheme in place and fulfils its equalities duties.

As a listed authority SWestrans is required to publish a report on the progress it has made to make the general equality duty integral in the exercise of its functions. For this reporting cycle the mainstreaming report must be published no later than 30 April 2025 and subsequently at intervals of not more than two years.

SWestrans is also required to publish a new set of equality outcomes in 2025, which will cover the period 2025-2029 and will enable the organisation to better perform the general equality duty. Progress reports on these Equality Outcomes will be published every 2 years as part of the Equalities Mainstreaming Report.

3. Mainstreaming the Equality Duty

3.1 Regional Transport Strategy

One of the main functions of RTPs is to develop a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) which sets both the policy and framework for transport delivery in the RTP area. In developing and delivering the RTS for Dumfries and Galloway, and working with statutory and other key stakeholders, SWestrans seeks to ensure that connectivity and accessibility needs of all sectors of society, and communities, are recognised and addressed.

The first SWestrans RTS which was published in 2008 and is relevant to the 2021-2025 reporting cycle is founded on the concept of the Sustainability Triangle, recognising that economic, environmental and social development are mutually dependent, and that progress towards sustainability in each policy element is required if sustainable development overall is to be made real.

In the 2008 RTS it states 'Our vision is 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 set of projects proposed in the 2008 Strategy are closely aligned to objectives and strategic outcomes that were set out by the Scottish Government at the time of writing the 2008 RTS. The five high level objectives for transport at that time were identified as:

- Promoting economic growth;
- Promoting social inclusion;
- Protecting the environment and improving health;
- Improving safety of journeys;
- Improving integration.

SWestrans new Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 was signed off by Scottish Ministers in summer 2024 and includes a number of actions and activities that will enhance equalities and will be directly relevant to the 2025-2029 Equality Outcomes that have been set.

SWestrans is also committed to contributing to the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) priority to reduce inequality and the associated outcomes to ensure everyone in Scotland will share in the benefits of a modern and accessible transport system that:

- Will provide fair access to services we need;
- Will be easy to use for all;
- Will be affordable for all.

3.2 Impact Assessments

SWestrans has adopted the Impact Assessment Toolkit developed by Dumfries and Galloway Council. The impact assessment tool assists SWestrans to check whether its 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.

The Impact Assessment Toolkit is available on SWestrans website www.swestrans.org.uk

3.3 Operations

SWestrans is responsible for procuring socially necessary local bus services across Dumfries and Galloway, these services are delivered by several bus operators. SWestrans has a responsibility to satisfy itself that operators who deliver services on behalf of SWestrans meet the requirements of the public sector equalities duties.

Operators are themselves subject to the general requirements of the Equality Acts, both as service delivery organisations and as employers.

When tendering for services SWestrans has access to support provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council's Procurement Team. SWestrans will include terms in contract specification documents requiring compliance with equalities legislation and the equalities aspirations of SWestrans.

3.4 Mainstreaming activities

Below is a list of some examples of how SWestrans mainstreams the Equality Act in its day to day business.

Functions

- All Board meeting venues are accessible and access issues are considered.
- Board meetings are 'hybrid' allowing attendance face to face or virtually via MS Teams.
- Board meetings are live streamed, recorded and published on SWestrans website to allow access to all.
- Engagement with diversity groups is facilitated through observers to the Board.
- Board reports are published on our website.
- SWestrans is a member of the Dumfries and Galloway Equality and Diversity Working Group.

Policy and strategy

- Strategies and Policies have been subject to Impact Assessments.

- The new Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 has undergone an Equality Impact Assessment.
- Dumfries and Galloway Councils Impact Assessment Toolkit has been adopted.

Projects

- All SWestrans projects comply with the General Equality Duty.
- Public engagement and formal consultation, when required, is always undertaken including key stakeholders from diversity groups.
- SWestrans has adopted the Thistle Assistance Card to make using public transport easier for older people and those with disabilities or illness.

Operations

- All local bus assets are fully accessible for people with a physical impairment.
- Accessible buses are specified on all contracted services.
- When tendering for services SWestrans is responsible for meeting the Duty and in doing so includes terms in contracts requiring compliance with equalities legislation.
- Public transport timetables are available on our website and printed accessible copies can be produced as required.

4. Equality Outcomes

SWestrans develops Equality Outcomes based on transport policy and evidence of national and local transport inequality. During the development of the new RTS 2023-2042 particular focus has been given to consultation with a variety of key stakeholders, including representatives from the Equality and Diversity Working Group, to allow all stakeholders to have their say and influence the RTS direction. An Equality Impact Assessment has also been undertaken as part of the development of the RTS.

Below is a list of the equality outcomes and the actions/activities SWestrans has endeavoured to deliver on during 2021-2025-

Equality Outcome 1: Everyone will be able to easily access and understand the local bus service information they need.

Actions/activities

- Improve at-stop bus publicity (as well as improving at-stop facilities)
- Improve printed publicity
- Improve digital publicity
- Improve communications and language to ensure that our information and services are accessible
- Engagement with stakeholder groups to understand information gaps
- Adopt additional methods of informing our communities

Equality Outcome 2: Public transport services are more flexible to meet the identified travel needs of those who need them most.

Actions/activities

- Work with national agencies and transport operators to protect key public transport links
- Lead on the development and delivery of the new Public Transport Model agreed by Dumfries and Galloway Council and SWestrans
- Advocate for increased financial support for rural bus services
- Making sure the voice of protected characteristics groups is heard within the new Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Work with the Third Sector and Community Planning Partners to enhance the capacity of Community Transport and deliver the mission within the Dumfries and Galloway Community Transport Strategy 2022 to 2025
- Develop, design and implement a more flexible transport delivery model
- Trial Demand Responsive Transport solutions
- Work with young people representatives so they can make full benefit of free travel for Under 22s.
- Work with the Local Employability and Skills Partnership and South of Scotland Enterprise to identify transport solutions to ensure sustainable, public and active travel access to employment, education and training locations.
- Review and update the existing local bus Root and Branch Policy to reflect changes in transport demand.

Equality Outcome 3: Access and affordability issues are reduced through new transport solutions developed with partners.

Actions/activities

- Involve individuals and communities with lived experience of poverty in identifying needs and designing transport services to respond to those needs. We will engage with volunteers with lived experience of poverty through the Tackling Poverty Reference Group.
- Explore a range of ways of making travel more affordable. We will lead on a review of fees/fares and work with transport operators and Transport Scotland to encourage and assist with integrated ticketing options and reduced fare schemes.
- Examine ways of addressing the transport challenges faced by people on low incomes in remote and rural areas. We will identify areas where affordability of transport services is affecting access to health

appointments and employment opportunities and work with partners to pilot and deliver transport solutions.

- We will continue to investigate how new and innovative transport methods (e.g. demand-responsive transport, autonomous vehicles, and Mobility-as-a-Service) can be used to address transport barriers faced by people on low incomes and to connect particularly remote and rural communities.
- SWestrans will work to encourage use of the new free bus scheme for Under 22s – transport affordability issues will only be alleviated for young people if they have adequate access to services. We will also undertake work to mitigate the unintended consequences that the scheme may have on other users, i.e. that it does not drive up the single adult fare.

Equality Outcome 4: Our work is informed by a greater understanding of the transport and travel needs, barriers faced and experiences of people with protected characteristics.

Actions/activities

- Improved data collection and analysis
- Improved engagement and consultation with:
 - Protected characteristic groups, especially:
 - Disabled
 - Sexual orientation
 - Race
 - Equality Working Groups and third sector organisations
 - Transport operators on identified accessibility barriers
- Involve Protected Characteristic groups throughout the delivery of a new Regional Transport Strategy to identify barriers and a transport work plan/programme of support and improvements
- Use the Place Principle

5. Conclusion

SWestrans acknowledges the importance of mainstreaming the Equalities Act 2010 and the Equalities Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 in its day-to-day business. SWestrans will do this by continuing the mainstreaming activities outlined in this report and working to achieve the equality outcomes set for 2025-2029 through the new Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 and Annual RTS Delivery Plan.

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) Equality Outcomes 2025-2029



Introduction

SWestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the South West of Scotland and was established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, which created seven RTPs in Scotland. It covers the same area as Dumfries and Galloway Council and NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

The Partnership Board includes members nominated by Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, and South of Scotland Enterprise. It has a wide range of strategy and policy responsibilities relating to transport, as well as a number of operational responsibilities, primarily supporting socially necessary bus services and assisting with the delivery of home to school transport with Dumfries and Galloway Council.

We are committed to contributing to the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) priority to reduce inequality and the associated outcomes to ensure everyone in Scotland will share in the benefits of a modern and accessible transport system that:

- Will provide fair access to services we need
- Will be easy to use for all
- Will be affordable for all

To ensure that equality issues are fully addressed, this outcome report sets out the range of equalities issues facing SWestrans and its operations, the outcomes that we have set, and the actions to be taken to meet these outcomes.

Issue 1 – Bus publicity and journey information

Strategic link

Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042

Priority 5- Enhancing Access to Transport Services

- 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
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) should be made available for all public transport modes at stations, stops and on-board services wherever possible and practical

Priority 7- Improving the Quality and Affordability of our Public Transport Offer

- Enhancements to existing bus stops will be implemented where practical to improve security, accessibility and the attractiveness of bus services for all users

Background

Evidence shows that those with protected characteristics are more likely to use and rely on public transport, especially bus services. Communicating when services are scheduled for, where services are (real time passenger information) and what safety and accessibility measures are in place on these services are all imperative for confidence in the public transport network.

The Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) have highlighted that disabled people and/or older people with mobility needs have found the reduction in public transport services to be particularly difficult to deal with and often do not have access to reliable and accurate information when they are trying to make travel plans.

Bus service providers are increasingly relying on the provision of service information through digital means. This excludes those disabled people or older people who may be less likely to have access to or the skills and confidence to use digital technology and those who cannot afford to be digitally connected. This is an issue likely to be experienced in our region where those using the national concessionary card make up a high proportion of local bus patronage.

Inequality	The communication needs of different protected characteristics need to be more considered.
Equality outcome 1	Those with protected characteristics will have equal access to public transport information, in a variety of formats.
Protected Characteristics Groups Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Sex • Race
General equality duty	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Link to strategic priority	<p>Links to National Transport Strategy (NTS2) priority to reduce inequality, and the outcomes that transport will be easy to use for all and provide fair access to services.</p> <p>Links to Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 Priority 5- Enhancing Access to Transport Services and Priority 7- Improving the Quality and Affordability of our Public Transport Offer</p>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve at-stop bus publicity • Improve printed publicity • Improve digital publicity • Improve communications and language to ensure that our information and services are accessible • Implement RTPI at bus stops • Equality and Diversity Training for all SWestrans staff

Issue 2 – Public Transport Provision

Strategic link

Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042

Priority 5- Enhancing Access to Transport Services

- 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
- 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

Priority 6- Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity

- Where no bus service exists, demand responsive transport (DRT) solutions will be developed and operated by third sector community transport operators, DGC Buses and the community

Priority 7- Improving the Quality and Affordability of our Public Transport Offer

- Improving links between different modes of transport by reducing the distances between connecting modes and coordinating the timing of services should be taken forward as a priority whenever possible.

Background

Evidence shows that a lack of public transport services and options disproportionately impacts disabled people, women, and the young and old. In rural areas, such as Dumfries and Galloway, low levels of public transport provision and connectivity issues can act as barriers to travel. These barriers contribute to a range of socio-economic issues including difficulty accessing suitable employment, education and training opportunities, and healthcare which then increases social isolation, out-migration of young people and forced car ownership.

The bus network within Dumfries and Galloway is a complex, fragile balancing act in which the inter-dependent factors of commercial local bus, supported local bus and school transport all inter-connect and cannot be sustained individually. There is a real risk of service reduction across our local public transport network, which could have an adverse impact on those in protected characteristics groups.

There is also a recognition that public transport needs to be delivered in a more flexible way so that people can access the services/opportunities they need at the time they need. Bus service frequencies across much of the region are already low, with some areas having no service in the off-peak periods. It is also more difficult to integrate services in rural areas given the dispersed residents and low population densities. This low demand can lead to high fares for users and/or need for subsidy.

Inequality	Protected characteristic groups are more likely than most to use public transport and tend to be disproportionately affected by service reductions.
Equality outcome 2	Public transport services are more flexible to meet the travel needs of those who need them most.
Protected Characteristics Groups Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Sex • Race
General equality duty	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Link to strategic priority	<p>Links to NTS2 priority to reduce inequality, specifically the outcome to ensure that disadvantaged communities and individuals have fair access to the transport services they need.</p> <p>Links to Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 Priority 5- Enhancing Access to Transport Services, Priority 6- Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity, and Priority 7- Improving the Quality and Affordability of our Public Transport Offer.</p> <p>SWestrans has a statutory duty to secure the provision of public transport services it considers appropriate to meet any public transport requirements within its area that are not being met commercially.</p>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Scottish Government and transport operators to protect key public transport links • Lobby for increased financial support for rural bus services • Work with the Third Sector, NHS, DGC and SOSE to enhance the capacity of Community Transport • Develop, design and implement a more flexible transport options • Promote free travel for U22s as part of our publicity

Issue 3 – Transport Affordability

Strategic Link

Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042

Priority 6- Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity

- 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
- Where no bus service exists, demand responsive transport (DRT) solutions will be developed and operated by third sector community transport operators, DGC Buses and the community

Priority 7- Improving the Quality and Affordability of our Public Transport Offer

- 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
- Expansion of existing concessionary travel schemes to cover rail should be considered to enable more users to access affordable rail travel
- 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
- Integrated ticketing solutions should be built upon and better promote existing schemes such as PlusBus and Rail and Sail as well as seeking new opportunities to deliver integrated ticketing measures for bus, rail and ferry in the region

Background

Disabled people, people with mental health conditions and people from ethnic minority groups are more likely to live in poverty and women and disabled people are more likely to experience severe material deprivation. Dumfries and Galloway Council's 'Future approach to tackling poverty and inequality for Dumfries & Galloway' shares that one in five Dumfries and Galloway residents live in poverty.

The National Transport Strategy 2 sets out that the single most important factor cited by those on low incomes as the greatest transport-related barrier is cost. People in low income households are excluded from maintaining social connections or accessing employment or training opportunities due to the affordability and availability of transport options, resulting in isolation for many.

People living in poverty are more likely to travel by bus, while those in higher income households are more likely to travel by car. Public transport is therefore important to those on low incomes to allow them access to services and facilities they need. Locally, the price of fares on commercially funded bus services and the lack of integrated ticketing across multiple operators/routes is an issue.

Inequality	The affordability of transport within Dumfries and Galloway is an issue due to its rurality. Protected characteristic groups are more likely to be living in poverty and the lack of affordable transport contributes to the socioeconomic disadvantages.
Equality outcome 3	Access and affordability issues are reduced through transport solutions developed with partners.
Protected Characteristics Groups Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • Sex • Race
General equality duty	Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
Link to strategic priority	<p>Links to the NTS2 priority to reduce inequality, specifically the outcome to ensure that disadvantaged communities and individuals have fair access to the transport services they need. The strategy identifies that the cost of transport is a barrier.</p> <p>Links to Regional Transport Strategy 2023-2042 Priority 6- Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity, and Priority 7- Improving the Quality and Affordability of our Public Transport Offer.</p>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with volunteers with lived experience of poverty through the Tackling Poverty Reference Group • Work with Transport Scotland to encourage and assist with integrated ticketing options and reduced fare schemes • Examine ways of addressing the transport challenges faced by people on low incomes in remote and rural areas • Continue to investigate how Community Transport can be used to address transport barriers faced by people on low incomes • Work to encourage use of free bus scheme for U22s through promotion and publicity

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL, REDUCING CAR KM – AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To update the Board on the Audit Scotland report (see **Appendix**) on the reduction of car use across Scotland.

1.2 This paper was requested to be presented to the March Board by the Senior Auditor at Audit Scotland.

2. Background

2.1 The Scottish Government set an ambitious but challenging target to reduce car kilometres driven by 20 per cent by 2030.

2.2 The Scottish Government's car kilometre target was developed to help reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030. The Scottish Government wanted to set an ambitious target on car use to show leadership in terms of taking climate action.

2.3 The Regional Transport Strategy in Priority 9.1 'Dumfries and Galloway will make its contribution to delivering the Scottish Government's target to reduce car km by 20% by 2030 reflecting the regional circumstances' demonstrates that we are working towards this achievement. However, it will be very challenging in Dumfries & Galloway due to rural environment in the absence of demand management and alternatives to the car.

3. Key Points

Please find the Audit Scotland report recommendations set out below:

3.1 The Scottish Government should:

- As soon as possible, clarify its commitment to reducing transport emissions through the car kilometre target and how it aligns with the new carbon budget approach towards its climate change policy.
- By the end of 2025, at the latest, publish a realistic delivery plan that sets out how it will work with partners to achieve the restated target. This should include the impact Scottish Government, councils and Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) are expected to have, clear roles and responsibilities, timescales, costs, and an appropriate monitoring and evaluation plan.
- In 2025, publish guidance for councils on how to reduce car use and the need to travel in their communities. This should be aligned with the national planning framework and include the role that rural councils can play.
- By the end of 2025, review the first full year of the new system for active travel delivery, identify challenges and address them. It should evaluate the impact of the changes and whether they have resulted in more efficient delivery.

- In 2025, start a national conversation with the public about their travel choices using effective behaviour change techniques to educate and encourage people to reduce their car use.
- 3.2 The **Scottish Government** and **COSLA** should:
- By the end of the 2024/25 financial year, confirm the joint governance and collective accountability arrangements for delivering, overseeing and scrutinising progress towards the 20 per cent car kilometre target. These arrangements should include clear roles and responsibilities and have membership from across the Scottish Government, councils and RTPs.
- 3.3 The **Scottish Government, councils** and **RTPs** should:
- From 2025, report annually through the climate change monitoring report, and local and regional transport strategy updates, on how spending in the year has affected the desired outcomes of fewer people using their car and more people travelling via sustainable modes such as active travel and public transport.
 - Use the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process to consult with communities, businesses and the third sector to ensure that efforts to reduce car use are part of a just transition and do not deepen inequalities. The EQIA should clearly capture how bodies have fully involved different groups and considered their needs as part of their decision-making.
- 3.4 **Councils** and **RTPs** should:
- As part of their Local Transport Strategies and Regional Transport Strategies, set out to what extent they will contribute to the 20 per cent car kilometre target. This should include measurable key performance indicators, costs and timescales.
 - Regularly share good practise and learning, including their detailed analysis of how to achieve the target in their local area.

4. Implications	
Financial	None.
Policy	No change in policy. This work fulfils SWestrans policy objectives.
Equalities	Provision of good quality infrastructure will enhance travel choice and experience for those with protected characteristics.
Climate Change	Provision of good quality infrastructure that enhances opportunity for increased uptake of active and sustainable travel will have a positive impact on climate change objectives.
Risk Management	R05 – RTS Delivery

5. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to: -

5.1 note the Audit Scotland Report on Sustainable Travel and await further updates on the implementation of the reports' recommendations; and

5.2 agree to work towards the target of 20% reduction of car km by 2030 through the implementation of the RTS priority 9.1 and to update the board in future on action and progress.

Report Author: Grant Coltart
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Date of Report: 10 March 2025
File Ref: SW2/Meetings/2025

Approved by: Simon Bradbury
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DG2 8PN

Appendices – 1

Appendix - Audit Scotland Sustainable Travel Report.

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Sustainable transport

Reducing car use



ACCOUNTS COMMISSION 

AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland
January 2025

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Accessibility

You can find out more and read this report using assistive technology on our website www.audit.scot/accessibility.

Audit team

The core audit team consisted of:
Ashleigh Madjitey,
Garry Quigley, Lewis
Kinnear, James
Troy and Dharshi
Santhakumaran
under the direction of
Cornilius Chikwama.

Key messages

- 1** Transport is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland. In 2020, the Scottish Government set an ambitious but very challenging target to reduce car kilometres driven by 20 per cent by 2030. It still does not have a clear plan to achieve this. A lack of leadership has resulted in minimal progress against the demanding policy intention. It is not clear if the Scottish Government remains committed to the target as key documents remain in draft form, there is no costed delivery plan or measurable milestones, and arrangements for monitoring and scrutinising progress are insufficient.
- 2** Councils have an important role in reducing car use, but some prioritise contributing to the target more than others and they face different challenges in doing so. It is more difficult to deliver change in rural areas with longer distances to travel and an inadequate public transport network. Councils need clearer guidance and direction from the Scottish Government on their role in supporting delivery of the target.
- 3** Scottish Government and council spending on measures to reduce car use is complex, fragmented and lacks transparency. One-year funding makes it difficult for bodies to plan and deliver longer-term projects. Transport Scotland and councils do not record how much is spent specifically on the target to reduce car use. The Scottish Government spends significant amounts of money on interventions that could reduce car use, such as concessionary bus travel and active travel, but it has not

considered how to target funding to have the most impact on car use. Because of uncertainty about funding, councils and others have found the first year of introducing changes to how active travel is delivered difficult.

- 4** Car use has rebounded since the Covid-19 pandemic with public transport use decreasing in the last decade and active travel rates fluctuating. It is unlikely that the Scottish Government will achieve its target of reducing car kilometres driven by 20 per cent by 2030. It has not said how this will affect its wider ambitions to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. The Scottish Government and councils will find it hard to significantly reduce transport emissions unless they make difficult and potentially unpopular decisions to discourage car use.
-

Recommendations

The Scottish Government should:

- As soon as possible, clarify its commitment to reducing transport emissions through the car kilometre target and how it aligns with the new carbon budget approach towards its climate change policy.
- By the end of 2025, at the latest, publish a realistic delivery plan that sets out how it will work with partners to achieve the restated target. This should include the impact Scottish Government, councils and Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) are expected to have, clear roles and responsibilities, timescales, costs, and an appropriate monitoring and evaluation plan.
- In 2025, publish guidance for councils on how to reduce car use and the need to travel in their communities. This should be aligned with the national planning framework and include the role that rural councils can play.
- By the end of 2025, review the first full year of the new system for active travel delivery, identify challenges and address them. It should evaluate the impact of the changes and whether they have resulted in more efficient delivery.
- In 2025, start a national conversation with the public about their travel choices using effective behaviour change techniques to educate and encourage people to reduce their car use.

The Scottish Government and COSLA should:

- By the end of the 2024/25 financial year, confirm the joint governance and collective accountability arrangements for delivering, overseeing and scrutinising progress towards the 20 per cent car kilometre target. These arrangements should include clear roles and responsibilities and have membership from across the Scottish Government, councils and RTPs.

The Scottish Government, councils and RTPs should:

- From 2025, report annually through the climate change monitoring report, and local and regional transport strategy updates, on how spending in the year has affected the desired outcomes of fewer people using their car and more people travelling via sustainable modes such as active travel and public transport.

- Use the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process to consult with communities, businesses and the third sector to ensure that efforts to reduce car use are part of a just transition and do not deepen inequalities. The EQIA should clearly capture how bodies have fully involved different groups and considered their needs as part of their decision-making.

Councils and RTPs should:

- As part of their Local Transport Strategies and Regional Transport Strategies, set out to what extent they will contribute to the 20 per cent car kilometre target. This should include measurable key performance indicators, costs and timescales.
- Regularly share good practise and learning, including their detailed analysis of how to achieve the target in their local area.

Background

Domestic transport is Scotland's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions

1. In 2019, the Scottish Government declared a climate emergency and went on to set challenging new emission reduction targets, including a target of **net zero** greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. It also announced interim targets, including a 75 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (based on 1990 levels). The **Climate Change Committee** (CCC) advised at the time that achieving the 2030 interim target would be extremely challenging.¹

2. Reducing emissions from transport is crucial to achieving net zero targets. Domestic transport is the largest source of emissions in Scotland, accounting for 28 per cent of all emissions ([Exhibit 1, page 8](#)). Domestic transport emissions are reducing at a slower rate than emissions from most other sectors. Emissions from cars make up the largest share of all domestic transport emissions.

3. Reducing transport emissions will be achieved through encouraging wider behavioural changes, such as persuading more people to use public transport and **active travel**, reducing the need to travel, and technological advances such as increasing the uptake of electric vehicles.

4. The Scottish Government's [update to its 2018 Climate Change Plan](#) includes policies to achieve the new emission reduction targets. This includes a target to reduce car kilometres driven by 20 per cent by 2030, compared with 2019 levels. Transport Scotland and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)'s draft [routemap](#) sets out the four key behaviours to achieve the target to reduce car use:

- reducing the need to travel
- choosing local destinations
- switching modes of transports
- combining or sharing car trips.



Net zero

The process where emissions are cut to as close to zero as possible with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere.

Climate Change Committee

An independent body which advises the UK and Scottish governments on emissions targets and reports on progress.

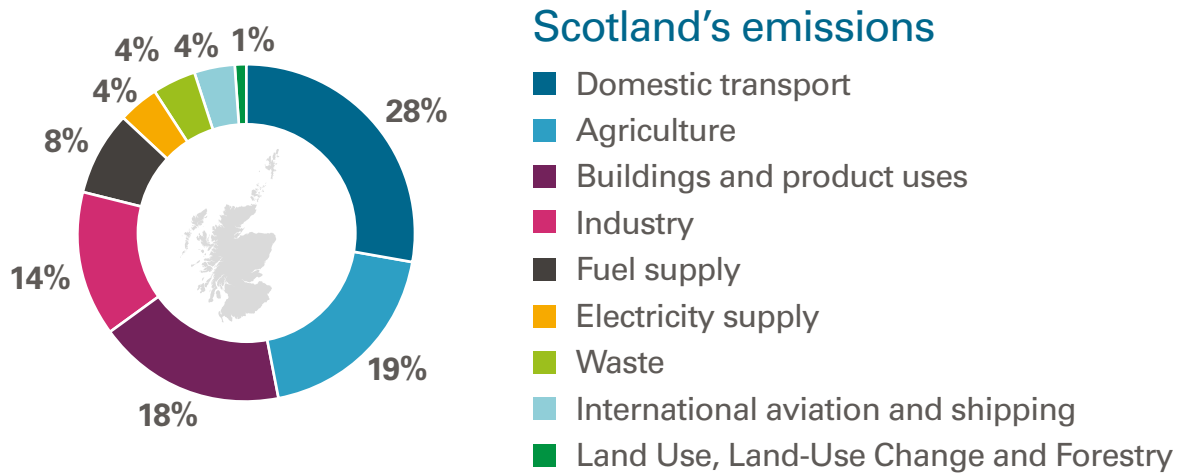
Active travel

Involves travelling in a way that includes some level of activity – most often walking, cycling or wheeling a wheelchair.

Exhibit 1.

Greenhouse gas emissions by sector in 2022

Domestic transport makes up the largest share of Scotland's emissions.



Note: Buildings and product uses includes emissions from combustion on residential, public sector and commercial sites, including from air conditioning and refrigeration.

Source: Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2022, Scottish Government

5. The Scottish Government set the target to reduce **car kilometres** driven and is responsible for the overall Climate Change Plan. It has delegated responsibility for delivering this target to **Transport Scotland**. Councils, other Scottish Government directorates and **RTPs** deliver many of the interventions that aim to reduce car use.

6. The routemap does not expect every area in Scotland to reduce car kilometres travelled by 20 per cent by 2030, nor does it expect every individual to reduce their personal mileage by the same amount.



Calculating car kilometres

The Department for Transport uses automatic and manual traffic counters on key roads to calculate the number of kilometres driven nationally and locally. The calculations rely on some assumptions to extend the count data nationally.



Transport Scotland

Transport Scotland is the Scottish Government's national transport agency. On behalf of Scottish ministers, it is responsible for developing and delivering the Scottish Government's national transport policy, including policy relating to bus, rail and active travel, and managing transport infrastructure.



Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs)

There are seven RTPs across Scotland. They bring together councils and other key regional stakeholders to take a strategic approach to transport in their region. They have a statutory duty to produce a regional transport strategy (RTS). Some RTPs also deliver public transport in their area.

The Scottish Government has regularly failed to achieve its emission reduction targets, and has dropped its commitment to reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030

7. The Scottish Government has missed its annual emission reduction targets in eight of the last 12 years. The CCC said in March 2024 that the target to reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030 is not credible.²

8. The Scottish Parliament passed legislation in November 2024 that removed the target to reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030, although it remains committed to achieving net zero by 2045. The Scottish Government will develop five-year carbon budgets instead. This has delayed its next Climate Change Plan update, which was due by March 2025. The Scottish Government has not outlined how the change will affect its commitment to the car kilometre target.

About the audit

9. This report has been prepared on behalf of the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) and the Accounts Commission. It is part of a wider programme of climate change audits being carried out by Audit Scotland on behalf of the AGS and the Accounts Commission. It follows 2023 audit work assessing the [Scottish Government's governance and risk management arrangements for climate change](#) and the 2024 report on [decarbonising heat in buildings](#). The role of public audit in, and our approach to, supporting the public sector in delivering climate change ambitions is set out in [Auditing climate change: Our strategy](#).

10. This audit considers the progress that the Scottish Government and councils are making towards the target to reduce car use. The audit looks at:

- the strategic, governance and leadership arrangements that are in place nationally and locally to meet the target
- the delivery arrangements for interventions which encourage people to switch from car use to more sustainable forms of transport and reduce the need to travel
- progress made to date in delivering the target to reduce car use.

11. Our findings and recommendations are based on evidence gathered through reviewing documents, analysing data and interviews with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, RTPs, and councils. We also spoke with key stakeholders, including the CCC, COSLA, third sector delivery partners and the Improvement Service.

12. We adopted a case study approach to scrutinise the work of councils. Our case study councils are Glasgow City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council. The audit also assessed the work of the Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership (Tactran) in delivering sustainable transport.

13. Although electric vehicles contribute to reducing transport emissions, this audit will focus on Scottish Government and councils' activities to reduce car use. Audit Scotland is considering separate work on the transition to electric vehicles and the charging network as part of its future work programme.

1. An ambitious target

The Scottish Government set an ambitious, but very challenging, target to reduce car kilometres driven by 20 per cent by 2030

14. The Scottish Government's car kilometre target was developed to help reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030. The Scottish Government wanted to set an ambitious target on car use to show leadership, but for several reasons it is unlikely that it could achieve it by 2030:

- The Scottish Government introduced the car kilometre target during the Covid-19 pandemic when levels of car traffic had decreased significantly. Before this, car traffic had been increasing every year since 2010. To achieve the target, car traffic levels will need to decrease by 7.3 billion kilometres to 29.3 billion compared to a 2019 baseline. The last time car traffic levels were at this level was in 1994.
- Demand management measures are crucial to reducing car use ([paragraphs 83–86](#)), but the Scottish Government and councils do not have the powers to introduce all schemes. For example, the Scottish Government does not have powers over fuel duty and vehicle excise duty, and it is unclear how it will deliver the target within its existing powers. Councils are not able to enforce local charging options. It will take time to acquire and introduce all the necessary powers and for them to start reducing car use.
- Transport Scotland consulted on the draft routemap but not on the target before it was introduced. Earlier engagement would have allowed stakeholders, particularly those from rural areas, to explain the challenges of contributing to the national target and to present alternatives.
- The target was not accompanied by dedicated funding or a clear delivery plan with milestones to measure progress against ([Part 2](#)).
- Modelling commissioned by Transport Scotland to understand how to meet the emissions targets only considered a 20 per cent reduction, based on its assessment of the transport sector. It is possible that with a different choice of measures, for example increasing electric vehicle take-up, that the Scottish Government could have adopted a different car use reduction target.

15. Several stakeholders welcomed the Scottish Government's commitment to tackling car dependency, recognising that it was a policy-based target aimed at galvanising action. The CCC said the ambitious

target went beyond the actions of other governments across the UK³ but has consistently recommended that the Scottish Government produce a clear delivery plan.

The Scottish Government recognises that the current transport system drives inequalities

16. The Scottish Government and COSLA recognise that the current transport system drives inequalities. It prioritises car ownership at the expense of other transport modes. A lack of reliable transport alternatives means that some people cannot easily access key services that others with a car can. This potentially pushes people into poverty as they need to own a car they cannot afford. People on lower incomes, those from an ethnic minority group, women and elderly people are less likely to own a car.

17. The Just Transition Commission (JTC) cautions that policies to limit car use without a clear, considered, cross-governmental plan could deepen inequalities. For example, limiting car use could make travelling harder for people with a disability who rely on mobility cars. This is recognised in the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Climate Change Plan update (CCPu) which recommends individual policies must consider the impact on protected characteristics. The draft routemap explains how those with a protected characteristic are less likely to own a car and should benefit from the car kilometre target through increasing access to services, improving places and improving air quality.

Scottish Government and council policies broadly align with the target, but ministers and councillors need to manage competing priorities

National transport strategies align with reducing car use

18. Transport Scotland's [National Transport Strategy 2](#) (NTS2) introduces the:

- **sustainable investment hierarchy** which prioritises reducing the need to travel unsustainably and maintaining existing assets over building new, and
- **sustainable travel hierarchy** which prioritises active and sustainable modes of transport over the private vehicle.

The NTS2 expects public bodies to follow these hierarchies when making decisions about transport investment.

19. Following the publication of the NTS2, Transport Scotland published other transport strategies such as the [Active Travel Framework](#), the [Cycling Framework for Active travel](#), and the [Fair Fares Review](#).

20. The [Strategic Transport Project Review 2](#) (STPR2) is a plan for transport investment over the next 20 years to help deliver the vision of the NTS2. Most of the recommendations will positively contribute to the Scottish Government's priority of tackling climate change by reducing emissions. Some, such as strengthening access to Stranraer and the ports at Cairnryan and improvements to the A83, will not. The projects are unfunded and two years later the STPR2 delivery plan has not been published.

Transport is connected to many government priorities and change will need to happen across government

21. Key Scottish Government strategies contain common actions that should reduce car use even if all do not explicitly reference the target. For example:

- [NHS Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2022-2026](#) outlines activities that explicitly contribute to the car kilometre target.
- The [National Planning Framework 4](#) outlines policies that could reduce car use through supporting **20-minute neighbourhoods**. In April 2024, the Scottish Government published planning guidance on local living to support the framework.⁴
- The [Digital Strategy for Scotland](#) also does not explicitly reference the car kilometre target but contains several projects that could reduce the need to travel, including delivering broadband coverage for all.

22. The interconnectedness of transport means that many parts of the Scottish Government will need to contribute to the delivery of the car kilometre target. The Auditor General's 2023 [report](#) highlights how challenges remain in integrating climate change into wider decision-making across the Scottish Government. We have not seen a substantial cross-government commitment towards delivering the target, instead the responsibility for it lies with Transport Scotland.

Local strategies support national strategies and promote reducing car use

23. Case study councils' strategies broadly align with national strategies and efforts to reduce car use. Apart from transport strategies, key local strategies tend not to mention the car kilometre target directly, but most contain actions that should indirectly reduce car travel. However, most are unfunded. They include:

- **Regional transport strategies (RTS)** – Developed by RTPs, they reflect the ambitions of the NTS2 and tend to explicitly reference the car kilometre target.



20-minute neighbourhoods

This is a concept to support local living. It encourages planners to develop neighbourhoods where most residents' needs can be accessed within a 20-minute walk, wheel or cycle from home.

- **Local Development Plans (LDPs)** – the National Planning Framework 4 and the ambition to enable local living heavily influences councils’ LDPs.
- **Economic strategies** – key local economic strategies contain fewer references to discouraging car use.
- **Active travel strategies** – strategies aimed at increasing the uptake of active travel in their local areas.

Ministers and councillors need to balance competing priorities when making strategic decisions

24. Climate change is one of many competing priorities that Scottish Government ministers and local councillors need to balance. The Auditor General reported in [September 2023](#) and [November 2024](#) that it is not clear how the Scottish Government prioritises its infrastructure spending or its reform. We found a similar lack of clarity in councils:

- The Scottish Government’s [Infrastructure Investment Plan](#) sets out £26 billion of capital spending over a five-year period. There are capital projects that could increase the amount of car kilometres driven, for example, upgrades to the A9 and A82 and projects which would encourage a reduction in car use such as investment in bus priority measures and support for active freeways (active travel infrastructure on key routes between towns).⁵
- The [2024/25 Programme for Government](#) repeats that achieving net zero by 2045 is a key priority for the Scottish Government. However, budgetary pressures led to the Scottish Government announcing over £500 million worth of budget reductions for 2024/25 in September 2024. This included reinstating peak fares for trains ([Case study 1, page 15](#)) and reducing the active and sustainable travel budget by £23.7 million.
- Some councils’ and RTPs’ local strategies contain actions that may be contradictory to reducing car use but provide important safety improvements or economic benefits. For example, SWestrans’ RTS outlines an ambition to deliver road enhancements, including securing funding for the A75 and A77.

Case study 1.

Pilot to remove ScotRail peak fares

The Scottish Government announced that the 12-month pilot to remove peak fares did not attract enough passengers to rail, and due to funding pressures, peak fares were reinstated

The Scottish Government allocated up to £40 million to subsidise the temporary removal of ScotRail peak fares between October 2023 and September 2024. One of the pilot's aims was to encourage a modal shift from private car to rail travel.

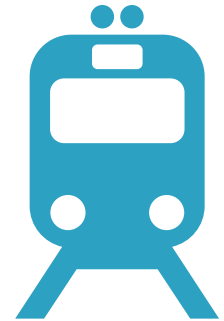
An evaluation report explains that the pilot made rail a more viable transport option and reduced the costs of travelling during the cost-of-living crisis.

Transport Scotland analysis suggests that the pilot led to an increase in the demand for rail travel of 6.8 per cent. This represents around 4 million extra rail journeys over nine months, of which two million were journeys that commuters would have previously travelled by car.

The evaluation considers the value for money of the intervention and estimates it would give a benefit of between £1 and £1.25 of value for every £1 spent.

The Scottish Government decided that the costs of subsidising the removal of peak fares does not represent value for money in the current challenging financial environment. The evaluation report does not outline the impact of reinstating peak fares will have on car use or acknowledge that it can take time to sustain positive behavioural changes, such as encouraging modal shift from car to rail use.

Source: Transport Scotland⁶



A lack of collaborative leadership has resulted in minimal action

25. The Scottish Government has regularly delayed taking important decisions to deliver the car kilometre target:

- The CCPu said the Scottish Government would publish a routemap to achieving the car kilometre target in 2021.⁷ The Scottish Government published its draft routemap in January 2022.
- It planned to publish the final routemap in October 2022. Publication has been delayed several times.

- Independent research on **demand management** was completed in January 2023. Transport Scotland delayed publication several times before publishing it in December 2024.⁸
- The CCC has consistently, over the last three years, called on the Scottish Government to produce a clear delivery plan explaining how the car kilometre target will be achieved.

26. Internal Transport Scotland performance reports indicate that these delays were due to transport ministers not approving publication of the routemap and research. Since the Scottish Government introduced the target for reducing car use, there have been:

- three cabinet secretaries with responsibility for transport
- six ministers with ministerial responsibility for transport.

Officials say that these changes, along with the ending of the **Bute House Agreement** in April 2024, a change in First Minister in May 2024 and UK general election in July 2024, have all impacted the schedule for gaining ministerial approval.

27. There is a team working hard towards delivering the target within Transport Scotland, but we have not seen the leadership needed from the Scottish Government to make sustained progress. Recent policy decisions suggest that the Scottish Government has deprioritised the target in the face of growing financial pressures, for example the peak fares reversal ([Case study 1, page 15](#)) and reducing funding for active travel. There is limited evidence of working across government to deliver the target, for example through a joint governance board. The Scottish Government needs to consider whether this target remains a priority and, if so, clearly restate its commitment to it.

28. Some councils explain that they do not believe the target is achievable and getting agreement to implement policies which actively discourage car use is politically difficult. COSLA is engaging further with its member councils on the revised routemap which is further delaying publication. All parts of government will need to act to deliver the target and reduce transport carbon emissions.



Demand management

Measures to reduce the attractiveness of driving such as road reallocation, parking charges and charging drivers for entering an area or for the amount they drive. The intention is to make the cost of driving, in terms of either time or money, more than that of the alternatives ([Exhibit 8, page 37](#)).



Bute House Agreement (BHA)

In August 2021, the SNP and the Scottish Greens agreed a power-sharing agreement and a shared policy programme. This enabled the SNP to form a government that would be supported by the Scottish Greens on areas included in the agreement. The BHA ended in April 2024.

Action on the car kilometre target requires stronger leadership and clearer governance arrangements

29. The Auditor General's 2023 report on [the Scottish Government's governance and risk management arrangements for climate change](#) identified weaknesses in how it is set up to achieve net zero goals. The Scottish Government is now improving its climate change governance arrangements to provide oversight of programmes for which the Director-General Net Zero is responsible for.

30. The Scottish Government and COSLA have yet to establish a joint governance group to oversee progress on the car kilometre target. Stakeholders explain that it is difficult to establish governance arrangements for the target without a final routemap ([paragraph 25](#)). They are in the process of establishing a joint governance group to strengthen the way national and local government work together on climate change.

31. Various Scottish Government **governance** groups oversee aspects of achieving the target, but there is no dedicated governance board:

- **Global Climate Emergency Programme Board** – A senior Scottish Government body that oversees all climate change policy.
- **Transport Scotland's NTS2 Delivery Board** – The board is accountable for delivering the NTS2, including the priority to take climate action.
- **Transport Scotland's Climate Change Board** – The board responsible for all relevant transport climate change policies and action. This board reports into the Global Climate Emergency Programme Board.

32. These boards receive regular performance information, which focuses on whether key documents have been published. They do not consider progress or the impact of interventions within the routemap. Nor do they regularly review a risk register or receive a financial oversight report on the costs of delivering the car kilometre target.



Governance

Governance is fundamental to ensuring organisations are well managed and that programmes of work are delivered effectively. It supports planning, policy and financial decision-making, and helps identify and address risks. Regular monitoring of performance and resources to ensure policies and projects are delivered within agreed timescales and budgets is a critical part of good governance.

There are weaknesses in councils' oversight arrangements for the car kilometre target

33. The case study councils have committees that monitor transport activity, such as the local transport strategy or active travel investment. But no case study council has a specific group that is regularly assessing efforts to reduce car use at a local level. The level of reporting and quality of information to councillors on spending, performance and evaluations varies and often focus on individual projects. RTPs tend to be better at monitoring this spending.

Councils and delivery partners are not clear about who is responsible for delivering parts of the car kilometre target

34. Councils and delivery partners say that it is not clear who is responsible for delivering the car kilometre target. Many elements of delivering the required reduction in car use are outside the control of Transport Scotland:

- Several interventions in the routemap are delivered by other directorates within the Scottish Government. Other directorates in the Scottish Government or councils will also decide where to locate services such as hospitals and schools which will affect the extent to which people need to travel.
- Councils and RTPs work with Transport Scotland to deliver on the routemap, for example building active travel infrastructure and supporting local bus networks. But they have their own local priorities which may not always align with the national agenda.
- Many bus and coach operators are privately owned and make decisions about which of their bus routes are commercially viable.
- The UK Government sets fuel duty and vehicle excise duty, which influence the cost of driving. These could be used differently to discourage excessive driving.

Councils want more guidance from the Scottish Government on reducing car use in their communities

35. Councils have requested further guidance and support from the Scottish Government on reducing car use, particularly on introducing demand management measures and achieving the target in rural areas. Transport Scotland has developed a resource pack for councils which it plans to publish alongside the delayed final routemap.

2. Delivering the target

The draft routemap for achieving a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres does not provide a clear plan on how partners will achieve the target

36. Transport Scotland and COSLA's [draft routemap](#) sets out interventions to encourage a national shift in travel behaviours; away from private car use and towards sustainable and active travel.

37. The routemap does not specify targets for individual councils, it is for them to decide their own approach and targets. Transport Scotland does not know how much each council will contribute to the target and there is no duty on councils to achieve any reduction. It is therefore not possible to see how the national target of 20 per cent will be achieved.

38. The routemap contains 32 interventions aimed at encouraging the four sustainable travel behaviours. These interventions vary in scale from £4.85 billion to maintain and enhance the rail network to a £300,000 eco-schools Scotland programme. Many:

- do not have funding allocated to them, for example, the Bus Partnership Fund
- are not new areas of spending, for example; the Scottish Government announced the £600 million investment in superfast broadband in 2016
- address several policy objectives, such as the intervention to deliver the National Planning Framework.

The routemap lacks key delivery information

39. The current routemap lacks key information to deliver the car kilometres target. There is no information on:

- the likely or estimated impact of each intervention on reducing car use and over what timeframe this impact will be realised
- the costs of delivering individual interventions
- which body is responsible for delivering each intervention
- milestones for measuring progress towards delivering the interventions
- the timescales for delivering the interventions.

40. This makes it impossible to understand which interventions will have the most impact on the target or deliver the best value for money. It also makes monitoring and scrutinising progress difficult as it is not clear whether an intervention is off track or who is responsible if it is. The CCC⁹ and the Institute for Public Policy Research¹⁰ have also reported on the lack of a clear delivery plan for the target.

Transport Scotland consulted widely on its draft routemap, but stakeholders want more engagement on action to reduce car use

41. Transport Scotland consulted widely on the draft routemap, receiving over 650 responses. It also carried out an EQIA on it. Respondents expressed concerns that the car kilometre target could negatively affect people who rely on cars, particularly people with disabilities and those living in rural areas. It is not yet clear how these concerns will be addressed in the final routemap. It is important that the impact of the routemap on equalities is monitored and EQIAs are completed for individual interventions as they are progressed.

42. Research shows that the public want more engagement and clearer information on transport's contribution to climate change and on the car reduction target:

- A 2024 report prepared for the Net Zero, Energy and Transport committee in the Scottish Parliament found that the public want more engagement and clearer messaging on how to reduce emissions, this includes transport.¹¹
- Research on the public's perception of the target, showed that most people support it when they understand more. But participants want more clear, honest and concise information on the target and how it will be delivered from government.¹²

43. The draft routemap commits to holding a national conversation on sustainable transport, but this has not happened yet. The Scottish Government has run an online marketing campaign, '[Let's do Net Zero](#)'. But the lack of progress towards the car kilometre target means much more is needed to encourage the public to adopt more sustainable transport behaviours.

Councils vary in how they prioritise measures to reduce car use and the challenges they face in doing so differ

44. Some councils have their own targets, for example, Glasgow and Edinburgh plan to reduce car kilometres driven by 30 per cent by 2030. Other councils, usually the more rural ones with longer travel distances and fewer public transport options, struggle to see how they can contribute meaningfully to the target and focus on other priorities. In the case study councils, we did not see the target or the impact on car use considered in wider decision-making.

Some councils and RTPs have commissioned work to understand their role in reducing car use.

45. Glasgow City Council, Nestrans¹³ and Tactran have completed detailed analysis that set out the impact various interventions will have on reducing car use in their area. These describe the local context, and the type of journeys made in the area as well as modelling the likely impact of proposed measures. This detailed analysis has informed local strategies and priorities. It also ensures that councillors and others making decisions have more information to allow them to prioritise their spending.

The Scottish Government and councils do not record how much they are spending on achieving the target

46. The Scottish Government and councils cannot say how much they are spending on reducing car use. They say this is because many of the interventions in the routemap cover several priorities, and specific spending on the target cannot be extracted from overall spending.

47. The Scottish Government, mostly through Transport Scotland, is spending significant sums on activities that should contribute to the target, such as on active travel and public transport. Reducing car use is not the primary objective of this spending and Transport Scotland does not collate this information to give an overall figure spent on the target. Councils similarly do not record spending on the car kilometres reduction target although they are spending on active travel and public transport.

48. As a result, the Scottish Government and councils cannot say whether spending in these areas represents good value for money in terms of achieving the target. It will have wider benefits, however, on matters such as health or the economy. For this report, we will consider spending on key areas that contribute to the target such as active travel and public transport.

The Scottish Government has underspent on its budget for active travel and sustainable transport for the last four years

49. In the 2021 BHA, the Scottish Government committed to allocating at least £320 million or ten per cent of its transport budget to active travel by 2024/25. Following the end of the BHA, the 2024/25 Programme for Government no longer included this commitment.¹⁴ In 2024/25, the budget allocated to supporting active travel was £220 million¹⁵ or six per cent of the total transport budget.

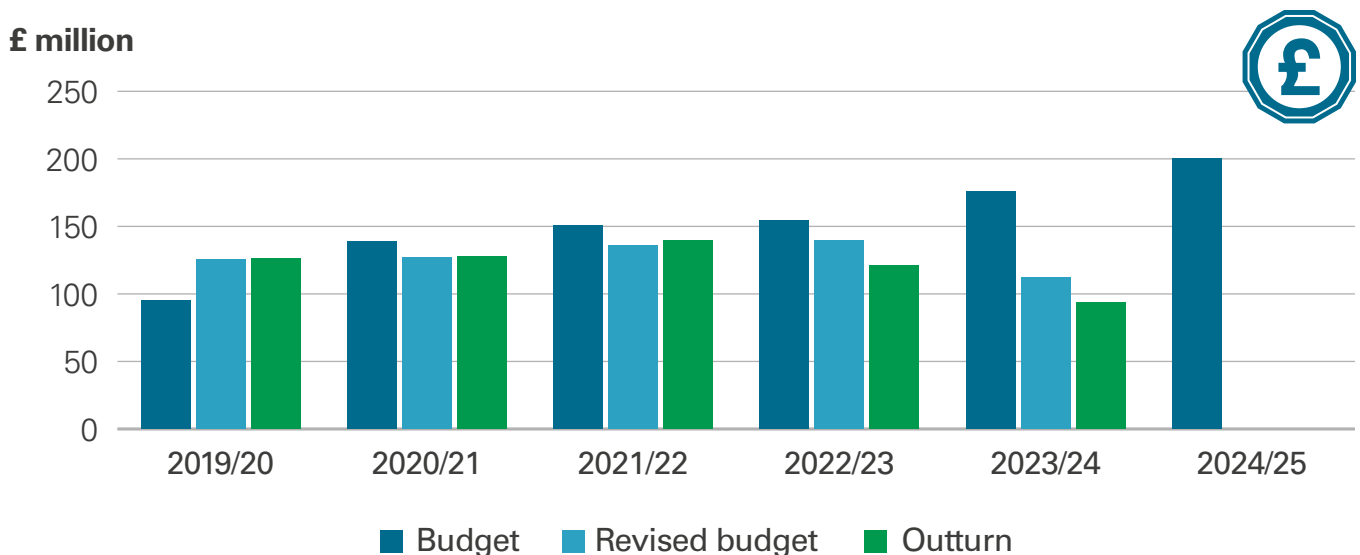
50. Despite having had this commitment, Transport Scotland is unable to provide actual spend information on active travel. It says this is due to differences in the way that budgets and accounts present spending information. Instead, it considers active travel together with the support for sustainable transport; this includes some support for electric vehicles and fuel-efficient driving.

51. Exhibit 2 shows that since 2020/21, spending on these two areas has been significantly below the amount budgeted. The reasons for these underspends were: delays in confirming funding for 2023/24, a requirement to spend all funding by the end of the financial year, and challenges councils faced in delivering the infrastructure projects, such as planning or access to land.

Exhibit 2.

Support for active travel and support for sustainable transport budget allocation and actual spend since 2019/20

Although budget allocations for active travel and sustainable transport have increased since 2019/20, the actual amounts spent have reduced.



Note: Support for sustainable transport includes elements of spend on electric vehicles and reduced emission driving which will not support the car reduction target. Transport Scotland cannot provide outturn spend for the support for active travel budget line due to the way figures are presented in different reports. This does not include the cycling, walking and safer routes funding which is given to councils.

Source: Scottish Government budget analysis and Transport Scotland outturn spending information

The delivery of active travel infrastructure was complex, fragmented and not appropriately monitored

52. Transport Scotland previously provided funding to several organisations to administer various grants that encouraged active travel. These grants, which catered for different groups and different modes of transport, were paid to various delivery partners and had different grant conditions. The main delivery partners were:

- Sustrans (£105.6 million spent in 2023/24) – Places for Everyone programme, the National Cycling Network, behaviour change, co-design and strategic partnerships.
- Paths for All (£13.8 million spent in 2023/24) – Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme and the Ian Findlay Path Fund.
- Cycling Scotland (£8.6 million spent in 2023/24) – Increasing access to cycle training, bikes, cycle parking and storage, and monitoring of cycling.

53. Transport Scotland also funded active travel components within its rail, ferry and trunk road directorates and councils received £33.8 million in 2023/24 for cycling, walking and safer routes. This complex funding system is not transparent.

54. The [2023/24 annual audit of Transport Scotland](#) found that it needs to improve its processes for paying grants. The auditors found that there was a consistent lack of evidence provided for grant expenditure claims. This does not meet the conditions set out in the grant letters.

Transport Scotland recorded active travel funding as spent but it was held in a delivery partner's accounts

55. At the end of March 2023, Sustrans had accrued £72.5 million of unspent Places for Everyone funding in its accounts. This had accumulated since 2017/18 because Sustrans had claimed the full grant award each year and carried forward any unspent funding. Transport Scotland agreed with this approach despite it not complying with the grant conditions. Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government recorded this money as spent on active travel, but the funding had not yet reached projects or delivered any benefits. This is not transparent.

56. Over the course of 2023/24, in agreement with Transport Scotland, Sustrans used the £72.5 million to pay for projects instead of claiming further grant payments. In April 2024, it claimed and received a further £10 million. However, Transport Scotland did not check any documentary evidence that the £82.5 million had been spent on projects before authorising payments.

57. Sustrans and Transport Scotland say that the practice was adopted because of the rapid increase in active travel funding in 2018. Large active travel infrastructure projects ([Case study 2, page 24](#)) take several years to complete but active travel funding must be spent within a single year. Sustrans agreed with Transport Scotland that it could carry over any unspent funding into future financial years to support councils to deliver multi-year projects. Sustrans say this provided councils with confidence to commit to projects and did not disrupt the pipeline of projects.

Case study 2.

Glasgow South City Way cycle network

An evaluation of the South City Way cycle network shows the rates of active travel increasing



Glasgow City Council built a three-kilometre cycle network from the southside of Glasgow to the city centre. The project cost £7.9 million and was funded through Sustrans' Places for Everyone programme and council funding. The network officially opened in July 2024.

Sustrans and Glasgow City Council published an evaluation report on the South City Way cycle network that showed the project has successfully achieved many of its intended outcomes:

- People have made around 3.9 million journeys on the cycle network over the last three years, increasing the active travel rates by 12 per cent.
- At the last count, during the construction of phase 5, there was a 29 per cent reduction in the number of vehicles along the route and a 20 per cent drop in speed.
- Fewer cars on the route have led to a 53 per cent decrease in carbon dioxide levels across certain parts.
- The number of shoppers who think the area along the route is good for retail has increased by 12 percentage points since the project was completed.

The evaluation identifies key lessons from the project, including how parts of the project initially caused challenges for people with a visual impairment to travel. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project took over six years to complete and was constructed over separate phases. This meant that different officers were leading the project at different times. They had different approaches to storing, collecting and analysing data which led to difficulties accessing some information.

Source: Sustrans¹⁶

58. Funding was unspent because of delays to projects. The grant conditions specify that this unspent money should have been returned to the Scottish Government. As Transport Scotland cannot hold reserves it would have lost the funding for that year which would have risked active travel infrastructure projects not being delivered.

59. The [Auditor General reported in September 2023](#) that capital funding has reduced in recent years and difficult decisions about priorities are needed. In autumn 2022, the Scottish Government published cost-saving measures and an emergency budget to balance the budget in light of high inflation and public sector pay rises. This included a reduction of

£270 million in capital spending. It is difficult for ministers to make these decisions if capital budgets are held by third parties and the available capital budget is not clear.

Transport Scotland is changing how active travel funding is delivered, but it has been a difficult first year

60. Transport Scotland recognised the complexity of active travel delivery and that it was no longer fit for purpose. Active travel infrastructure was not delivered quickly or efficiently enough, and what has been delivered has been fragmented. It also found that most councils lack the capacity and capability to deliver at the scale required. Because of this, following a pilot in 2023/24, Transport Scotland has made significant changes to how active travel funding is delivered from 2024/25 onwards.

Active travel infrastructure funding will be administered by Transport Scotland and delivered by councils

61. The Active Travel Investment Fund delivered by Transport Scotland will replace Sustrans' Places for Everyone programme by December 2025. From 2024/25:

- £35 million was paid direct to councils to replace the annual £23.9 million cycling, walking and safer routes. This is a slight increase in funding to councils as in 2023/24 they received a further £9.9 million from Transport Scotland's active travel funding.
- £10 million was awarded to more complex infrastructure projects which were ready to be delivered this year. Councils, RTPs and national parks bid for funding from Transport Scotland and may meet some of the project costs.

62. As this is the first year of the new arrangements it is not yet clear if they will reduce the burden on councils while giving assurance to Transport Scotland on spending. For the funding councils receive directly, they will need to provide an annual programme to Transport Scotland in June, followed by a mid-year report in October and a year-end report the following April. The level of detail required in these reports is quite high and focused on project delivery rather than outcomes achieved.

Funding for behaviour change will be delivered by RTPs

63. In 2024/25, the £19 million People and Place programme will replace:

- the three Smarter Choices, Smarter Places behaviour change funds delivered by Paths for All (£12 million in 2023/24)
- the access to bikes, cycle parking and storage schemes delivered by Cycling Scotland (£6.4 million in 2023/24).

A further £9.2 million will be available for community projects direct award to councils and the bikeability scheme. These schemes are designed

to encourage a change in behaviours away from driving to using more sustainable modes of transport.

64. Transport Scotland hopes that the changes will simplify funding for behaviour change and allow RTPs to better meet their local needs. It should also reduce the need for councils to bid for funding from delivery partners. However, we heard concerns about capacity and resources within RTPs to deliver this increased role.

Late allocation of funding and a lack of certainty has made it a difficult first year

65. Most stakeholders have welcomed the changes to active travel funding and think that they will make it more transparent and efficient. However, many have found the first year difficult:

- Some councils received less direct funding in 2024/25 than in 2023/24, due to the different allocation methodology agreed with COSLA. Transport Scotland intends to increase the funding to all councils over time.
- RTPs told us they were informed that they would receive behaviour change funding in early 2024 and that the model for the funding changed several times before it was announced.
- The changes do not address the challenge of one-year funding. Bid funding for 2024/25 was confirmed in October 2024 but must be spent before the end of the financial year. This risks projects being unable to spend the funding before the end of March 2025. Glasgow City Council expect that they will find it difficult to get any spending approved and procured in time.

A lack of bus services is affecting travel decisions

66. Detailed analysis by Tactran and Nestrans ([paragraph 84](#)) shows that most of the car kilometres driven are longer distance journeys that would not be easily replaced by active travel. Transport Scotland estimates that to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030, public transport capacity would need to increase by 222 per cent.¹⁷ Many communities and stakeholders say a lack of reliable and affordable public transport is the biggest barrier to reducing car use.

67. In recent years, several factors have increased the cost of running buses, such as driver shortages and fuel price increases, while passenger numbers have not recovered from the pandemic. As a result, bus operators have cancelled services. The Scottish transport statistics show that, nationally, bus traffic levels decreased by 22 per cent between 2012 and 2022, from 610 million kilometres to 473 million kilometres. Over the same period, the number of buses fell by 30 per cent from 4,600 to 3,200.

68. Rural areas tend to have fewer public transport services than urban areas. In 2020, less than 50 per cent of people living in rural areas could access a GP within 15 minutes using public transport, while 92 per cent of

people in the rest of Scotland could ([data visualisation](#)). In some places in Aberdeenshire, for instance, travelling to a retail centre by public transport takes 37 minutes longer than by car. The biggest difference in Glasgow is 15 minutes. People who do not have a car in these areas are at a significant disadvantage.

Significant funding is provided to support bus and rail services but none is dedicated to encouraging a shift from private car use to public transport

69. The Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland, provides significant funding to public transport ([Exhibit 3, page 28](#)), but it is not dedicated to encouraging a shift away from private car use. In 2022/23, around 27 per cent of bus operator's income (£204 million) was from national and local government and 35 per cent (£266 million) came from concessionary travel fares:¹⁸

- **Concessionary travel** for people aged 60 and over, and people with a disability has been in place since 2006. It has many objectives, including encouraging a shift from private car use, increasing access to services and reducing social isolation. Community bus operators have told us that they are not able to offer concessionary fares. This affects the viability of services that could provide an alternative to fixed bus networks.
- **The young person's bus pass** for those aged under 22 was introduced in 2022 and is included in the routemap for reducing car kilometres ([Case study 4, page 35](#)). Young people have told us that free travel is only helpful if there is a bus available.
- Transport Scotland administers the **network support grant for bus operators**. This pays the operator 14.4 pence per kilometre. It has been in place since 2010, and its key aim is to keep fares reasonably priced and maintain commercial routes. During the pandemic, there was further support for buses.
- Transport Scotland spends over £1 billion annually on rail, including on the **ScotRail franchise** which operates the rail network across Scotland.
- **Councils** can choose to support bus services within their area, the extent to which they do varies depending on local priorities.

70. While Transport Scotland has evaluated the young person's bus pass, it has not analysed the overall impact that funding for bus and rail has on private car use. None of the conditions it places on the funding to bus operators relates to reducing car use or providing a minimal level of service.

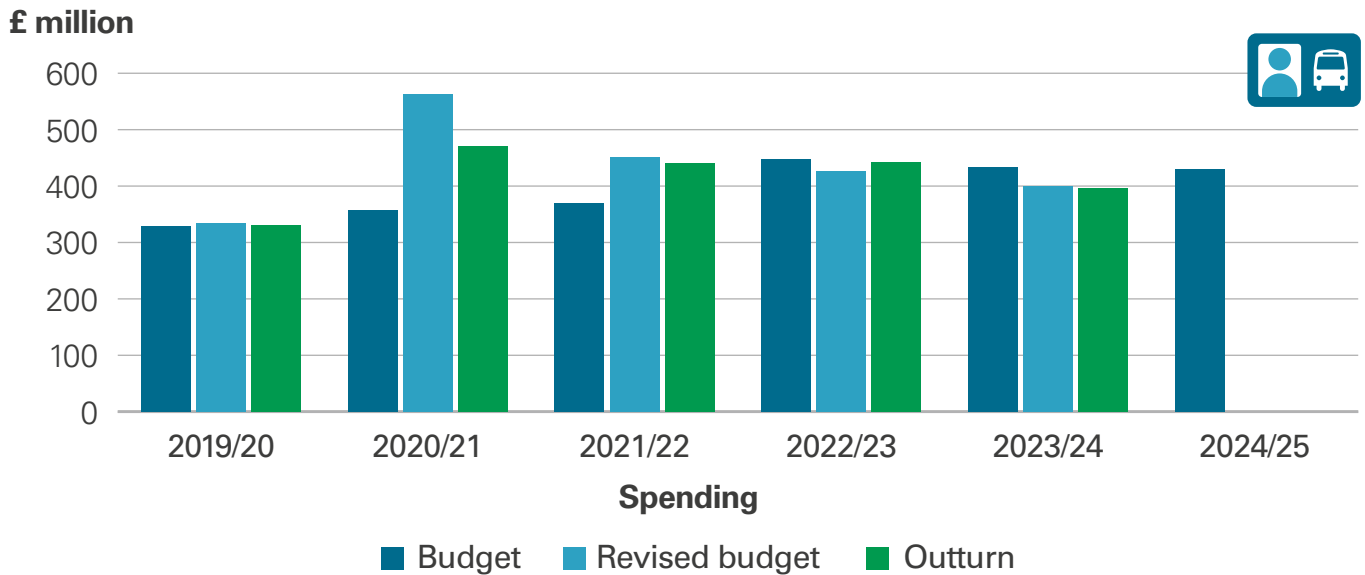


Our **data visualisation** shows local travel time differences.

Exhibit 3.

Scottish Government budget allocations and outturn spend for supporting bus services and concessionary travel

Budget allocations for concessionary travel have increased by 46 per cent following the introduction of free bus travel for under-22s while bus operator grants peaked during the pandemic.



Note: Outturn figures are demand led and depend on distance travelled by operators or journeys taken by concessions.

Source: Scottish Budget and Transport Scotland actual spend figures

Funding that would prioritise road space for buses and improve public transport journey times has been paused because of budget constraints

71. In 2019, the Scottish Government committed £500 million in long-term funding to deliver infrastructure, such as bus lanes and bus gates, through the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). The aim was to improve bus journey times by giving buses priority over other road traffic.

72. By the end of 2023, only £26.9 million had been allocated to delivery partners. Transport Scotland said that the pandemic delayed work and that, initially, there were few projects ready to develop. The BPF also funded business cases and feasibility studies to develop these projects, and there is now a pipeline of suitable works. ([Case study 3, page 29](#))

73. In December 2023, the then Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition confirmed in a letter to the Net Zero and Transport Committee, that due to budgetary constraints, there were no plans to continue funding the BPF in 2024/25. Without certainty of funding, planned projects have been affected, including:

- the Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) which has found alternative funding through the city region deal
- five projects in Glasgow City Council which have been paused while alternative funding is sought.

It has also affected work on the bus partnerships between councils, RTPs and bus operators that were established to deliver BPF funding.

Case study 3. Aberdeen bus gates

Measures to prioritise bus travel in Aberdeen city centre have faced strong opposition but have resulted in bus journey time improvements.

Aberdeen City Council introduced three additional bus gates to the city centre in 2023. The aim of the gates was to establish a priority route for buses that would reduce the non-essential traffic travelling through the city centre. This would reduce bus journey times, improve punctuality, and provide an improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Scottish Government's BPF provided £10 million to improve the road infrastructure (South College Street) which facilitated the installation of the bus gates. Since opening in 2023, the three bus gates have generated fines amounting to around £1.6 million. The council must spend this additional income on measures that progress its Local Transport Strategy.

Bus operators have reported improvements:

- Stagecoach has increased passenger numbers by five per cent and reduced the journey time into the city by ten per cent.
- First Bus reports a 16.5 per cent increase in passenger numbers on routes using the bus gates and a three per cent improvement in punctuality.

These improvements led operators to provide free bus travel on weekends in January 2024. Some businesses claim, however, that the bus gates have reduced footfall in the city. Aberdeen City Council disputes this and points to other factors such as a general decline in town centres across the country and the loss of large department stores.

In July 2024, the council temporarily modified one of the bus gates. This was to allow access to some businesses during a significant city centre redevelopment project. There had been opposition to the introduction of the measures including a campaign by a local paper which resulted in a petition signed by over 10,000 people.



3. Progress towards the target

It is unlikely that the Scottish Government will reduce car kilometres by 20 per cent by 2030

74. Car traffic levels were increasing before the Scottish Government introduced the car kilometre target. Car kilometres increased from 33.6 billion in 2013 to 36.7 billion in 2019. Although people drove less during the pandemic, car traffic levels quickly rebounded when restrictions were lifted. In 2023, 35.4 billion car kilometres were driven. This is 3.6 per cent lower than in 2019 but 6 billion kilometres higher than the number needed to meet the target ([Exhibit 4](#)).



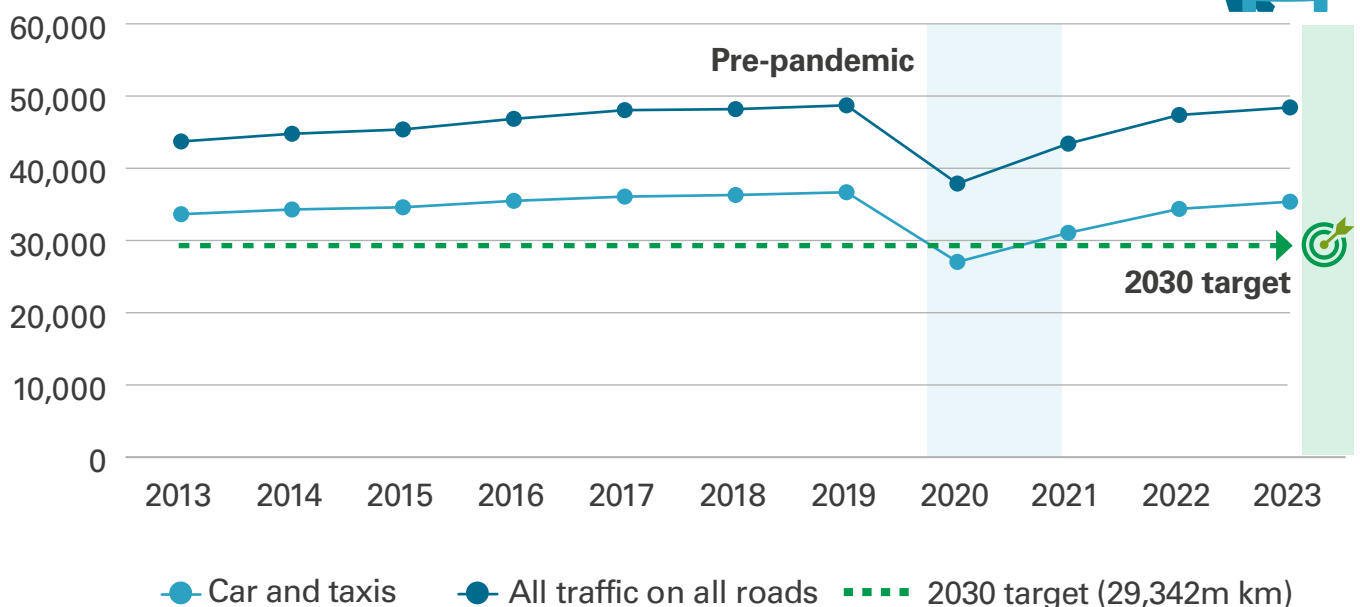
Our **data visualisation** shows car traffic at a council level.

Exhibit 4.

Car traffic levels on all Scotland's roads

Car traffic levels are increasing to pre-pandemic levels.

Vehicle kilometres (million)



Note: Data from 2013 to 2022 is from Transport Scotland's Scottish Transport Statistics. Data from 2023 is from the UK Government's Road Traffic Statistics.

Source: Scottish Government and UK Government

75. The Scottish Government reports that the target to reduce car kilometres by 20 per cent by 2030 is now off track. It says that this is because the current policy package is not sufficient to achieve the car kilometre reduction target. The CCC said in March 2024 that car traffic levels in Scotland are rebounding from Covid-19 levels at a higher rate than in other parts of the UK.

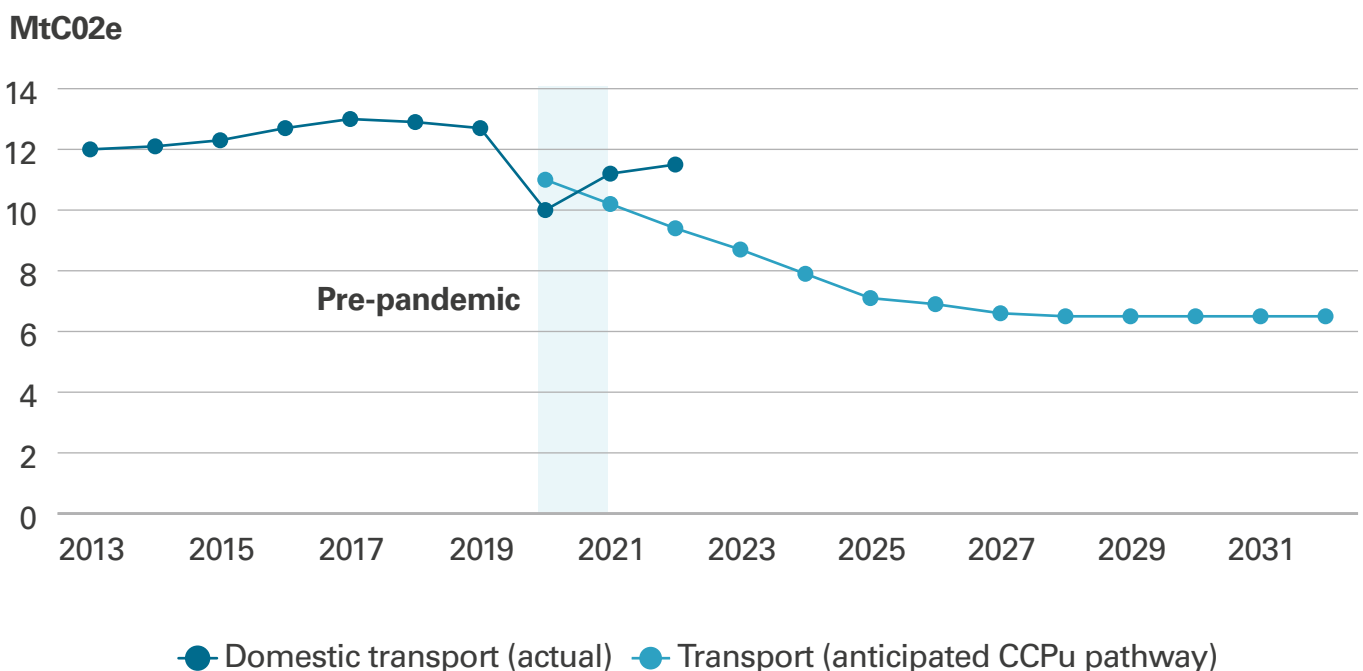
Emissions from transport are increasing following the pandemic

76. Emissions from domestic transport increased by four per cent between 2012 and 2019 ([Exhibit 5](#)). Lockdown restrictions led to a significant reduction in the level of emissions from transport, decreasing to 10 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) in 2020. When these restrictions were lifted, emissions rebounded. In 2022, 11.5 MtCO₂e was emitted; this is lower than in 2019, when the figure was 12.7 MtCO₂e.

Exhibit 5.

Emissions from the domestic transport sector

The Scottish Government has only met its emission reduction estimates for domestic transport once in the last three years.



Note. The Transport (anticipated CCPu pathway) will also include emissions from international aviation and shipping.

Source: Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2022, Scottish Government

77. The CCC 2023 report explains that to meet the transport sector's contribution to the CCPu, the annual rate of emission reductions in the transport sector will need to be almost four times higher from 2021 to 2030 than it was from 2012 to 2021.¹⁹

There is no evidence of a significant shift to other modes of transport

The percentage of people travelling by active modes of transport has fluctuated over the last ten years

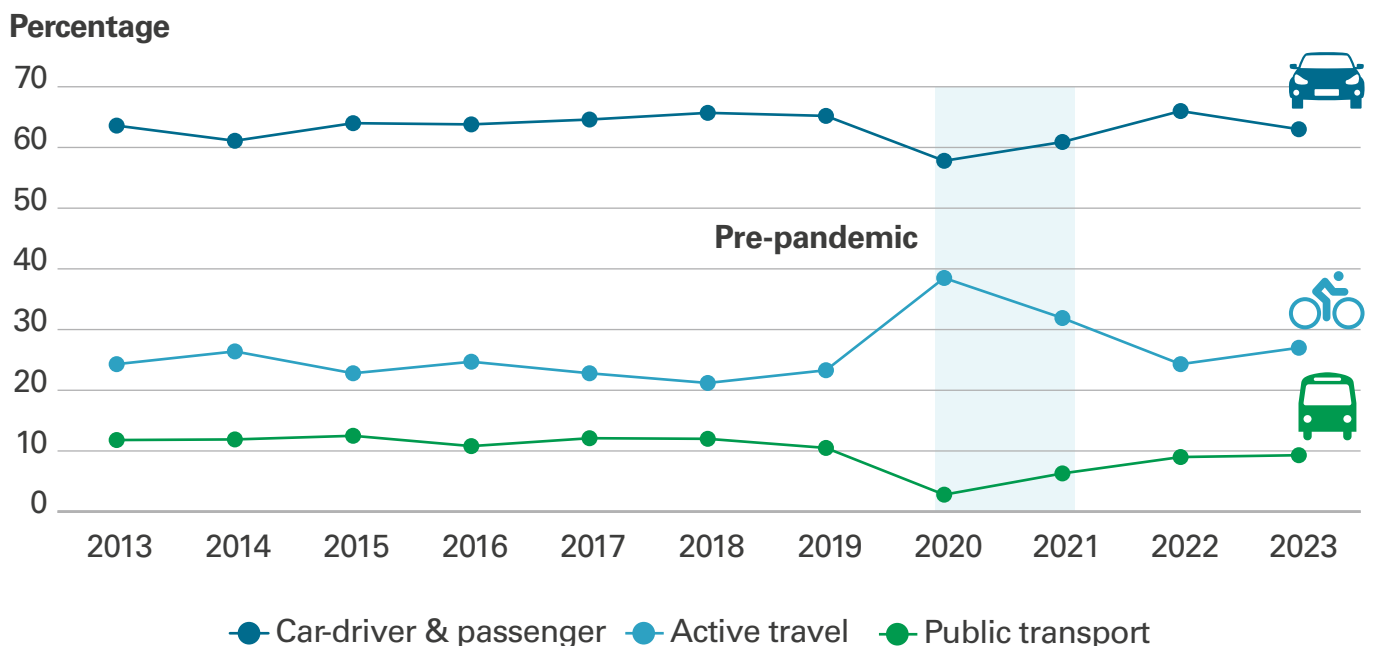
78. Although more people walked and cycled during the pandemic, those changes were not permanent with active travel rates fluctuating over the last ten years. There is no evidence of a significant and sustained modal shift away from private car use to more active forms of transport ([Exhibit 6](#)):

- Over the last ten years, the percentage of walking journeys has increased slightly from 23 per cent in 2013 to 25 per cent in 2023. The percentage of school children walking to school has fallen over the last ten years.²⁰
- Cycling rates have largely remained unchanged over the last ten years. Cycling is slightly more popular for shorter journeys and the percentage of pupils cycling to school has increased from three per cent in 2013 to five per cent in 2023.

Exhibit 6.

Percentage of journeys by main mode of travel

There is no evidence of a significant and sustained shift away from car use to walking and cycling or public transport.



Note: In 2020 and 2021, because of Covid-19 the Scottish Household Survey was undertaken remotely. It returned to face-to-face interviews in 2022. This may affect comparisons with the pandemic years.

Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland 2023, Transport Scotland

Public transport use is failing to recover to pre-pandemic levels

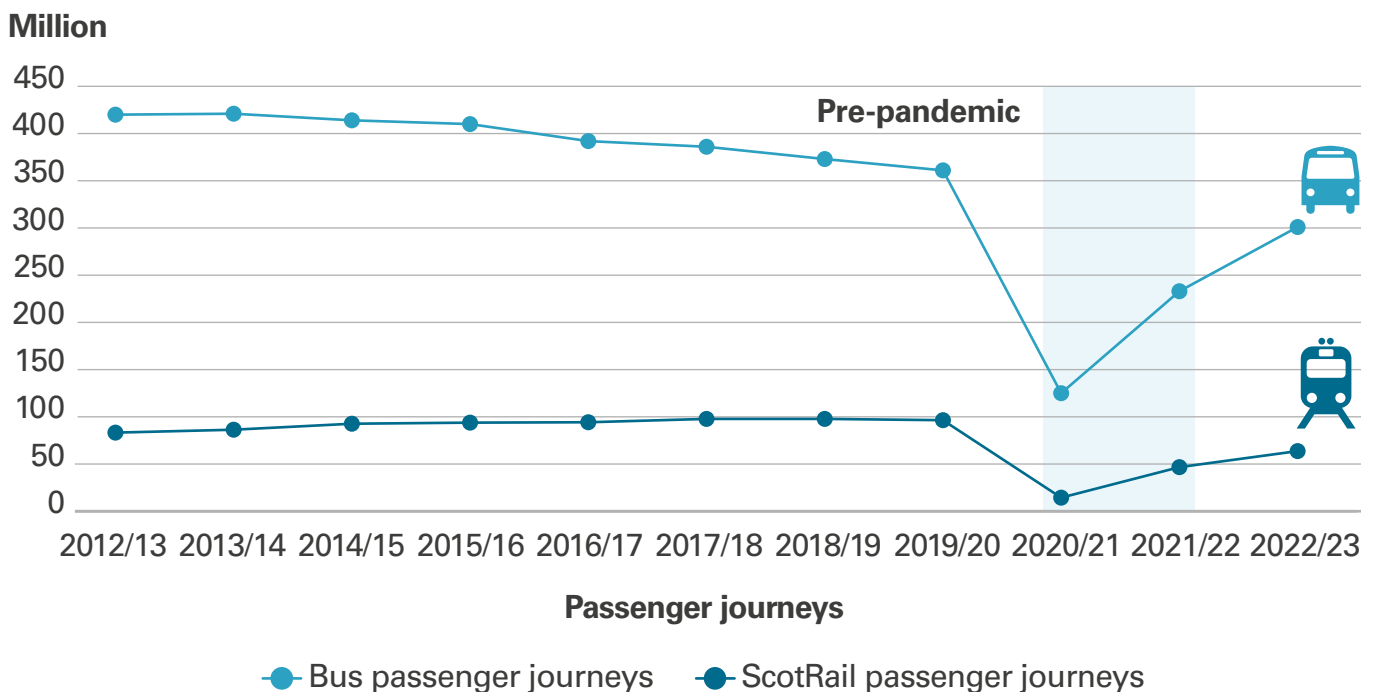
79. During the Covid-19 pandemic significantly fewer people used public transport. Passenger numbers have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, as working patterns have changed since 2019 ([Exhibit 7](#)).

- In 2022/23, there were 64 million ScotRail passenger journeys, an increase of 36 per cent on the previous year. The number of ScotRail passenger journeys is still 34 per cent lower than in 2019/20. The Scottish Government attempted to increase ScotRail passenger numbers through a pilot that removed off-peak train fares.
- The number of people travelling by bus has fallen over the last ten years. The pandemic significantly affected bus passenger journeys, reducing them to 125 million in 2020/21. The number of bus passenger journeys increased to 301 million in 2022/23. This is still below the 361 million bus journeys travelled before the pandemic, partly because more people are now working from home.

Exhibit 7.

Public transport passenger journeys

Bus and rail passenger journeys have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Transport Scotland

The Scottish Government does not report on progress of the routemap interventions

80. The routemap has no clear milestones that allows the government and others to effectively monitor progress, and the Scottish Government does not report on progress of routemap interventions. Progress on delivering individual routemap interventions has been mixed. For example:

- There was a delay in rolling out the low emission zones across Scotland's cities, but these are now in place and being enforced.
- 96 per cent of properties in Scotland can now access fixed superfast broadband (defined as speeds above 30 Mb/s) with reporting focused on number of premises connected.²¹
- In 2023, there were 557 car club vehicles and almost 38,000 car club members in Scotland. Car clubs allow users to access a vehicle without owning one. Each member reduced their annual car mileage by 156 miles after joining a car club.²²

Evaluation of projects varies and is not collated

81. Transport Scotland, delivery partners and councils may complete evaluations on individual projects as part of the grant reporting requirements or to assess their value for money. For example:

- When it announced the end of the peak fare removal pilot in August 2024, the Scottish Government published an evaluation report showing that the scheme had increased awareness of rail travel but had limited impact on reducing overall car journeys. [\(Case study 1, page 15\)](#)
- The Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme Year 1 evaluation report [\(Case study 4, page 35\)](#) shows that an increasing number of young people are now travelling by bus rather than by car.
- Monitoring of Glasgow's South City Way [\(Case study 2, page 24\)](#) identified an increase in the number of people using active travel modes along the route.

Case study 4. Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme

The Scottish Government is providing free bus travel to those aged under 22 to encourage more sustainable travel behaviours



In 2022, the Scottish Government provided free bus travel to young people aged under 22. This scheme was included as an intervention in the routemap. One of its aims is to encourage behaviour change in young people before they can learn to drive. It also intends to improve access to employment or education for young people.

Transport Scotland evaluated the scheme after a year and found that 59 per cent of young people have signed up to receive free bus travel.²³ Take-up varies widely between council areas, with some people not applying because of the limited bus service where they live and others because of the challenging application process. The Auditor General and Accounts Commission reported on [tackling digital exclusion](#) in Scotland in 2024.

The year-one evaluation found:

- some evidence that the scheme is increasing the number of young people using the bus, opening up opportunities to them
- some limited evidence that the scheme is encouraging a modal shift away from car use
- that it is too early to tell whether it is reducing the number of young people learning to drive.

Source: Audit Scotland

82. The various evaluation reports are completed depending on individual project agreements and are not collated to provide an overview of how public transport and active travel activities contribute to the overarching goal of reducing car use.

Evidence shows that without demand management the car kilometres target will not be achieved

83. The Scottish Government and COSLA commit in their routemap to exploring measures to discourage car use and develop a car demand management framework ([Exhibit 8, page 37](#)). Transport Scotland commissioned modelling as part of the development of this framework.

84. Detailed analysis for Glasgow, Nestrans and Tactran shows that they will not achieve the 20 per cent car kilometre reduction target without measures to discourage car use:

- Glasgow City Council’s modelling report shows that successfully implementing its transport strategy will reduce car use by 16 per cent against its target of 30 per cent. It expects that the modelling exercise underestimated the shift from car use to active travel.
- Tactran’s analysis shows that longer trips should be targeted. It showed that, even with high levels of funding and political will, without demand management, the maximum reduction in car kilometres that might be achieved is 9.5 per cent. This is lower than the estimated growth in traffic to 2030. To achieve the target, action outwith RTP partners is needed.
- Modelling undertaken on behalf of Nestrans showed that journeys of over 20 kilometres made up a quarter of the trips in the region but resulted in almost two-thirds of the kilometres driven.²⁴ The report found that, over the long term, active travel improvements would have the potential to reduce car kilometres by three per cent, bus improvements by one per cent, car sharing by 2.5 per cent, increased parking charges by five per cent and road pricing by ten per cent.

85. Research commissioned by Transport Scotland on demand management sets out potential revenue that could be raised from local and national road charging and the potential risks of schemes.²⁵ It also considers the potential reduction in car kilometres driven and the environmental, economic and equality impacts. It found that:

- A national ‘pay as you drive’ charge of 10 pence per kilometre with discounts to those living in rural areas and people with a disability, provides the best opportunity for reducing car use. This could result in a 26 per cent reduction in car kilometres and raise £2.3 billion annually in 2030. The Scottish Government does not currently have the powers to introduce national charging.
- An area-based scheme that charges drivers around £15 per day for travelling into large urban areas (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dundee and Glasgow) could reduce car kilometres by 25 per cent and raise £1.3 billion annually in 2030. This would be dependent on the cities implementing the scheme at the same time.
- Local charging options would be easier and quicker to introduce because of the powers councils hold through the Transport (Scotland) 2019 Act.
- Demand management has the potential to raise significant levels of revenue, which existing legislation states should be used to support the objectives of the local transport strategy. Any new legislation on national schemes would need to consider how the money raised is spent.

Exhibit 8.

Demand management tools

There are several ways of discouraging car use, with varying costs to drivers. The Scottish Government and councils need to decide which are the most effective for their area or the country.



Road space reallocation

Removing space for cars and replacing with cycle lanes or green spaces. This makes the space more attractive, and can increase drive times, making driving less appealing.



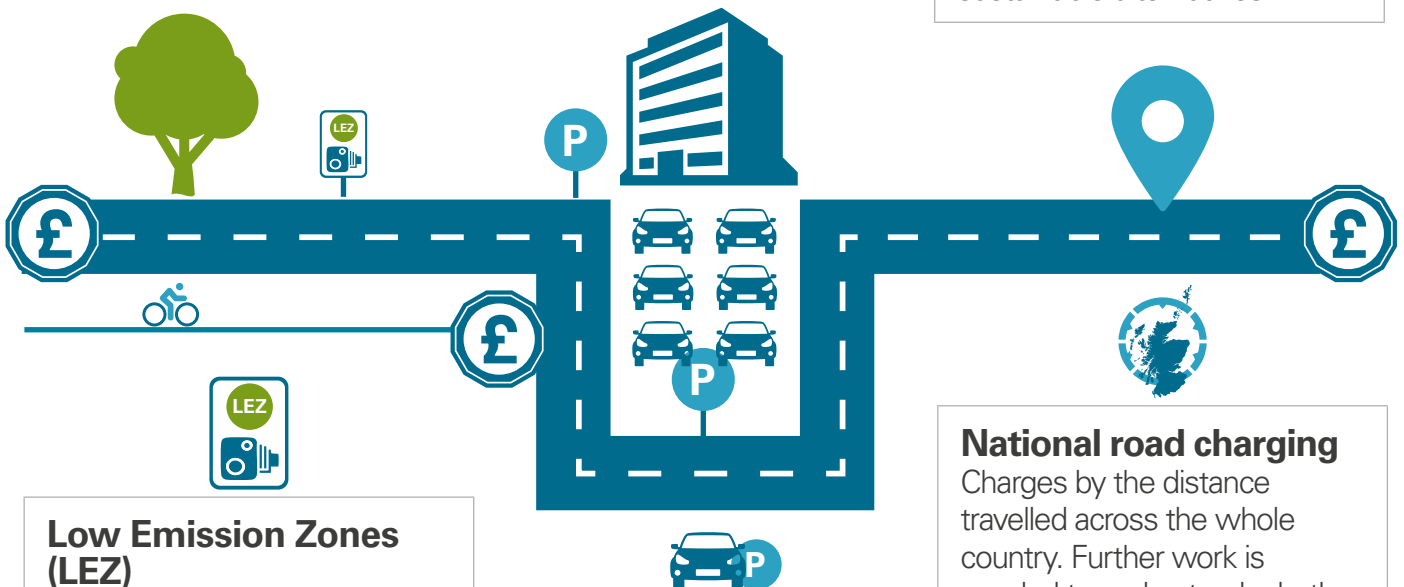
Workplace parking license

A discretionary power that councils can introduce to discourage employers from providing free car parking.



Local charges

Drivers are charged for either passing through a cordon or driving in a local area. Councils have the powers to introduce charges but not yet to enforce them. Income could be ring-fenced for improvements to sustainable alternatives.



Low Emission Zones (LEZ)

Charges for higher polluting vehicles entering city centres. Designed to improve air quality.

Parking charges

Charging drivers to park their car increases the cost of driving and can make other choices more appealing.

National road charging

Charges by the distance travelled across the whole country. Further work is needed to understand whether Scottish Government has the powers to introduce this.



Vehicle and excise duty

Changing these taxes to account more for distance travelled. This is reserved to the UK Parliament and outwith the Scottish Government's control.

86. Internal performance reports show that in early 2024, Transport Scotland was waiting for ministerial approval to publish the independent research on demand management. It published the research in December 2024, two and a half years after it was commissioned. It is unlikely that any option will be implemented in time to achieve the 2030 target due to the need to amend regulations or introduce new legislation.

Any demand management interventions will need to carefully consider accessibility and equality

87. The demand management option study shows that two of the four proposed interventions could have a minor negative impact on equality and accessibility. All the interventions need to have mitigating measures in place to protect certain groups. Scottish Government and councils will have to carefully consider how to implement schemes to discourage car use without negatively affecting people who cannot give up their cars or cannot afford additional charges.

Demand management options are potentially unpopular and have faced significant opposition

88. Councils and the Scottish Government report strong opposition to measures to reduce car use, whether that is road reallocation or local low emission zones. One example is the Aberdeen bus gates. [\(Case study 3, page 29\)](#) Residents are concerned about the impact on local economies and people reliant on their cars. Often there are campaigns on social media and in newspapers focused on preventing or reversing interventions.

89. Our case study councils told us that no council wants to be the first to introduce interventions that are unpopular with some people, and they would like more guidance and leadership from the Scottish Government.

90. All councils can introduce workplace parking licensing, but only Glasgow City Council is considering it. The City of Edinburgh Council decided against implementing it for the time being due to concerns about the impact on local businesses and low-income workers.

91. Strong local and national leadership is needed to progress schemes that face significant opposition. Politicians need to be supported with the data and evidence of the benefits of these schemes, for example the improvements that car-free areas brings to public spaces, or the positive impact on local businesses when town centres are improved. They need to work with their communities using this information to build support for measures that reduce car use, and ultimately make the decisions that are right for the whole community.

The Scottish Government and councils face several challenges in delivering a reduction in kilometres driven

92. The challenges of reducing car use are wide-ranging and significant. One single organisation cannot address all the challenges of reducing car use. Instead, national and local government and others in the private and third sectors need to work together effectively to address the following:

- **Equalities:** Many different groups report relying on their private vehicles. People with disabilities may not be able to use public or active transport, people with visual impairments can find some active travel infrastructure restrictive, and women report safety concerns about using other modes of transport especially at night. Fully involving a wide range of people with varying needs in all aspects of policy, including at an early project design stage, can help make sure the transport system works for everyone.
- **Powers held:** Fuel duty and vehicle excise duty could be changed so that people who drove more paid more of these taxes. This could address demand management without additional charges for users. This is a decision reserved to the UK Government. Increasing collaboration between all levels of government can help ensure greater coordination on climate change policy, particularly in areas that attract significant opposition.
- **Rural:** The geography of rural and island areas presents specific challenges when switching from car travel. Longer distances to access services means that active travel is not always suitable. There are also fewer train journeys in rural areas, and bus services are being significantly reduced.
- **Data quality:** There are challenges in securing timely and reliable data to assess the impact of sustainable transport activities. High quality and reliable datasets will allow the government and councils to make more evidence-based decisions.
- **One-year funding:** Sustainable transport projects often require multi-year funding. This enables effective long-term planning ([paragraph 57](#)) which can help achieve better value for money.
- **Budgets:** The Scottish Government reported in its 2024/25 Programme for Government that it is pausing all non-essential spending. This will affect many of the projects designed to reduce car use.
- **Political instability:** Activities to encourage radical behaviour change away from car use requires long-term and cross-party political support. This requires all political leaders to make potentially unpopular decisions and stick to them.
- **Resources and skills:** Councils, particularly smaller ones, struggle with finding the skilled resources required to deliver projects that will reduce car use. Helping to upskill workers to address climate change will mean that all parts of Scotland can contribute to challenging targets.

Endnotes

- 1 Letter: [Lord Deben, Climate Change Committee to Roseanna Cunningham MSP](#), Climate Change Committee, 2020.
- 2 [Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland](#), Climate Change Committee – 2023 Report to Parliament, 2024.
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- 4 [Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods: planning guidance](#), Scottish Government, 2024.
- 5 The Auditor General’s 2023 report on [Investing in Scotland’s infrastructure](#) explains the challenges of fully understanding where the government is investing funding and how individual projects contribute to net zero goals.
- 6 [ScotRail peak fares removal pilot Final Evaluation Report: An analysis of the Fair Fares Review Pathfinder project](#), Transport Scotland, 2024.
- 7 [Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 - update](#), Scottish Government, 2020.
- 8 [Travel demand Management options study](#), Transport Scotland, 2024.
- 9 [Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland](#), Climate Change Committee – 2023 Report to Parliament, 2024.
- 10 [Wheels of Change: Promoting Fair and Green Transport in Rural Scotland](#), Institute for Public Policy Research, 2024.
- 11 [Scottish Parliament People’s Panel reviewing the Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#), Scottish Parliament, 2024.
- 12 [Reducing car kilometres 20% by 2030: public perceptions, Climate X Change](#), 2021.
- 13 The RTP covering Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- 14 [Programme for Government 2024/25 - Serving Scotland](#), Scottish Government, September 2024.
- 15 Including Cycling, walking and safer routes funding for councils.
- 16 [Glasgow South City Way: Follow Up Monitoring Report](#), Sustrans, 2024.
- 17 [Fair Fares Review: Case for change](#), Transport Scotland, 2024.
- 18 [Scottish Transport Statistics 2023](#), Transport Scotland, 2024
- 19 [Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland](#), Climate Change Committee – 2023 Report to Parliament, 2024
- 20 Sustrans’ Hands Up Survey.
- 21 [Ofcom Connected Nations](#), UK report, 2024.
- 22 [Annual car club report – Scotland](#), CoMoUK, 2023.
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- 25 [Travel demand Management options study](#), Transport Scotland, 2024.

Sustainable transport

Reducing car use



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