

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

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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

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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 (SSE)	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						

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Activities		RTS Actions	RTS Objectives	Project Goals	Project Actions	Project Outcomes
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. SWestrans will share best practice on Community Transport and explore alternative funding models for the Bus Network to trial	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
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

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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					

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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	<p>Lobby the UK and Scottish Governments to increase rail provision</p> <p>Undertake STAG / business case work to promote specific initiatives</p> <p>Engage with Government and Rail Industry partners to explore the potential of a local service</p> <p>Lobby the UK and Scottish Governments for network upgrades</p> <p>Work with Network Rail to support upgrades</p> <p>Support and work with Network Rail to explore the feasibility of quadrupling the track</p> <p>Work with train operating companies to encourage more local recruitment and increase network resilience</p> <p>Continue to lobby Transport Scotland on the submitted STAG appraisals</p> <p>Support / undertake any further business case work required to deliver proposals</p>	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.
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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
Bus Network Procurement					

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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.

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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

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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