

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Elected Member Oversight Committee

10am, Friday 21 May 2021

Response to Scottish Government feedback on Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies

Item number

Executive Summary

The preparation of indicative Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) is part of the ongoing work of preparing the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). A draft of NPF4 is due to be published by the Scottish Government in September 2021.

Regional Spatial Strategies provide a spatial representation of the key strategic land use issues to be addressed across the region and will advise the content of NPF4. The Strategy for SE Scotland was developed by the six South East Scotland Local Authorities, agreed by the Joint Committee in October and submitted to the Scottish Government.

The Government has provided feedback on iRSS documents submitted and are seeking any further comments from the various regional partnerships and/or amendments to the iRSS.

Due to the competency of the original iRSS and the timescales involved for feedback it is recommended to make no changes to the iRSS at present but to engagement with stakeholders across the region with a view of progressing some of the themes raised in the Scottish Government feedback into future iterations of regional strategy.

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Response to Scottish Government feedback on Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Elected Member Oversight Committee:
 - a) Notes the content of the report and agrees that no further amendment to the indicative Regional Spatial Strategy be made at this stage; and
 - b) Directs the Chair of the SESplan Board to inform the Scottish Government of its position.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members will recall that in September 2020, the Joint Committee agreed to submit the interim Regional Spatial Strategy for South East Scotland to Scottish Government as part of its ongoing work preparing the National Planning Framework 4. National Planning Framework 4 will become part of the development plan and be a determining part of the planning process. It will also incorporate Scottish Planning Policy. A draft of NPF4 is due to be published by the Scottish Government in September 2021.
- 2.2 Regional Spatial Strategies provide a spatial representation of the key strategic land use issues to be addressed across the region and to input to the preparation of the National Planning Framework 4. The iRSS had been developed by the six SE Scotland Local Authorities with the process including engagement with Key Agencies. The work was progressed through the SESplan officer structures.
- 2.3 The Government has provided feedback on iRSS documents submitted and are seeking any further comments from the various regional partnerships and/or amendments to the iRSS before the end of April. The Scottish Government have been notified of the recommendation of this report and will be contacted again with the decision of the Committee.

3. Main report

- 3.1 At the Heads of Planning Development Sub-Committee meeting in March 2021 the Government reiterated that the feedback report was intended more to encourage reflection on the process so far and how the final RSS may look rather than a

specific call for changes at this stage. The Government also signalled its intention to undertake wider engagement on NPF4 post the Scottish Parliamentary elections in May, including the ongoing consultation on Housing Figures (published 23 February 2021).

- 3.2 The feedback is not specific to any one RSS partnership area but grouped together into a set of observations and questions related to common themes identified from the initial regional submissions. These are: Movement Infrastructure; Utilities, Energy & Decarbonisation; Settlements; Environment, Landscape & Land Use; Economy & Employment; Tourism & World Heritage; Regeneration; and the Combined Map (of projects and proposals).
- 3.3 Overall there was a small number of questions raised on the format and content of the iRSSs (not all relevant to the SESplan area or with a spatial dimension). This highlights that the iRSS in its current form sets the right tone. The themes and the proposed SESplan response are set out below. Additional Detail on the Scottish Government questions and the recommended response is provided as Appendix A.

Movement Infrastructure: Transport and travel infrastructure is critical to the future growth and development of the South East Scotland as well as other regions across Scotland. The reasons for rejecting SDP2 are a reminder of this. For the most part the iRSS addresses the questions raised, particularly in terms of the multi-modal approach to public transport and the focus on Active Travel. However the question about a regional electric vehicle charging strategy is an issue that should be addressed by SESTRAN through the review of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). Likewise, the next Climate Change Plan is likely to require additional commitments to be identified through the RSS and future iterations across all policy areas.

SESplan consulted with Transport Scotland and SESTRAN during preparation of the iRSS and will continue to engage with them after the April deadline to ensure the South East Scotland RSS aligns with the emerging priorities and outcomes of NTS2/STPR2, the emerging RTS and NPF4.

Utilities, Energy and Decarbonisation: This section only raised a small number of questions, principally focused around climate change (energy supply, renewable energy projects and water infrastructure). The iRSS includes reference to the Edinburgh and Lothian's Drainage Partnership in terms of sustainable urban drainage and climate adaptation. As all SE Scotland Local Authorities have declared a climate emergency it may be that corporate plans and strategies are the key drivers for change rather than the development plan per se.

The issues around energy will be largely influenced by Government policy and intervention, particularly in terms of climate change and requirements to prepare Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES). The SE Local Authorities will continue to monitor and engage with ongoing Government consultation events associated with implementing the remaining sections of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (PSA19) and update the RSS if and where appropriate.

Settlement: This section focuses on planned growth, the infrastructure first principle, regeneration opportunities and settlements under threat as a consequence of climate change. The final RSS will reflect the emerging requirements of NPF4 and align with the Regional Prosperity Framework to identify the opportunities and challenges of a long term development strategy for South East Scotland. This work will be co-ordinated through the ESESCRD partnership and the proposed Elected Member Oversight Committee (EMOC). The Regional Prosperity Framework diagram included in the iRSS covers most of the questions raised in this section therefore no further response is recommended at this stage.

Environment, Landscape & Land Use: This theme raised relatively few questions or new issues that aren't already referenced in the iRSS and/or incorporated in existing LDPs and strategies such as the National Forestry Strategy, SESplan Strategic Green Network, Edinburgh and Lothians Drainage Partnership. No further response is recommended.

Economy & Employment: One of the key observations made here was the opportunity to align with the Infrastructure Investment Plan and Economic Development/City Growth Deals. The iRSS includes reference to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESESCRD) and makes the connection between spatial planning and inclusive economic growth (the iRSS and the Regional Prosperity Framework). The ESESCRD will represent a major investment in the Regions infrastructure including some key transport projects which will address some of the questions highlighted in the Movement Infrastructure theme, particularly Active Travel and multi-modal solutions. SESplan will continue to work with the ESESCRD partnership to agree and deliver the long term ambitious growth strategy for the South East of Scotland. No further response is recommended.

Tourism & World Heritage: The iRSS acknowledges the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit on the tourist sector and identifies it as a potential contributor to the longer term regional economic recovery objectives of the iRSS. There are potential synergies here with some of the projects identified in the Movement Infrastructure theme where mobility hubs could make stronger physical connections across the region to support sustainable and low/zero carbon visitor trips. It is also likely that this theme will require further consideration and potential revision of the iRSS prior to the requirements for RSSs coming into force in 2022. SESplan will continue to work with the ESESCRD partnership to ensure alignment of the iRSS with the Regional Prosperity Framework.

Regeneration: Again this theme generated very few questions. The iRSS addresses this issue and includes reference to regeneration opportunities of land and buildings and town centres in particular. It acknowledges and reinforces the role regeneration can play as part of the economic recovery objectives of the iRSS. No further response is recommended.

The Combined Map: This theme raised a number of questions about mapping the spatial elements of the RSS submissions including projects, issues, connections etc. and how climate change priorities and potential connections/gateways to and from Scotland could be presented. It also highlighted the option to "scale up"

strategic thinking – i.e. the Central Belt, eastern seaboard, A9 spine, island arc etc. The iRSS mapping content has been prepared with the intention of providing as much clarity and perspective on the various spatial elements in the South East Scotland region as possible. The questions raised in this theme are largely for the Government to take a view on. No further response is recommended.

- 3.4 The iRSS addresses many of the questions raised in the Scottish Government feedback document and therefore remains valid and relevant in terms of the initial ask from Government and the requirements of the PSA19. Those points that merit further discussion should be taken forward through future engagement with key stakeholders with a view to addressing them in the first formal RSS. Also, there is insufficient time, and a lack of RSS national guidance, to properly consider and agree these changes to the iRSS before the Scottish Government deadline. Section two of this report sets out how SESplan intends to take forward those issues it considers relevant to the South East of Scotland and future Local Development Plans across the region.
- 3.5 In addition it is not clear what merit there would be in making changes at this stage without further understanding of the content of NPF4 and the requirements of other important documents such as the revised National Transport Strategy (and the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2) and the emerging SESTRAN Regional Transport Strategy.
- 3.6 As it progresses the preparation of NPF4, the Scottish Government intends to undertake additional consultation in May after the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, which will provide an additional opportunity to assess any need to amend the iRSS. Accordingly, no changes to the iRSS for South East Scotland are recommended at this stage.

4. Financial impact

- 4.1 Due to the indicative nature of the iRSS there are no direct financial impacts from this report.

5. Alignment with Sustainable, Inclusive Growth Ambitions

- 5.1 The iRSS fully promotes the sustainable inclusive growth of the region. Its overarching themes include tackling inequality, economic renewal, addressing climate change and improving connectivity.
- 5.2 The spatial land use strategy identified in the iRSS will aim towards delivering these key regional ambitions.

6. Background reading/external references

- 6.1 None.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – Response to Scottish Government iRSS related questions.
- 7.2 Appendix B – Interim Regional Spatial Strategy

Appendix A

RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT iRSS RELATED QUESTIONS

Movement Infrastructure

SG Question	SPATIAL ISSUE	NON SPATIAL ISSUE	CITY DEAL/SESPLAN RESPONSE	ACTION	CHANGE RSS
Does the spatial strategy (land use and transport infrastructure proposals) support NTS2 priorities and outcomes, particularly in relation to Climate Change?	✓		<p>Yes, dialogue has taken place with Transport Scotland during iRSS preparation.</p> <p>NTS 2 identifies four specific priorities : 1- reduce inequality, address climate change, help deliver inclusive economic growth; and 2 - improve health and wellbeing, all of which the iRSS is consistent with. The actions to take forward the new National Transport Strategy are outlined in the Delivery Plan, published in December 2020.</p>	Continue dialogue with Transport Scotland.	No
Do proposals avoid 'locking in' higher carbon travel and transport?		✓	Existing LDPs promote sustainable transport policies and proposals. All partner Councils have declared climate emergencies therefore emissions reduction will feature at the centre of emerging LDP strategies and policy frameworks. Changing legislation and Government policy and initiatives will be a heavy influencing factor in this respect but will also support local initiatives through LDPs and other Council led strategies. The iRSS themes of an "Adaptable Region" and "Accessible Region" seeks to address this question.	None	No
			There is widespread sensitivity and appreciation of the relationship between vehicle carbon emissions and climate change and the iRSS explicitly acknowledges the need to shift from car based travel to public transport and active travel.	The iRSS has already sought a commitment from Scottish Government to coordinate a low carbon transportation strategy across the Edinburgh City Region and it is identified the necessity for investment in decarbonised public transport systems to help promote non car based travel behaviours	No
What are strategic implications for public transport (if any)?	✓		<p>Draft NTS and STPR2 are setting the scene for future interventions and changes to transport network. TS taking a multi-modal approach. In addition SG emergency measures to focus on Active Travel measures have identified potential permanent changes and improvements to transport network/re-prioritising road space in favour of Active Travel proposals. (The emerging SESTRAN Regional Transport Strategy as the key link between NPF4 and next LDPs.)</p> <p>Sustainable strategic public transport and active travel corridors are consistently promoted throughout the iRSS with a particular emphasis on cross boundary connectivity.</p>	Continued SESplan engagement with NTS/STPR2 and emerging SESTRAN strategy.	No
Have NTS2 travel and investment hierarchies been considered, and how?	✓		<p>Yes, dialogue with Transport Scotland during preparation. Aware of NTS and STPR2 ongoing review.</p> <p>Discussion with Transport Scotland can consider cross-boundary travel including opportunities and pressures that that brings for respective areas and the region. It must also better reflect NTS's Investment Hierarchy Approach.</p>	Maintain contact with Transport Scotland and take account of RTS work.	No

How will plans assist in reducing car kilometres by 20% by 2030?		✓	This will be addressed through separate Transport, Active Travel and/or Climate Change strategies rather than the RSS.	None	No
Have transport infrastructure projects emerged from a transport appraisal?	✓		All transport projects arise from LDPs which will have been subject to transport appraisal.	None	
Have cross LA boundary travel needs been considered?	✓		Yes, work undertaken for the SESplan Cross Boundary Transport Study has been taken into account. This is the most up to date cross boundary study available for SE Scotland. Further work on this and cross-boundary obligations will follow through the SEStran RTS.	None	No
Is there scope to look across boundaries to provide more strategic connectivity?	✓		Yes. This is being addressed by STPR2 in terms of creating "Transport Hubs" as well as through specific projects such as the grade separation of Sheriffhall roundabout and work for the Borderlands CRD initiative in respect of feasibility of extending Borders Rail to Carlisle, and rail enhancement projects including Levenmouth, Alloa-Longannet electrification and the potential hydrogen	Fife schemes to be added (missed from iRSS and noted for the Tayside iRSS): <u>Wormit rail station</u> - Supported by FC LTS & SEStran RTS. Part of the overall public transport strategic	No
How do projects align with the infrastructure first approach?		✓	The iRSS acknowledges the need for advance provision of transport/travel infrastructure to give the best opportunities for sustainable travel habits to develop. The iRSS identifies examples of possible transport interventions which would improve connectivity across South East Scotland and beyond to the rest of Central Scotland and north of England.	None	No
Having viewed the collective input, is there anything groups would wish to add/remove?		✓	The iRSS references COVID-19 and the pandemic has sharply brought into focus the consequences for travel as a result of people being compelled to work from home coupled with the speed that the move to online shopping has created and the implication that this will have on town centres. This may not be entirely sustained going forward but the 'new normal' requires to be factored in to emerging transportation policies and proposals.	See response to <i>Is there scope to look across boundaries to provide more strategic connectivity?</i> question.	No
Are groupings considering implementing a regional electric vehicle charging strategy?	✓		SEStran are developing an Electric Vehicle Strategy, currently still at draft.	Consider if iRSS could align with the RTS and/or give direction for LDPs and LTSs	No
Is there a need for consistency in how strategic assets are considered and/or represented? i.e. ports, airports, etc	✓		The emerging focus on Scottish Greenports should be considered given the strategic role of the River Forth as a freight and passenger corridor. This recognises the roles of sites related to Grangemouth such as Rosyth and Longannet.	Monitor and refer to the Scottish Greenport bidding and selection process.	No
Has the scope for virtual/digital connectivity been fully considered to reduce the need for 'unsustainable' physical connectivity?	✓		ESES authorities are looking for NPF4 to provide more guidance and direction on this. Within 12 months the Covid-19 pandemic has radically altered the way we work and has by default largely met this issue of unsustainable physical connectivity. New working practices are likely to stay with us for many professions and work tasks. The SG/BT superfast broadband programme is more important than ever to support this transformation. Digital infrastructure to facilitate knowledge transfer corridors could be highlighted further linking academia, business R&D and areas of 'cluster' digital activity.	Monitor to reflect ESES City Region Deal content.	No
Is the strategic importance of localised 'connectivity' represented? –i.e. walking /	✓		The concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods has gained momentum following the preparation of the iRSS. LDPs will address this matter in more detail and	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No

Should inter/regional thinking seek to join up long distance walking / cycling opportunities whilst identifying associated infrastructure requirements?	✓		<p>Yes. Sheriffhall grade separation is an example, removing a physical barrier and connecting cross boundary routes between Midlothian and Edinburgh for short/commuter routes and longer distance/leisure routes.</p> <p>The iRSS can make more of the long-distance path networks existing including Coastal Paths and the role that Fife's network has (westerly) in serving and connecting central Scotland.</p>	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
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Utiliites, Energy and Decarbonisation

Is this a complete picture of priorities? We are aware that energy and the transition to low carbon are priorities for the North East for example, but this is not currently represented graphically.	✓		<p>National Climate Change Strategy and IIP should take the lead and NPF4 provide direction for LDPs.</p> <p>The iRSS intimates that national and regional strategy must support investments to deliver net zero emissions through local, regional and cross boundary heat and power networks, carbon capture and storage, energy generation and storage, and hydrogen. The IIP has now been finalised and accepts the majority of recommendations made by the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland on the strategic investment priorities required to achieve an inclusive, net zero emissions economy in Scotland. The Climate Change Plan updated (December 2020) sets out Scottish Government's plans to meet new carbon reduction targets by 2045.</p>	None	No
Are there other energy related projects which should be highlighted? (e.g. solar?)		✓	The Greenspace Scotland project - Green Heat in Green Spaces. East, Mid and West Lothian Councils and City of Edinburgh are participating as core partners and will receive feasibility reports of the potential to develop low carbon heat supply projects (ground source heat/water pumps and District Heating Networks) from greenspaces in their area. Fife is an advisory partner to the project and will be invited to the various workshops and presentations and will have access to the published reports.	Monitor for final RSS	No
Are there strategic issues around water that should be included?	✓		This will be reviewed in the post-NPF4 RSS, particularly role in climate change adaptation.	None	No
Can we build a more complete picture of opportunities around hydrogen infrastructure?	✓		These projects are limited in extent. Fife H100 demonstration project - Methil. This is something the SG should be identifying and incorporating into NPF4. Scottish Government should consider if the developement of a Hydrogen network becomes a national project if demo projects prove feasible and how the development of these initiatives would assist further roll out and scoping of the application of hydrogen - rail/bus.	None	No
Are groupings considering implementing a regional electric vehicle charging strategy?	✓		<p>SEStran are developing an Electric Vehicle Strategy, currently still at draft.</p> <p>The reference in the iRSS to electric vehicle charging infrastructure is very minimal and there may be some justification for expanding on this given the Scottish Government's substantive pledge that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans will be phased out by 2032.</p>	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No

Is there potential for projects to join up across different RSSs?	✓		Marine Regional Planning Partnership areas may offer a means to link these RSSs.	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
Do projects / proposals align with the IIP?		✓	The IIP introduces an infrastructure investment hierarchy which has been founded on the recommendations of the Infrastructure Commission. The hierarchy prioritises enhancing and maintaining existing assets over new build in order to protect the environment and ensure value for money and would drive future investment choices. The IIP is closely aligned with the forthcoming National Planning Framework 4 (NPF 4) which is due to be published in draft later in 2021 in order to support its delivery. NPF 4 will shape the geographic distribution of development and infrastructure.	None	No

Settlements

To what extent are past trends / existing pressures being identified?		✓	The iRSS is developed from the existing development plans which identify trends and pressures. More recent trends will be review in the post-NPF4 RSS and subsequent LDPs..	None	No
Is development proactively guided to locations that demonstrably meet climate change targets and inclusive growth	✓		The development plan spatial strategy does this. Further work for the post-NPF RSS will develop this approach.	None	No
Could groups consider strategic	✓		Review in the post-NPF4 RSS and address through LDPs.	None	No
Is there scope to identify areas for rural repopulation that are strategically	✓		None.	None	No
Is 'regeneration' (renewal / re-invigoration) of settlements a 'strategic' consideration for all?	✓		The impact of Covid-19 could accelerate this aspect, particularly in town centres where there may be an increasing amount of vacant office and retail space which could be regenerated into housing/other uses. A consequence of the Covid pandemic (and possibly Brexit) is a reduced demand for business premises and industrial land and the re-purposing of a proportion of it for other uses (housing?) in LDPs.	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
Are any settlements under threat / re-imagining? E.g. coastal climate action?	✓		The climate change agenda includes mitigation/adaptation. National and local Climate Change strategies will, where appropriate, address coastal threats and mitigation/retreat, as appropriate.	Review for the post-NPF4 RSS	No

Environment, Landscape and Land

To what extent are we showing protection / recognising existing assets rather than identifying future priorities?	✓		The IIP promotes enhancing and maintaining existing assets over new build and the iRSS does identify the need to mitigate the delivery of committed development and associated infrastructure and make better use, through renewal, of existing road and rail infrastructure.	None	No
Are there strategic spatial priorities that might emerge with some further co-ordination?	✓		Carbon capture through national forestry strategy - reflected in LDPs as appropriate. The Scottish Government Land Use Strategy (2016-2021) set out commitments to ecosystem-led approaches and the establishment of regional land use partnerships.	None	No

Need to think cross-boundary to capture catchment scale priorities?	✓		The Inner Forth Landscape Partnership (RSPB) does this and is a local authority and agency forum which could be further supported. This highlights catchment area-wide biodiversity opportunities and nature conservation projects including those with regional scale potential.	Link with the scoping work HES, NatureScot and SEPA are considering with Falkirk Council on cross-boundary (Forth estuary) partnerships.	No
<input type="checkbox"/> Scope to work with the key agencies to build a fuller picture of this?		✓	Yes. This will happen in engaging with stakeholders in preparing the post-NPF4 RSS.	None	No
Are there aspects –i.e. peatland / carbon sequestration; green networks –that are strategic considerations?	✓		The commitment set out within the Scottish Government Climate Change Plan update (2020), to resource Forestry and Land Scotland towards acquisition and remediation activities will assist the creation of green corridors. This, in conjunction with continued Vacant and Derelict Land funding, provides an opportunity for policy principles and nationally significant projects across the ESES region to be referenced.	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
Is coastal management a strategic consideration for all? Or is there a need to identify / focus on specific 'at risk' areas?	✓		The RSS refers to consideration of a regional coastal strategy.	None	No
Should flood mitigation, currently noted as projects, be considered as a wider strategic land management / catchment issue?	✓		Yes. ESES can point to the Edinburgh and SES Drainage Partnership. Coastal management could be highlighted further including Fife Local Flood Risk Management Planning Programme.	None	No
Is there potential for woodland / forestry carbon sequestration to be identified at scale?	✓		Yes. Central Scotland Green Network may be an opportunity to reinforce its potential and role in achieving this outcome. The commitment set out within the Scottish Government Climate Change Plan update (2020), to resource Forestry and Land Scotland towards acquisition and remediation activities will assist.	None	No

Economy and Employment

Does iRSS support a wellbeing economy? ...and/or how is this represented?		✓	Yes, tackling inequality and economic renewal.	None	No
Are the 6 economic strategy sectors covered –culture/creative, food and drink, financial and business, life sciences, tourism, energy?		✓	Yes, as captured in the "Focus on Centres" section. Further recognition can be given to the spatial and sectoral needs of advanced manufacturing or innovation, reflecting a specific commitment in the Scottish Government Manufacturing Recovery Plan published in December 2020.	None	No
Represented mostly as projects –what about spatial intent/strategy?	✓		Covered in Economic Renewal-investment along key transport corridors, identifies business clusters and links between them. The regional Inclusive Growth Diagnostic Tool held and developed by Scottish Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth (SCRIG) may provide an opportunity to define further how place-based Investment priorities and the Infrastructure Needs Impact Assessment cited in the Infrastructure Investment Plan (2021) can align with existing approaches including spatial datasets.	None	No

Are the iRSSs covering strategic investment corridors and focusing on a spatial strategy? E.g. South of Scotland focusing investment along the A75/ hubs in the Borders, etc.	✓		<p>Yes. The RSS develops the SESplan SDP spatial strategy and provides commentary on strategic corridors within the ESES region.</p> <p>Further recognition of the M90 regional growth/investment zones identified by Fife Council and partners may follow in the post-NPF4 RSS. These include nationally significant opportunities at Junction 4 M90 which may offer the potential to accommodate diversified economic activity including a potential freight hub in conjunction with an enhanced and electrified Fife Circle rail line</p>	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS..	No
Is there a fit with the Capital Investment Plan / nationally significant investment sites?	✓		For Scottish Government to determine.	None	No
Is there a need for more fuller coverage of City and Growth Deal projects?		✓	<p>Scottish Government should advise on its Green New Deal referenced in current Programme for Government (and including a £100m Green Jobs Fund) and the potential relationship with established CRD partnerships as a means to deliver this. Also could make reference to the use of the City Deal model to drive longer term ambition for the region.</p> <p>The ESES Strategic Growth Framework covers this and it is important that the RSS strategy.</p>	Monitor government announcements and reflect in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
To what extent are projects considered to be regionally significant rather than	✓		This is for Scottish Government to determine.	None	No
Need for consistency? Some referenced as City Deal; others as nominated projects?		✓	References are made in the in overall strategy to City Deal projects. We will be clear by the post-NPF4 RSS which are ideas and which are projects that are awaiting funding and which are going ahead.	None	No
Implications for rural / remote economies?	✓		The "Focus on" sections in the iRSS cover this. Emphasis on physical connections and sustainable travel to support recovery and development.	None	No
Are there implications for public estate programmes? (i.e. rationalisation		✓	ESES councils will be reviewing their estate as a result of Covid, new working practices, and as opportunities for regeneration.	None	No

Tourism and World Heritage

What is missing from this? Opportunities and pressures?		✓	<p>Tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing the rural economy providing the major source of income and employment. References in the iRSS to tourism are however fairly fleeting and could perhaps be augmented and reinforced to convey some idea of the economic importance of the sector on this part of South East Scotland which has Edinburgh at its centre. This may be all the more pertinent in light of the Covid pandemic and the massive hit the tourism sector is thought to have experienced. There are opportunities to encourage the tourism offer and to begin to promote a stronger theme around more sustainable and lower impact tourism.</p> <p>Consider NPF making connections between tourism./visitor hubs - e.g. Edinburgh and Lothians - Fife via Forth Bridges World Heritage Site - Dundee (V&A, waterfront).</p> <p>The tourism and sectoral role of the Fife coastline and river corridors could be strengthened including Forth Bridges World Heritage Site and the role of the estuaries (Tay and Forth) in offering tourism infrastructure and sustainable growth.</p>	Align with the RGF.	No
Is there scope to involve VisitScotland and others in developing a fuller strategy?		✓	This appears eminently sensible but may be better done through LDPs to reflect the nuances of the tourism offerings across the region. There will be a role for Visit Scotland in the delivery of the spatial and locational components across the SESplan region.	None	No
How does this reflect the National Tourism Strategy?	✓		Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	None	No
Could a more complete tourism network with hubs support a low carbon strategic approach to future tourism infrastructure?	✓		Yes. This needs to be supported by infrastructure to support sustainable travel within and between regions.	None	No
Scope for further integration with tourism strategies, coastal / cultural programmes? e.g. festivals, 'year of...', changing perceptions and mindsets about innovative possibilities?	✓		The 'experience economy' represented by festivals and events could be extended and spatially supported by identifying the River Forth corridor, Tay Coast and Kirkcaldy/Portobello waterfront as a location for seaborne and coastal programmes or promotion. A light festival, regatta and/or series of nature conservation exhibitions could capitalise on existing community activity in addition to attracting visitor or digital interest.	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
☐ 'Tourism' = includes long distance walking / cycling networks? ... what supporting infrastructure is required?	✓		There is potential to create inked-up cross-boundary off road cycle routes which create a cohesive network, including links to public transport hubs and stations, and links to existing long distance walking routes such as Fife Coastal Path	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No

Regeneration

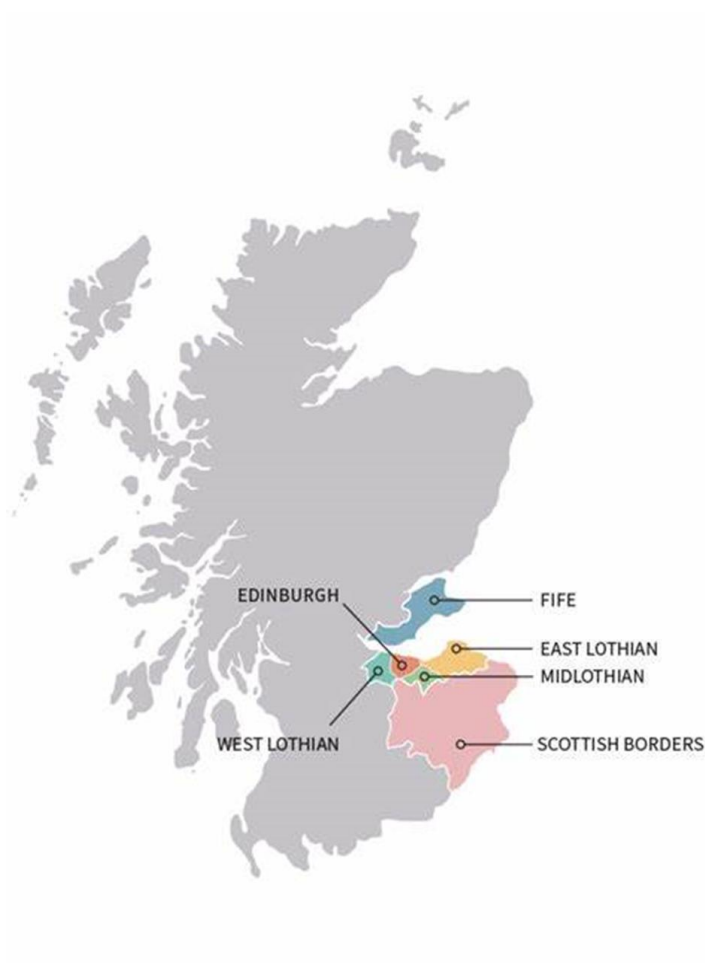
Coverage appears to be partial –should other geographic priorities be identified?	✓		This question is unclear. ESES iRSS has identified its priorities.	None	No
Is there a strategic overlap with prioritising the reuse of Vacant & Derelict Land? ... might this be illustrated?		✓	Yes, the Vacant & Derelict Land (V&DL) delivery plans across the ESES area aligns capital budgets and offer the opportunity to large scale, transformational change, in some locations. The spatial data held and mapped by V&DL audits etc has been used by the Scottish Land Commission (V&DL Task Force).	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	No
Can we provide a fuller picture of remote rural / repopulation issues in spatial	✓		This question is unclear. ESES iRSS cannot comment further.	None	No
Should this theme ('regeneration') amalgamate with Settlements? ...and / or Economy? (depending on land use		✓	Regeneration is relevant to both given the links to resilient communities and social economic recovery. Regeneration can be applied to wider rural areas and need not be settlement specific.	None	No

Is this a mapping of what exists? ...Or what is intended to happen as part of a	✓		The iRSS reflects existing commitments and proposals. The RGF sits alongside the RSS and each will align with the other.	None	No
Spatially, what will change / what will happen?	✓		The iRSS reflects existing commitments and proposals. LDPs will give a clearer indication of delivery timescales..	None	No

Combined Map

Spatial strategies are key to delivering our challenging climate change targets. Has this been adequately considered in	✓		The spatial strategy seeks to be ambitious. The post-NPF4 RSS will reflect the transformational change required in transport.	None	No
To what extent is this map describing / capturing existing assets and trends, or	✓		The mapping largely refelects existing assets and priorities. Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.	None	No
Can groups develop further representation of specific projects in the context of a	✓		None	None	No
Are there opportunities to 'scale up' strategic thinking? –i.e. across central belt; eastern seaboard; A9spine; island arc; etc...	✓		Yes, common economic and spatial (regeneration issues) arise across ESES and the central belt including Fife and Lothian from 'former coalfields communities'. Appraisal of this with the common issues of SIMD, access to services, open space, health would support multi RSS approaches to focus strategy and socio-economic intevention.	Review in the post-NPF4 RSS.and align with SGF.	No
Could we jointly consider connections and gateways to and from Scotland more fully?	✓		Emphasis the role of international trade networks recognising the regional port assets (passenger and freight) in addition to the marine, rail and airport access across ESES. Cross-border opportunities and proposals are referenced in the iRSS.	None	No
Are proposals resilient to future change, particularly climate change, demographic change and technological change? How are strategies responding to pandemic recovery?		✓	The issue of climate change and the challenges it presents are comprehensively identified and responded to in the iRSS. The Covid-19 pandemic has similarly been recognised but it is too early to be conclusive about what the lasting consequences will be.	None	No
Is a 'coastal' theme specific to some areas or more widely consistent for all (e.g. coastal erosion; long distance paths /	✓		A coastal theme will not be relevant to all areas in ESES region and is noted in responses to other questions.	None	No

Regional Spatial Strategy for Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region



Foreword

I am delighted, along with my fellow Council Leaders and Planning Leads in City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian councils to agree this interim Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of Scotland. The South East of Scotland has for many years been the powerhouse of the Scottish economy. The six authorities in the southeast have worked individually and in partnership to ensure that growth occurs while ensuring the protection and enhancement of the regions important environmental and culture assets. The authorities have and will support the right developments in the right place, particularly where they increase opportunities for our businesses, people and communities.

The interim Regional Spatial Strategy sets a framework for this support to continue. The regional authorities are committed to meeting significant levels of housing growth already planned for and providing for sustainable economic development but we cannot do this alone. This was most apparent when Ministers rejected the second Strategic Development Plan (SDP2) that covered much of the area now covered by the Regional Spatial Strategy.

SDP2 set a strategy to meet the most recent agreed assessment of housing growth in full. However, questions were raised about the capacity of the roads and transport infrastructure to cope with the level of growth proposed. Ultimately, the plan was rejected on the basis that the transportation impacts had not been fully assessed and mitigated, highlighting the need for an infrastructure led approach to delivering development.

The interim Regional Spatial Strategy commits to supporting the level of growth in SDP2 and the area of North East Fife which is now incorporated within the strategy area. However, if this growth is to be delivered significant investment in sustainable transport and other infrastructure, including schools, will be required. It is imperative that the forthcoming review of the National Planning Framework addresses the link between development and infrastructure once and for all and puts a funding regime in place which supports an “infrastructure first” approach. Fellow Leaders, Planning Leads and I look forward to working with government to achieve this.

Of course, many things have happened since the six authorities agreed the spatial strategy set out in SDP2. The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly change the way people work and the climate emergency requires everyone to think differently about what they do and how they do it. That will require a flexible approach to achieving resilience and sustainable growth. Brexit may also bring challenges for all sectors of the rural and urban economies of the region.

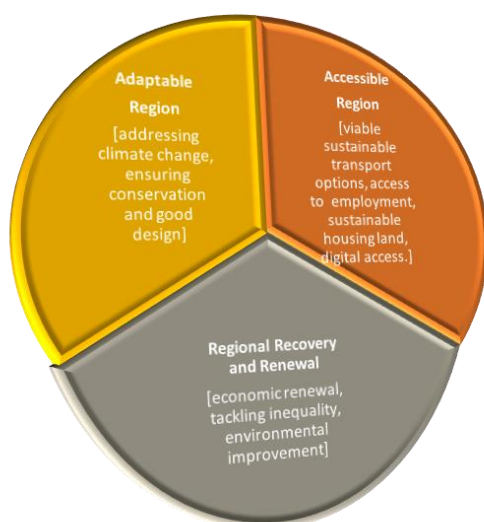
Fellow Leaders, Planning Leads and I believe that the strategy provides a flexible framework to address the challenges ahead and we remain, as a partnership, committed to working with government and agencies to ensure that the necessary investment to support the strategy is in place.



Councillor Russell Imrie

SESplan Convenor

Regional Challenges and Strategy



As the Capital region of Scotland, with connections to the rest of the country and beyond, the South East Scotland Local Authorities will work together for the benefit of the region and Scotland as a whole. As mentioned in the Scottish Government's Advisory Group's Report 'Towards a Robust Wellbeing Economy for Scotland' (June 2020), differences between regional geography and sectors need to be "recognised, respected and championed". To this end, the Local Authorities have agreed on a series of shared overarching themes through which the economic and environmental prosperity of the region and benefits to health and well-being will be realised.

The report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery sets out the importance of a green recovery as a major change in renewal in the post Covid environment. All the South East Scotland Local Authorities will soon have declared climate emergencies and are looking to pursue climate change related action at a corporate level and through their Local Development Plans. The National Climate Change Strategy and policy in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) must provide the context for the Local Authorities to take decisive action and assist with this green recovery.

As Scotland's capital region, it is vitally important that it functions effectively for the benefit of the whole country. The timely delivery of strategic infrastructure will provide the framework for the delivery of all development that is required to effectively meet the themes outlined above. The implementation of the Transport Transition Plan (TTP) recovery following the COVID 19 crisis, the Infrastructure Commission findings, particularly around on the early delivery of infrastructure, and the alignment of Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) with the progression of NPF4 require to happen to allow carbon reduction and the sustainable delivery of new development.

These national actions will be made a reality through spatial interventions, council policies and through the policy and programmes of other regional stakeholders to achieve a robust, resilient and wellbeing economy. They will also be progressed through a Regional Growth Framework to be developed by the six South East Scotland Local Authorities and partners over the coming year.

Regional Overview

The Edinburgh City Region will continue to be a very attractive area for business and people to locate and this focus will accelerate due to the Covid crisis and the realisation of business that it can locate to smaller city regions without losing their global reach. The population of the region is expected to grow over the next 10 years by over 200,000 people. Including the nation's capital city, the region will continue to be the main driver of the Scottish economy so for the benefit of the country, it requires a significant level of investment and action to successfully perform this role and accommodate this growth. International, national and regional transport infrastructure needs continued investment to support sustainable growth and change.

The six South East Scotland Local Authorities and the wider stakeholders in the region have responded to this demand over the last few years by identifying locations for an unprecedented level of development that will be required to address the increasing population and employment base. To plan for this, effective land for just under 100,000 houses has already been identified across the region for the period to 2032. Tables 1 and 2 below highlight the effective land available when compared with the land supply targets set out in SESplan2 (see Table 3). Although these sites are effective their effective delivery as part of this overall strategy is dependent on the provision of large amounts of strategic infrastructure which requires interventions at a national level. Much of this housing development is still to be delivered and will provide a significant supply of future housing well into the lifetime of this Regional Spatial Strategy and consequently NPF4. A key element of this housing delivery are the seven strategic sites, including the proposed national development at Blindwells, that will deliver new communities in key locations across the region.

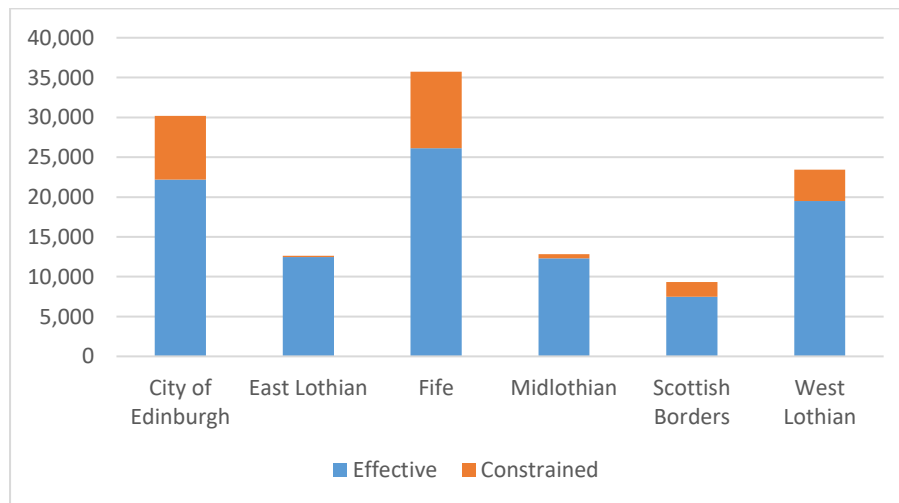


Table 1: Constrained and Effective Housing Supply (2018)

	Effective Land Supply	Average completions for last 5 years	No. of years effective supply
City of Edinburgh	22,194	2,185	10
East Lothian	12,456	486	26
Fife	26,119	1,429	18
Midlothian	12,323	619	20
Scottish Borders	7,500	281	27
West Lothian	19,505	690	28
Total	100,097	5,690	18

Table 2: Effective land supply based on comparison with SDP2 +TAYplan (NE Fife only) housing Supply targets

As Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans are reviewed they will need to consider the emerging impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on business and other sectors including tourism, culture, higher education and on population growth through UK, European and world migration trends.

The challenge is always to deliver housing land in a sustainable manner that enhances existing communities and creates low carbon, accessible communities. This is made more important by the critical need to address climate change and community and economic resilience to threats such as Covid 19. Education, transport and green network infrastructure identified must be delivered as an integrated part of this overall development strategy. Without this, the challenges of the region would become acute and the aims set out in this strategy and at a national level cannot be achieved.

Delivering the planned levels of development is a challenge but one which the six South East Scotland Local Authorities are proactively addressing. The projects set out in this strategy have, on the whole, been progressed through being allocated and scrutinised through the development plan process. To assist with delivery, partnerships between the local authorities and wide variety of stakeholders are in place. An example of this is the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal which will go some of the way to assist with the delivery of this infrastructure and strategy.

Also, further growth and development can only be accommodated sustainably in the region through appropriate sustainable transport interventions. Infrastructure will have to be programmed and properly funded if the strategy is to be delivered. That will require public and private investment but ultimately it will be for NPF4 to set a framework for deliverable infrastructure investment. This spatial strategy aims to mitigate the delivery of committed development and associated infrastructure and make better use through renewal of existing assets whilst identifying interventions to enhance both sustainability and potential to accommodate further growth with lower climate change impacts and more resilient communities.

Private sector contributions to delivery of some of this infrastructure is often subject to challenge and the extra pressure on local authorities through capital expenditure and revenue consequences is significant and unsustainable. These are significant challenges that the region has faced for a long time without funding mechanisms to address them and cannot be solved simply through developer contributions or local authority action. There are cross boundary issues of national importance which

require interventions and investment at a national level, particularly the shift from car based travel to public transport and active travel. Some of these requirements relate to existing development and needs (e.g. carbon neutral transport) rather than growth so cannot therefore be funded by new development. A holistic approach towards investment is therefore required in order to reach sustainability targets.

The six South East Scotland Local Authorities and stakeholders will actively pursue the delivery of the projects and themes in this regional spatial strategy, a task that will be made easier with their reflection in NPF4. Whilst there has been significant recent investment in the Queensferry Crossing and the rail network across central Scotland and from the city to the Borders, regionally there requires to be substantial investment by national agencies in the infrastructure required to give sustainable movement solutions for the level of nationally important growth and economic activity in the city region. There are also areas of policy that require national action as individually or collectively the member authorities do not currently have the policy backing to implement their aims. These investment and policy gaps must be addressed by NPF4 as well as regional action to allow the shared themes of the Regional Spatial Strategy and national agendas to be delivered.

To achieve this, NPF4 must achieve the following key requirements:

- A commitment from the Scottish Government to fully fund, or where appropriate part fund, strategic infrastructure. The region will, and can, support significant growth, but it cannot be to the burden of individual authorities, or authorities working in partnership, to deliver the infrastructure required to benefit the national economy of Scotland.
- A commitment from Scottish Government to establish an investment mechanism whereby local authorities working in partnership with the development industry and other key agencies can deliver upfront infrastructure so that sustainable development is delivered on an infrastructure first basis as recommended through the Infrastructure Commission report;
- A commitment from Scottish Government to coordinate a low carbon transportation strategy across the Edinburgh City Region, addressing the reasons why Ministers rejected SESplan2. The strategy shall include a commitment to deliver the planned Sheriffhall Roundabout upgrade, Edinburgh bypass orbital public transport solutions and coastal transport options;
- NPF4 needs to set clear housing targets at the levels set out below and included in SESplan SDP2*** Where targets cannot be met, through lack of market delivery, Councils must be supported in the first instance by Scottish Government, rather than being faced with the prospect of housing allocations being awarded on appeal on unsustainable sites contrary to the national planning principle of a plan lead system;
- NPF4 shall enshrine the principles of planning; which include the primacy of place-making and good design for the benefits of communities, economic growth, climate change mitigation, wellbeing, and biodiversity enhancement, enabling local development plans based around significant active travel and public transport solutions; and
- NPF4 shall commit the development industry to carbon neutral and biodiversity enhancement only development, requiring a position statement on carbon and biodiversity offsetting.

Local Authority	Recommended annual average housing supply target	housing supply target ** +	Recommended housing land requirement ** +
*City of Edinburgh	3,100	43,400	47,000
East Lothian	516	9,282	10,224
Fife	1,093	19,674	21,654
Midlothian	518	9,318	10,260
Scottish Borders	289	5,202	5,760
West Lothian	523	9,420	10,350
Total	6,039	96,296	105,248

Table 3: Recommended Housing land requirements and Housing supply targets for inclusion in NPF4

*City of Edinburgh Council Choices for City Plan 2030 and Housing Study, January 2020, subject to approval

**Figures for East Lothian, Scottish Borders, West Lothian, Fife and Midlothian are for the period 2012 – 2030

+ Figures for City of Edinburgh are for the period 2018 to 2032.

*** SESplan 2 plus the NE Fife element of TAYplan

Through NPF4 connections must be made across all relevant policy areas, and major influences on the planning system including; climate, inequality, ecology, housing, health, welfare, education, economy, technology, transport and energy. The current challenges brought about by Covid 19 may have lasting effects on the economy. While demand for new development will recover it is important that in the short-term standards in new development are not prejudiced by a desire to stimulate growth. The ambitions around climate change, health and well-being, connectivity and place making remain through the pandemic and when it recedes.

Regional challenges and strategy

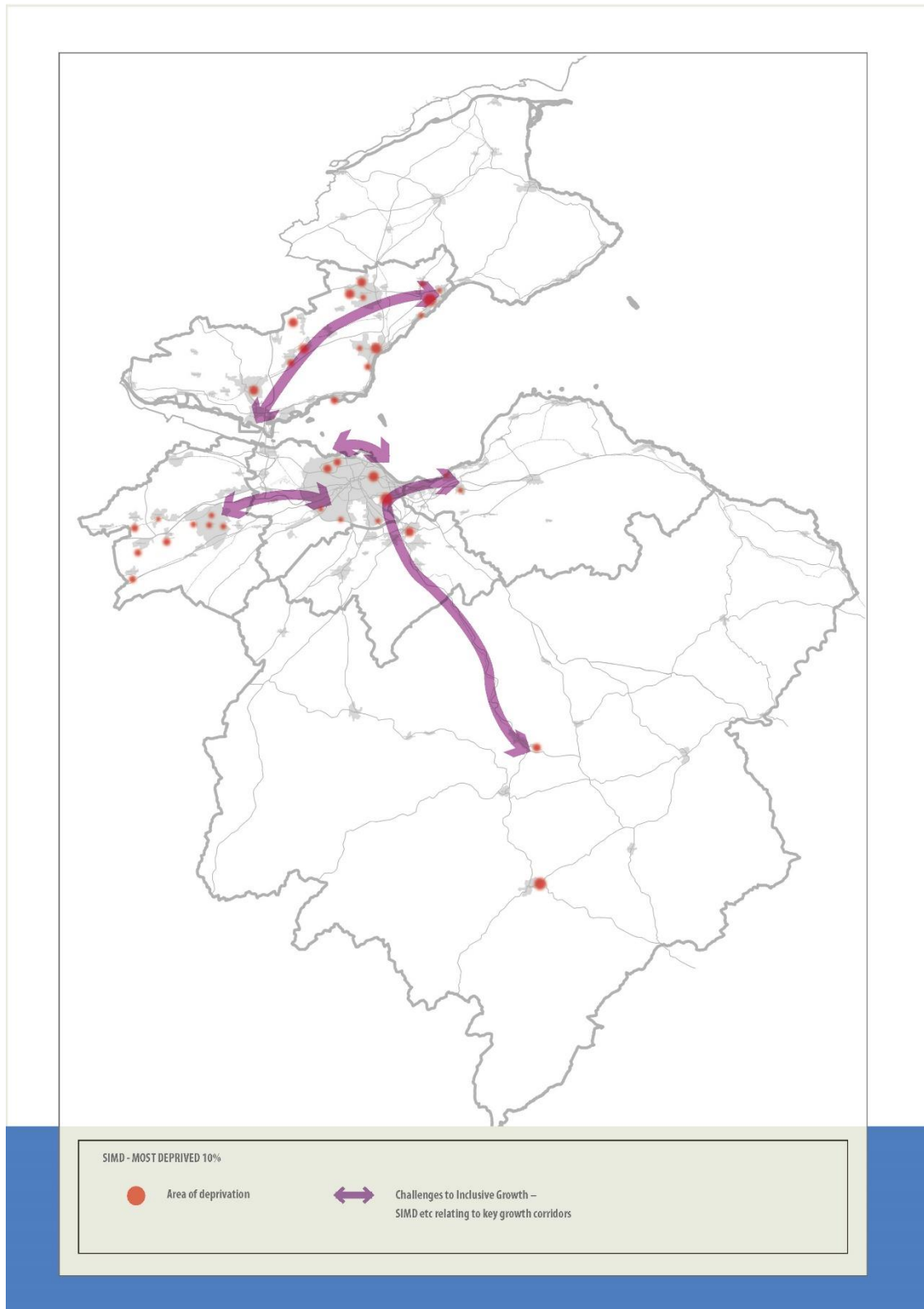
This strategy is expressed in two sections:

The challenges and solutions that affect the whole region or are of a cross boundary nature; and, those that are specific to a distinct part of the region.

The delivery of both sections is required to successfully achieve the environmental, economic and accessibility themes of the spatial strategy for South East Scotland.

Regional Recovery and Renewal [Tackling inequality, environmental improvement, economic renewal]

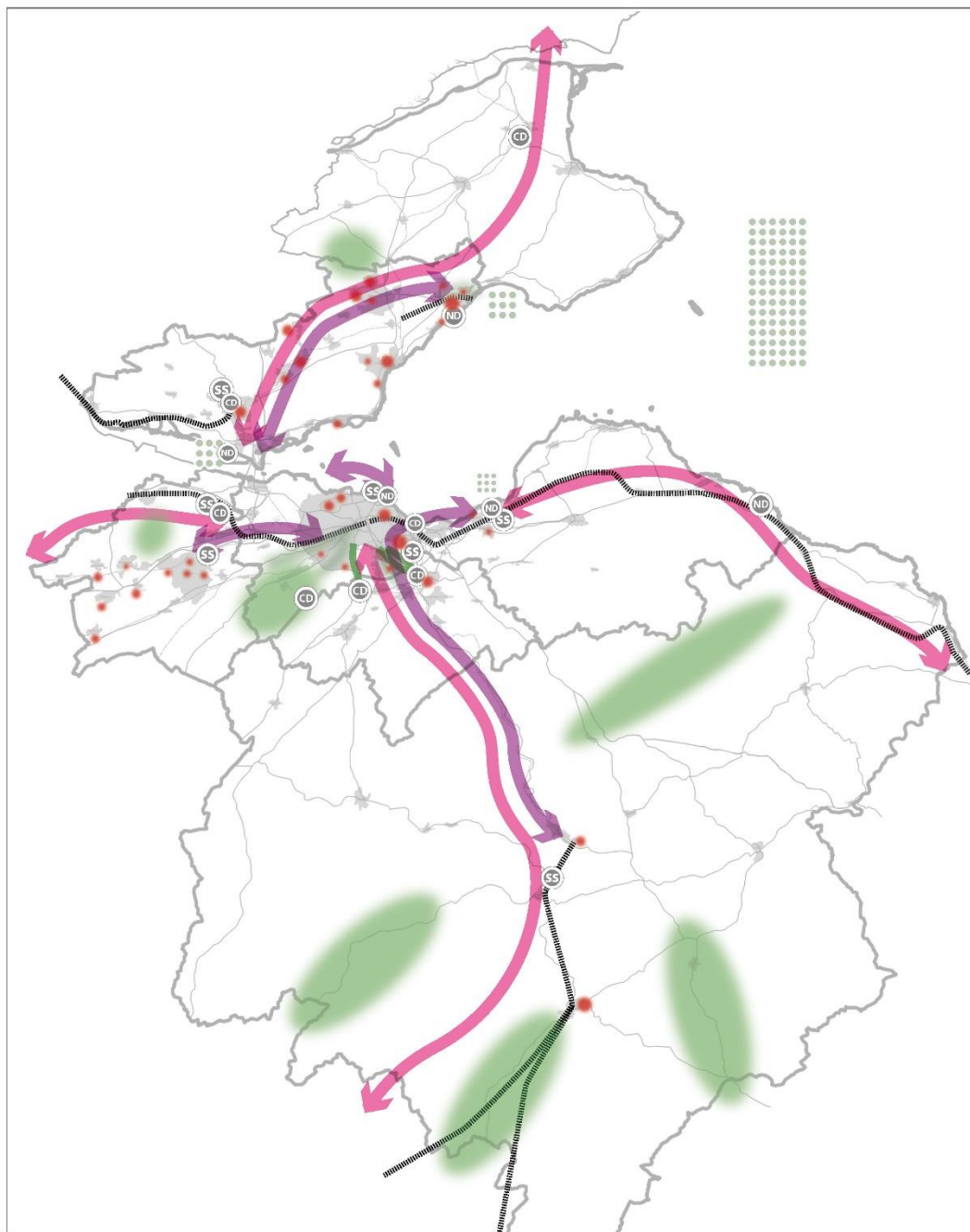
Tackling Inequality



Pockets of multiple deprivation persist in part of the region, and nearly a fifth of children live in poverty. Inequality is reflected, in concentrations of poorer households in relatively poorer neighbourhoods: these include disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities and the disabled, in neighbourhood contexts, which have negative effects on economic and social wellbeing. Areas that currently experience higher levels of deprivation including, southwest and northwest Edinburgh, east Edinburgh/west east Lothian, Mid Fife, Midlothian and the west of West Lothian and areas of the Scottish Borders will be the focus of investment to improve the quality of the urban environment including town centres. These areas should be made more accessible through greater affordable connectivity and access to employment and training.

The Covid crisis confirms the importance of digital connectivity and improved investment in this is essential for a just transition into a future economy. Many areas experience digital skills poverty, with almost one in five adults in Scotland not having the skills to make full use of digital technology at home or at work. This presents a significant challenge and opportunity for communities to benefit from digital infrastructure, including how services can be delivered, where this is made accessible.

Housing need and demand has recovered from the levels of the post 2008 recession, with high levels of completions across the area. The need and demand for affordable housing is significantly above deliverable levels given funding arrangements. The impact of Covid on the economy may have a future impact on these levels of housing demand as well as on work and commuting patterns, all of which need to be considered. However, housing will remain an important driver of the economy but delivery must balance local need and emerging sectoral requirements such as adaptable housing for older people, accessible homes for the disabled and appropriate provision for travellers. It is also important to ensure that new housing is situated in genuinely sustainable areas that meet the challenges of accessibility and climate change. Other services and facilities must be readily accessible along with housing through mixed-use neighbourhoods and local connectivity.



OVERALL STRATEGY		
	Challenges to Inclusive Growth – SIMD etc relating to key growth corridors	Strategic Housing Site
	Corridors requiring sustainable mobility	Proposed National Development
	Transport Intervention	City Deal Project
		Area of Deprivation
		Green Network
		Strategic Growth Area
		Sustainable energy - Offshore wind energy and renewables industry

Economic Renewal

Committed and potential opportunities provide sufficient employment land for economic renewal, regeneration and redevelopment. The region includes a number of significant business clusters. These are broad locations where groups of similar business sectors operate where there are opportunities for expansion. Some of these largest clusters are around west and southeast Edinburgh, Mid Fife, Dunfermline, and Guardbridge/St Andrews, Galashiels, Midlothian and the M8 corridor. West Edinburgh remains an area of significant strategic potential of national and regional importance and the ongoing collaborative West Edinburgh Study will inform strategy here.

The region has a competitive advantage of data driven innovation e.g. Building Information Modelling as the basis of a circular economy re-using building materials or the 70+ spin outs in central Edinburgh from the University's campus there. Several innovation hubs and new assets are coming on stream through City Region Deal funding. The Local Authorities and partners will work on how best to link them to strategic business clusters so that there is greater regional impact.

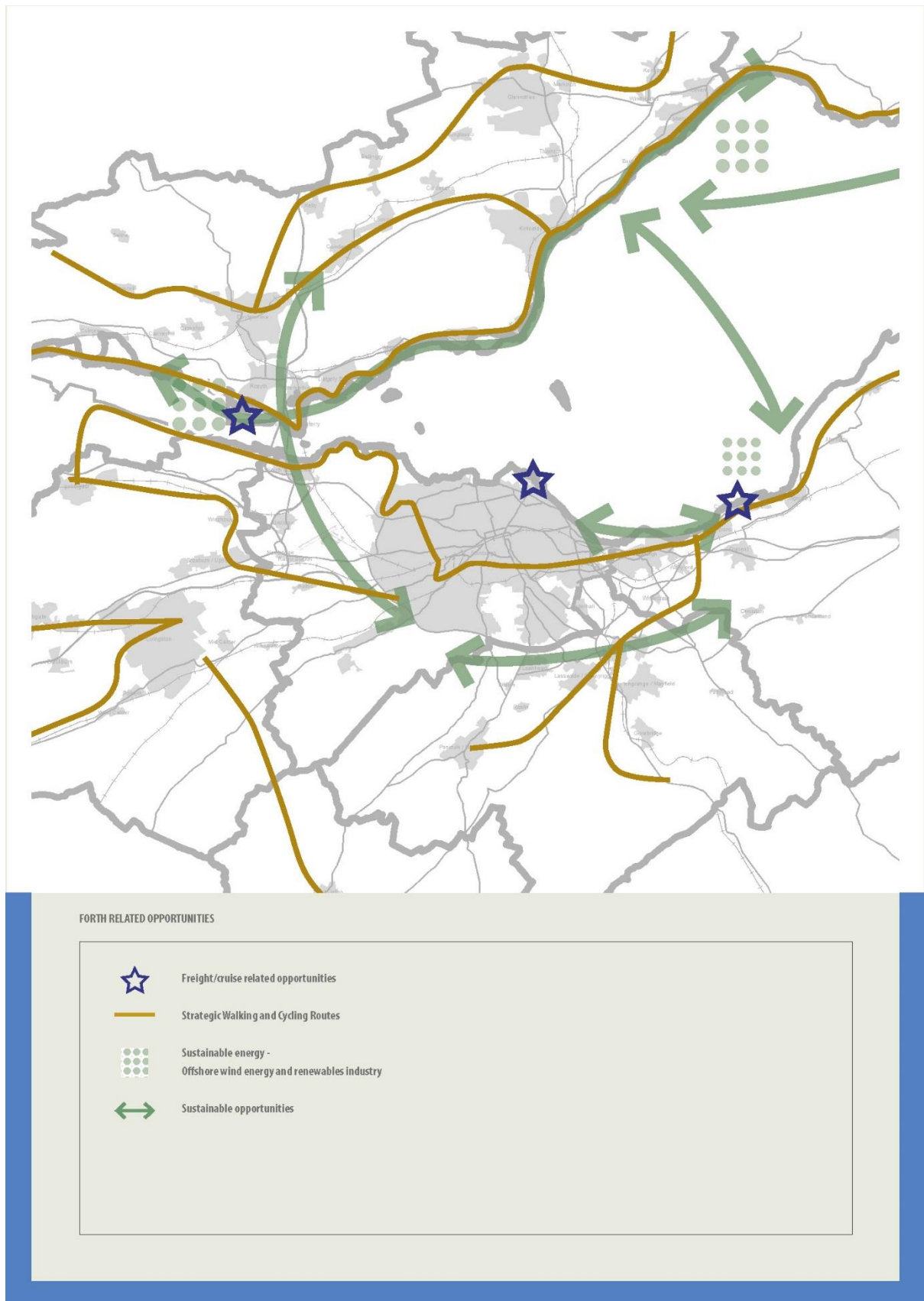
Support for investment along key transport corridors – M8, M9, M90 and existing rail corridors – is crucial to provide for economic development and growth in business clusters at Newbridge, Livingston, Winchburgh, Bathgate and Whitburn, and the M90 through Fife. Economic cluster linkages could be improved by cross boundary tram connectivity e.g. from Edinburgh Bioquarter to the Bush in Midlothian. In addition existing innovation projects will continue to be delivered at Queen Margaret University, Easter Bush, St Andrews, and Eden Campus Energy Centre, Guardbridge. Economic regeneration through low carbon development at Granton Waterfront will be led by City of Edinburgh Council.

Alongside this provision there will need to be flexibility to respond to business sectors which need flexible and co-located/connected industrial/business hubs. This post COVID-19 focus needs to recognise that large serviced and planning policy safeguarded estates may not meet all modern business requirements. Office use and related travel is likely to reduce because of the Covid pandemic but work related travel will still be significant and more sustainable modes of travel must be accessible if climate change targets are to be met, with transport emissions one of the top two impacts on air quality and CO2 emissions.

Not all parts of the region, such as Scottish Borders Council and Mid Fife, have shared the growth or productivity levels typical of other parts of the region. A fundamental strategic aim is to ensure that the economic benefits of the city region are distributed more effectively across the city region's more deprived urban communities and rural hinterland. The rural economy is also very important to the region and will be allowed to diversify in an appropriate manner with particular emphasis being of support in a post Brexit era. In rural areas, the authorities will support further appropriate agricultural diversification, which will be required as a counter to likely Brexit issues. Equally, there will be support for the promotion of tree planting and food production both as a rural industry and due to its positive contribution to tackling climate change. For Borders forestry opportunities may come through the SOSE / Borderlands funding opportunities, which will be developed in conjunction with Dumfries and Galloway Council, Carlisle City, Cumbria and Northumberland Councils. Tourism will be one key area that can be encouraged although the impact on local housing and community will need to be carefully managed.

The region's coastlines are underused and for this to change recognition and action needs to be included in NPF4. On the Forth, there are opportunities primarily at Leith, Rosyth and Burntisland to rebuild and support the resilience of sea freight, deliver associated economic development, which is

underpinned by port infrastructure and through development of cruise infrastructure, support the area as a destination. With this aim passenger/cruise opportunities will also be investigated at the former Cockenzie power station site. The Forth currently has no passenger services either on a local or national level and these require to be developed and implemented.



There are already recreational paths round most of the Forth in the form of the Fife Coastal Path, the Pilgrims Way and the John Muir Way and these must be maintained and extended in an appropriate

manner to provide community access to the coast. Renewable energy opportunities both onshore and offshore can contribute to climate change targets. Climate change will also bring the need to plan for sea level rises. Regional partnership can assist in the consideration of these opportunities, both through this strategy and the proposed regional partnership of the Upper Forth Valley.

Environmental Improvement

The region has a wide range of countryside, coast and urban green, blue networks, and high quality urban environments, important assets for both human health and the wider natural environment. The protection and enhancement of the natural environment is key to retaining the identity of the region. The quality of its urban realm requires to be enhanced through the implementation of a strong place based approach.

The coastline of south-east Scotland helps define the identity of the region and presents significant opportunities and challenges, particularly in relation to an expanding population and climate change. The coast itself is an important asset that supports globally important wildlife and is crucial in the context of climate change. The coast is also increasingly recognised for its value to human health and wellbeing. Consideration will be given to how a regional coastal strategy could assess, balance and plan for all of these issues, particularly in relation to climate change.

Addressing climate change needs general environmental improvement and protection, with green networks for travel and recreation to connect existing and new development as essential parts of any large-scale development. Green and blue networks and active travel links should support decarbonised public transport to ensure the effective connection of new neighbourhoods with adjoining communities, as well as learning and work opportunities and other commercial and public services. Particular focus is needed to ensure that deprived communities have equal access to high quality greenspace and connectivity.

As part of the post Covid 'Green Recovery', the significance of renewables, and the role of regions will increase. To achieve the net zero carbon nation (2045) targets, areas like the Scottish Borders will have a significant role in addressing the carbon challenge through programmes such as tree planting and peat land restoration. This will be carried out in a structured manner.

Proximity and access to green and blue spaces form an important part of the city regional spatial strategy.. Green and blue networks will be extended across the region, including as integral parts of new development. An urban green network will extend across and out from Edinburgh that will link with other networks across the south east. The delivery of the blue network will be assisted by the work of the Edinburgh and Lothian Strategic Drainage Partnership. These networks will provide routes for wildlife and sustainable travel whilst connecting existing assets of the Lammermuirs, the Pentlands and lowland river valleys. The River Leven Project will deliver significant benefits for communities, the environment and wellbeing and has the potential to stimulate economic growth. The role of the Central Scotland Forest and Green Networks requires to be reassessed and reinvigorated through NPF4 to ensure it has the ability to coordinate the delivery of strategic scale green indicatives. Opportunities such as the ClimateZone in East Lothian will be progressed with the dual aim of environmental improvement and the enhancement of the quality of surroundings for deprived communities. Pentland Hills Regional Park is co-managed by Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian, located near to over half of the City region's population and through increased investment can provide for wellbeing benefits for residents and visitors.

Peatland forms a critical carbon sink; restoration of peatland therefore needs to be a regional priority. Afforestation in appropriate locations within river catchment area has the potential to contribute to water flow management.

Adaptable, a more resilient region [Tackling climate change, building design and conservation]

Tackling climate change

Whilst in this Strategy as a specific theme, the response to climate change will flow through all themes of national and local planning policy. Strong policies at a national level and the delivery of sustainable infrastructure are essential now to address sustainable movement, provide sustainable energy, contribute to net zero targets and promote inclusive growth. Without stronger policy in these areas the national climate targets will not be achieved.

The regions changing climate will bring challenges that will require more climate resilient communities. Particular challenges will be around the need to increase flood risk management and manage the impact of sea level rise. Frameworks like the Edinburgh Water Management Strategy will assist with this process. Also, addressing the biodiversity crisis, people's health and wellbeing and urban design need to be integral in climate change strategy as they are key factors in the success of the region's future development.

National and regional strategy must support investments to deliver net zero emissions through green transport infrastructure, local, regional and cross boundary heat and power networks, carbon capture and storage, energy generation and storage, and hydrogen. Building design must improve to address climate change and large-scale new developments must be in sustainable locations, have an energy efficient ethos and be adaptable to future uses.

Councils will, where appropriate and acceptable in planning terms, support the decarbonisation of the energy supply system. However, to make this a reality there needs to be much stronger policy in NPF4 or legislation to allow local authorities to require developments to contribute to net zero targets. To meet the Scottish Governments 2045 target, greater action is required now.

Existing renewable energy across the region can be enhanced by a wide range of as yet unused opportunities including sea water along the Forth Estuary and North Sea coast, mine water across much of the region, solar, and further offshore wind energy. These should be promoted and linked in with future investment and development. The necessary transition to a greener economy will be pursued in a 'just' manner to avoid further exacerbating rural inequality. It is vital to recognise the interrelationship between climate change and biodiversity/ecosystems loss and promote the prioritisation of biodiversity and net biodiversity gain. The development of offshore wind energy is supported however, careful consideration needs to be given to addressing the requirements for land-based infrastructure to support offshore wind energy.

Retrofitting existing housing stock to better energy efficiency standards, construction of low and zero carbon buildings, installation of district heating networks, new renewables technology, hydrogen and new EV technology, the circular economy, all create economic opportunities. The six South East Scotland Local Authorities will pursue the delivery of carbon neutral development at all scales of site but they will put particular emphasis on the delivery of carbon neutral new settlements and areas at locations such as the proposed national development at Blindwells and Granton Waterfront, and

creating opportunities around Fife Energy Park for hydrogen facilities and beyond to Burntisland and Longannet which will advance low carbon technologies into mainstream development on a strategic scale. Overall, design and performance must be pushed up the agenda to enable poor layout, design or response to the landscape context of a proposal become primary reasons for refusing applications. The same should be true in terms of measures to address future climate.

Conservation

The pace and scale of housing growth across the city region is now visibly changing the appearance and character of many of our communities. Across the region the current protection for listed buildings, conservation areas, town centres, open spaces and green networks will continue. Conservation Areas will continue to be promoted and properly managed as the best examples of Scottish townscape that there are and that promote much of the tourism benefit for the country. However, stronger enforcement powers and funding are required by local authorities to deal with dereliction of listed buildings and to manage their maintenance.

Accessible Region [connectivity, infrastructure delivery, sustainable housing sites]

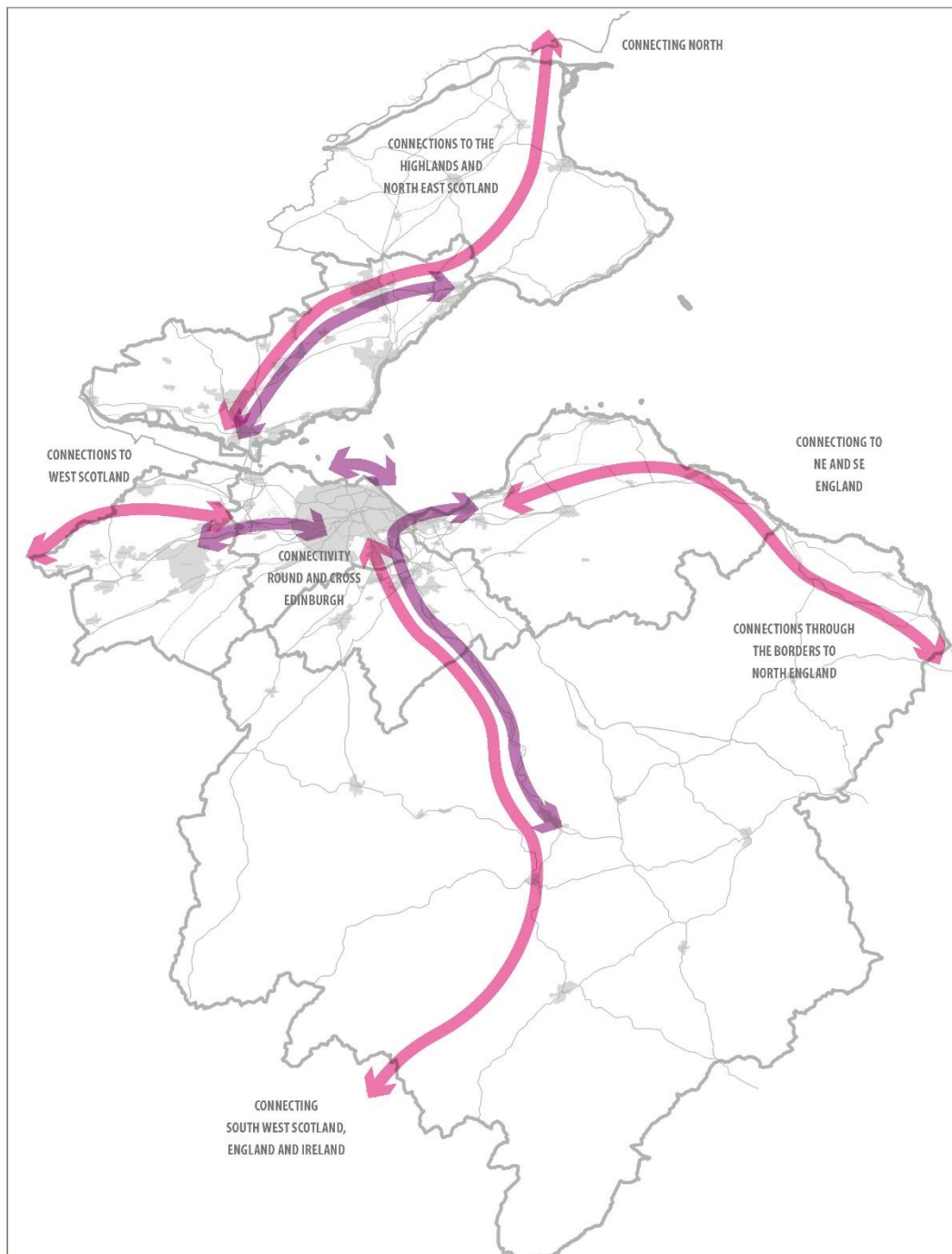
Connectivity

The Edinburgh Forth coast, the west of East Lothian and mid Fife/Levenmouth and parts of the Scottish Borders are particular cases with poor connectivity to the area's economy. Connectivity is both about transport infrastructure and strong connections between communities and settlements to ensure there are no barriers to participation. Addressing the challenges of the Covid crisis and climate change emergency needs a transformational approach to transport and travel - connecting people and places by sustainable strategic public transport and active travel corridors. Cross boundary deficiencies in connectivity and affordable public transport options can mean disconnection from work opportunities, including in more rural areas. To this aim the Local Authorities will actively engage with the STPR2 process and will expect it to align with the development of NPF4.

Better connectivity, physical and digital, and new infrastructure that allows sustainable movement is critical to success. This applies to both the urban and rural areas. Indeed, many rural parts of the region experience poor connectivity, putting them at a competitive disadvantage. Connecting infrastructure needs to be identified and delivered before new development sites are completed to give the best opportunity for sustainable habits to develop. In a post Covid19 "new normal" and in response to the climate change emergency this means regional public transport, an active travel commuter network and more sustainable use of road networks through EV infrastructure for public and private transport.

The strategy focus is twofold. Firstly, improve the linkages along existing major transport corridors to enhance connectivity beyond the region. Better direct public transport connections between the City Region and the south and southwest is needed to alleviate significantly higher unemployment in recent years. Connections west and south of Glasgow (including onwards to Ireland) involve changing in central Glasgow adding to journey time or at Carlisle for the southwest. An extended Borders railway line and a link to the West Coast Main Line would create stronger links with Dumfries and Galloway across east and west of South Scotland and to Ireland as well as the more urbanised northern parts of the region. Improvements to the East Coast Main Line, including the delivery of East Linton and Reston Station, will improve accessibility around the region and to the North, Midlands and South

of England and onwards to Europe while also addressing local line congestion issues. Working alongside existing East Coast Mainline stops such as Dunbar, a new Edinburgh to Berwick service could also more local connections to the North of England.



EXISTING REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

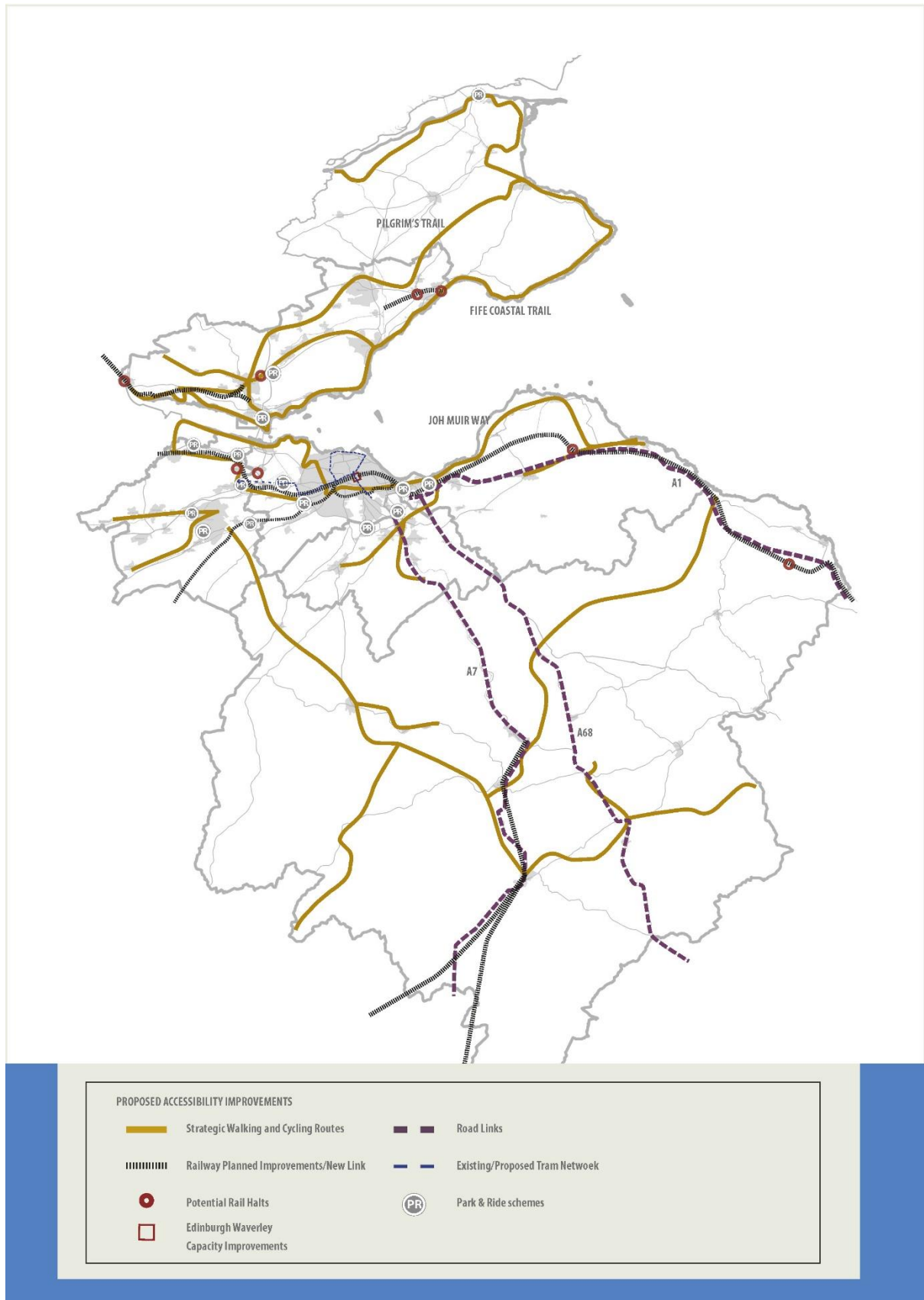


Challenges to Inclusive Growth –
SIMD etc relating to key growth corridors



Corridors requiring sustainable mobility

Connectivity to major regional Cities in England from Edinburgh and the wider region is limited and the East Coast Mainline needs better connections with the north and Midlands of England and onwards to Europe and the potential for a direct connection between the Edinburgh City Region and Channel Tunnel via Ebbsfleet to avoid London connections should be promoted. Sustainable public transport development in heavy rail including Waverley and Haymarket Stations capacity, the 'Chord' proposed link with Kirkliston with a potential station, potential 4 tracking of the East Coast Main Line and High Speed Rail would facilitate sustainability and capacity in regional settlements and beyond. Additionally, rail investment would allow for greater connectivity in and beyond the city region, including the regions of England and to Europe and to Ireland. The Alloa-Dunfermline rail line will open up the Fife Circle to wider connections with access to Rosyth Port and opportunities to reopen a direct rail link via Kinross would improve connectivity in Fife and northwards and link to significant growth in south Fife. The regeneration benefits of existing, underused rail infrastructure linking to redevelopment at Leith and Seafeld should be part of an integrated investment strategy. Four tracking of the East Coast Main Line and High Speed Rail requires to be pursued.



Sea connectivity is a very sustainable travel option which is currently very under utilised in a commercial and leisure sense. Sea connections to the rest of the UK and beyond are important and

needs to be developed further. Opportunities for freight and leisure facilities at Leith, Rosyth and Burntisland, as well as the potential for Cruise facilities at Cockenzie require to be explored. Travel across the Forth needs to be improved with routes made available between Fife and East Lothian.

Secondly, enhance the inter region links. Infrastructure investment is essential in both urban and rural areas to ensure that locations such as northeast Fife the Scottish Borders are part of an 'inclusive City Region economy'. Key infrastructure links between deprived areas to the wider region are already planned. Improved connectivity within the region is vital, including North-South transport links such as the full dualling of the A1, A68 and A7 Trunk Road networks. Improved linkages to the North east of England can bring a great deal of economic opportunity. Cross border liaison with proposals in Northern England is essential to ensure coordinated action. East-West links which are currently poor will also require significant investment. The spatial strategy addresses the impact of over a decade of economic austerity with the commitment to the reopen the Levenmouth Rail line, the likely undertaking of the partial electrification of the rail network between Dunfermline and Alloa and the provision of new rail stations in areas such as East Linton and Winchburgh. The extension to the tram network and routes around Edinburgh and major improvements to the West of the City along the M8 and M9 corridors, through new stations and sustainable transport routes and the improvements to rail infrastructure to the East that will increase the level of local services.

The Edinburgh City bypass and its key linkages require a comprehensive solution to address the severe congestion that the area experiences. Although not the focus of climate policy, efficiency in roads is required to be addressed, both around the Edinburgh City Bypass. Implementing existing commitments including the new Sheriffhall junction, the A701 relief road and associated A702 link/active travel improvements and the A7 urbanisation project contribute towards this objective although they must be part of an overall zero carbon vehicle use strategy for the area.

Faster and more efficient bus services in and out of the City from areas like East Lothian would provide a sustainable travel option. Such a move would be supported by the planned moves towards transport interchanges / hubs around Edinburgh, coupled with the increasing uptake and potential of e-bikes, demonstrate that delivery of cross-boundary active travel routes should be planned for if opportunities for modal shift and more sustainable lifestyles are to be fully exploited.

These projects should be supplemented by the delivery of the Edinburgh City orbital bus route, extending the Edinburgh tram network to areas adjacent to Edinburgh, including South Fife and identifying new Park and Ride opportunities. The upscaling of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the region will support the transition to zero carbon vehicle use.

Infrastructure Delivery

Timely delivery of infrastructure will be key to successful delivery of NPF4 and any regional strategy. Local Development Plans and new development sites need to plan for and identify this connecting infrastructure and have confidence over its delivery before the sites are completed in order to give the best opportunity for sustainable habits to develop. Achieving sustainable growth must be linked to investment in, and realistic programming of, the required infrastructure, facilities and services to support development – a sustainable infrastructure first approach. Such a change will require greater collaboration and partnership between providers, Government, local authorities and the development sector. This could include the development and use of more innovative finance initiatives and extending the City Growth Deal model.

Digital Access

The shift to digital infrastructure will also help with both climate change mitigation and adaptation. The experience of Covid 19 impacts and restrictions have rapidly enhanced the ability for people in some sectors of the economy to work remotely and reduce travel. Major investment in digital connectivity must become a key focus to increase regional and countrywide resilience to maximise the potential benefits of new ways of working. The rural areas which continue to experience poor digital connectivity will be a focus for investment in broadband infrastructure to ensure the increase viability of rural businesses and sustaining dispersed homeworking to reduce commuting.

Critically, there are still significant deficiencies in mobile and internet networks in the area and across the South of Scotland and parts of Fife which recent investment programmes have not adequately addressed. The potential for greater commercial benefits and home working to compete with urban areas can only be realised through investment to unlock the area's economic potential.

Sustainable Housing Sites

Local authorities will aim to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of housing land to meet the housing land requirements/targets as to be set out in NPF4. Within the region policy will continue to promote the presumption in favour of brownfield development and minimum levels of density appropriate to urban and edge of urban sites, to promote better public transport and active travel provision and more sustainable neighbourhoods where the density supports a level of local services, public transport and employment opportunities. Community resilience and sustainability needs to be planned for in this way.

The six South East Scotland Local Authorities will ensure that Planning is aligned with other regimes, including Local Housing Strategies and Health and Social Care Strategic Plans. Planning must be closely linked to Housing to 2040 and the Scottish Government's ambitions for the housing system. To enable this approach, it must also be reflected in planning policy, guidance, decisions and actions to ensure climate change mitigation through low carbon place making

However, there is also the need to develop a new approach to the calculation of required housing delivery through an effective provision of land, as an essential part of its vision for how economic renewal should be distributed across the region. This is not to avoid the need to deliver housing but to allow the planning system to focus on the delivery of high quality development and places.

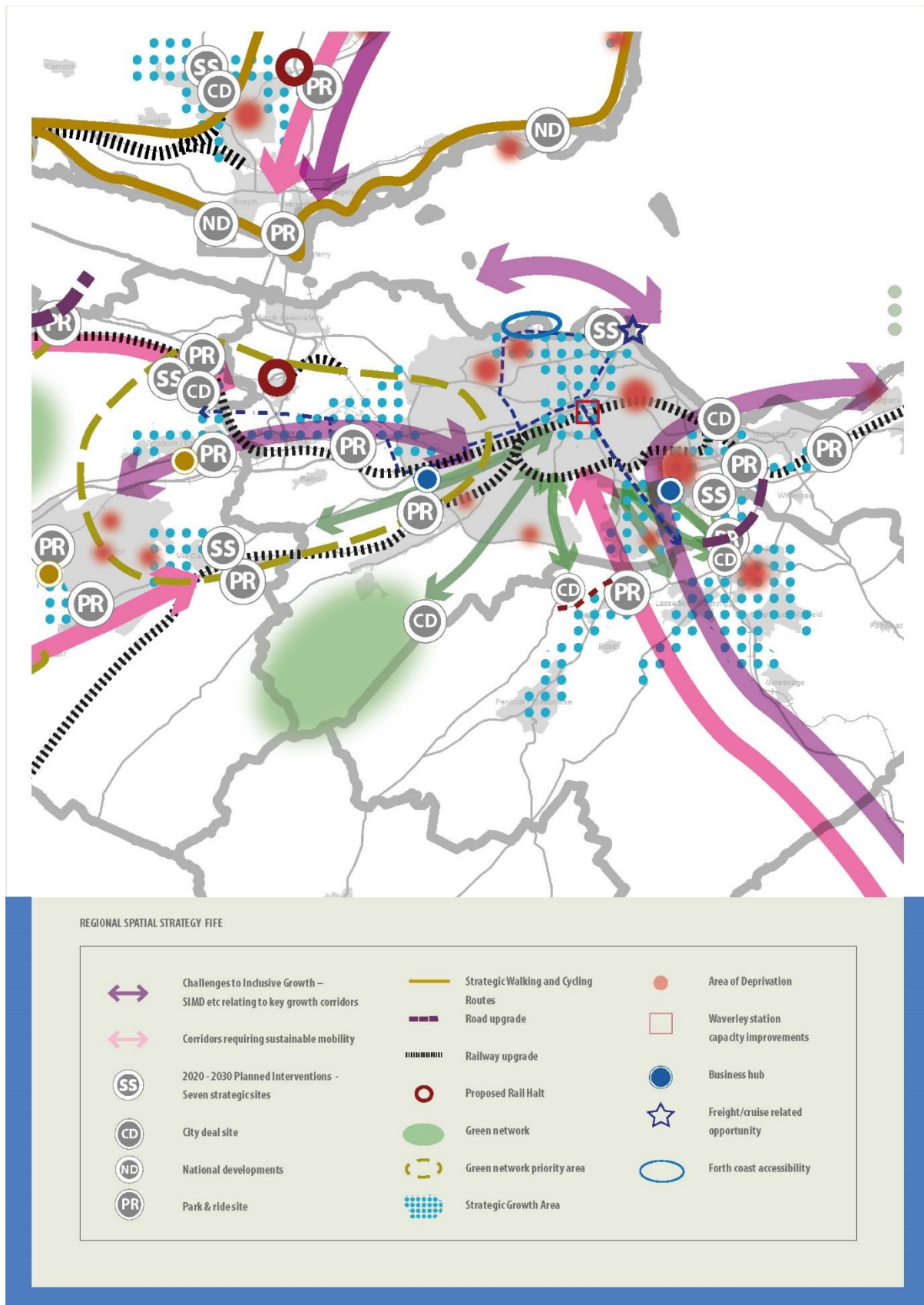
The seven strategic sites and significant brownfield sites are major opportunities to contribute to national and regional growth and should be exemplars in design and place making. This requires appropriate funding mechanisms to ensure that the opportunities for delivery are matched by quality of outcomes.

It is important to recognise that areas of South East Scotland located in close proximity to Edinburgh experience very different rural pressures from some of those in the south of the region. Countryside areas within an hour's drive time of the city, are under significant development pressure and do not need repopulated. Restraint towards housing development will continue to be implemented in these areas, whilst growth should be focused around key sustainable transport locations such as Borders railway stations.

The needs of the rural areas are diverse and this strategy recognises that further away from the city, housing is a key driver of the economy and provides a key part of our social and physical infrastructure. In recent years investment in affordable housing has been particularly important in meeting needs of differing sectors of communities across the city region. It is critical to deliver high

quality housing in the right locations, maximising the benefits of investment from both the public and private sectors.

Focus on the City



Edinburgh is the centre of the city region, providing significant opportunities for employment, higher education and leisure dependent on good connectivity. The city is home to 10% of the Scottish population. In recent years there has been infrastructure investment in central Scotland's heavy rail network, increasing capacity; the first line of the city region tram network and also in active travel. Given the accelerating climate change challenge and requirement for sustainable renewal there is a need for significant ongoing infrastructure investment improving connectivity within the city and city region as part of a coordinated regional and national sustainable growth and change strategy.

Edinburgh has approved commitments to build a minimum of 20,000 affordable homes by 2027, to be carbon neutral by 2030 and for inclusive good growth. The increasingly urgent national and local commitments to address climate change, housing need, inclusive growth and health and wellbeing need planning and transport strategies which deliver the potential for active travel and public transport interventions to support local and national objectives.

Edinburgh and the region must focus on development which enables carbon neutral targets to be reached, building neighbourhoods, promoting brownfield development, higher densities and mixed uses with high amenity green spaces in locations where good public transport and active travel connections can be made and used to ensure need to travel and travel distances are minimised. Transport based development corridors may provide opportunities where needed.

Edinburgh's role in the regional and national economy in providing jobs means it experiences high levels of in-commuting (60,000 in bound car journeys daily). To address congestion, air quality and carbon impacts, investment in decarbonised public transport systems is a priority to promote non car based travel behaviours. The scale of investment to support rail capacity), tram network, bus transit and active travel interventions across the region to support national and regional carbon neutral commitments is significant. The wider area impacts of travel as a result of nationally significant city and region economic growth need to capture the objectives of the National Transport Strategy and STPR2 as requiring national as well as regional and local action.

Mass rapid transit by tram or guided bus through north/south Edinburgh with cross boundary regional links to east, south and west would offer sustainable links to reduce car commuting. This expanding regional network requires to connect key development sites within the city, such as the Waterfront (both at Granton and Seafield) and the Bio Quarter / regional hospitals and for West Edinburgh, providing connectivity within the city and the city region to harness their full potential to provide necessary homes and nationally significant employment opportunities. A wider review of transport options and how these could contribute to the nationally significant contribution of Edinburgh to inclusive growth, carbon reduction and sustainability is listed below.

Green infrastructure needs to be a policy objective in terms of design as well as overall green network and as part of travel and flood risk management options. The latter will require a coordinated approach with other public agencies including Scottish Water. Through increasing rainfall intensity alluvial flooding is an issue which will require to be dealt with through changes to place based attenuation which will require to form a citywide strategy and will require investment.

South East Scotland partners have developed an ambitious regional housing programme, which aims to increase the supply of homes across all tenures, to deliver vibrant and sustainable communities across the region. Taking a place-based approach across infrastructure, land, finance, innovation and skills, it seeks to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing, the seven regional strategic sites and incorporate innovation in construction.

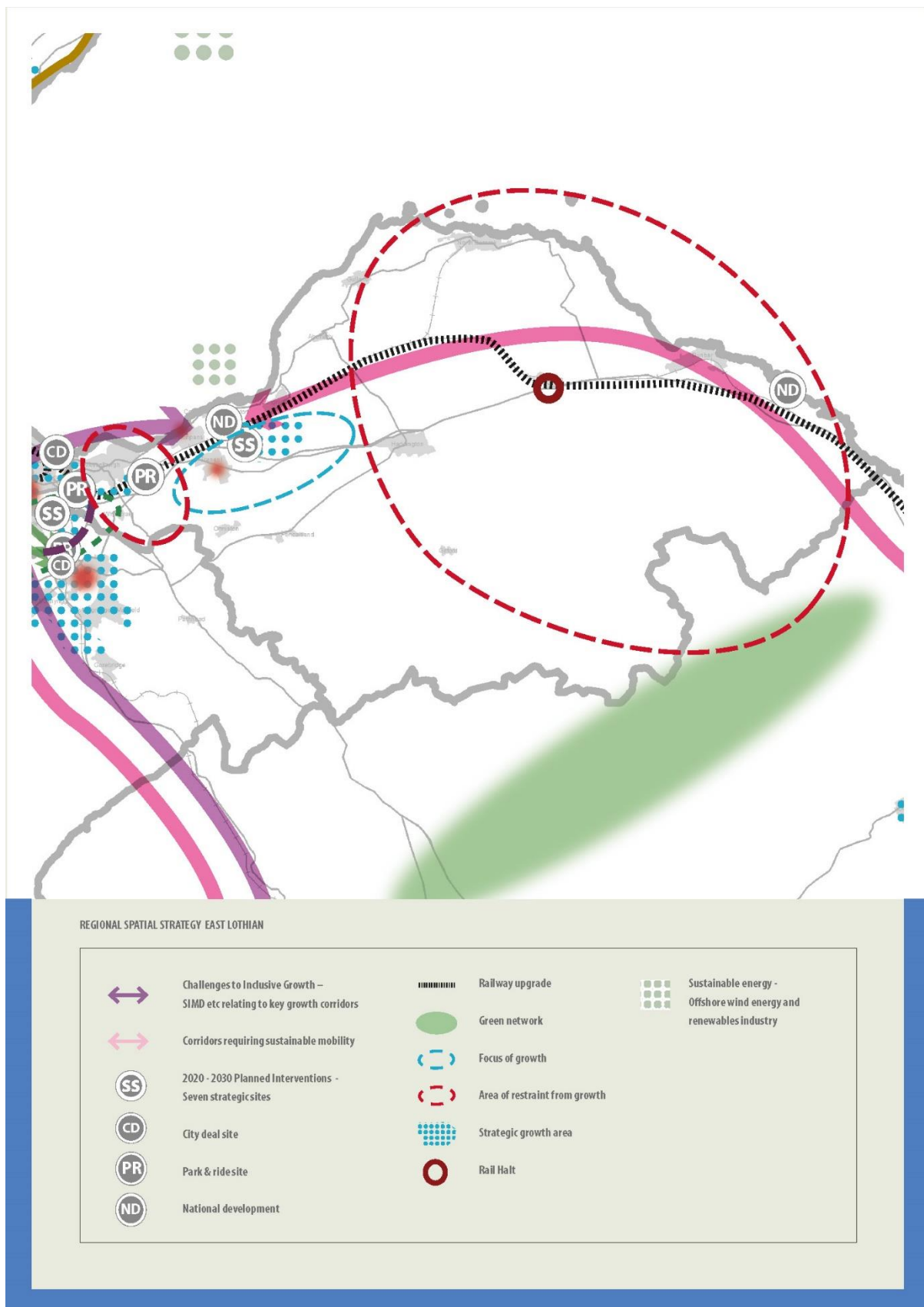
There are significant brownfield development opportunities within the city bypass which can contribute towards sustainable long-term regional growth. A strategic spatial approach for sites which are in public sector ownership, working across national and local public sector agencies to maximise the strategic benefits of their development to the city and city region needs to be encouraged. A coordinated development approach can address affordable housing (including for key workers), provide mixed use communities with integrated facilities and employment opportunities.

Edinburgh's spatial strategy focuses on harnessing the economic and social potential of improved connectivity. Brownfield sites of regional and national significance will be promoted through the next City local development. These will require infrastructure to support them and ensure they are well connected and zero carbon. Coordinated regional and national infrastructure investment in the heart of the city region can enable the above to be delivered, with other significant public health benefits resulting, for national objectives on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The coastal path linked to development at the waterfront with significant areas of open space also offers opportunity for city regional recreation. These key development sites are physically linked to neighbouring authorities.

The Green Belt forms an important part of the spatial strategy for Edinburgh and the city's relationship to the surrounding countryside. In addition to recreational benefits, prime agricultural land has strategic importance for sustainable local food production. At a micro level the importance of food growing within place making is acknowledged and incorporated into citywide strategies for green spaces.

Focus on the East



Key strategic priorities for East Lothian are to the west of the County around strategic sites at Blindwells and Cockenzie and the ClimatEvolution Zone as an opportunity to genuinely address national climate change targets and to place Scotland as a world leader in developing net zero carbon places.

A one of the seven strategic housing sites in the region, the Blindwells Development Area and former Cockenzie Power Station site are together some 625 hectares of mostly brownfield land. Over a 30 year period, these strategic projects can enable significant new employment and economic development opportunities, including a new regional town centre. There is significant potential enable this long term development opportunity in a sustainable, inclusive, healthy and low carbon way.

Circumstances have changed in relation to the former Cockenzie Power Station and there is a need to recognise the wider opportunities and multiple benefits that a more flexible approach to the delivery of employment generating uses on the site and not just focus on energy and related development.

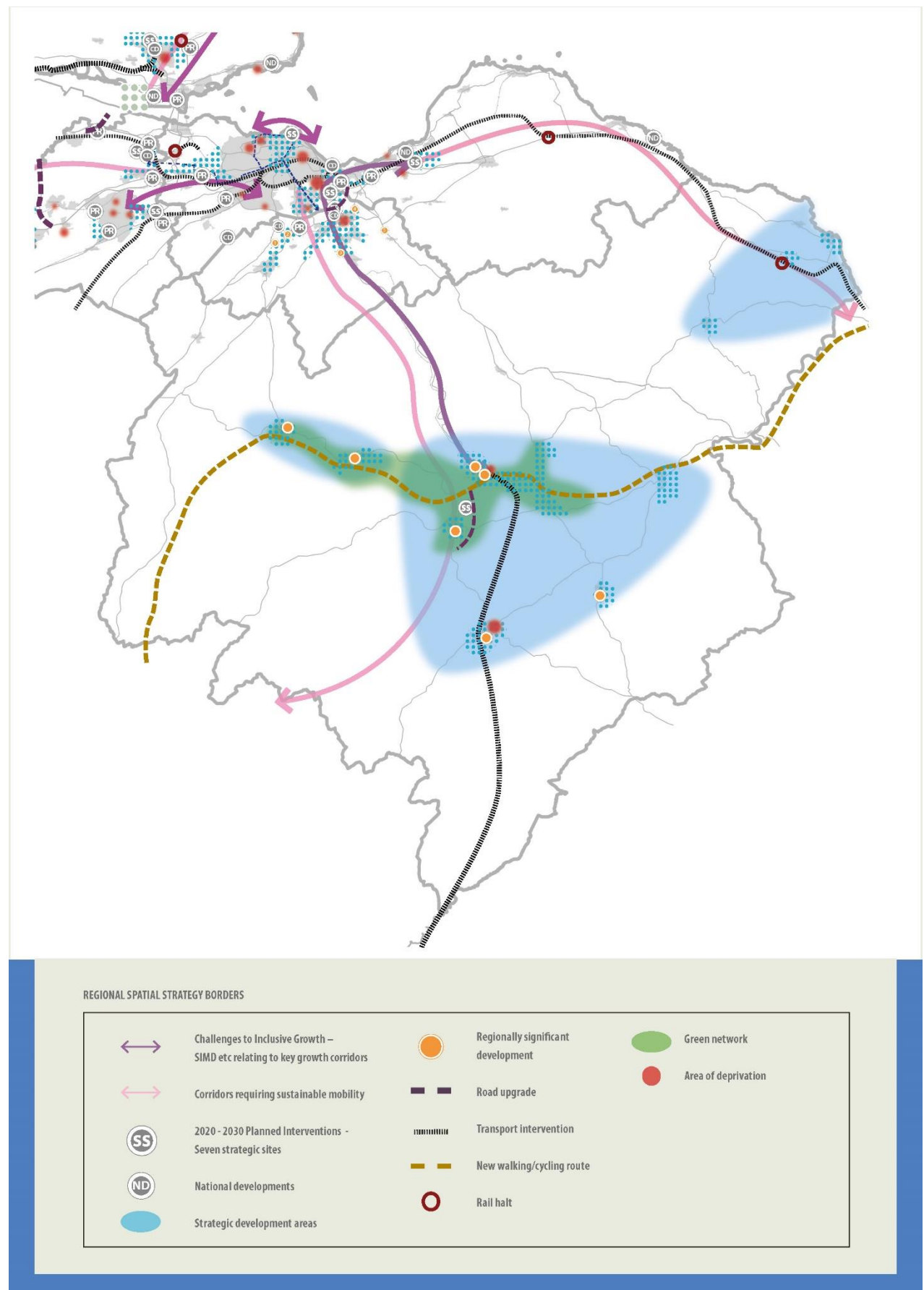
Future housing development will be focused within parts of the west of the County around Blindwells. This is due to the land availability and the sustainable opportunities to link in with travel routes to and from the City. Conversely, restraint to growth will be shown to the far west and east of the county where large scale development has recently taken place. Here existing infrastructure and settlement patterns have been altered at a fast pace and there are few options for the expansion of some infrastructure.

Torness nuclear power station, scheduled to close in 2032, has a major role in the country's energy supply. The Council supports its continued presence and potential for redevelopment, and notes the particular challenges and opportunities that will arise from decommissioning, including its deep-water access. It is important to recognise the key role this site plays in the local economy and the need to have a 'just transition' around any changes proposed.

Torness also provides a grid connection, with another grid connection nearby further inland to serve Crystal Rig Wind Farm. Clearly, the maritime setting off the coast of East Lothian is of increasing national importance for offshore energy generation, and the Council would welcome a national approach through the NPF to addressing the requirements for land based infrastructure to support offshore wind energy whilst considering cumulative seascape and landscape impacts.

One of East Lothian's assets are large areas of prime agricultural land including a good proportion of the very best soils in Scotland. With the need to improve food security and encourage more local production there needs to be greater protection of this resource through the direction of future development across the region to brownfield land.

Focus on the South



Key strategic interventions in Scottish Borders will be delivered through interaction of a range of initiatives including the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal, the Borderlands Deal and the evolving iRSS for Southern Scotland with Dumfries & Galloway Council. Participation in the South of Scotland Regional Economic Partnership and the work of the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency is also be critical to the delivery of inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and addressing existing economic fragility.

There are three identified growth zones in the Borders based around central Borders (incorporating Galashiels, Hawick, Selkirk, Jedburgh, Kelso, Earlston), Eastern Borders (Duns, Eyemouth) and western Borders (Peebles, Walkerburn, Innerleithen), which are the principal areas of search for growth, investment, redevelopment and regeneration.

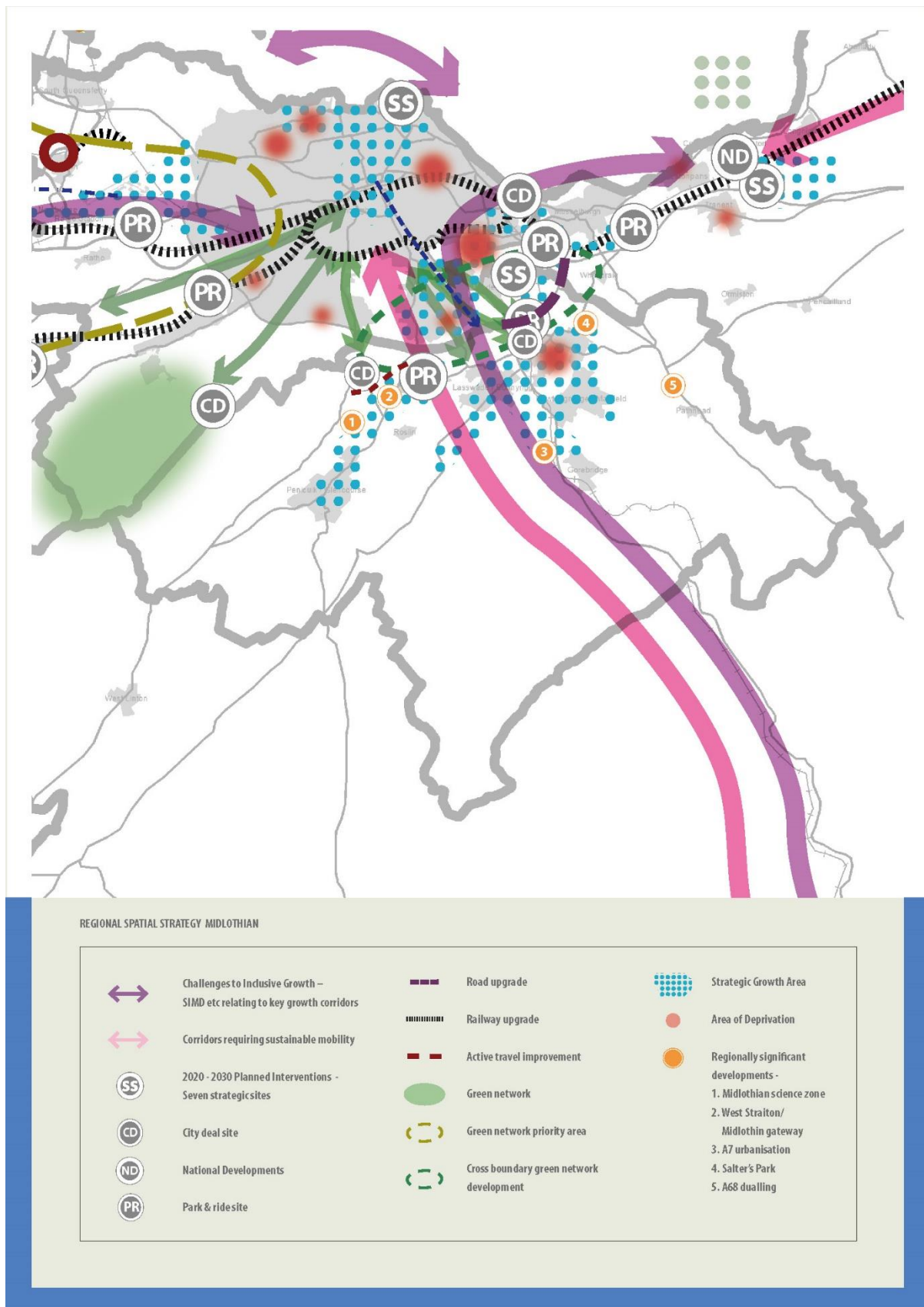
Regionally significant development in the central Borders is linked to the existing railhead at Tweedbank, with the development of the Tweedbank Business Park and a mixed-use expansion of the settlement, plus the potential for the extension of the Borders Rail to Hawick and Carlisle. In the eastern Borders, it relates to the proposed new station at Reston. In the western Borders, this involves the development of the Mountain Biking Innovation Centre in Innerleithen. A significant cross Borders project is Destination Tweed a new National Walking/Cycling route that follows the route of the Tweed from source to sea.

Critically, there are still significant deficiencies in mobile and internet networks in the area and across the South of Scotland which recent investment programmes have not adequately addressed. The potential for greater commercial benefits and home based working to compete with urban areas can only be realised through investment to unlock the area's economic potential.

The strategy promotes a place-based approach to our communities and the repurposing of town centres, moving away from retail and recognising the importance of the integrated service provision including education and community uses as well as supporting the Health and Social Care agenda. Town centre regeneration is promoted through various tools including BID's, CARS schemes and projects such as the Great Tapestry of Scotland in Galashiels.

The Scottish Borders benefits from a high quality natural, built and cultural heritage, the sensitive stewardship of which assists economic and social vitality. The Scottish Borders has a vital role to play in national and regional action in response to Climate Change, reflecting its capacity for renewable energy production and woodland creation.

Focus on the Centre – Midlothian

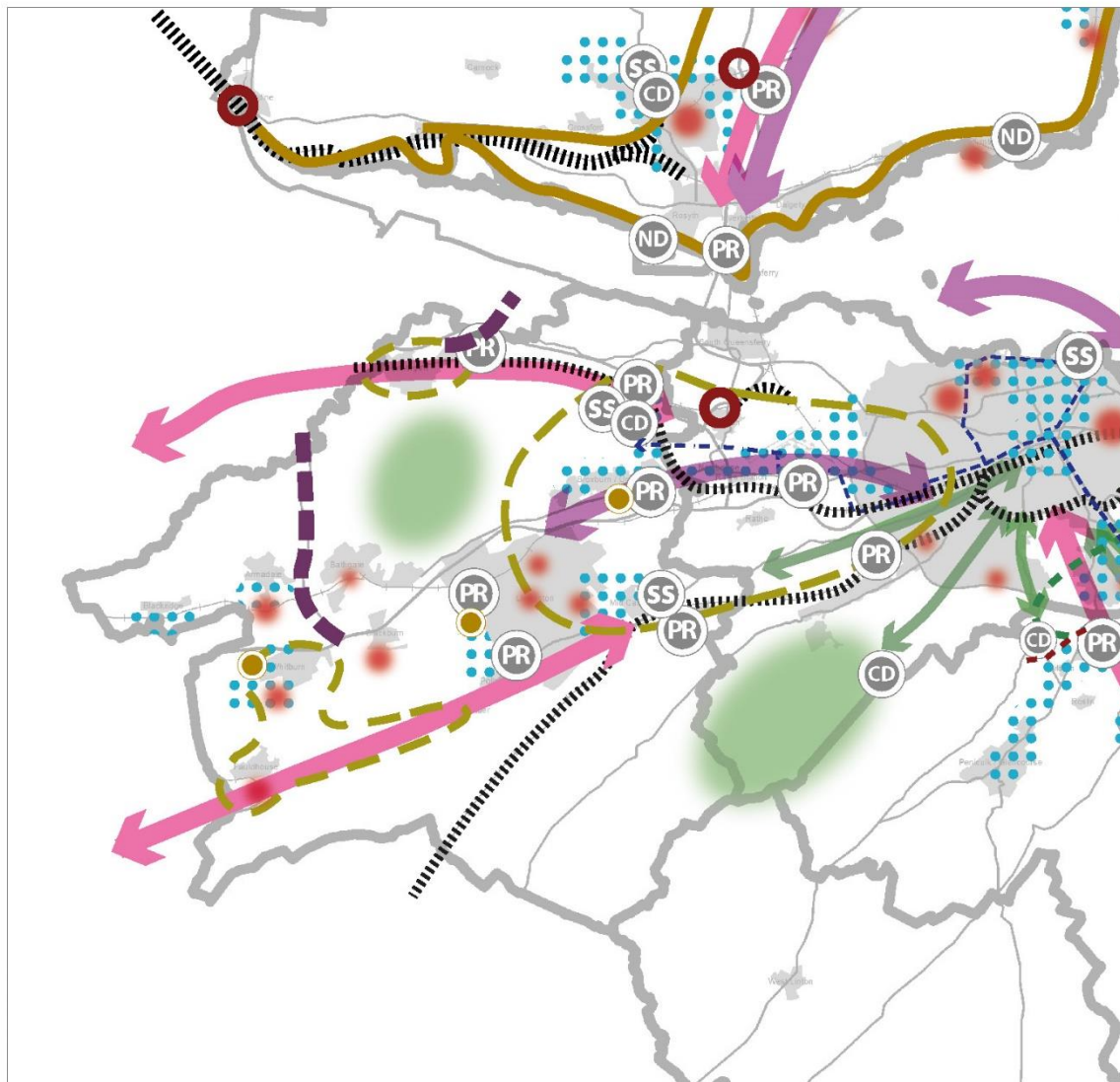


To ensure Midlothian benefits from, and contributes to, the shared prosperity of the region it is important to maintain the identity of Midlothian by supporting and promoting its existing town centres while also seeing key development sites of regional significance being delivered. In particular; the Shawfair new settlement which will comprise over 5,000 new homes, a town centre, 70 hectares of employment allocations, a railway station on the Borders Rail line, renewable energy projects and new schools and community facilities.

In addition it is essential to have the continued development of the Midlothian Science Zone (The biotechnology campus at the Bush); the 60 hectare 'Midlothian Gateway' employment site at West Straiton (which it is hoped will incorporate a new arena to service the south east of Scotland and beyond) and the Salters Park employment site (which it is hoped will incorporate a new film and television studio).

To help, to maintain the character of the area action will be taken to reinforce the green belt and expand cross boundary green network opportunities along the A720 City Bypass between Straiton, Lasswade, Gilmerton and Sheriffhall junctions to mitigate impacts of new development either side of the City bypass.

Focus on the West



REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY WEST LoTHIAN

	Challenges to Inclusive Growth – SIMD etc relating to key growth corridors		Road upgrade
	Corridors requiring sustainable mobility		Railway upgrade
	2020 - 2030 Planned Interventions - Seven strategic sites		Green network
	City deal site		Green network priority area
	National development		Strategic Growth Area
	Park & ride site		Significant business cluster

In West Lothian the spatial strategy is focused on strategic growth corridors along key transport routes – M8, M9 (Winchburgh) and rail corridors (Linlithgow/Bathgate/Livingston South lines to Glasgow and Edinburgh). This allows for containment and promotion of the urbanised area to deliver the core development areas/strategic allocations at East Broxburn/Winchburgh, Armadale, Livingston and Almond Valley (Calderwood, Gavieside and Mossend) and Heartlands.

Enhanced public transport including rail enhancement, the provision of a new rail station at Winchburgh, park & ride facilities at key transport hubs at Broxburn/Uphall and active travel routes across West Lothian will promote sustainable access to local facilities.

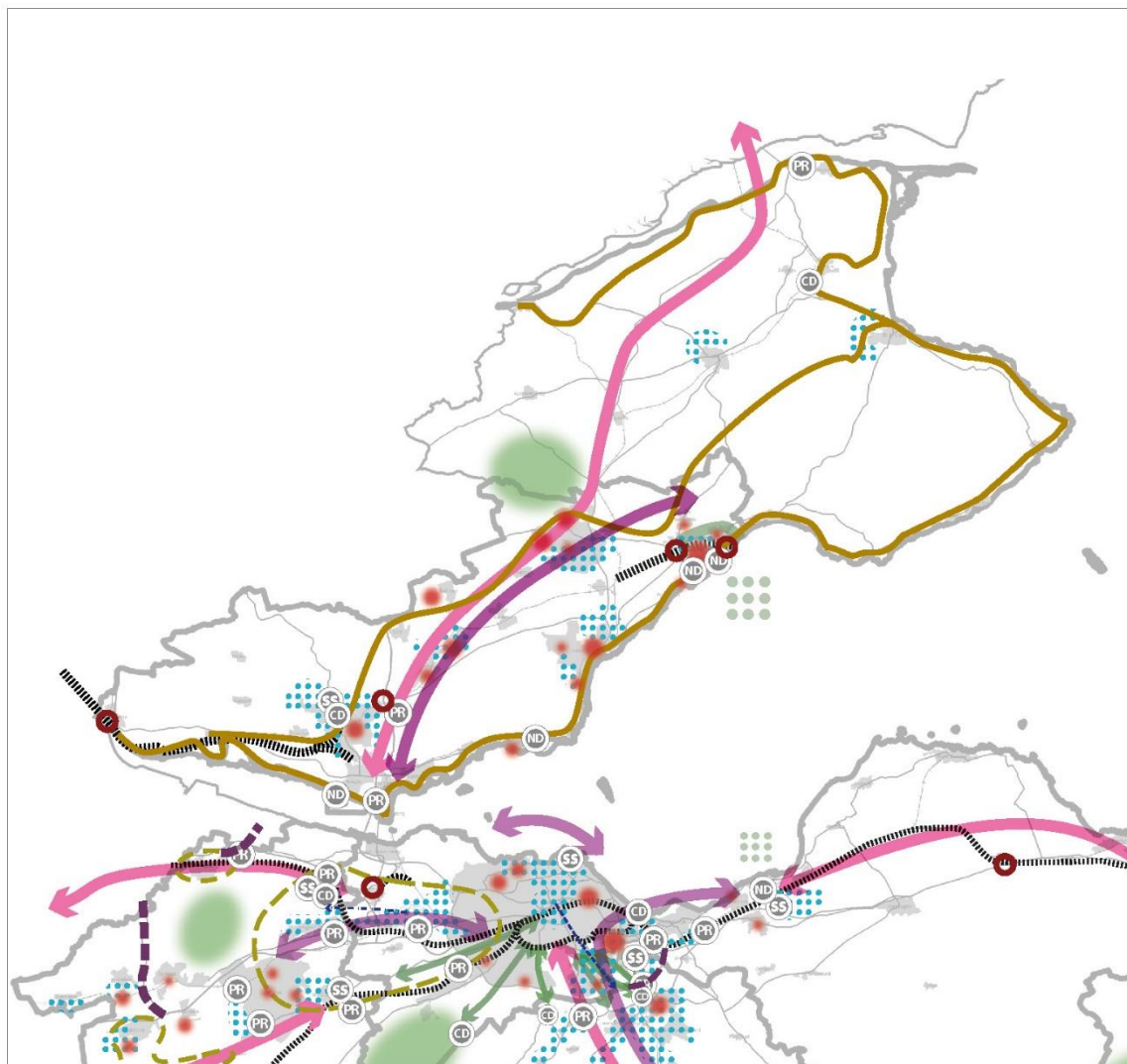
This includes provision of strategic walking and cycling routes within and through the district and key active travel routes identified in the Council's Active Travel and Core Path Plans.

To further promote sustainable transport and connectivity, opportunities to extend the tram line into West Lothian will be kept under review. Improvements to the A801 and M9 junction 3 upgrade will further assist with economic growth and connectivity.

Livingston will continue in its role as a strategic town centre providing a mix of retail, residential, leisure and commercial uses whilst promoting the 5 traditional town centres – Armadale, Bathgate, Linlithgow, Whitburn, Broxburn to continue to thrive as town centres.

Delivery of the Polkemmet and Breich Water Green Network priority area, Linlithgow and west Edinburgh together with the protection of the sensitive landscapes in the Pentlands and Bathgate Hills and enhancement of the landscape character at and around settlement gateways.

Focus on the North



REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FIVE

	Challenges to Inclusive Growth – SIMD etc relating to key growth corridors		Strategic Walking and Cycling Routes		Area of Deprivation
	Corridors requiring sustainable mobility		Road upgrade		Sustainable energy - Offshore wind energy and renewables in industry
	2020 - 2030 Planned Interventions - Seven strategic sites		Railway upgrade		
	City deal site		Proposed Rail Halt		
	National developments		Green network		
	Park & ride site		Green network priority area		
			Strategic Growth Area		

Fife's strategic position stretching between three of Scotland's cities from Edinburgh north to Dundee and west to Stirling with a long coastline and strategic transport routes provides excellent opportunities for investment to strengthen Fife's communities and economy.

Ongoing planned strategic growth of Dunfermline is the largest of the City Region's development areas, with levels of strategic infrastructure investment highest outwith a Scottish city. Fife will build on this strong growth around Dunfermline and the Forth bridgehead area through further development across the former Fife coalfield communities, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, and through to Levenmouth to regenerate communities and strengthen town centres.

St Andrews strategic growth area will deliver a mixed use development within a high quality environment. The Eden Campus Energy Centre, and associated research and commercialisation hub at Guardbridge is central to the University of St Andrews' strategic drive to become the UK's first energy carbon neutral university. Strategic growth is also proposed at Cupar North. Opportunities in more rural areas to the west and east for low carbon, renewable energy, and food production need to be considered further. The River Leven Project is significant in its scale with transformational opportunities, and SGN's H100 Fife project is seeking to deliver a 'first of a kind' demonstration of a 100% hydrogen network to supply 300 customers in the area of Levenmouth; this will comprise of an end to end system from power generation, distribution, to customer connections and requires to be reflected in NPF4 as a national development.

Continuing to facilitate the long term planned growth of Fife's strategic growth areas remains a focus to provide over 21,000 new homes with mixed business and commercial development. This requires public sector collaboration, Government investment and partnership working with the private sector to achieve investment in physical and community infrastructure such as transportation, water and drainage and education to support committed development and attract further private and public investment, and in digital infrastructure to enable data driven innovation, diversify the economic base, and create employment opportunities in areas in challenging economic circumstances.

Growth clusters at the Forth bridgehead, mid- and east Fife include opportunities for renewable energy innovation, hydrogen, and district heating which can contribute to a green economic recovery. Each are also set to benefit from significant capital investment in new rail links and road enhancement to establish strategic economic links to Clackmannanshire/Forth Valley and Dundee, and energy network investment at the University of St Andrews' Eden Campus.

In west Fife, the Port of Rosyth can enhance import and export infrastructure, linked by improved road and rail corridors including freight rail access via the Fife Circle. On the M90 regional growth/investment zones have the potential to strengthen Fife's outdoor leisure and tourism opportunities and further economic development potential, as well as A92 corridor. Further opportunities for sea transportation (freight and leisure) on the Forth and Fife coast as part of Scotland's east coast connectivity requires to be part of NPF4's strategy.

As we look to a green economic recovery, the strategy includes exploring the potential for a more sustainable, resilient logistics and distribution network considering experiences in that area during the Coronavirus pandemic. Fife's Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (2020-30) demands changes to land use to decarbonise how we live and increase the resilience of Fife's communities and economy. Funding from across the public sector will be required to deliver this.