

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee

10am, Friday 7 June 2024

Transport Programme - Annual Update

Item number 5.4

Executive Summary

This report updates Joint Committee on the progress on the major transport investments in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and those overseen by the Transport Appraisal Board (TAB) over the past year.

It includes updates on the following projects: Bus Partnership Fund; new A1 junction at Queen Margaret University; the A701 Relief Road and A702 Spur Road at Easter Bush; and the Workforce Mobility Programme.

The report does not include an update on the West Edinburgh Transport Improvement Programme (WETIP), as the Outline Business Case for this project is included in a separate report to this Committee. This report includes a full update on recent progress.

The report provides only a brief update on the A720 Sheriffhall grade separation project. That scheme is entirely managed and delivered by Transport Scotland and there is also a separate agenda item specific to it at this meeting.

The report also describes how regional partners are working to take forward opportunities to contribute to the delivery of cross-boundary projects through the delivery of the Regional Prosperity Framework and the Regional Transport Strategy.

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Transport Programme – Annual Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the progress that has been made towards the delivery of regional transport projects and relevant strategies that relate to the City Region Deal, overseen by the Transport Appraisal Board (TAB) over the past year.
- 1.2 To note that the six local authority regional Directors of Place have agreed to take a regional approach to EV charging procurement, and to contribute £5000 for taking this forward. Reports are being prepared to be considered by the nine relevant Committees, where required, within partner authorities in the coming months.
- 1.3 To note that this report does not include an update on the West Edinburgh Transport Appraisal (WETIP) project, as the Outline Business Case is a separate report to this Committee, and this includes information on recent progress.
- 1.4 To note that this report the A720 Sheriffhall grade separation project is entirely managed and delivered by Transport Scotland and there is a separate agenda item specific to it at this meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Transport is one of the five programmes of the City Region Deal and is integral to securing the overarching aim of achieving sustainable inclusive growth across the region. The [City Region Deal document](#) specifically identifies the need to upgrade existing transport infrastructure to assist in removing physical barriers to growth. To be fully effective, the transport element is identified as being significant in supporting the programmes of investment in: innovation; employability and skills; culture; and housing.
- 2.2 The ESES City Region Deal agreement specified as part of the governance structure the requirement for a Transport Appraisal Board (TAB) to focus on a regional approach to upgrading existing transport infrastructure to support regional activity in: innovation; employability and skills; culture; and housing. The TAB was established in 2019 and includes representation from the City Region's six local authorities, SEStran, Transport Scotland, the regional HE/FE Consortium and the Programme Management Office. It meets every six weeks.

- 2.3 There are two named transport projects within the City Region Deal: The A720 grade separation at Sheriffhall and the West Edinburgh Transport Improvement Programme (WETIP).
- 2.4 The A720 Sheriffhall junction improvement on the City Bypass trunk road is a scheme for which the Scottish Government has set aside up to £120m of its contributory ESES City Region Deal funding. The Scheme is entirely managed and delivered by Transport Scotland and there is a separate agenda item specific to it at this meeting.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government has committed £20m of its ESES City Region Deal funding to support public transport infrastructure improvements in West Edinburgh as identified in the [West Edinburgh Transport Appraisal refresh 2016](#) report. The City of Edinburgh Council has also committed £16m to the project.
- 2.6 In addition to those named projects, the TAB oversees and assesses transport elements within other ESES City Region Deal projects including: new infrastructure to support innovation projects (notably the Easter Bush A701 Relief Road/A702 Spur Road and the new A1 junction at Queen Margaret University); measures to encourage greater workforce mobility (led by the Workforce Mobility Project within the IRES programme); and new infrastructure to unlock strategic housing sites.
- 2.7 The TAB provides the City Region Deal input to programmes at a national and regional level. In recent years, this has included the National Transport Strategy, Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and the Regional Transport Strategy.
- 2.8 The TAB has a remit to consider the benefits of collective regional based bids and has successfully overseen and delivered projects it has bid for, including the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund (2020) and the Bus Partnership Fund (2021).
- 2.9 The TAB was also actively involved in the development of the [Regional Prosperity Framework](#) (RPF), published in September 2021, which builds upon the City Region Deal as the next phase of the development of the regional economy. The RPF is designed to be a single document that helps to shape where public and private investment, including Levelling Up monies, could make the best contribution to drive the region forward in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Joint Committee approved the RPF [Delivery Plan](#) in March 2023.

3. Main Report

- 3.1 Individual transport project updates that are part of the City Region Deal, or governed through the City Region Deal structure are summarised in this section. There are also separate agenda items to this Committee on the A720 Sheriffhall Scheme and WETIP. This report also includes information on how regional partners have contributed towards recent strategic documents including the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan, which, following the agreement of a Concordat with SEStran, is now fully aligned with the Regional Prosperity Framework delivery plan.

West Edinburgh Transport Improvement Programme (WETIP)

- 3.2 The WETIP Outline Business Case is a separate paper to this Joint Committee. This gives extensive information on the programme and its recent progress.

A720 Sheriffhall

- 3.3 In September 2021, Joint Committee ratified its support for the scheme as published in advance of progressing to any necessary Public Local Inquiry stage. It was also reaffirmed that any costs exceeding the £120m investment made through the Deal are the responsibility of Transport Scotland.
- 3.4 The Public Local Inquiry was held between 30 January and 8 February 2023. The DPEA Reporter issued their report to the Scottish Ministers' advisors on 10 October 2023, with subsequent decision from the Scottish Ministers regarding the scheme to be published "in due course."
- 3.5 In March 2024, the Convener of the Joint Committee wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport to seek reassurance about the timeframe for Scottish Ministers responding to the Reporter's recommendations and a reaffirmation of the Scottish Government's commitment to deliver the grade separation of the Sheriffhall Roundabout at the earliest opportunity. In April 2024, the Cabinet Secretary responded to state that the report "remains under active consideration", and that it is "not possible at this stage to give an indication of when the decision will be made". The exchange of letters is shown in Appendix 1.

Bus Partnership Fund

- 3.6 Following the publication of the Scottish Budget on 19 December 2023, Transport Scotland (on 16 January 2024) wrote to the Council to confirm that the £500m Bus Partnership Fund will be paused for Financial Year 2024/25 due to budgetary constraints.
- 3.7 Despite the announcement of the pause, the programme continued to make good progress during Financial Year (2023/24) and utilising the allocated funding (totalling £1.06m) the following workstreams have been delivered:
- Three of the seven Outline Business Cases;
 - Feasibility Studies along A702, Kirkliston and M90/A90;
 - Implementation of a Bus Lane Enforcement Camera on A70;
 - Design and procurement of a new Queue Management System on A90;
 - Feasibility of Bus Priority at signals and bus lanes at selected sites.
- 3.8 Transport Scotland recognise that the Council has successfully delivered on the ground measures and robust business cases during earlier rounds of the Bus Partnership Fund and consequently provided assurance that these works will continue to inform future funding decisions. As a priority, officers are working closing with Transport Scotland to explore other funding opportunities with the aim of progressing as much of the previously planned 2024/25 workstreams as possible. As progress is made on any new funding agreements, further updates will be provided to Committee members.

- 3.9 The Joint Committee Convener wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport on 12 March 2024 seeking further clarification and assurances on the future of the Bus Partnership Fund. A response was received from Transport Scotland (on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary) dated 12 April 2024 acknowledging the Convener's letter. No confirmation of the Bus Partnership Fund returns was provided as this will be considered as part of future annual budget setting processes. The exchange of letters is shown in Appendix 2.

Queen Margaret University – New A1 Junction

- 3.10 The [Edinburgh Innovation Hub](#) at Queen Margaret University (QMU) is a £40m City Region Deal-funded project, with construction due to commence in November 2023. The Edinburgh Innovation Hub is a partnership between QMU and East Lothian Council and represents phase one of a wider Edinburgh Innovation Park.
- 3.11 Before construction of this could start, a major civil engineering project to create a new junction off the A1 to improve accessibility and connectivity to QMU was required. The project included new northbound on and off slip-roads to the A1 which each meet a newly constructed roundabout, providing vastly improved access to the future development area around QMU, along with a link road which passes underneath the A1 to link to the existing southbound on and off slip-roads.
- 3.12 The junction was formally opened on Monday 12 June 2023. There have been no reported incidents or concerns raised by stakeholders or the public and traffic flow through the junction is within acceptable limits.

A701 Relief Road and A702 Spur Road (Easter Bush)

- 3.13 Easter Bush is a £68m project within the Data-Driven Innovation theme of the City Region Deal. It seeks to leverage existing world-class research institutes and commercialisation facilities to make Easter Bush a global location of Agritech excellence.
- 3.14 The A701 Corridor experiences significant traffic congestion which is likely to be exacerbated as a result of the development. Transport Scotland has stated that it would be unable to support further growth at the Easter Bush Campus and wider Midlothian Science Zone until the operational impacts on the trunk road network at the A702/Bush Loan junction have been resolved and acceptable mitigation measures are in place.
- 3.15 A new A701 relief road and A702 link is therefore proposed, led by Midlothian Council, which represents a significant investment in the key infrastructure needed to support the major growth planned along the A701 corridor and in capturing the benefits of an inclusive growth programme based on research, development and innovation.
- 3.16 The latest update report on this project was taken to the Joint Committee meeting on [1 March 2024](#). It stated that, following an increase in the estimated total capital costs of the project to £68 million, which exceeds the current approved £21.774m; there is a current estimated shortfall of £46.2m (excluding potential future developer contributions). Joint Committee were informed of a proposed prioritisation of the

Bush Loan Junction (Phase 1) and Sustainable Transport Corridor (Phase 2), which aligns with priorities set out in City Region Deal business case, and the needs of partners including University of Edinburgh. It stated that Midlothian Council continues to be committed to delivering the remaining phases (phases 3-8) as funding and delivery mechanisms become available and its commitment to obtaining planning permission for the project by 2026. It also noted continued efforts to obtain funding for the wider enabling infrastructure project through UKG and other available funding streams. Joint Committee agreed that the economic dimension of the scheme represents value for money and the programme has identified the resources to deliver the next stage of the project.

Workforce Mobility

- 3.17 Workforce Mobility is one of seven projects within the City Region Deal's Integrated Regional Employability and Skills Programme. The project aims to work across employability and transport sectors to improve communication, coordination, and the effectiveness of local transport to support the ambitions of the IRES programme and the Regional Prosperity Framework. The Lead Officer for the Workforce Mobility Project sits on the TAB.
- 3.18 There are multiple barriers that contribute to workforce mobility issues across the region. These include affordability, accessibility, complexity, integration and declining service provisions. In August 2022, a Workforce Mobility [Final Baseline Report](#) was published which provides full details on the issues faced and the actions for the project team to deliver.
- 3.19 Over the past two years, the project has focused on working with partners to improve sustainable transport investment through the use of demand data from the existing commuting workforce (not currently using public transport), supplemented by other data sources, such as mobile phone data.
- 3.20 Since June 2023, the project has used data supplied from local businesses to finalise a full bus network review in the Scottish Borders and a Journey Hub Strategy for East Lothian. Both projects provide investment opportunities to improve access to the transport network based on actual demand data.
- 3.21 In return for business supplying data, they are provided with an [Employer Incentives factsheet](#) . The factsheet has been created to identify business incentives to encourage behavioural change within the region's workforce. It identifies cultural changes, grants and funding opportunities to support green travel choices and how to use tax allowances to invest in infrastructure to support employees to travel sustainably. It is important that employers support behavioural change across the region, to increase the use of infrastructure and services delivered and supported by Local Authorities and transport providers.
- 3.22 The project team have also developed a PowerBi analysis template for Local Authorities, which improves the efficient and effective assessment of data provided by Bus Operators to help review the performance of subsidised services. The ability to analyse bus data effectively is becoming more important for Local Authorities with the recent increase of bus operators withdrawing services and supplying data to Local Authorities to justify the decisions. The PowerBi dashboard enables officers to upload the data quickly to create automatically generated analysis outputs that are

easy to interpret / interrogate, while providing an effective communication tool for senior officers, Elected Members and communities. There are several Local Authorities outwith the City Region Deal partnership that have requested the template, which indicates that it could be mainstreamed across all Scottish Local Authorities.

- 3.23 The project has developed an online transportation accessibility tool to help Local Authority partners understand how well served the region's key 'trip attractors' (business, healthcare, town centres etc.) are by public transport. This tool has been used to inform the recommendations of the Journey Hub strategy for East Lothian and Bus Network Review in the Scottish Borders. The project team are currently using the tool to support Planning teams across the region to inform the development of evidence reports for the next version of Local Developments Plans.
- 3.24 Since 2022, there has been a bus driver shortage across the UK that has put pressure on services across the country and even resulted in the 'hand-back' of subsidised bus services to Local Authorities across the City Deal region. The peak of the driver shortages was in late 2022 and early 2023, with rural areas still feeling the pressure into 2024. To support local operators with the recruitment of new drivers, the Workforce Mobility Project created a website and employability resources to be used by operators to promote a career in the sector by demonstrating the diversity of people, roles and career opportunities. The website has been showcased at national forums by the Managing Director of Lothian Buses as an example of good practice. [Bus Driver Careers Helix](#)
- 3.25 With the development of the Bus Drivers Careers website, the endorsement by Lothian Buses and the continued bus driver recruitment issues affecting local operators, the Transport Appraisal Board endorsed the Workforce Mobility and Integrated Employer Engagement teams jointly organising a series of driver recruitment roadshows across the region. The roadshows have been delivered with support from bus operators and employment partners across the region. The first roadshow was held on 2 May 2024 and was attended by the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity.
- 3.26 With the continued shrinkage of the bus network it is important to identify and investigate new ways of connecting people with public transport. Therefore the project team have produced a '[Bikes on Buses Performance Review & Recommendations Report](#)' which was published in November 2023. This report assesses the performance of 'bike on bus' pilots across the UK, compared to mainstream provisions in the EU and USA. It provides the context to understand why bike on bus pilots in the UK haven't always been successful and how to learn from the services that have built a strong network of bike on bus storage provisions, like Borders Buses in the Scottish Borders. The reports provides recommendations on how to deliver successful pilots in the future and identifies a role for 'bike on bus' in our transport network, especially in rural areas, to widen accessibility to key transport corridors. The report has been distributed to Local Authorities, SEStran, SUStrans and Cycle Scotland and it is hope that it will inform future policy and services. The Workforce Mobility team are now promoting it with bus operators through CPT.

3.27 Finally, the Workforce Mobility team have been supporting Scottish Borders Council with the Berwickshire Demand Responsive Transport pilot (PINGO), through project management, operational development and data analysis support. The data and learning gathered from the pilot over the last two years has enabled Scottish Borders Council to redesign the service into a taxi-bus provision, that provides community connectivity into the fixed route bus network, based on demand data from the PINGO pilot. The new taxi-bus service commenced on 20 May 2024.

Concordat with SEStran

3.28 In August 2023, SEStran, (the Regional Transport Partnership comprising the six local authorities in the City Region Deal, as well as Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Councils) and the ESES City Region Deal partners agreed a concordat. This committed the two partnerships to work together in support of further integrating economic development, transport and land use planning and delivery in the city region.

3.29 The Concordat sets out a governance framework, and lists roles and responsibilities for transport-related matters. The concordat has strengthened the relationship between ESES Regional partners and SEStran. As well as continuing to sit on the Transport Appraisal Board, Brian Butler (Partnership Director of SEStran), now sits on the ESES City Region Directors' Group, where areas of joint working through the concordat are regularly discussed.

3.30 These areas of work included: establishing a Regional EV charging infrastructure procurement programme and delivering the Regional Transport Strategy – ensuring that it is aligned with the Regional Prosperity Framework.

Regional Prosperity Delivery Framework

3.31 In March 2023, Joint Committee approved the [RPF Delivery Plan](#). This responds to current challenges and recognises that the cost-of-living crisis disproportionately impacted the most economically disadvantaged members of the community, with the cost of basic necessities e.g., food and fuel far exceeding any increases to wages.

3.32 Transport is a key enabler to unlock the region's potential, but in many areas due to limited accessibility, investment and coordination, it has constrained the realisation of opportunities and benefits for our people, place and economy. The Delivery Plan lists developing a Regional Transport Masterplan as a priority action. This will be aligned with STPR2 and build upon the Regional Transport Strategy to provide clarity on expectations, especially relating to new sustainable transport interventions which may include active travel, railway opportunities, road interchanges, service improvements and behavioural change.

3.33 It was agreed in late 2023 that the Regional Transport Masterplan would be delivered in partnership with SEStran under the agreed Concordat for partnership working. The Workforce Mobility Manager and SEStran reconvened the regional working group in September 2023 to identify the supported needed to help deliver the Masterplan, which was presented at the joint Ministerial meeting on 26 September 2023. As part of this process, the working group agreed that the

Masterplan should be re-named to reflect the alignment with the recently published Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), while still identifying priority transport projects that deliver the objects of the RPF. The Masterplan is now known as the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan.

- 3.34 The Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan will be structured to develop a series of priority projects (infrastructure and services) to a position that they can be used to seek funding and be delivered within the term of the Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan will be refreshed on a 10-year cycle as per the Regional Transport Strategy.
- 3.35 SEStran and the Workforce Mobility Manager have been developing a delivery strategy for the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan, which saw the re-establishment of a steering group, senior responsible officers (City Region Deal – Kevin Anderson and SEStran – Brian Butler), governance structure, scope of works and delivery programme. The first regional Steering Group meeting was held on 15 May to agree the project documentation and way forward.
- 3.36 The key delivery milestones for the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan:
1. **Jan to May 2024:** Project Preparation.
 2. **Jan to Jul 2024:** Baselineing.
 3. **Aug to Nov 2024:** Matrix Analysis to identify priority projects.
 4. **May to Dec 24:** Procurement of consultant support.
 5. **Jan to Jun 25:** Consultant develops priority projects.
 6. **Jan to Jun 25:** Develop wider RTS Action Plan.
 7. **Aug 24 to Nov 25:** Drafting of RTS Delivery Plan Report.
 8. **May 24, July 24, Nov 24, Mar 25, Jun 25, Nov 25:** Steering Group Gateway reviews.
 9. **Dec 25:** ESESCRD Directors Review.
 10. **Dec 25:** to Feb 26: Approval process from eight local authorities.
 11. **Feb 26:** EMOC Briefing.
 12. **Mar 26:** ESESCRD Joint Committee sign-off.
 13. **Mar 26:** SEStran Board sign-off.
- 3.37 It is anticipated that SEStran and the Workforce Mobility Manager can deliver Milestones 1 to 4 from the programme, with the support of Local Authority officers to define the priority list of projects. The further development of the priority projects through a STAG or DMRB processes will require consultancy support and a budget to be identified. Once the priority projects have been identified by November 2024, the definition of a consultancy commission will be better defined and an accurate budget estimate identified.

Regional EV Charging

- 3.38 Over recent years, local authorities have been developing plans to ensure that electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout their areas is aligned to projected increases in demand. These 'Expansion Plans' have been funded by Transport Scotland. Now that the plans have been developed, there is a need to move to a delivery phase, either on a local authority by local authority basis, or by taking a collaborative regional approach.

- 3.39 There are currently several key deadlines around the delivery of a public EV charging network. The first and most pressing is the discontinuation of Charge Place Scotland in December 2025, at which point most current public EV chargers will cease to become operational unless they are transferred to an alternative supplier. The second is availability of EVIF grant to support private sector delivery, which is of particular importance for charge point locations that may be less commercially viable. At present, this funding needs to be spent and claimed by March 2026. If these deadlines are to be met, it is estimated that tenders would have to be issued in autumn 2024.
- 3.40 Exploration of the benefits of taking a regional approach relative to local authorities taking a unilateral approach was agreed at the Transport Appraisal Board. It was also raised at the Elected Member Oversight Committee (EMOC) where there was initial support for such an approach.
- 3.41 In January 2024, the regional approach to delivery was discussed and endorsed in principle by the City Region Deal Directors' Group. The approach covers the six local authorities in the City Region Deal, plus Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Dumfries & Galloway. It was agreed that all local authority partners would nominate representatives to work together in a team to develop a Programme Specification that would describe a recommended approach towards a regional model of shared working.
- 3.42 Following some challenges in assembling the group and getting it to work effectively, support was gained from the ESESCRD Executive Board. Programme governance, an outline specification are now in place, and the programme is rapidly gaining momentum.
- 3.43 Each of the nine local authorities has agreed to contribute funding for taking this forward, and reports are now being prepared to be considered by the nine relevant Committees, where required, within partner authorities in coming months.

4. Financial impact

- 4.1 There is no financial impact arising from this update report.
- 4.2 Scottish Government has committed to funding up to £120m for the A720 grade separation at Sheriffhall and has confirmed that any costs exceeding this are the responsibility of Scottish Government/Transport Scotland. Money for this project does not flow through the Accountable Body, and the City Region Deal partners are therefore not responsible for managing the costs of this project.
- 4.3 Government funding for: WETIP; Edinburgh Innovation Hub (QMU); A701 Relief Road and A702 Spur Road; and the Workforce Mobility Programme is monitored by the Accountable Body on a monthly basis, and any major issues are reported to relevant Boards, Governments and Joint Committee as required. While not a City Region Deal project, money for the Bus Partnership Fund flows through the City Region Deal Accountable Body in a similar manner and is also monitored closely.

5. Alignment with Sustainable, Inclusive Growth Ambitions

- 5.1 The Transport projects that are being taken forward through the City Region Deal programme are aligned closely with the national and regional environmental

objectives of maximising public transport and active travel; and thereby reducing the amount of travel undertaken by private car.

- 5.2 An efficient regional public and active transport system is also an essential requirement if the regional economy is to experience strong and rapid across a range of sectors, through helping people access employment, education and training.
- 5.3 Removing physical barriers to growth was identified one of five key interventions in the Deal Document's Inclusive Growth Framework. As a consequence, there are three specific positive impact on equalities which are to be achieved:
- 5.1.1 Upgrades and additions to existing infrastructure, with the resultant reduced journey times and increased modal choice, can readily support residents of more disadvantaged communities to more easily access job opportunities and education/training centres.
- 5.1.2 Transport infrastructure upgrades to unlock housing development sites enable the increase in the supply and availability of housing, particularly in the affordable sector, to assist directly those households which cannot access the private housing market.
- 5.1.3 Infrastructure improvements which assist in the delivery of data-driven innovation projects and other business development areas will enable accelerated overall economic growth, as well as providing good accessibility to the increased job opportunities arising from those implemented projects.

6. Background reading/external references

- [A701 Relief Road and A702 Spur Road - Phasing](#) – report to City Region Deal Joint Committee (1 March 2024)
- [Bus Partnership Fund – Progress Update](#) – report to City Region Deal Joint Committee (1 March 2024)
- [A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout](#) – report to Joint Committee (1 December 2023)
- [Bus Driver Careers website](#)
- [Bikes on Buses Performance Review & Recommendations Report](#) (November 2023)
- [Workforce Mobility: Transport Barrier Survey Baseline Report](#) (August 2022)

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Exchange of letters between the Convener of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport on Sheriffhall.
- 7.2 Exchange of letters between the Convener of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport on the Bus Partnership Fund.