

# 7 Regional Transport Strategy

## OBJECTIVE

To develop a co-ordinated approach to transport across Central and South East Scotland by playing an active role in the South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SESTRAN), and fostering links with Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) and WESTRANS authorities.

## ISSUES

7.1 Transport is a cross-boundary activity, so Councils must work together if the improvements that Central and South East Scotland needs are to be brought about. The City of Edinburgh Council will play its part, so that quality of life and economic development opportunities are maximised. An integrated approach will also ensure that, in appraising new transport infrastructure, all modes and links are considered so that the most appropriate are chosen.



The Forth Rail Bridge

7.2 SESTRAN is a voluntary partnership of the nine local authorities in south east Scotland, plus the Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA - the body that is responsible for the Forth Road Bridge and its approaches). The purpose of the Partnership is 'to identify, develop, implement and monitor matters of mutual transport interest'. SESTRAN is composed of a steering group made up of elected members from each Council and a representative from FETA, whose decisions are put into effect by a management team made up of Council officers. SESTRAN pursues transport schemes and issues, which require a regional approach (new rail services, for example), through voluntary co-operation between its members. It adopted its Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) in June 2003, and this has now been ratified by all member organisations. The RTS is a live, evolving document and will be updated as necessary.



Regional road network

- 7.3 Key objectives of the SESTRAN RTS are to:
- Reduce the number of people commuting in single occupancy vehicles within South East Scotland - especially for journeys to and from Edinburgh; but also for journeys to destinations outwith the SESTRAN area;
  - Minimise the overall need for travel, especially by car;
  - Maximise public transport provision and achieve public transport integration and intermodality; and
  - Improve safety for all road and transport users.

7.4 To date, the SESTRAN authorities have delivered a number of key regional transport projects and secured funding to deliver more. These projects form part of the regional transport strategy and demonstrate how effective regional partnership working can be. Schemes already delivered include:

- **The OneTicket Integrated Ticketing scheme.** This was set up as a result of a bid by SESTRAN to the first round of the Public Transport Fund (PTF) and was launched for sale in late 2001. It already has ticket sales in excess of £300,000 per year with a marketing plan for rapid growth. It offers a range of tickets valid for bus travel with all operators in south east Scotland, together with some rail journeys;
- **Cross-Forth bus enhancements.** Joint working by Fife and City of Edinburgh Councils delivered, in May 2001, major bus priority on the A90 together with a 500-space park and ride site at Ferrytoll, on the north side of the Forth bridge. This project has been extremely popular and so successful that work is now in hand to double the size of the car park;
- **Edinburgh Crossrail.** The only new passenger rail service to open in Scotland between rail privatisation in 1996 and early 2002, this project has extended Bathgate and Dunblane to Edinburgh services through Edinburgh Waverley to Brunstane and a new 500-space park and ride site at Newcraighall in the east of the city. This project is the first phase of restoring the Waverley Railway line to the Central Borders;
- **Fife rail stations.** Two new stations, Dunfermline Queen Margaret's and Dalgety Bay, have opened in Fife since the formation of SESTRAN;
- **Railway station enhancements.** Funded through PTF, these have provided additional car parking at stations in East Lothian, and will do the same at stations in West Lothian over the next three years. Similar enhancements have also been funded for Rosyth, Dalgety Bay and Kirkcaldy stations in Fife; and
- **Public Transport Fund (PTF) Bids.** Three successful bids have been made by SESTRAN as a corporate body (as opposed to its constituent authorities on an individual basis) for PTF funding. These were the OneTicket bid, as mentioned above; Sustainable Access to Edinburgh (particularly expansion of Ferrytoll Park and Ride); and, a preparatory pool bid ('Enabling Step Change') to further develop a number of regional schemes to enhance inter-regional links, including those with Edinburgh.

7.5 In addition to the projects already delivered, there are a large number of further schemes, forming part of the 'upfront' investment package, that have funding in place and for which work is about to commence or which is, in some cases, already close to completion. The most significant of these schemes are as follows:

- Improved railway station parking in Fife, Stirling and Falkirk;
- Bus priority on the A7, A701 and A702 in Edinburgh; and on the A199 in East Lothian;
- The West Edinburgh Busway Scheme, now in its detailed design stages;
- Fastlink West Lothian to Edinburgh express bus service;
- Improved pedestrian and cycle links to rail stations across the SESTRAN area;
- Strategic park and ride sites around Edinburgh, at Hermiston, Ingliston, Straiton and Todhills, providing together some 2,000 spaces in addition to the 1,000 already available at Ferrytoll and Newcraighall;
- New/improved interchanges in Fife (Ferrytoll; Dalgety Bay, Kirkcaldy, Rosyth, Inverkeithing and Markinch) and Edinburgh;
- Half-hourly bus service from Melrose to Edinburgh;
- Funding has been secured from the Strategic Rail Authority to lengthen platforms on the Edinburgh-Bathgate and Fife Circle lines to allow six car

trains to stop. Further units have been ordered to form these longer trains. This should be complete by the end of the 2004/05 financial year;

- Shotts Line service enhancements; and
- Bathgate to Airdrie rail line re-opening.

- 7.6 A Private Bill has also been lodged in the Scottish Parliament for the re-opening of the Stirling-Alloa railway line to passenger trains, with freight services to Longannet and Kincardine; and the Waverley line re-opening to the Central Borders has also been submitted as a Private Bill. Scottish Borders Council in partnership with City of Edinburgh and Midlothian Councils is promoting the latter project. The Private Bill procedure is likely to be that which will be used for all future rail re-openings in Scotland.
- 7.7 The Council, in partnership with the Council, Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) and Forth Ports is considering the feasibility of providing a Cross Forth ferry service linking the Granton/Leith area to Kirkcaldy/Burntisland. A study is currently being carried out and the Council is awaiting the report that will have initial recommendations whether such an option is feasible.
- 7.8 The Council recognises that a key condition of the Preferred Strategy is that the benefits of congestion charging are spread across the region, and so working on a regional basis is essential to the success of the strategy. Through its active participation in SESTRAN to date, the Council has demonstrated its commitment to this process.

**SOCIAL INCLUSION AUDIT**

- 7.9 Working in partnership across local authority areas promotes social inclusion on a broader geographical scale. By doing so provides increased accessibility across the region, this aiding access to employment opportunities and goods and services for those who cannot access these within their home authority area.

**POLICY**

- R1 The Council will continue to work in partnership with SESTRAN authorities and other agencies to ensure successful delivery of regional and strategic transport projects
- R2 For the purposes of expenditure of the net revenues raised from an Edinburgh congestion charging scheme which are applicable to the SESTRAN region outwith Edinburgh, this LTS adopts the SESTRAN Regional Transport Strategy in place from time to time, insofar as it relates to travel to Edinburgh and is consistent with the aims and objectives of this Local Transport Strategy.

**ACTION PLAN**

*The Council will:*

- RP1 Work with SESTRAN partners to implement the Regional Transport Strategy.

**EIGHT • UK AND INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS**