



# Annual Report

1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

# SWestrans Vision

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

- Reflects the needs of communities and expectations of people living, working, and consuming in the region.
- Is safe, affordable and accessible to all.
- Allows healthier lifestyles.
- Is resilient to climate change, supporting a contribution to net zero emissions targets reflecting the regional circumstances."



# Foreword

I am pleased to present SWestrans Annual Report for 2024/25, a year in which we continued to build momentum toward delivering a more inclusive, sustainable, and connected transport system for the South West of Scotland. Our region faces unique challenges - geographical, demographic, and economic - but it also holds enormous potential. This year's progress reflects our commitment to realising that potential by placing the needs of our communities at the heart of every decision.

Over the past year, we have strengthened our focus on delivering the ambitions set out in the 2023-2042 Regional Transport Strategy. This has included significant steps forward in active travel design and delivery, enhancements to the accessibility and quality of our public transport network, and targeted investments to improve safety and resilience on key strategic routes. Our work with partners across local government, national agencies, transport operators, and community organisations has been essential in driving forward these improvements and ensuring that solutions are responsive to local needs.

A major theme of 2024/25 has been preparing the region for a more modern and sustainable transport future. The procurement of new low emission buses, progress on mobility hub development, and the continued delivery of behaviour change initiatives demonstrate our commitment to supporting a shift towards cleaner, healthier and more affordable ways of travelling. We have also made important progress in accessibility, ensuring that services, information, and infrastructure are increasingly inclusive and supportive of all users, particularly those facing the greatest barriers to travel.

This report provides details our activities, performance, and statutory duties across the year. We remain committed to using this insight to guide our decision making and to ensure that our work delivers meaningful outcomes for residents, businesses, and visitors across Dumfries and Galloway.

My thanks go to Board Members, Observers, stakeholders, partners and the dedicated officers who support SWestrans throughout the year. Their expertise and commitment continue to be invaluable as we work collectively toward a transport system that is safe, accessible, inclusive, and fit for the future.

**John Campbell**  
Chair, SWestrans



# Introduction

This report covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 gave Scottish Ministers a duty to establish Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) covering the entirety of Scotland. In line with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act of 2005, the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership (SWestrans) was established through the Regional Transport Partnerships (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005, and the Transfer of Functions to the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Order 2006.

A statutory requirement of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 was that each of the seven Regional Transport Partnership produced a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The original RTS was agreed by SWestrans Board on 25 April 2008 and the RTS Delivery Plan was agreed in March 2009. In 2023, a new version of the RTS was published to replace the 2008 RTS, reflecting the changing needs of the region. The 2023 RTS covers the period 2023-2042.

In March 2006, the former Scottish Executive issued guidance on the development of Regional Transport Strategies. Paragraphs 112 and 133 of this guidance set a requirement for an annual report to be submitted to Scottish Ministers. This report should cover the operational and financial year ending 31 March and should include assessments of performance against the objectives, targets, and performance indicators outlines in the RTS.

SWestrans is subject to additional statutory reporting requirements in respect of:

- Public Sector Equalities Duties
- Public Sector Climate Change Duties
- Public Sector Reform Act 2010
- Public Sector Records Management
- Freedom of Information
- Publication Scheme



# Board

## Members

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership Board consists of seven members. Five of these are local Councillors nominated by Dumfries and Galloway Council. The other two are referred to as 'external members'. One member each is nominated by NHS Dumfries and Galloway and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE). SWestrans has opted to give voting rights to external members.

Throughout 2024/25 the members of SWestrans Board were:

- John Campbell DGC (Chair)
- Karen Jackson South of Scotland Enterprise (Vice Chair)
- Willie Scobie DGC
- Keith Walters DGC
- Jim Dempster DGC
- Andrew Wood DGC
- David Bryson and Stephanie Mottram NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Stephanie Mottram replaced David Bryson as NHS representative at the Board meeting on 27 September 2024.

## Observers

SWestrans Board appoint observers to the Board. Observers of the Board have a specific interest in transport and their knowledge and experience enables Observers to contribute to the scrutiny

role of the Board. A wide range of sector of interests, and specialist expertise is therefore available to the Board. The Observers on 1 April 2024 were Fraser Smith, Hugh McCreadie and Graham Whitely.

Laura Moodie was granted observer status at the Board meeting of 29 November 2024.

## Meetings

There were eight meetings of SWestrans Board between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 with provision for special meetings for business deemed urgent.

Board meetings were held on the following dates, with the option to join in person at Council Hall, Council Offices, English Street, Dumfries, DG1 2DD or via MS Teams:

- 19 April 2024
- 19 June 2024
- 25 June 2024
- 28 June 2024
- 27 September 2024
- 29 November 2024
- 31 January 2025
- 28 March 2025

More information on Board meetings, including agendas and minutes, can be found on the [SWestrans website Board members, observers and meetings | SWestrans](#).



# Governance

SWestrans has developed a series of governance documents to ensure the effective management of the organisation. The key governance documents are:

- Standing Orders
- Financial regulations and financial codes
- Procurement Standing Orders
- Members' Code of Conduct
- Guidance for Observers.

## Annual accounts 2024/25

Draft Annual Accounts for 2024/25 were considered by SWestrans Board at its meeting on 27 June 2025. These were prepared to comply with international financial reporting standards and proper accounting practice. The draft unaudited accounts were submitted to Audit Scotland, who are the appointed external auditors for SWestrans. The draft accounts were made available on the SWestrans website and the Council's website during this period. The final audited accounts were received by the Board at its meeting on 21 November 2025.

## Revenue Expenditure

The table below provides a summary outturn statement which outlines expenditure against budget for SWestrans for 2024/25.

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership



	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Variance</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	
Staff costs	213	213	0
Transport costs	9	9	0
Administrative costs	28	28	0
Payments to other bodies	4,428	4,428	0
People and Places Grant Payments	838	838	0
Central Support costs	45	45	0
<b>Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>5,561</b>	<b>5,561</b>	<b>0</b>
Government Grants	246	246	0
Government Grants (People and Places)	838	838	0
Other Income	4,477	4,477	0
<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>5,561</b>	<b>5,561</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## Performance management

A Performance Management Framework has been developed for monitoring and reporting the achievements of SWestrans' strategic objectives. These are reported to the Board throughout each financial year, either on an annual or six monthly basis.

The elements of the Performance Management Framework include:

- Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan
- Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring and KPIs
- Annual Report
- Business Plan
- Risk Management Plan



# Function

Under the provisions of the Transport (Scotland Act 2005) the following transport functions were transferred from Dumfries and Galloway Council to SWestrans:

- Formulation, consultation, and publishing of policies.
- Promotion of passenger transport services.
- Procurement, management, and administration of service subsidy agreements.
- Management and administration of concessionary travel schemes.
- Quality Partnership schemes.
- Ticketing schemes.
- Provision of public transport information.

SWestrans is a Model 3 Regional Transport Partnership, meaning that one of the functions transferred to SWestrans from Dumfries and Galloway Council is the responsibility for procuring socially necessary public transport.

SWestrans and Dumfries and Galloway Council work in close partnership to deliver passenger transport in an integrated fashion to ensure economies of scale and value for money, whilst ensuring the best possible service for the communities of Dumfries and Galloway.

SWestrans.org.uk  
South West of Scotland Transport Partnership



# Staffing and resources

SWestrans employs no staff directly. Staff are employed by Dumfries and Galloway Council on behalf of SWestrans, and either attached to the Partnership, or provide significant support to it in addition to their Council roles. During 2024/25, these staff resources included the Lead Officer, a Team Leader, 3x Policy and Project Officers, a Public Transport Officer and Public Transport Assistant.

Some business requirements of SWestrans are provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council on its behalf. These include:

- Human Resources
- Financial and Legal Services
- Governance support
- Communications and Office Accommodation
- Technology Solutions and Business Support
- Procurement

## Secretary to the Board

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires Regional Transport Partnerships to appoint a Secretary to the Board. During the 2024/25 period this function was fulfilled by Claire Rogerson.

## Chair of the Board

John Campbell has been the Chair of SWestrans Board since June 2022.

## Vice-Chair of the Board

Karen Jackson has been the Vice-Chair of SWestrans Board since June 2022.



# National and Strategic Policy Context

In fulfilling their duty, Regional Transport Partnerships are required to give regard to any relevant guidance issued by Scottish Ministers. This includes alignment with the National Transport Strategy (NTS2), which sets out a vision for sustainable, inclusive, and accessible transport goals for Scotland. Additionally, RTPs must consider the priorities and recommendations outlined in the Strategic Transport Projects Reviews (STPR2), which identifies national and regional infrastructure investments. These documents provide the strategic framework within which regional transport planning operates, ensuring alignment with national objectives, while addressing local and regional needs.

## National Transport Strategy 2

The National Transport Strategy (NTS2) sets out a national vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and accessible transport system that supports Scotland's broader social, environmental, and economic priorities. The NTS2 has significant ongoing influence on strategic development undertaken by SWestrans and directly influences the work of SWestrans through the Regional Transport Strategy.

The NTS2 identified four key priorities that guide transport policy and delivery across the country to create a transport system that:

- Reduces inequalities
- Takes climate action
- Helps deliver inclusive economic growth
- Improves our health and wellbeing

## Strategic Transport Policy Review 2

The Second Strategic Project Review (STPR2) provides a long-term programme of potential transport investment opportunities covering the period of 2022-2042. The SWestrans RTS is aligned with STPR2 priorities under the six key themes of STPR2:

- Improving active travel
- Influencing travel choices and behaviours
- Enhancing access to affordable public transport
- Decarbonising transport
- Increasing safety and resilience on the strategic transport network
- Strengthening strategic connections



# Regional Transport Strategy

A statutory requirement of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 is that each Regional Transport Partnership develops and actions a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

SWestrans current Regional Transport Strategy was published in 2023 and covers the period 2023 to 2042. The 2023 Regional Transport Strategy aims to ensure that the regional transport system supports the goal of making the South West of Scotland an inclusive, prosperous, and attractive place to live.

The RTS is the product of extensive engagement with stakeholders including, local communities across Dumfries and Galloway, industry partners, public sector partners and national agencies, supported by quantitative evidence on current and future transport needs. It responds directly to the region's unique spatial, demographic and economic context. The Strategy also aligns closely with national priorities including the Scottish Government's transition to net zero by reducing car dependency, supporting sustainable economic growth and improving inclusion for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

The RTS is structured around six strategy objectives and 10 strategic themes, comprising of 69 priorities. Collectively they form a detailed and actionable pathway for improving transport across the region.



The 10 strategic themes are as follows:

- 1. Enabling More Sustainable Development:** integrating land-use and transport planning, enabling access to developments for all groups by sustainable modes of transport, reducing the need to travel and facilitating an 'infrastructure first' approach to development.
- 2. Connecting Our Communities:** facilitating walking, wheeling and cycling within villages and towns as well as providing active travel connections between them and to regional centres.
- 3. Transforming Travel in Our Towns:** improving the public realm by reducing car dominance and delivering road space reallocation to prioritise buses and active travel.
- 4. Reducing the Negative Impact of Transport on Our Communities:** eliminating the negative impacts of through traffic on local settlements and supporting decarbonisation.
- 5. Enhancing Access to Transport Services:** providing safe and equal access to transport for all including vulnerable and minority groups by removing physical and non-physical barriers.
- 6. Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity:** extending the number of services and stops / stations on the public transport network.
- 7. Improving the Quality and Affordability of Our Public Transport Offer:** delivering affordable public transport solutions, enhancing the public transport infrastructure including accessible vehicles and stops as well as improving integration between services, information and ticketing provision.
- 8. Supporting Safe, Effective and Resilient Connections to Loch Ryan and Other Key Regional, National and International Locations:** enhancements to the strategic transport network that provides links to key economic destinations, gateways and development locations to increase efficiency and competitiveness.
- 9. Managing Our Car Traffic:** reducing car dependency and contributing to the Scottish Government's target to reduce car km by 20% by 2030 where possible and practical.
- 10. Making the Most of New Opportunities:** capitalising on innovations and new technology to enhance access to more sustainable modes of transport and the efficiency of the transport system.

Each theme will now be explored in more detail to demonstrate the actions of the RTP partners throughout 2024/25 in support of RTS delivery.



## Enabling More Sustainable Development

During the period 2024/25, significant progress has been made in advancing the Regional Transport Strategy's ambition to enable more sustainable development across Dumfries and Galloway. This theme recognises that how and where we plan new growth has an influence on travel behaviour, environmental outcomes, and long-term economic patterns. By prioritising development that is inclusive, well-connected, and supported, the region can encourage greater use of active travel, improved uptake of public transport, and support more sustainable lifestyles.

Progress continued in 2024/25 on locating new developments more sustainably to reduce the need to travel. In December 2024, Dumfries and Galloway Full Council agreed to submit the Local Development Plan 3 Evidence Report for Gate Check, which was formally submitted in January 2025. Throughout the year, planning applications continued to be assessed against Local Development Plan 2 and National Planning Framework 4, both of which place sustainability and sustainable transport at their core. This ensures that new development is located where it can be easily served by existing active travel and public transport links, or by new links where required, reflecting the principles already embedded in national and local policy.

A major focus of this theme in 2024/25 has been embedding the concept of local living and 20minute neighbourhoods in the development planning and management process. Local living is an approach that aims to ensure that people can meet the majority of their daily needs, such as schools, shops, health services, and leisure opportunities, within a short distance of where they live. The associated 20-minute neighbourhood concept refers to creating places where most needs can be reached within a 20 minute journey on foot or by wheel, reducing the need for car trips for day-to-day journeys. Applying these principles in a rural region does not mean every settlement will meet the textbook 20-minute definition, but rather development should strengthen access to key services, improve connections between places, and support more resilient local centres. Throughout the year, these principles have been applied while determining planning applications to help ensure new developments contribute to creating more connected, well served and accessible places.

## Connecting Our Communities

Strengthening connections between the region's towns, villages, and rural areas remains central to delivering a more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable transport system across Dumfries and Galloway. Across 2024/25, work under the Connecting Our Communities theme focused on expanding and enhancing the active travel network, improving integration between places, and supporting people to choose walking, wheeling, and cycling as part of their everyday journeys.



Progress continued in 2024/25 on delivering improvements to the active travel network through a combination of enhancements to existing routes and new bespoke routes where appropriate. These improvements are being taken forward through a range of ongoing capital infrastructure projects funded by the SWestrans capital programme, Transport Scotland funding, and the Council's Public Realm Capital Programme. Concept designs and feasibility studies were completed for eight identified routes:

- Castle Douglas to Dalbeattie
- Langholm to Canonbie
- Springfield to Gretna
- Annan to Ecclefechan
- Lochmaben to Lockerbie
- Dumfries to Caerlaverock
- Wigtown to Newton Stewart

A route identified between Crossmichael and Castle Douglas reached a significant milestone with the award of the detailed design contract in January 2025. The work on these routes will contribute to safer, more connected active travel pathways within and between communities.

To ensure new and improved routes meet quality expectations and prioritise accessibility, SWestrans now requires that projects and improvements to the active travel network that are funded by Transport Scotland are developed in accordance with national technical guidance such as Cycling by Design and Designing Streets. Work was completed in 2024/25 to embed these national design standards into specifications and scope documents to form a key part of tender requirements for external contractors guaranteeing that improved and new active travel routes meet the needs of communities across Dumfries and Galloway.

Work progressed significantly in 2024/25 on implementing a prioritisation tool to support the assessment and ranking of future active travel requests when applicable. Developed in partnership with Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust, the tool is designed to provide a consistent, objective, and transparent method for determining which routes and improvements should be prioritised and taken forward to design stages. The prioritisation framework works by balancing the benefits of each project against the quality of the proposal and any constraints that may affect delivery. It considers a wide range of factors including public health outcomes, levels of car ownership, the presence and condition of existing active travel infrastructure, and the potential contribution of a route to reducing emissions and supporting climate objectives. Alongside these benefits, the tool also evaluates key delivery considerations such as land ownership challenges, likely usage, estimated costs, and the level of community or stakeholder support.



This approach ensures that decision making is fair, consistent and aligned with wider policy goals, helping to direct investment where it will have the greatest impact. Additionally, this approach clearly demonstrates how proposals align with national criteria.

## Transforming Travel in Our Towns

Transforming how people move within and around our region's towns is essential to creating safer, healthier, more attractive towns for our residents and tourists. During 2024/25, progress under this theme has focused on reshaping local streets and public spaces to create locations where walking, wheeling, and cycling can play a far greater role in everyday travel.

A core priority of this theme is the reallocation of road space to give greater priority to walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. By redesigning streets to favour these modes, infrastructure can be designed in towns that encourages residents to choose active and sustainable ways to travel for everyday journeys.

A key guiding principle for this work is the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, which provides a clear framework for how transport planning and investment decisions should be prioritised. The hierarchy places different forms of travel in order of their sustainability, with the least environmentally damaging modes prioritised first. The order is:

1. Walking and wheeling
2. Cycling
3. Public transport
4. Taxis and shared vehicles
5. Private car use, with single occupancy car travel at the lowest priority

The hierarchy encourages decision makers to consider whether the needs of pedestrians, wheelchair users, cyclists, and public transport passengers can be prioritised before designing or maintaining road space for private cars. It does not restrict car use where necessary, particularly in rural settings, but it ensures that sustainable options are supported and promoted wherever feasible. By applying this hierarchy within towns and settlements, SWestrans and partners work to create environments where the easiest and most attractive choice is also the most sustainable one.



## Reducing the Negative Impact of Transport on Our Communities

A key aim of the Regional Transport Strategy is to ensure that transport systems enhance quality of life across Dumfries and Galloway. This theme focuses on addressing the environmental, social, and safety challenges that are created from current travel patterns, particularly in settlements where strategic routes pass directly through built-up areas. Progress during 2024/25 has centred on understanding where targeted interventions can alleviate these pressures while supporting a transition to cleaner, low carbon transport across the region.

Progress continued in 2024/25 on investigating the feasibility of bypasses for Crocketford and Springholm on the A75, Transport Scotland has advanced initial design development and early assessment work for potential bypasses at Springholm and Crocketford, recognising the longstanding concerns regarding the volume, speed and impact of traffic passing directly through these villages. A 'Meet the Team' event for the A75 Springholm and Crocketford Improvement Scheme took place on the 11th and 12th of March 2025 at Crocketford Village Hall, providing residents an opportunity to engage with the project team. SWestrans and the Council continue to be supportive of the work into bypassing these villages and are encouraged by the work undertaken this year by Transport Scotland.

Additionally, Transport Scotland has received £5 million to undertake a feasibility study on dualling the A75. Dualling the A75 will offer a range of benefits, including enhanced road safety, improved journey time reliability, and strengthened connectivity to Loch Ryan.

## Enhancing Access to Transport Services

Ensuring that transport services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all users is fundamental to delivering a fair and effective transport system for Dumfries and Galloway. The Enhancing Access to Transport Services theme focuses on removing physical, financial, informational, and social barriers that can prevent people from using public and active travel, with particular attention given to vulnerable and underrepresented groups. Progress during 2024/25 has centred on improving the customer experience, enhancing accessibility, and providing better information to support travel.

During 2024/25, significant progress was made in preparing for the introduction of the new subsidised bus network across Dumfries and Galloway. A key focus of the procurement process has been ensuring that accessibility, community connectivity, and enhanced support for people in poverty are built into the foundation of all new contracts.



The new contracts were developed with a strong emphasis on improving the customer experience for those who may require additional assistance. By embedding these expectations from the outset, the Council and SWestrans ensured that high standards of passenger care are a clear and non-negotiable requirement for all operators participating in the new network. Under the new contracts, bus operators will be required to implement several important improvements. These include ensuring that drivers receive appropriate training to support passengers with mobility challenges, including wheelchair users, and that they consistently consider the needs of older and disabled residents.

Specific enhancements have also been built into school transport arrangements. The updated terms allow for the provision of attendants and chaperones for pupils who require additional support, with operators required to work collaboratively with parents and carers to meet individual needs. Together, these procurement measures represent a meaningful step towards delivering a more accessible, inclusive, and supportive public transport system that better meets the needs of the region's most vulnerable residents.

Throughout 2024/25, SWestrans delivered an extensive programme of behaviour change initiatives aimed at encouraging greater use of active travel across Dumfries and Galloway. Supported by Transport Scotland funding, this work focused on promoting walking, cycling, and wheeling through a series of supporting measures that improve awareness, confidence, and opportunities for people to choose active modes of travel.

Highlights included the Active Lives Pathway (#DGDoingMore), improved school cycle parking, a social prescribing e-bike scheme, workplace walking challenges, and disability cycling schemes.

Following the closure of the Council's GoSmart website, SWestrans is assisting the Council in transitioning active travel information to the #DGDoingMore platform. This new site, launched in 2022, has been created to be a user-friendly hub bringing together practical resources to increase awareness of active travel opportunities and highlighting the benefits of choosing active travel. This site serves as a central point in keeping communities informed about active travel projects and developments.

Facilitating access to bicycles and e-bikes remains a key priority in promoting active travel across the region.

During its first year, the SWestrans People and Place Programme successfully enabled individuals to access bikes and e-bikes via a network of partner organisations and local community groups. This approach supports both regular and occasional users by combining opportunities for ownership with community-based access. Looking ahead, activity will build on this foundation with an increased focus on local delivery, ensuring that more residents can benefit from affordable and convenient cycling options.



## Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity

Improving the availability, reliability, and resilience of public transport is fundamental to tackling transport poverty, supporting inclusive economic growth, and enabling more sustainable travel across Dumfries and Galloway. The Sustainable and Extended Local and Regional Public Transport Connectivity theme brings together a wide range of priorities that share a common objective: to deliver a public transport system that is accessible, flexible, and responsive to the diverse needs of communities across a predominantly rural region.

In 2024/25, SWestrans maintained strong engagement with rail stakeholders through quarterly meetings with Transport Scotland, TransPennine Express, Scotrail, and Network Rail. These meetings provided a valuable platform for sharing updates, addressing issues, and progressing actions linked to the Regional Transport Strategy. Additionally, these meetings played an important role in lobbying partners for rail improvements across the region, helping to ensure that Dumfries and Galloway remains a priority and that local needs are fully represented in national decision making. Stakeholders also provide essential information and performance update reports that enable SWestrans to monitor rail delivery performance throughout the region. By maintaining regular dialogue, these sessions help drive forward enhancements to rail services and infrastructure that supports connective and sustainable travel.

In 2024/25, SWestrans progressed significant work to plan for the upcoming bus network procurement process. The procurement process will give SWestrans the opportunity to deliver a new, sustainable public transport model for Dumfries and Galloway. The planning for the procurement process will be designed to align with the new three-tier framework:

Tier 1: Community Level Provision

Tier Two: Supported Local Bus and Community Transport Services

Tier Three: Commercial Local Bus and Rail Services

The planning for the procurement process focuses on Tier 2 transport to ensure essential local bus routes are secure where no commercial case exists. The needs-based approach aims to create a stable, efficient, and integrated network that better reflects the needs of our communities. Additionally, data analysis has been undertaken to identify locations suffering from transport poverty and deprivation. This will allow SWestrans to target areas that have little public transport connectivity to better improve public transport access throughout the region.



Significant progress has been made in the development of new Mobility Hubs across Dumfries and Galloway in 2024/25. The initiative represents a major step to increasing transport connectivity in the region. Each hub will be tailored to local needs to offer a range of specific travel facilities such as e-bike hire, electric car club vehicles, secure cycle storage, public EV charging points and cycle repair stations. A key strength of the programme is its focus on connectivity. The hubs are situated in locations close to bus and rail stations to allow smoother, more integrated journeys. Features such as improved waiting areas and real-time passenger information screens will help users plan and complete multi-modal journeys. In 2024/25, a feasibility study was carried out to identify the preferred locations with nine locations being identified for the hubs.

## **Improving the Quality and Affordability of Our Public Transport Offer**

Improving the quality, affordability, and accessibility of our public transport is central to creating a more inclusive and sustainable transport system across Dumfries and Galloway.

SWestrans continued to prioritise the quality and accessibility of bus stop infrastructure. During 2024/25, work progressed to install new bus shelters, upgrade existing facilities, and plan a wider refurbishment programme. Several shelters affected by graffiti have already been replaced to improve both appearance and usability. To support these enhancements, £120,000 of investment was committed during the year. This funding will deliver new shelters, upgraded hardstanding areas to improve accessibility, and replacement of outdated or damaged signage to make waiting areas more comfortable, safer, and easier to navigate for all passengers.

## **Supporting Safe, Effective and Resilient Connections to Loch Ryan and Other Key Regional, National and International Locations**

Supporting safe, effective, and resilient connections to key regional, national and international locations is vital to the social and economic success of the region. This theme focuses on strengthening strategic transport links, improving reliability across the network, and ensuring that people and goods can move efficiently. Enhancing road, rail and freight connectivity ensures the region continues to play a key role within wider national and international transport networks. During 2024/25, work under this theme focused on improving the safety of the region's roads and implementing targeted traffic calming measures, such as 20mph in towns and schools, to create safer conditions for all road users.

SWestrans continues to work closely with the Council and Amey through their respective Road Safety Capital Programmes to identify and address locations where personal injury collisions occur. While no specific junctions met the formal criteria for inclusion in the Accident Investigation and Prevention (AIP) Programme this year, defined as three reported injury accidents at the same location within a three-year period, the monitoring process remains active. Any location meeting these thresholds in the future will be added to the Road Safety Programme for investigation and potential improvement works.



Alongside infrastructure monitoring, SWestrans and the Council continue to support a range of road safety education and engagement initiatives. Police Scotland's 'Pop-up Bairns' safe parking campaign has been delivered in schools across the region to reinforce safe driver behaviour around school gates. Dumfries and Galloway Council's Roads Service also maintains a stock of these signs to support local requests. In addition, updated Junior Road Safety Officer resources have been distributed to schools, helping to engage young people in promoting safe travel behaviours.

Unfortunately, road traffic collisions in Dumfries and Galloway increased in 2024 compared to 2023. In 2024, there were 145 reported traffic collisions of all severities from fatal to slight, compared to 129 collisions in 2023. Tragically, in 2024, one person was killed on the roads of Dumfries and Galloway. Encouragingly however, this is the lowest number since 2010. Historically, the number of road traffic collisions was much higher with an average of 227 between 2000 and 2018. Continued attention to preventive measures is necessary to prevent further road traffic casualties.

Ensuring roads around communities and schools are safe for all users remained a significant focus throughout 2024/25. Work was successfully completed on the '20mph at Schools Programme', ensuring reduced speed limits are now in place around all schools in Dumfries and Galloway. This was complemented by continued progress on the wider 20mph Speed Limits in Communities Programme, which will see the 17 largest towns in the region benefit from permanently reduced speed limits.

These measures support safer active travel and reduce risk at known conflict points to help create a transport system that allows people walking, cycling, wheeling, and driving to coexist safely.

## Managing Our Car Traffic

Managing car traffic is an important part of delivering a more sustainable and efficient transport system, while recognising the essential role the car continues to play in supporting travel in a large, rural area. This theme focuses on reducing unnecessary and single occupancy car journeys by providing realistic alternatives where they are viable, including active travel, public transport, shared mobility and digital connectivity.

The combination of active travel infrastructure improvements, the behaviour change programme, and public transport upgrades can create a modal shift towards active and public transport and away from single occupancy car journeys.



A central priority in 2024/25 has been expanding the range of practical alternatives to private car travel. Enhancements across public transport, shared mobility and active travel have created a more integrated transport offer that supports more sustainable decision making for everyday journeys. Investments in bus upgrades, improved passenger facilities, and infrastructure upgrades has strengthened the reliability and quality of public transport. Additionally, active travel programmes including infrastructure upgrades, community engagement, public awareness campaigns, and cycling initiatives have made walking, wheeling, and cycling more accessible and appealing throughout the region.

Together, these measures provide realistic alternatives to single occupancy car use by creating a more integrated and accessible public and active travel system across Dumfries and Galloway.

## **Making the Most of New Opportunities**

Making the most of new opportunities brings together the ambitions of the wider Regional Transport Strategy by focusing on how innovation, technology and new ways of travelling can enhance existing transport networks. This theme looks to build on improvements to public transport, connectivity, and safety by creating intelligent transport systems that increase choice, flexibility, and efficiency.

SWestrans remains committed to continually identifying new opportunities to enhance the transport network across Dumfries and Galloway. As the region evolves, the organisation actively monitors emerging developments in technology, national policy, and the wider economy to ensure local communities can benefit from innovation.

This includes exploring improvements through digital and IT advancements, such as better real-time information, data driven planning tools, and modern ticketing solutions that can make travel easier and more dependable.

Central to this work is an understanding of Dumfries and Galloway's unique context, its dispersed population, rural characteristics, and varied local needs. SWestrans continues to seek measures and approaches that reflect these conditions, ensuring that new opportunities translate into meaningful and practical improvements for residents and visitors throughout Dumfries and Galloway.



# Statutory Duties

## Public Sector Equalities Duty

SWestrans is a listed public body under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2012 (Scotland) Specific Duties Regulations, and as such SWestrans has a duty to publish an Equalities Mainstreaming Report and a new set of Equality Outcomes every 4 years. SWestrans is also required to provide a progress update on the Equality Outcomes set every 2 years. The Equality Outcomes are:

- E01: Everyone will be able to easily access and understand the local bus service information they need.
- E02: Public transport services are more flexible to meet the identified travel needs of those who need them most.
- E03: Access and affordability issues are reduced through new transport solutions developed with partners.
- E04: Our work is informed by a greater understanding of the transport and travel needs, barriers faced and experiences of people with protected characteristics.

## Public Bodies Climate Change Duties

Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on public bodies relating to climate change. SWestrans fulfils these duties by completing an annual climate report for evaluation by Scottish Government. SWestrans also takes due regard of the climate duties in its daily functions and efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

## Public Services Reform Act

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (PSR) (Scotland) Act 2010 imposes duties on Scottish Ministers and listed public bodies to publish certain information on expenditure and other matters on an annual basis.

Section 31 requires Scottish Ministers, and public bodies must publish a statement of any expenditure that it has incurred during that financial year or in connection with these matters:

- Public Relations
- Overseas Travel
- Hospitality and entertainment
- External consultancy

SWestrans has no expenditure to declare under the PSRA for 2024/25.



## Freedom of information and records management

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) provided individuals with a right of access to all recorded information held by Scotland's public authorities. Section 23 of FOISA requires that Scottish public authorities must adopt and maintain a publication scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and is approved by the Information Commissioner.

The Model Publication Scheme and guide to information issued by the Scottish Information Commissioner in October 2012 has been adopted by SWestrans.

All elements of SWestrans Record Management are covered by Dumfries and Galloway Councils Records Management Plan, as all systems used by SWestrans are managed by Dumfries and Galloway Council.



# Key performance Indicators

Monitoring plays a key role in SWestrans' activities, providing the evidence needed to understand how travel patterns are changing across the region. By drawing on data from the Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust Hands Up Survey, Transport Focus' Your Bus Journey survey, and Transport Scotland's Transport and Travel in Scotland statistics, the RTP can track performance against regional priorities and identify emerging trends. Comparing 2024 findings with the 2023 baseline highlights areas of progress, ongoing challenges, and where further intervention may be required. This evidence-led approach helps ensure that SWestrans decisions are targeted, effective, and responsive to the needs of communities.

## Transport Scotland - Transport and Travel in Scotland

The 'Transport and Travel in Scotland' dataset provides a comprehensive national picture of travel behaviours and regional insights into how people travel. This data offers valuable insight on local travel behaviours and allows SWestrans to assess how Dumfries and Galloway compares with wider Scottish travel trends. The sample size for Dumfries and Galloway is relatively small so they may not be fully representative of the region, however, the data still provides valuable insights into the transport system.

Encouragingly, the percentage of people in Dumfries and Galloway that drive everyday has fallen from 48% in 2023 to 45% in 2024. Walking as a mode of transport and for leisure has also increased in 2024. The percentage of people walking for transport almost every day has risen from 14% in 2023 to 19% in 2024, and those walking for pleasure almost every day has increased from 26% to 29%, which is significantly higher than the national average of 22%.

The percentage of people using local bus services also increased from 19% in 2023 to 23% in 2024. The satisfaction with bus services has increased from 2023 to 2024 but remains significantly lower than the national satisfaction level. Those that reported being very satisfied with the local bus service rose from 5% in 2023 to 10% in 2024, however this is significantly lower than the national average of 22% in 2024.

In 2024, the majority of people felt that local buses were on time, they felt safe on the bus, and finding routes and times were easy. People reported that the areas that needed improvement in the region's bus services were the cleanliness of buses, the cost of fares, and connectivity to other modes of transport. This information provides insight that SWestrans will use to determine which areas of transport need prioritising in near future.



## Transport Focus - Your Bus Journey

The 'Your Bus Journey' survey captures passenger views on bus services, helping SWestrans understand customer satisfaction, experiences, and priorities for improvement.

The results from Transport Focus's 'Your Bus Journey' survey show a level of satisfaction in 2024 that is slightly less positive than 2023 on all key metrics, including overall satisfaction which reduced from 87% to 82% for the SWestrans region. It is important to point out, however, that there are broadly high levels of satisfaction (80%+) in almost all the headline result categories for 2024.

Older, disabled, and free pass passengers were generally more satisfied with bus journeys in 2024. However, fare paying passengers, those in the 26-64 age group, and those travelling at peak times, noted poorer levels of satisfaction with their journey.

Some specific concerns were raised by bus passengers around value for money, the quality of bus stops in the region, and punctuality of buses.

The importance of the bus network in Dumfries and Galloway has been highlighted in the survey, with 'I didn't have the option of travelling by another means' as the main reason for taking the bus in the majority of cases, with 56% of respondent choosing that option.

## Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust- Hands Up Survey

The Hands Up Survey provides annual information on how pupils travel to school, offering valuable insights into active travel trends among young people across the region.

There has been a slight reduction in all active travel transport to school in 2024 compared to 2023. Overall, the percentage of pupils travelling to school using active travel dropped from 43% in 2023 to 40% in 2024. Walking to school fell from 36% to 33% between 2023 and 2024, while cycling stayed at 4% in 2023 and 2024.

Despite the decrease in pupils travelling to school through active travel, the percentage of children being driven to school stayed consistent at 30%. The decrease in active travel is made up from an increase in bus usage for pupils from 13% in 2023 to 18% in 2024.

SWestrans will continue to use the above surveys and reports to monitor KPIs in line with the RTS as well as commissioning our own survey on a biannual basis.

### In 2024

- 40.5% of pupils travelled to school using active travel
- 32.2% of pupils travelled to school using private motorised travel
- 18.8% of pupils travelled to school by bus
- 8.3% of pupils travelled to school using park and stride
- 0.2% used other modes to travel to school

# Key statistics

In 2024 in Dumfries and Galloway:

**35%**



of people have access to a private bicycle

**96%**



of people report feeling safe on the bus during the day

**40%**



of pupils travelled to school using active travel

**33%**



of pupils travelled to school by walking

**4.5%**



of pupils cycled to school

**5%**



increase in bus use to school in 2024 compared to 2023

**19%**



of people used walking as transportation almost everyday

**29%**



of people walked for pleasure almost everyday

**69%**



of people walked for pleasure at least once per week

**100%**



of primary schools in the region delivered bikeability training level 2



Over **1.2 million** bus journeys in the whole of the region between 01/04/24-31/03/25

**9.4%**

of bus journeys were made using card for disabled passengers.

**40%**



of bus journeys were done using an over 60s travel card

**20%**

of bus journeys were made using an under 22s travel card.

# **SWEST** *Trans*.org.uk

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

