



Charlotte Alldritt
RSA Inclusive Growth Commission
8 John Adam Street
London
WC2N 6EZ

19th December 2016

Dear Charlotte,

RSA – Inclusive Growth Response

I write on behalf of SEStran, the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) covering eight local authorities in the South East of Scotland. The area covered is diverse in both geographical and socio-economic terms, and includes City of Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and Clackmannanshire.

SEStran initially responded to the commission in August 2016. Following the publication of the emerging findings executive summary, we have some further comments to bring to the commission. SEStran, through its promotion of a Regional Transport Strategy¹ (RTS), has focused on the role that transport plays in the development of a sustainable and strong economy throughout the area. The strategy recognises the importance of taking full account of local needs but is also fully aware of the importance of national and international links to support the development of the SEStran region.

The emerging findings report highlighted the need to invest in social as well as physical infrastructure. Specifically in a transport context, the need to prioritise connecting people to economic opportunities through better skills planning and provision and through the delivery of better local transport services, as much if not more so than traditional physical road network infrastructure improvements. We feel is fundamentally important and members of the partnership have highlighted this in their approach to the Edinburgh Regional City Deal. The focus is to accelerate the City Region's Economic performance with a twin focus on innovation and inclusion:

- More and accelerated investment, businesses and jobs; along with improved productivity through a focus on Big Data; Low Carbon/Energy; Culture, Creative and Tourism; and Health.
- Inclusive growth through helping more people into work; universal digital inclusion; an increase in the construction of affordable homes and accelerated public and private sector investment in infrastructure.

We would welcome if your final report could contain a clearer statement or recommendation about the need for an integrated approach to transport and land-use policy and planning. This issue is currently being discussed as part of the Independent Review of Planning in Scotland. The United Nations in the Secretary

¹ http://www.sestran.gov.uk/uploads/sestran_regional_transport_strategy_refresh_2015_as_published.pdf

General's High Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport² has suggested a single joint authority with oversight of all policy and planning aspects would be helpful across all types/stages of economies. The emerging findings report touches upon the different approaches to service delivery and devolution of responsibility with references to combined authorities. However, we look forward to any future proposals in the final report. Certainly, members of the partnership have viewed the need for a spatial strategy covering a number of policy areas including transport as fundamental to delivering cohesive, sustainable and inclusive growth for the South East of Scotland.

SEStran is at present formally consulting our constituent councils on a proposed transfer of functions to a "Model 3" type of RTP, similar to the Combined Authorities of West Yorkshire or Greater Manchester for example. We have commissioned research from Professor Tom Rye of Napier University which in the initial stages seems to hint at the delivery of better outcomes for transport where there is some form of empowered regional structures³. The causal link seems to be a mixture of greater concentration of human capital, focus of resources and also historical impacts of 4-5 decades of existence for a passenger transport type authority.

With the continuing prospect of an austere economic context for the public sector, it would be interesting to hear in your final report how you view that Scottish Ministers could invoke Part 1 of the Equality Act in Scotland in terms of the socio-economic duty to address transport decision-making, given how vital and inclusive and accessible transportation system will be for so many of the other emerging findings of your Commission. The Scottish Urban Regeneration Network highlighted early this year, in their Scottish Parliament lobbying manifesto, the importance of adequately accessible, efficient and affordable transport infrastructure as one of two principal key objectives for regeneration across Scotland. They specifically focused on the need to consider the scale, nature and connectivity of investments linking need and opportunity within and between communities.

SEStran is seeking to model the impact of accessibility relative to deprivation at present and this is also something the Edinburgh City Regional Deal is keen to focus upon with the Infrastructure work stream undertaking further work on the investment proposal to understand the impact on areas of high deprivation and unemployment up to 30 minutes travel time from the individual projects. This is intended to provide an evidence base to underpin the potential impact on inclusion and also to support the regional Employability and Skills Programme to improve the employment rate and reduce welfare dependency.

The emerging findings report highlighted that there are numerous communities across the UK within a few miles of improvements to transport opportunities that do not always benefit, through either an ingrained mind-set or the cost of travel. Transport services and accessibility can be a preventative measure against low skilled or economically inactive areas becoming further excluded. Every city in Scotland has agreed or is negotiating a City Region Deal. This is an excellent opportunity to follow up on the

² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/10/press-briefing-sustainable-transport-outlook-report/>

³ http://www.sestran.gov.uk/uploads/PTA_Models_of_Organisation_for_Regional_Transport_Governance_-_Professor_Tom_Rye.pdf

suggestions of the report in enabling a focus on the elusive business of prevention and early intervention, focusing on genuinely geographically inclusive place-based strategies tailored to the needs, ambitions and nuances of places' economic geography.

There is clear evidence that a lack of accessibility to transport options has a limiting effect on opportunities and that those who are least skilled, or remote from the labour market have the least locational flexibility in seeking new job or training opportunities. Therefore SEStran views transport and accessibility/affordability of transport as integral to an inclusive economy.

The links between transport, health and employability are complex but it is clear from academic evidence that mental and physical health are negatively affected if an individual is not able to participate fully in society, and lack of transport can be a factor in this. In order to address this SEStran are committed to a set of Equality Outcomes which aim to deliver a safe, accessible and equitable regional transport network for all. In the UK it has been shown that women are more likely than men to use public transport and more likely to need public transport to balance work and caring responsibilities. Getting women into greater full time employment has significant positive impacts on the gender pay gap and in-work poverty and presumably inclusive growth. The issue of intersectionality across equality groups impacts on other people's accessibility and mobility, and will also be fundamental to driving inclusion in future transport networks.

In order to address the issues laid out by the fact that some people within close distance of transport improvements do not always benefit, there is a need to co-design with communities. SEStran have recently engaged in a successful co-design project with Young Scot⁴ to engage young people about the barriers they face in accessing active travel. The main goals of the project were; to support young people to shape and influence sustainable travel services and low carbon activity, improve the understanding of young people's cycle network needs and to develop young people's awareness and knowledge of active travel while improving their confidence working in teams and to celebrate and share the participating young people's achievements. Active travel is a key part of ensuring; inclusive and sustainable growth of regional economies, inclusive mobility in terms of sharing services and changing patterns of commuting with the result of less pollution.

There is an increasing view that people view mobility as a service (MaaS). Highlighting a move away from the ownership of assets to access transport, towards a much greater focus on the sharing economy and the role that subscriptions and leasing can play in allowing people to travel. MaaS often refers to mobility provided by a monetary service, however there is a need for greater consideration of the non-commercial aspects of the sharing economy in terms of lift-sharing and peer to peer sharing, similar to SEStran Tripshare⁵ and Liftshare UK⁶. Treating mobility as a service raises questions relating to the personalisation of services, reducing the need for ownership of vehicles, reclaiming public space and ultimately driving inclusive growth through

⁴ http://www.sestran.gov.uk/uploads/XRoute_document_2016_Final_2.pdf

⁵ <https://liftshare.com/uk/community/sestran>

⁶ <https://liftshare.com/uk>

transport for all. SEStran is involved in a project called SHARE-North⁷ that specifically looks at the sharing economy, but may also be relevant to aspects of MaaS such as social inclusion and inclusive mobility. There is therefore some debate that MaaS may impact upon the underpinnings of the inclusive growth agenda, creating new opportunities and informal transport networks for people to access healthcare, employment etc. However, there is some further thought that MaaS may threaten traditional approaches to mass public transport and while it may reduce transport emissions and offer a greener future there may be some impact on those who may struggle to access shared mobility in the future.

An important and very successful scheme that SEStran has undertaken is the introduction of the Thistle Assistance Card to make it easier for older and disabled people to use public transport which is often a more affordable option for many, rather than taxi/private car. In this way SEStran is encouraging those who may experience social exclusion to be more active in society and perhaps travel to work or other activity. We are actively looking at how digital amendments to the card and development of other applications could be a mechanism for encouraging inclusive mobility and access across all stakeholders with the South East of Scotland.

Finally on the subject of rail, previous studies have indicated that the wider social and economic benefits of high speed rail to Scotland should be significant and it is understood that a very recent study undertaken by JMP for the HS2East group suggests that the wider economic benefits of extending the line beyond Leeds to Newcastle and Edinburgh could be £180 Million per year (not including transport benefits). However, it will be important in our view that any discussion of High Speed Rail and inclusive growth doesn't focus on a future outcome to the detriment of short-term investment in the East Coast Main Line with clear economic and inclusion returns⁸. Further, any discussion should avoid focussing on a single origin-destination analysis between two points say London to Scotland, as this has the potential to miss clear agglomeration benefits of the route to and between other UK areas.

SEStran is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Inclusive Growth Commission and would be willing to support the Commission in the provision of further detail if this was helpful in determining your final conclusions.

Yours sincerely



Emily Whitters

⁷ <https://liftshare.com/uk>

⁸ <http://www.investineastcoast.co.uk/research/>