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**Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) – Update**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years. STPR2 will review Scotland's transport network across a range of modes including walking, cycling, bus, rail and road plus wider island connectivity to identify options which will support the delivery of Scotland's Economic Strategy.
- 1.2 Argyll and Bute Council have been a key stakeholder in the STPR2 process working collaboratively with Transport Scotland and their appointed consultants Jacobs / Aecom. To date, this process has included a number of key stakeholder workshops across Argyll and Bute including representation from the public and private sector.
- 1.3 A Regional Transport Working Group (RTWG) has also been established for Argyll and Bute and this includes representation from the Council, Transport Scotland, the Regional Transport Partnerships, LLTNP and Enterprise Agencies. To date, the RTWG has been instrumental in raising concerns over the Case for Change Report and Interventions that have been scoped out of the list of transport options.
- 1.4 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, STPR2 has a two Phased approach, with Phase 1 reporting to the original timescale of Winter 2020/21. Phase 2 will report later in 2021 and will inform the Scottish Government's future investment plans and spending reviews.
- 1.5 On 3 February 2021, Transport Scotland published the STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report along with the associated impact assessment reports. These are the first STPR2 recommendations for transport investment and focus on transport projects or interventions that significantly contribute to STPR2 objectives, align well with NTS2 priorities, and can be progressed or delivered within the current spending period and will help support a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.6 The STPR2 Phase 1 report includes the following themes and associated interventions set out in Table 1 below:-

**Table 1: STPR2 Phase 1 Themes and Interventions**

Theme	Proposed Interventions
Supporting smart and sustainable travel across Scotland	1. Development and delivery of Active Freeways
	2. Expansion of 20mph zones
	3. Influencing travel choices
Creating Smart and sustainable towns and villages	4. Transport's contribution towards place-making principals in neighbourhoods.
	5. Guidance and framework for delivering mobility hubs
Improving accessibility in rural, island and peripheral areas and vulnerable groups	6. Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility As a Service
Transforming Cities	7. Reallocation of road space for active travel
	8. Enhancing facilities at major rail stations
	9. Development of Glasgow Metro and Edinburgh Mass Transit strategies
Enhancing public transport provision	10. Reallocation of road space for buses
	11. Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals
	12. Infrastructure to provide access for all at rail stations
Supporting transition to low-carbon transport	13. Investment in low carbon and alternative fuel systems
	14. Delivery of Rail Decarbonisation Programme (Phase 1)
Supporting a viable freight industry	15. Strategy for improving rest and welfare facilities for hauliers
	16. Infrastructure to encourage rail freight
Enhancing safety and resilience on the strategic transport network	17. Investment in the trunk road network asset
	18. Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)
	19. Investment in ferries and ports
	20. Speed Management Plan

1.7 Many of the above interventions may have implications for Argyll and Bute however clearly the most significant is intervention 18 which proposes improvements to the A83 trunk road network to provide improved resilience

including a long-term solution at the Rest & Be Thankful (further details available on the Transport Scotland [website](#)). A number of potential transport interventions for Argyll and Bute have also been sifted out of STPR2 as Transport Scotland consider these to be out of scope. Further details of these are available on Transport Scotland's website and can be viewed at the following [link](#) (pages 50 – 71).

- 1.8 Alongside the Phase 1 report, Transport Scotland have also published an updated National Case for Change which contains the options that will be taken forward for further appraisal in Phase 2 of STPR2 as well as an Appendix on COVID-19. Updated Case for Change reports have also been published for STPR2 regions including Argyll and Bute. The Argyll and Bute options that will be taken forward for further appraisal in Phase 2 can be viewed [here](#) (pages 34 – 47).
- 1.9 Transport Scotland are now inviting feedback on the STPR2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendation Report and the STPR2 options and COVID -19 scenarios. Online comment forms have been provided on the Transport Scotland STPR2 webpages and feedback is sought by midnight on 31st March 2021.
- 1.10 Officers from the Strategic Transportation Team will review these documents and draft a response to Transport Scotland. As part of this process, a members seminar has been arranged for the 23rd March and this will give members an opportunity to feed into the Council's response.
- 1.11 This report recommends that the EDI Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the EDI Committee to agree a consultation response which will be informed by discussion and comments at the Elected Members Seminar on 23 March.

**Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) – Update**

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years. Transport Scotland have recently published STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report along with the associated impact assessment reports.
- 2.2 These are the first STPR2 recommendations for transport investment and focus on transport projects or interventions that significantly contribute to STPR2 objectives, align well with NTS2 priorities, and can be progressed or delivered within the current spending period and will help support a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.3 Transport Scotland are now inviting feedback on the STPR2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendation Report and the STPR2 options and COVID -19 scenarios by midnight on 31st March 2021.
- 2.4 Officers from the Strategic Transportation Team will review these documents and draft a response to Transport Scotland. As part of this process, a member's seminar has been arranged for the 23rd March.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 This report recommends that the EDI Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the EDI Committee to agree a consultation response which will be informed by discussion and comments at the Elected Members Seminar on 23 March.
- 3.2 The EDI Committee are also asked to note some of the emerging concerns set out in this report. These are initial thoughts from officers who at the time of writing this report are still reviewing the material recently published by Transport Scotland.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 Transport Scotland have provided the following timeline for the STPR2 process:-

- Option Appraisal to run from early 2021 throughout the pre-election period to the early summer.
- **February 2021 - Publish Phase 1 Option Sifting & Case for Change reports for 8 week consultation.**
- Feb – March 2021 –Feedback form for Phase 1 and case for change reports closes.
- April – Summer 2021 – Detail Appraisal.
- Autumn 2021 – Publish Phase 2 Report + Strategic Economic Assessment.

- 4.2 Argyll and Bute Council have been a key stakeholder in the STPR2 process from the outset, working collaboratively with Transport Scotland and their appointed consultants Jacobs / Aecom. To date, this process has included establishing the Argyll RTWG which includes representation from key stakeholders such as Transport Scotland, the Regional Transport Partnerships, LLTNP and Enterprise Agencies. To date, the RTWG has been instrumental in raising concerns over the Case for Change Report and Interventions that have been scoped out of the list of transport options.
- 4.3 The RTWG will next meet on the 16<sup>th</sup> February and at this meeting stakeholders will agree to coordinate a joint response to Transport Scotland’s consultation. Officers from Strategic Transportation also attend the HITRANS RTWG meetings which include representation from other rural local authorities such as Highland, Moray and the Islands Councils. To date, all of these local authorities and HITRANS have expressed similar concerns to those of the Argyll RTWG.
- 4.4 It should be noted that stakeholders on the RTWG previously submitted a response to the draft Case for Change Report in May 2020. This response was approved by the Council’s P&R Committee and copies can be provided if required.
- 4.5 On 3 February 2021, Transport Scotland published the STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report along with the associated impact assessment reports. These are the first STPR2 recommendations for transport investment and focus on transport projects or interventions that significantly contribute to STPR2 objectives, align well with NTS2 priorities, and can be progressed or delivered within the current spending period and will help support a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.6 Details of the Themes and Interventions set out in the STPR2 Phase 1 report are included in **Table 1** above. A number of potential transport interventions for Argyll and Bute have also been sifted out of STPR2 as Transport Scotland consider these to be out of scope. Further details of these are available on Transport Scotland’s website and can be viewed at the following [link](#) (pages 50 – 71).
- 4.7 To date, the Council and wider RTWG have raised a number of concerns relating to the emerging STPR2 including:-

- The current transport policy network is increasingly complex and very difficult to understand. For example we have a National Transport Strategy 2, STPR2 which will now be delivered in 2 phases, the Islands Connectivity Plan will be the successor to the National Ferries Plan and there are proposals for a separate national review of aviation (although yet to be confirmed).
- Governance of transport is also overly complicated with a lack of consistency around funding and roles / responsibilities.
- STPR2 focuses almost exclusively on infrastructure owned and operated by Transport Scotland with other infrastructure such as local authority roads and transport services considered out of scope.
- Local roads make up 94% of the road network and carry 65% of traffic in Scotland however the majority are out of scope of STPR2. Trunk roads also account for 50% of the national funding for roads maintenance resulting in huge challenges for the funding of local roads.
- Aviation – fundamental mode of transport. Provides lifeline connections to Country's most fragile and remote communities and yet out of scope. How can a comprehensive national review of transport exclude a key mode?
- Definition of strategic airports focus exclusively on city airports and those operated by the Scottish Government.
- No definition given of what constitutes a strategic ferry port in Scotland. This could have significant consequences for Argyll and Bute which has more inhabited islands than any other local authority.
- STPR2 should consider ferry Services operated by local authorities in addition to the CHIFS and NIFS networks as these are also lifeline connections to local island communities.
- Funding, Fares and Subsidy – funding of transport infrastructure and services is key barrier. Without adequate funding, we will see a continued contraction of rural public transport services.
- Active travel – funding models require to be revised as there is currently too much focus on challenge funds and LA's / RTP's are the key delivery agencies yet are required to bid via third parties and charities who manage funding on behalf of Transport Scotland. Active travel funding should be brought in line with funding models for other strategic transport infrastructure.
- Scottish Government policy and grant funding for transport is often too focused on urban transport issues e.g. active travel funding and associated design criteria requiring, Bus Partnership Funding – focus on congestion, sustainable investment hierarchy priorities active travel infrastructure over investment in road infrastructure.

4.8 These are some initial high level concerns and it should be noted that at the time of writing this report officers from the Strategic Transportation Team are still reviewing the documents published most recently by Transport Scotland. A detailed consultation response will be drafted in due course and this will take cognisance of feedback received by elected members at the seminar on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

4.9 In response to some of the concerns set out above, Transport Scotland have subsequently advised the following:-

- Island Connectivity Plan – will now be new successor to the Scottish Ferries Plan.
- They intend to undertake an Aviation Strategy – public Consultation to now be held in 2021 (no further commitments given to date).
- Transport Governance and Collaboration Review Group has been established to update and revise the evidence base on Scotland's transport governance structures. This will link to wider Local Governance Review which is considering how powers and resources should be shared between national and local government and with our communities.
- Transport Scotland is still working on the definition of a major port.
- There will be a review of public transport funding and delivery, including the impacts of Covid-19.

4.10 Given the national importance of STPR2, we are also liaising with colleagues from our Communications Team to ensure that Transport Scotland's consultation is adequately promoted by the Council.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 STPR2 will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years across all modes. Argyll and Bute Council will continue to be a key stakeholder as part of this process working collaboratively with Transport Scotland and their appointed consultants Jacobs/Aecom via the Argyll RTWG.

5.2 Transport Scotland are now inviting feedback on the STPR2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendation Report and the STPR2 options and COVID -19 scenarios by midnight on 31st March 2021. A members seminar has been scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to ensure that the views of local elected members are captured in the Council's response.

5.3 This report recommends that the EDI Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the EDI Committee to agree a consultation response which will be informed by discussion and comments at the Elected Members Seminar on 23 March.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Policy – STPR2 will set out the governments transport investment priorities over the next 20 years.

6.2 Financial – The Council fund local transport infrastructure and services including roads, active travel, bus, air and ferry services.

- 6.3 Legal – None at this stage
- 6.4 HR – None at this stage
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: (please refer to guidance on Hub) – transport is critical to inclusive growth in rural regions. We will lobby Transport Scotland for increased investment at part of the STPR2 process.
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – as above
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – as above
  - 6.5.3 Islands – STPR2 and the Islands Connectivity Plan will be critical to the connectivity of our island communities.
- 6.6 Risk – There is a risk that current government transport policy is too focused on urban regions which may exacerbate issues such as depopulation of rural areas.
- 6.7 Customer Service – None at present

**Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth**

**Policy Lead Robin Currie**

15<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**For further information contact:**

Jonathan Welch, Strategic Transportation Policy Officer, [jonathan.welch@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.welch@argyll-bute.gov.uk) tel: 01546 604329

Fergus Murray, Head of Development and Economic Growth, [Fergus.murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Fergus.murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk), tel: 01546604293