

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW 2 – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In 2019, Transport Scotland, the national transport agency of the Scottish Government, commenced the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), the first review having been published in 2008. This review will deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes that are set out in the second National Transport Strategy.

This review of the strategic transport network's performance will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042) by providing evidence-based recommendations on which Scottish Ministers can base future transport investment decisions.

This consultation is on the draft second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) for Scotland, with a closing date of 15 April 2022.

- 1.2 STPR2 provides an overview of transport investment, mainly infrastructure and other behavioural change recommendations that are required to deliver the National Transport Strategy priorities and objectives of the Review.

Appendix A summarises the interventions within STPR2 that are noted against Argyll and Bute.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members

- (i) Note the transport interventions within the draft STPR2 that are referenced to Argyll and Bute.
- (ii) Consider and approve the enclosed response to the draft STPR2 consultation.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW 2 – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This consultation is on the draft second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) for Scotland. The review will inform Scottish Ministers decisions on transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042).

STPR2 is one of the Scottish Government's strategic policy mechanisms for delivering the Vision, Priorities and Outcomes of the second National Transport Strategy (NTS2). **Appendix 1** summarises the interventions within STPR2 that are noted against Argyll and Bute.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members

(i) Note the transport intervention within the draft STPR2 that are referenced to Argyll and Bute.

(ii) Consider and approve the enclosed response to the draft STPR2 consultation.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Transport Scotland are undertaking a formal 12-week Strategic Transport Project Review 2 (STPR2) consultation process. This is the latest stage of a comprehensive review that has been taken through a number of stages and been informed by numerous key stakeholders.
- 4.2 STPR2 sets out recommended transport interventions for the next 20 years and is one of the mechanisms for delivering the Vision, Priorities and Outcomes of the second National Transport Strategy (NTS2). STPR2 is also an important tool for achieving the Climate Change Plan Update commitment to 20%

reduction in car kilometers by 2030 and contributing to Scotland's Net Zero Greenhouse Gas emissions target by 2045.

4.3 The draft STPR2 Report (Jan 2022) combines the Phase 1 recommendations published in February 2021, which are the short-term priorities, with the longer-term recommendations. Therefore, providing the full suite of recommendations for transport investment for the next 20 years.

4.4 The recommendations are set out in a Summary Report and draft Technical Report which can be accessed from the Transport Scotland website along with other supporting documents including the Impact Assessments Non-Technical Summary and other associated reports.

[Transport.gov.scot/stpr2/](https://transport.gov.scot/stpr2/)

4.5 The deadline for responses to the consultation is **midnight on Friday 15 April 2022**.

4.6 **Appendix 2** encloses a detailed draft response to this public consultation document that members are asked to approve.

4.7 The key points included within the draft response are as follows:-

- The council's funding settlement from the Scottish Government makes up the majority of funding for local council services. More than £53 million has already been taken out of Argyll and Bute's council services over the past 10 years, and the need to make millions more in savings goes on. It is estimated that the Scottish Government grant could reduce by a further £10m over the next five years and this coupled with inflationary increases will require a further £25m of savings.
Such financial challenges, are placing huge pressure on already strained transport budgets including road and bridge maintenance and the provision of public transport. For example, over 95% of our bus services requires direct subsidy from the Council.

Transport Scotland's previous position that *"it is the responsibility of each local authority to manage their own budget and to allocate the financial resources available to them on the basis of local needs and priorities"* is unsustainable given the declared aspirations of STPR2 and will fail to address the significant connectivity barriers facing the region.

This position is particularly disappointing given the advice previously received by the Scottish Government to remove £64M of proposed transport investment from our Rural Growth Deal and pursue this critical ask via STPR2.

- 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. There also appears to be a lack of consistency within STPR2 as to what local infrastructure is out of scope. For

example, proposed interventions such as 20mph zones, place-making, active travel freeways and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) will all be reliant on local authority transport infrastructure and resources to deliver and maintain and yet these are considered within scope while local roads and public transport infrastructure aren't.

- We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to move beyond the mitigation strategy and to look at an alternative permanent solution to the ongoing problems at the Rest and Be Thankful. There continues to be a concern that the lack of resilience on this key trunk road overshadows the wide and varied good work undertaken locally to create a place where people choose to live, work, visit and invest. Argyll and Bute faces a forecasted steady decline in its population and there is a sense that the ongoing issues at the Rest and Be Thankful, and the associated national media reports, are a significant barrier to attracting people to the area, both to live and to visit. Businesses in Argyll and Bute make a significant contribution to the national economy in spite of the ongoing trunk road resilience issues. In recent years the area has produced:
 - 7% of Scotland's domestic tourism value;
 - £124million in Gross Value Added (GVA) from food and drink;
 - 7% of the nation's pure alcohol capacity (used in whisky production);
 - £31million in GVA from aquaculture.

*Referenced from IBP Strategy and Research Report on Tourism and Food and Drink Industries November 2018

Whilst the intervention for the A83 is welcomed it should not be seen as the only transport intervention required for our region. Argyll and Bute Council assumed a solution to the historic issues over the Rest and Be Thankful was a 'given' – and was a national intervention required to be provided by Transport Scotland, regardless of whether the Strategic Transportation Projects Review 2 was under way or not. Indeed we would consider that the focus should not simply be on the Rest and Be thankful itself but on the entire A83 route – where climbing lanes, overtaking opportunities, better signage etc. could be identified.

- We would welcome further details on the proposed consideration of a fixed link to the island of Mull and where this link is proposed. We have not to date seen mention of this proposal in any previous documentation. Fixed links were only previously mentioned in relation to the Clyde and Hebridean Ferry Services contract and not specifically to the island of Mull. Given the detrimental impact on island infrastructure that has resulted from the introduction of RET we would have thought a fixed link would only compound this – again another example of why there needs to be consideration of local authority infrastructure and a joined up approach. We understand that a business case on this intervention is proposed and we assume this will also identify what likely impacts such a transport intervention would have on the local economy of Oban.

- Active travel – funding models require to be revised as there is currently too much focus on lengthy, multi-stage challenge funds. Local Authorities are the key delivery agencies of active travel infrastructure on the ground yet they are required to bid via third parties and Charities who manage funding on behalf of Transport Scotland. Active travel funding should be given directly to local authorities, through the Cycling Walking Safer Routes grant which ring fences the grant and is a very effective model. This would free up the limited resources local authorities have to deliver active travel infrastructure. This would also allow local authorities to programme ahead at the start of the year, rather than wait until half the financial year has past, before finding out if a bid for a project has been successful or not. It is also considered that many of the grant funding criteria for active travel infrastructure projects favour more urbanised areas (e.g. the requirement for 3m wide cycleways, segregated cycle lanes etc. – in a rural context some rural roads are less than 3m wide making an adjacent remote cycleway 3m in width, something of a parody.) It is therefore requested that funding for active travel infrastructure is reviewed as part of STPR2 and funds such as Cycling Walking and Safer Routes are given a greater proportion of the funds available for active travel.
- Existing/proposed grant funding for bus enhancements is targeted predominantly at congestion and bus priority measures which will primarily benefit urban and city regions. Whilst we recognise the importance of addressing congestion in urban areas it should be noted that these measures will have only limited impacts on bus services in rural areas. It is vital that rural areas benefit from attractive public transport options to promote positive transport choices given the necessity of long journeys and the associated limitations of active travel options. For example the Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme for 5 -21 year olds is of limited use in a rural context compared to an urban where the local supported services are infrequent sometimes hours apart.
- The current transport policy network is increasingly complex and very difficult to identify the linkages across modes of transport connectivity. For example we have a National Transport Strategy 2, Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, the Islands Connectivity Plan which will be the successor to the National Ferries Plan and a separate National Review of Aviation. It is vital that transport connectivity to our remote peninsula communities and fragile islands is looked at holistically. We welcome the proposals to undertake a national review of air services however, we would expect a funding commitment behind this review to be set out as part of STPR2 - given the decision by the Scottish Government to exclude aviation from this process. We would also expect, similar to the commitment for the Scottish Ferry Services Review (now Islands Connectivity Plan) for a funding plan and programme for vessel deployment and services, that there will also be a commitment following the aviation review to allocate a

funding programme to improve Scotland's Aviation Network including aircraft assets and infrastructure.

- Argyll and Bute Council welcome the review of ferry services and port infrastructure. Both ferry and air services provide lifeline connections to many of the country's most fragile and remote communities and these services should be reviewed in tandem under the new Islands Connectivity Plan. There are no trunk roads or rail services on any of Argyll's 23 inhabited islands and a number of our local island communities are accessed by lifeline ferry and air services via local authority port and airport infrastructure.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This consultation is on the draft second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) for Scotland. The review will inform Scottish Ministers decisions on transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042).
- 5.2 **Appendix 1** summarises the interventions within STPR2 that are noted against Argyll and Bute. Appendix 2 encloses a detailed draft response to this public consultation document that members are asked to approve.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – STPR 2 sets out recommended transport interventions for the next 20 years and is one of the mechanisms for delivering the Vision, Priorities and Outcomes of the second National Transport Strategy (NTS2).
- 6.2 Financial – STPR2 offers the opportunity to lobby for improvements to the transport network to be delivered at a national level through the Strategic Transport Project Review 2.
- 6.3 Legal – The roles and responsibilities work associated with the NTS will consider transport governance.
- 6.4 HR – N/A
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: STPR2 has been subject to a draft Equality Impact Assessment Report. [Equality Impact Assessment Draft Report – January 2022 – STPR2 | Transport Scotland](#)
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – STPR2 has been subject to a draft Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Report. [Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Draft Report – January 2022 – STPR2 | Transport Scotland](#)

- 6.5.3 Islands – STPR2 has been subject to a draft Island Communities Impact Assessment Report [Island Communities Impact Assessment Draft Report – January 2022 – STPR2 | Transport Scotland](#)
- 6.6 Climate Change – STPR2 has been subject to a draft Strategic Environmental Assessment. [Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Environmental Report – January 2022 – STPR2 | Transport Scotland](#)
- 6.7 Risk – Argyll and Bute’s Transport Infrastructure Priorities are not recognised with in the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, which sets out Scottish Governments planned transport interventions for the next 20 years.
- 6.8 Customer Service – N/A

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27 February 2022

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Extract from STPR2: Reference to Argyll and Bute

Appendix 2 Draft Consultation Response to STPR2.

APPENDIX 1

Extract from STPR2: Reference to Argyll and Bute

Tier 1: - “Recommendations specific to One or Two Regions”

29. Access to Argyll (A83)

Ongoing closures of the A83 due to landslides at the ‘Rest & Be Thankful’, or on other sections of the road in Argyll & Bute due to accidents, flooding or roadworks have a significant negative impact on the region and its economy. Closures at the ‘Rest & Be Thankful’ can add detours of up to 50 miles for residents, businesses and visitors.

New or improved road infrastructure to reduce the impact of landslides or other events would improve the reliability of the route which, as one of only two trunk roads linking Argyll & Bute to the central belt, serves as a vital artery through Argyll and a connection for both the Kintyre and Cowal peninsulas.

STPR2 recommends work continues on developing a more reliable route. A preferred corridor has been identified at Glen Croe and five possible route options are being considered with speed of delivery a key criterion for assessment.

Meets key objectives:

- Takes climate action
- Supports sustainable economic growth
- Increases safety and resilience

41. Potential Sound of Harris, Sound of Barra fixed links and fixed link between Mull and Scottish mainland

The current ferry routes on the Sound of Harris, Sound of Barra and between Craignure and Oban face a number of issues and challenges. Replacing ferry services with fixed links (bridges or tunnels) can improve reliability, connectivity, capacity and crossing times. A Sound of Harris fixed link would improve connectivity between the Uists and Lewis/Harris while a Sound of Barra fixed link would improve connectivity between Barra and the Uists. The provision of these fixed links would allow for the reconfiguration of transport provision between the Outer Hebrides and the mainland. The provision of a fixed link between Mull and the Scottish mainland would allow for the reconfiguration of transport provision between the island and the mainland.

STPR2 recommends that further work is undertaken on business cases to better understand the benefits, costs and challenges associated with these options. These studies would consider the feasibility of replacing existing ferry services currently delivered by CalMac as part of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) contract. These studies would also ascertain the potential savings associated with the public sector subsidies required to operate the ferry services and involve input from communities that may potentially be affected.

Meets key objectives:

- Addresses inequalities and accessibility
- Supports sustainable economic growth
- Increases safety and resilience

Tier 2: “General recommendations will have particular benefit for CERTAIN regions”**18. Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals**

Improving the connections from ferry terminals to other types of public transport is important in encouraging people to switch from travel by car. Historically, people are less likely to use public transport if limited travel choices or connections make it more difficult to reach their end destination.

Improving access and creating a better traveller experience at ferry terminals and interchange facilities would benefit rural and island communities as well as visitors. There would be particular benefits for longer distance travel with more seamless travel choices and improved services for those people not travelling by car. Reducing car usage also helps make better use of existing ferry capacity.

STPR2 recommends a detailed review of key ferry terminals to consider the improvements in timetable information, signing, ticketing and facilities required to deliver a seamless journey between different types of public transport to enhance the traveller experience and accessibility at ferry terminals.

Meets key objectives:

- Takes climate action
- Addresses inequalities and accessibility
- Improves health and wellbeing
- Supports sustainable economic growth
- Increases safety and resilience

24. Ferry vessel renewal and replacement and progressive decarbonisation

Continued investment in ferry renewals would address the needs of rural and island communities by improving the resilience, reliability, capacity and accessibility of ferries. If this investment is focused on progressive decarbonisation of ferry networks, it will reduce emissions and help Scotland achieve its net zero carbon emission targets.

STPR2 recommends renewal and replacement of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) and Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) vessels including progressive decarbonisation by 2045.

Meets key objectives:

- Takes climate action
- Addresses inequalities and accessibility
- Improves health and wellbeing
- Supports sustainable economic growth
- Increases safety and resilience

42. Investment in port infrastructure to support vessel renewal and replacement and progressive decarbonisation

To facilitate ferry vessel renewal and replacement and progressive decarbonisation of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) and Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) vessels (24), related investment in port infrastructure will be required. This would help meet the needs of rural and island communities by improving the capacity, resilience, reliability and accessibility of ferry services. Investment in port infrastructure means that there can be progression to standardisation of new vessels. This investment would also contribute to reducing emissions across the ferry network and support Scotland's net zero carbon emission targets.

STPR2 recommends an investment programme in port infrastructure, including power supplies, to support STPR2 recommendation (24) renewal and replacement of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) and Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) vessels including progressive decarbonisation by 2045.

Meets key objectives:

- Takes climate action
- Addresses inequalities and accessibility
- Improves health and wellbeing
- Supports sustainable economic growth

44. Rail freight terminals and facilities

A sufficient provision of rail freight terminals is critical to achieving a significant shift of freight from road to rail. It would improve the competitiveness of Scotland's supply chain and help support the movement of freight from road to rail.

Rail freight works on a commercial basis and is carried out by private sector freight operating companies and logistics providers. The role of Government is to put policies and strategies in place that facilitate growth (with Network Rail managing the core rail infrastructure and the regulator regulating compliance, safety and issuing licences).

STPR2 recommends that Transport Scotland supports industry partners in carrying out an updated market study for rail freight growth in Scotland (linked to the 2019 industry growth plan) including a review of rail freight terminals/hubs to confirm how to meet long-term mode shift requirements.

Meets key objectives:

- Takes climate action
- Supports sustainable economic growth
- Increases safety and resilience

Tier 3: 'Sustainable Transport Options'

The draft report makes 45 recommendations that focus investment on sustainable transport options. Of those recommendations, they note 28 provide benefits for individuals, families, communities and businesses across most parts of Scotland.

APPENDIX 2

Draft Consultation Response to STPR2

Transport Scotland Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Argyll and Bute Council Response – January 2022

This response should also be reviewed alongside our previous submissions on the Draft STPR2 Case for Change Report and Options Sifting Process report. We are pleased to enclose our response to the STPR2 draft report, published in January 2022, and would like to make the following points:-

1. The council's funding settlement from the Scottish Government makes up the majority of funding for local council services. More than £53 million has already been taken out of Argyll and Bute's council services over the past 10 years, and the need to make millions more in savings goes on. It is estimated that the Scottish Government grant could reduce by a further £10m over the next five years and this coupled with inflationary increases will require a further £25m of savings.

Such financial challenges, are placing huge pressure on already strained transport budgets including road and bridge maintenance and the provision of public transport. For example, over 95% of our bus services requires direct subsidy from the Council.

2. Transport Scotland's previous position that *"it is the responsibility of each local authority to manage their own budget and to allocate the financial resources available to them on the basis of local needs and priorities"* is unsustainable given the declared aspirations of STPR2 and will fail to address the significant connectivity barriers facing the region.

This position is particularly disappointing given the advice previously received by the Scottish Government to remove £64M of proposed transport investment from our Rural Growth Deal and pursue this critical ask via STPR2

3. We are aware that the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) is being progressed alongside STPR2 and will replace the ferries plan by the end of 2022. We seek confirmation from the Scottish Government that the ICP will include transport infrastructure owned and operated by local authorities and in particular island road networks. This is particularly significant given there are no trunk roads on any of our islands and therefore out of scope of STPR2. Many of our island roads have seen significant increases in vehicular traffic due to the success of RET and this is resulting in pressure on our island infrastructure.
4. The current transport policy network is increasingly complex and very difficult to identify the linkages across modes of transport connectivity. For example we have a National Transport Strategy 2, Strategic Transport

Projects Review 2, the Islands Connectivity Plan which will be the successor to the National Ferries Plan and a separate National Review of Aviation. It is vital that transport connectivity to our remote peninsula communities and fragile islands is looked at holistically.

We welcome the proposals to undertake a national review of air services however, we would expect a funding commitment behind this review to be set out as part of STPR2 - given the decision by the Scottish Government to exclude aviation from this process. We would also expect, similar to the commitment for the Scottish Ferry Services Review (now Islands Connectivity Plan) for a funding plan and programme for vessel deployment and services, that there will also be a commitment following the aviation review to allocate a funding programme to improve Scotland's Aviation Network including aircraft assets and infrastructure.

5. 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.
6. Local roads make up 94% of the total road network and 100% of the island road network and carry 65% of traffic in Scotland however the majority are out of scope of STPR2. Trunk roads currently account for 50% of the national funding for roads maintenance despite being only 6% of the network. Proposals to further increase funding for trunk roads only is unsustainable unless similar commitments are made for local roads.

There also appears to be a lack of consistency within STPR2 as to what local infrastructure is out of scope. For example, proposed interventions such as 20mph zones, place-making, active travel freeways and DRT will all be reliant on local authority transport infrastructure and resources to deliver and maintain and yet these are considered within scope while local roads and public transport infrastructure aren't.

7. Active travel – funding models require to be revised as there is currently too much focus on lengthy, multi-stage challenge funds. Local Authorities are the key delivery agencies of active travel infrastructure on the ground yet they are required to bid via third parties and Charities who manage funding on behalf of Transport Scotland.

Active travel funding should be given directly to local authorities, through the Cycling Walking Safer Routes grant which ring fences the grant and is a very effective model. This would free up the limited resources local authorities have to deliver active travel infrastructure. This would also allow local authorities to programme ahead at the start of the year, rather than wait until half the financial year has past, before finding out if a bid for a project has been successful or not.

Financially operating to a Charity organisation's financial year, often ending in late June, is another added layer of bureaucracy when trying to do year end claims out with a normal local authority year starting on the 1 April-31 March.

During Covid-19 and the subsequent response with the Spaces for People fund, demonstrated what local authorities can achieve in an unbelievable short space of time – if they are given funding direct - with no red tape attached or having to compete against other local authorities in a lengthy and time consuming exercise.

8. We note that STPR2 includes an intervention to develop Glasgow Metro and Edinburgh mass transit strategies. Whilst Argyll and Bute Council support proposals to improve transport in our city regions there appears to be a lack of consistency here with local transport infrastructure (bus, tram, light rail etc.) in city regions being within scope of STPR2 and more rural networks considered out of scope. This could exacerbate population imbalance resulting in further population drift from rural areas to city regions. This would appear to be politically motivated resulting in an inconsistent approach between rural and city regions.

Existing/proposed grant funding for bus enhancements is targeted predominantly at congestion and bus priority measures which will primarily benefit urban and city regions. Whilst we recognise the importance of addressing congestion in urban areas it should be noted that these measures will have only limited impacts on bus services in rural areas. It is vital that rural areas benefit from attractive public transport options to promote positive transport choices given the necessity of long journeys and the associated limitations of active travel options. For example the Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme for 5 -21 year olds is of limited use in a rural context compared to an urban where the local supported services are infrequent sometimes hours apart.

It is essential that Argyll and Bute has reliable and resilient connections to Scotland's city regions for access to key markets, employment, tertiary education and healthcare. The region relies heavily on infrastructure owned and operated by Transport Scotland such as our trunk roads, many of our ferries, rail and local air services. The region also suffers with well-publicised reliability and resilience issues on a number of our key transport arteries e.g. A83 Rest and Be Thankful, A82 delays, long diversion routes, ferry capacity issues. As has been highlighted repeatedly by the Council and other stakeholders, national reporting of local transport failures (such as landslips) has a detrimental impact on the economy of the region. It is therefore essential that there is significant investment via STPR2 to improve resilience on our key transport arteries.

We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to move beyond the mitigation strategy and to look at an alternative permanent solution to the ongoing problems at the Rest and Be Thankful. There continues to be a concern that the lack of resilience on this key trunk road overshadows the wide and varied good work undertaken locally to create a place where people choose to live, work, visit and invest. Argyll and Bute faces a forecasted steady decline in its population and there is a sense that the ongoing issues at the Rest and Be Thankful, and the associated national media reports, are a significant barrier to attracting people to the area, both to live and to visit. Businesses in Argyll and Bute make a significant contribution to the national economy in spite of the ongoing trunk road resilience issues. In recent years the area has produced:

- 7% of Scotland's domestic tourism value;
- £124million in Gross Value Added (GVA) from food and drink;
- 7% of the nation's pure alcohol capacity (used in whisky production);
- £31million in GVA from aquaculture.

Whilst the intervention for the A83 is welcomed it should not be seen as the only transport intervention required for our region. Argyll and Bute Council assumed a solution to the historic issues over the Rest and Be Thankful was a 'given' – and was a national intervention required to be provided by Transport Scotland, regardless of whether the Strategic Transportation Projects Review 2 was under way or not. Indeed we would consider that the focus should not simply be on the Rest and Be thankful itself but on the entire A83 route – where climbing lanes, overtaking opportunities, better signage etc. could be identified.

9. We would welcome further details on the proposed consideration of a fixed link to the island of Mull and where this link is proposed. We have not to date seen mention of this proposal in any previous documentation. Fixed links were only previously mentioned in relation to the Clyde and Hebridean Ferry Services contract and not specifically to the island of Mull.

Given the detrimental impact on island infrastructure that has resulted from the introduction of RET we would have thought a fixed link would only compound this – again another example of why there needs to be consideration of local authority infrastructure and a joined up approach.

We understand that a business case on this intervention is proposed and we assume this will also identify what likely impacts such a transport intervention would have on the local economy of Oban.

10. Argyll and Bute Council welcome the review of ferry services and port infrastructure. Both ferry and air services provide lifeline connections to

many of the country's most fragile and remote communities and these services should be reviewed in tandem under the new Islands Connectivity Plan.

There are no trunk roads or rail services on any of Argyll's 23 inhabited islands and a number of our local island communities are accessed by lifeline ferry and air services via local authority port and airport infrastructure. We are supportive of this intervention however, it must include local authority ports, harbours and ferry services or there is a risk that certain communities will be excluded. Argyll and Bute Council currently operate 4 ferry services to the islands of Jura, Luing, Lismore and Easdale and we also own a number of ports which form part of the CHFS ferry network. It is therefore vital that our infrastructure is considered as part of future long term plans and investment programmes. Integration with regional and island air services should also be considered as part of this process.

Given the impact of RET and the expansion of the whisky and tourism industries there is growing demands on ferry services across Argyll. STPR2 needs to consider suitable investment in the ferry network to ensure greater capacity at peak periods and reliability.

11. To see our active travel network enhanced and utilised will require a substantial shift in the current funding regime. The whole system of local authorities having to prepare bid documents, to competitively compete against each other for funding, is time consuming and costly to resource. Local authorities also have to then find internal match funding which in the current climate is not possible to do. The process of getting approvals from a Charity that manages funding on behalf of TS is bureaucratic and effectively slows the whole process of delivery on the ground - the exact opposite of what the Scottish Government is wanting to achieve. The fact that the Charity's financial spend profile does not accord with the standard financial year only adds to the confusing and time consuming burden of trying to manage through a third party Charity active travel funding.

The Cycling Walking Safer Route Grant that is given directly to Local authorities is a much quicker simpler way of delivering active travel projects on the ground and is a tried and tested delivery model. This grant award from the Scottish Government restricts local authorities to spending the grant on safer cycling walking projects only. Therefore rather than waste time and resources with bureaucratic third parties creating an artificial competition with confusing and unnecessary processes that slows delivery down, Argyll and Bute Council request that a greater proportion of active travel funding is awarded directly to the local authorities who are directly responsible for delivering projects on the ground. Also again the

maintenance funding of this will fall on the resources of local authorities yet there is no recognition of this by Scottish Government.

We would again note, that as local authorities are the key delivery partner for active travel infrastructure there is a clear case for additional funding to be awarded directly to Councils rather than the existing model which awards the majority of capital funding to local authorities via challenge funds which are administered by Charities. This is not consistent with funding for other modes of transport such as roads and public transport and is becoming increasingly challenging for local authorities to deliver. It is also considered that many of the grant funding criteria for active travel infrastructure projects favour more urbanised areas (e.g. the requirement for 3m wide cycleways, segregated cycle lanes etc. – in a rural context some rural roads are less than 3m wide making an adjacent remote cycleway 3m in width, something of a parody.) It is therefore requested that funding for active travel infrastructure is reviewed as part of STPR2 and funds such as Cycling Walking and Safer Routes are given a greater proportion of the funds available for active travel.

Given the critical importance of transport connectivity to Argyll and Bute, the Council remain committed to working in partnership with key stakeholders such as Transport Scotland and the Regional Transport Partnerships to address our connectivity barriers however we would again take this opportunity to ask the Scottish Government to ensure that their future transport investment priorities take a more inclusive approach and addresses the current imbalance of national transport infrastructure on the West Coast of Scotland. A modern and fit for purpose transport system is critical if we are to address our wider population challenges.

We enclose again for ease, **Appendix A** which is a list of Argyll and Bute Council's strategic transport infrastructure priorities for the region.

Encs:

Appendix A: Top Transport Priorities for Argyll and Bute

APPENDIX A: Top Transport Priorities for Argyll and Bute

The following is a list of Argyll and Bute Council's strategic transport infrastructure priorities for the region. This was previously submitted to Jacobs/Aecom as supporting evidence to the STPR2 process. This list has been updated following recent funding decisions by the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.

Top Transport Priorities Argyll and Bute to support economic growth and social inclusion	Issue	Action
ROADS		
A 82 Trunk Road - Road Upgrade	The A82 is a key economic driver for the West Highlands. There is a need to upgrade the Loch Lomond section of road Tarbet to Inverarnan section.	Ensure that the programme of works identified by the Scottish Government is implemented asap.
A 83 Trunk Road – Road Upgrade	The A83 is the primary transport corridor into much of Argyll from the central belt. There is a need for a comprehensive programme of investment to improve road resilience, safety and journey times.	Produce a clear timetable of actions to deliver identified problem areas including. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strone point (Completed) • Erines • Dunderave • Balmore Rd. Tarbert Need for enhanced capital/maintenance programme to tackle roads vulnerability to flood and frost damage.
A 83 Trunk Road Upgrade – Rest and Be Thankful	Need for permanent solution for R&BT	Action to determine the best “once and for all permanent solution” to address landslip risk public perceptions.

A85 Trunk Road Upgrade - Oban to Tyndrum/Oban Development Road	Relatively slow and busy road seen as a high priority for businesses and other stakeholders to improve with additional problems relating to congestion and lack of capacity to grow in Oban.	To identify the range of improvements to reduce journey times and build road resilience by tackling pinch points. To re-examine the need for the Oban Development Road to address congestion issue and capacity to grow as a town.
Pennygael Bridge Mull - structural repair/replacement required A848	Essential bridge serving the Iona community requiring significant investment.	Need to identify funding to repair/replace the bridge. (Update - following lobbying By the council the Scottish Government/Transport Scotland have agreed to fund this project through the Bridge Maintenance Fund)
A816 Oban to Lochgilphead Road Upgrade	Key link between Oban and Lochgilphead that suffers from a long journey time due to poor quality road with poor carriageway width and alignment.	Identify key aspects of the road that need action to remove pinch points, improve road alignment and excessive bends.
Dunoon – Colintraive – Portavadie Road Upgrade (B836/A8003/B8000)	Key route linking communities across Cowal, Bute and Kintyre (Mid Argyll) with Dunoon also a key timber haulage route.	To look at the feasibility of upgraded road to A road status incorporating physical upgrades to modern carriageway standards i.e. min. 6m wide carriageway with improved alignment to make it a safer and more reliable route.
A848 Salen –Tobermory Upgrade	Key route connecting main settlement on Mull with ferry terminal in need of widening to enable removal of passing places. Added pressure in summer	Identify funding to enable works to proceed to final design and implementation stage.

	from the success of RET.	
Local road network	GAE levels are insufficient to meet expanding road maintenance needs.	To lobby for a revision of the GAE distribution criteria to ensure that areas of sparse population are better financed to maintain their high mileages of rural road networks.
RAIL		
West Highland Line between Oban and Glasgow	Excessive journey time in excess of three hours.	Need to lobby the rail investment programme for Control periods 6-7 (2019-2029). Need for a more detailed study to identify scope for journey time reduction. Refurbished 158s due on line in 2019. (now in place)
Creation of new station at Shandon to service HMNB Clyde – or enhanced public bus service	Reduce reliance on the car and ease movement of personnel to the base that is currently expanding.	Need to lobby the Scottish Government and Scotrail on the need for this new facility or enhanced public bus service. STAG underway second stage.
Oban Integrated Transport Hub	Combination of bus/rail and ferry terminals to ease transport transfer. An added benefit would be to create additional space for vehicle marshalling.	Need to work with Hi Trans and other transport partners to design scheme and attract necessary funding from a range of partners. Partial implementation to increase marshalling area; looking at introduction of hydrogen.
FERRIES and PORTS		
Dunoon Town Centre to Gourock Town Centre Ferry Link	Need to improve ferry reliability from town centre to town centre and re-introduce vehicular option.	Continue to lobby Transport Scotland for a successful conclusion of the contract award. Contract awarded. Work commenced on ferry port improvements.

Replacement of Council Ferries/takeover by Scottish Government	Ageing ferries on the Islay Jura route and loss making ferry service serving four island communities.	Recent additional funding is welcome however there is a need to continue to work with and lobby Transport Scotland on the need to ensure the reliability/affordability of our internal ferries.
Extension of Ferry services	Need to make greater use of ferry services at key crossing points. For example, Tarbert - Portavadie ferry.	
Argyll and Bute Council Pier upgrades Fionaphort/Iona, Gigha/Tayinloan and Craignure Pier	Need to upgrade pier to take account of climate change/weather and capacity issues. Creation of berthing facility at Fionnphort.	Undertake STAG for Craignure Pier to assess future operations. Determine affordability of business cases through feasibility studies and attract external funding as necessary.
Improve capacity and resilience of ferry services across the network	Given the impact of RET and the expansion of the whisky and tourism industries there is growing demands on ferry services across Argyll.	Continue to lobby CMAL and Transport Scotland for suitable investment in the ferry network to ensure greater capacity at peak periods and reliability. STAG underway.
ACTIVE TRAVEL		
Helensburgh to Cardross/W. Dunbartonshire cycleway (Regional Route 42)	Need to complete this important route linking Helensburgh, Cardross and Dumbarton allowing active travel opportunities to connect to the main town and link into established routes to loch Lomond (John Muir Way)and the	Continue to work with landowners to acquire land, design works and implement sections of the route as funding is secured. Public consultation on preferred route completed.

	Three Lochs Way and routes to Glasgow.	
Provision of an off-road route for entire length of NCN78, The Caledonia Way, linking Campbeltown to Lochgilphead, Oban and Fort William.	This is a key 'spine' route for the Council area and wider West of Scotland. In addition to the NCN longer distance route, shorter sections of the route are heavily used for more local journeys, for example Ardrishaig to Lochgilphead, as well as part of other routes, for example the section from Kennacraig to Tarbert forms part of the popular 5 ferries route.	Continue to work with Transport Scotland (for sections alongside A83/A85/A828 trunk roads & sections on old Connel to Ballachulish Rail Line), Sustrans (as NCN route), local communities, landowners and other stakeholders.
<p>Pilgrims Way: Iona – Mull – Oban – Tyndrum – St Andrews</p> <p>Entire route should be constructed to a suitable standard for walking and cycling.</p>	<p>This national walking and cycling route linking the international destinations of Iona and St Andrews, while also providing active travel links between local communities, requires significant focus to deliver, particularly given the distance and therefore cost and number of authorities and landowners involved.</p> <p>A&B Council is currently working with local communities in the Fionnphort area of Mull on the development and delivery of a cyclepath route which would provide approximately 1.9km of the route.</p>	Continue to work with local communities, landowners, active travel bodies (e.g. Sustrans), Transport Scotland (for trunk roads, e.g. A85 Oban to Tyndrum) and the Scottish Government to develop and deliver sections of this nationally important route.

	Within Argyll & Bute the Pilgrims Way would also provide important links within Mull and between Oban and Tyndrum.	
Active Travel Islay	Following the successful delivery and positive reaction by local residents, businesses and visitors to the 3 distilleries path on Islay there is a strong desire to build upon this success by the construction of active travel routes linking other key settlements, employers and tourist destinations on Islay.	Work with Islay Community Access Group, local communities, local businesses, active travel groups (e.g. Sustrans, walking groups), landowners and the Scottish Government to develop and implement a network of high-quality walking and cycling routes on Islay. These routes will provide an alternative to the private car for local residents and visitors. Bruichladdich to Port Charlotte completed 2021
Develop Cycle Tour routes, e.g. 5 Ferries route (Arran / Kintyre Peninsula (Clanaig – Kennacraig – Tarbert) / Cowal Peninsula (Portavadie – Colintrave) / Bute (Rhubodoch – Rothesay), to provide attractive, high-quality cycle route suitable for families/tourists.	There are a number of popular cycle tour routes within Argyll & Bute, most notably the 5 ferries route with dedicated ferry tickets available from CALMAC for the route. At present these routes are primarily promoted to keen sportive cyclists as a single day activity, however with each of the routes having a total distance of under 55 miles if correctly developed these would offer an attractive weekend/multi-day activity for families/less dedicated cyclists	Work with local communities, businesses, landowners, active travel bodies (e.g. Sustrans), Transport Scotland (for trunk roads, e.g. A83 Kennacraig to Tarbert), CALMAC and the Scottish Government to develop and deliver attractive, high-quality walking and cycling touring routes.

	<p>thereby bringing significant economic benefit to these areas. To be attractive to these groups the route would require to be entirely on high-quality segregated infrastructure or on [perceived as] safe, quiet and low speed minor roads.</p>	
AIR LINKS		
Central Belt to Oban Air Service with potential link to Barra.	<p>Need to establish a scheduled flight connection to the central belt to provide a faster transport alternative for local people and businesses together with visitors. Assist the delivery of economic growth in Oban, Lorn, Barra and Lochaber.</p>	<p>Continue to undertake feasibility work on viability of bid, speak to air operators and lobby for subsidy to enable this connection to be established</p>