1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this Report is to advise the Executive of the impact that the Strategic Transport Projects Review may have on the road and rail infrastructure within the Argyll & Bute Council area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to note the contents of this paper and request that appropriate Member and Officer intervention is made to ensure that the proposals within the STPR within the Argyll & Bute Council area are realised.

3. DETAILS

3.1 Transport Scotland’s Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) was announced in Holyrood on 10 December 2008. The STPR has made a number of recommendations on a number of packages for land based strategic transportation intervention, which will allow appropriate development of Scotland’s transport infrastructure to meet the demand of the 21st century. The STPR has been prepared in order to complement both the National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) and also aid the delivery of the three main strategic outcomes identified in the national transport strategy of improving journey times and their connections; reducing emissions and improving the quality, accessibility and affordability of public transport.

3.2 The documentation is extensive and extends to four specific reports plus an environmental report. The reports can be viewed on Transport Scotland website at www.transportscotland.gov.uk/stpr.

The STPR has been developed from a three tiered approach based on the following:

1. Maintaining and safely operating the existing assets by investing in the existing road and rail networks to ensure that they operate safely and effectively.

2. Making better use of the existing capacity of the existing road and rail network.
3. Specific infrastructure improvements which will add to the network and thereby increase the capacity to meet future demands.

3.3 From a national perspective there are a total of 29 major packages of work which have been identified as part of this review and these works have been recommended by the STPR to inform spending reviews by the Scottish Government.

The 29 major packages of work are detailed in Appendix A and they reflect road and rail improvements throughout Scotland’s trunk road network. It should be noted that this review excluded aviation and ferries.

3.4 There are a number of projects identified by Transport Scotland that have a direct impact on Argyll & Bute Council. The STPR indicated that for road and public transport projects in the Highlands and Northwest area of Scotland they are designed to significantly improve connections between communities in the rest of Scotland. The STPR has identified targeted road improvements on the A82 by improving the standard of the carriageway and thereby reducing accidents rates and severity and cutting journey time. The STPR recognise that a general upgrade of the route is required which would include road widening at selected locations between Tarbet and Inverarnan and also Corran Ferry and Fort William. These are additional works to those already committed at Pulpit Rock and Crianlarich. It could be argued that the STPR has indicated limited commitment to improvements on the A82 but further discussion with Transport Scotland officials will identify the works planned on the A82.

3.5 They only other direct reference to Argyll & Bute Council trunk roads relate to Route Management which is the aim of optimising the road network along the key corridors through active Route Management and targeted individual investments. It is proposed that a package of work will be developed and built on by Transport Scotland on the A83, A85 and A828. Although there is not a specific indication on specific improvements and plans which are proposed it is anticipated that the works will include realigning sections of road with junction improvements and where appropriate dualling sections. The estimated budget for the entire route management for a variety of routes in Scotland which would include the A90 Aberdeen to Fraserburgh, the A1 improvements, the A76 in Ayrshire and various routes in the Borders and Fife amounts to between £100 – 250M in total.

3.6 The STPR will inform through each spending review undertaken by the Scottish Government a process of mapping out delivery packages and the appropriate engagement required with Transport Scotland to deliver these measures. Transport Scotland have indicated that they will instigate appropriate dialogue with local authorities throughout Scotland on the process of implementing the STPR but Transport Scotland have still to decide the appropriate mechanism.

The overall STPR does not offer a consultation process. The strategic environmental assessment included within the STPR has been produced in accordance with EC Directive 2000/42/EC and Regulation 16(2) of the Environmental Assessment Scotland Act 2005 and seeks consultation responses to Transport Scotland by 13 February. Having viewed the strategic STPR
Environmental Report it is not considered appropriate or necessary to formally respond on this matter from Operational Services

3.7 The STPR has taken some time to be published but now Scotland has its first national transport review and with the 29 work packages there is now an approach available for relevant specific schemes to be delivered. It is vital that Argyll & Bute Council though Members and Officers are fully involved in this process to ensure that Argyll & Bute Council has the most appropriate opportunity to benefit from this process.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Policy None
4.2 Financial None
4.3 Personnel None
4.4 Equalities Impact Assessment None
4.5 Legal None

For further information, please contact Stewart Turner, Head of Roads & Amenity Services (01546 604611)

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28 January 2009
Proposed STPR Projects

The 29 major packages of work outlined below have been recommended by the STPR:

Maintain and safely operate existing assets
1. Strategic Road Safety Plan
2. Maintenance and safe operation of rail network
3. A82 targeted road improvements
4. Road safety improvements in North and West Scotland
5. Route management.

Make better use of existing capacity
6. Electrification of the strategic rail network
7. Reconfiguration of the National Rail Timetable
8. Strategic Park & Ride / Park & Choose sites
9. Intelligent Transport Systems
10. Integrated Ticketing
11. Improved links to Loch Ryan ports
12. Rail system enhancements
13. East of Scotland rail improvements.

Targeted infrastructure improvements
14. Forth Replacement Crossing
15. Edinburgh to Glasgow rail improvements
16. A9 upgrade from Dunblane to Inverness
17. Highland mainline rail improvements
18. A96 Inverness to Nairn upgrade
19. Rail improvements between Aberdeen and Inverness
20. Grangemouth road and rail access upgrades
21. Upgrade Edinburgh Haymarket
22. Targeted road congestion / environmental relief schemes
23. Rail improvements between Aberdeen and the Central Belt
24. West of Scotland strategic rail enhancements
25. Light Rapid Transit between Edinburgh and Fife
26. Rail enhancements between Inverclyde, Ayrshire and Glasgow
27. West Coast mainline rail freight improvements
28. Inverkeithing to Halbeath railway line
29. Dundee Northern Relief Road.