

Report to Partnership Meeting 13 November 2020

CONSULTATION

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Purpose of Report

This report updates Members on the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 which will inform the Scottish Government's transport investment programme in Scotland over the next 20 years.

Background

Transport Scotland is currently undertaking the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) to inform the Scottish Government's transport investment programme in Scotland over the next 20 years (2022 – 2042).

To support this, Transport Scotland have developed 11 Regional Initial Appraisal: Case for Change reports. HITRANS are members of two of these Regions – one for the Highlands and Islands which includes Orkney, CnES, Highland and Moray, while the other covers Argyll and Bute.

These 11 reports are supported by a national level Case for Change report which sets out the overarching vision for transport investment in Scotland and the challenges that must be addressed to support delivery of the priorities set out in National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2).

At the last Partnership Meeting, Officers provided a verbal update on HITRANS submission to the consultations for the two reports relating to the HITRANS region indicating that the overall assessment process had been delayed as a result of the Covid pandemic.

The Regional Transport Working Groups (RTWG) were subsequently reconvened in October with an update on the revised timescales for STPR2 given to officers.

STPR2 Revised Timeline / Phasing

Following the redeployment of much of Transport Scotland's staff to the Covid response, the option sifting element of the STPR assessment has continued to be progressed. However, a revised two phase approach to STPR2 has been agreed with the Cabinet Secretary.

At the first reconvened meeting of the RTWGs, Transport Scotland confirmed comments made on the Case for Change reports were still being reviewed and updates discussed. A new Covid-19 Addendum would be added along with an Option Sifting chapter with the intention to publish a final version of the Case for Change reports in December.

At the time of writing, RTWG members have yet to receive a copy of Option Sifting with the long list of options and those options or interventions which have been sifted out. However, it was

confirmed that a number of options were sifted out because they were placed out of scope by Transport Scotland's STPR Decision Making Process.

These include:

- Local roads, unless they provide access to a key port or airport
- Inter-island ferry routes which do not form part of CHFS or NIFS networks
- Fixed Links (island to island not related to CHFS or NIFS services)
- Air Services
- Funding
- Concessionary Travel, including Public Transport fares
- Air Discount Scheme and Road Equivalent Tariff
- Digital Connectivity

Sifting has been supported by Modal Leads appointed to lead a top down sifting of options generated from the earlier more bottom up stage.

Options being considered for Phase 1 were being considered in packages under 10 themes:

- Smart Cities
- Sustainable Towns, Villages
- Rural, Island Accessibility & MaaS
- Smart Sustainable Travel
- Bus Users
- Ferry Users
- Low Carbon Transport
- Freight Industry
- Rail Users
- Resilience, Safety, Maintenance

Options were being identified in Phase 1 for which there is a high degree of confidence they will perform well against the following:

- Are likely to make a significant contribution to STPR2 transport planning objectives;
- Can be delivered or significantly progressed within the next 2-3 years, and
- Would support a fair and sustainable economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, and help lock in sustainable travel behaviours observed during lockdown.

Next Steps

Transport Scotland confirmed that following the RTWG meetings in October they would present further details on regional sifting of options and engage further on emerging Phase 1 themes and options before the STPR2 project board meeting in November and the publication of the final Phase 1 report and Case for Change reports in December 2020.

Transport Scotland intend to then progress option development of the longer term options early in 2021 with a view to publishing STPR2 Phase 2 in Summer 2021.

It remains unclear if projects committed to in STPR 1 will be subject to reconsideration through STPR2. There is an indication in the draft Infrastructure Investment Plan that the dualling of the A9 and A96 remains but this is less clear for other schemes including the Highland Mainline (sub

3 hour journey time and hourly frequency) and Inverness – Aberdeen Line (2 hour end to end journey time and hourly frequency).

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

1. Note the report
2. Consider how HITRANS and other Regional Transport Working Group Members engage with Transport Scotland to advance strategic transport priorities through STPR2 Phases 1 and 2

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 offers an opportunity for HITRANS and local partners to secure Scottish Government funding and support for transport priorities identified in the Regional Transport Strategy

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – STPR2 will shape investment in strategic transport priorities for the next 20 years. The Scottish government have committed to align strategic transport priorities with other government policy and strategy including the Infrastructure Investment Plan, National Planning Framework 4 and Regional Spatial Strategies.

Financial

Impact – Neutral

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – A fairer and more inclusive Scotland are priorities for STPR2. We have highlighted the importance for STPR2 to recognise the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and by extension ensure that the challenges faced by remote rural areas are also addressed.

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