STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations and Initial Appraisal: Case for Change reports – HITRANS Feedback, March 2021

Introduction and Executive Summary

At this stage, the STPR2 process is inviting feedback on the STPR2 options and COVID-19 Addendum sections of the National Case for Change report, specifically:

- Phase 1 Recommendations

- Options that will be taken forward for further appraisal in STPR2 Phase 2

- the COVID-19 Addendum of the report.

In this response feedback is provided in respect to:

- Phase 2 headline themes

- Phase 1 proposed interventions

- Gaps and limitations of the process and outstanding NTS2 actions

- Phase 2 options for further appraisal

- Case for Change Regional Reports

- Wider STPR approach

Executive Summary

The feedback evidenced in this response against the themes of phase 1 recommendations and those taken forward to phase 2 show a dominant focus around urban issues and opportunities.

HITRANS wants to understand how rural, remote and island areas that will be untouched by the STPR2 phase 1 and phase 2 aspects will be supported in terms of investment and development associated with transport to assist towards the NTS2 strategic framework?

A key factor remains around the way in which the definition of the strategic transport systems has been formulated. The process should include all of Scotland's transport, rather than be limited to Transport Scotland's responsibilities. This does not meet with the intention of NTS2 being a national strategy for all of Scotland's transport infrastructure and networks.

Concluding the NTS2 sponsored review of roles and responsibilities in transport in Scotland is of critical importance to the shaping of the STPR2 process.

As rural Scotland and the islands tend to suffer most as a consequence of the present rigid approach to responsibilities, rather than considering a more collaborative stance or element of subsidiarity, it is difficult to recognise how the STPR2 process, as currently presented, will *reduce inequalities, take climate action, deliver inclusive economic growth* and / or *improve our health and wellbeing* for the Highlands and Islands region, and therefore in turn the nation as a whole. **What is the current status of this review of roles and responsibilities?**

The question remains as to where strategic planning will otherwise be progressed with strategic matters that fall beyond the responsibility of Transport Scotland, but which necessitate consideration at a national level. **For those projects that have been excluded as out of scope (***Appendix C – Out of Scope Options***), where will they now be considered?** Highlighted here are projects such as the following that would benefit from national consideration:

- Reclassification of roads from local road to trunk road or vice versa – where will this be considered?
- Any public transport project or option that is revenue based.
- Ferry routes which do not form part of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) or Northern Isles Ferry Service (NIFS) – how will these be considered where there is ongoing uncertainty around the ability to fund replacement vessels and infrastructure?
- Options related to air services, including operation / expansion of airports and new flights / changes to existing flights.
- Revenue funding for public transport is out of scope, including concessionary travel, free public transport, reduced public transport fares or changes to existing concessionary travel schemes and Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) – where then will such issues be considered?
- Revenue funded routine and cyclic maintenance measures, for all modes and assets are out of scope – despite the fact that the maintenance backlog across much of the transport network across Scotland would be considered a strategic issue due to the scale of the problem.

"An Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) will be published, as the successor to the Ferries Plan 2013-22. It will develop objectives based on supporting delivery of NTS2 and the National Islands Plan, and develop proposals to meet those objectives which justify the continued high level of Government intervention. The ICP will be closely linked to the outcomes of the STPR2, in order to consider island connectivity more broadly having regard to aviation, ferries and fixed links, and to connection and onward travel". **Confirmation is required however that this Islands Connectivity Plan will satisfy the following:**

- have an **equal footing and absolute parity** to STPR2; and
- will **comprehensively cover all islands and peninsulas** in terms of their wide-ranging connection needs; and
- will be **strategically long-term** in nature to consider future options – we suggest 60+ years to appropriately consider the breadth of options, such as location of crossings, means of connection, ferry or fixed link etc.

While we recognise the merits of a number of the projects to our region that have been listed as 'progressed' through initial sifting to phase 1 or phase 2, it is clear that the loss or absence of a number of other projects that have been sifted out or that do not feature will undermine the opportunity to optimise NTS2 priorities in the Highlands and Islands context, including:

- addressing **affordability** issues across active travel, behavioural change opportunities, electric vehicles and transport poverty more generally.

- **decarbonising the bus network**, specifically consideration around an approach for smaller operators, particularly in remote, rural and island communities.
- how **Demand Responsive Transport** will be supported and developed in the absence of revenue funding through this process, or otherwise identification of targeted revenue support to affect service-changing provision.
- **very long term planning** for all island transport connections (60+ years).
- **decarbonisation of ferry and air transport** beyond the CHFS and NIFS network – the expertise developed by Orkney Ferries on the use of hydrogen should be used to guide practice along with international best practice on the deployment of battery electric ferries. Decarbonisation of internal air services including on routes within Orkney and Argyll should be included in the options taken forward.
- **improving surface access to ports and airports by all modes** is of relevance across all of Scotland, access to all ports and airports is vital in terms of lifeline services.
- in terms of mass transit, **options for enhanced shared mobility in other parts of Scotland** should be featured alongside the projects in the three largest urban centres – these should include meaningful, service-changing, investment in bus, coach and Demand Responsive Transport services.

Further, it is unclear how the Islands Impact Assessment for STPR2 has been used to inform the overall appraisal process thus far. The understanding is that the Island Impact Assessment process should help shape and inform appraisal rather than being on the outside of the process as an addendum. Again, it is vital that evidence is supplied to demonstrate transparently how the Island Impact Assessment element has and is being employed throughout the process.

In summary, HITRANS believes that the STPR2 process should include all of Scotland's transport, rather than being limited to Transport Scotland's transport responsibilities. This latter approach does not flow from the intentions, vision or objectives of the NTS2 being a national strategy for transport for Scotland.

1 STPR2 Phase 2 Themes

1.1 The Phase 1 report in introducing the eight themes within STPR2 Phase 1, of what needs to be done in the short term highlights that *"within the list of themes and interventions, there are no specific priorities, as each component is important in addressing the complex transport needs of our nation. Neither are these interventions the sole responsibility of Transport Scotland to deliver, indeed many will rely heavily on partners to take them forward."*

1.2 However, many interventions or projects that are particularly important to the Highlands and Islands and Argyll and Bute regions have been excluded as *"out of scope for STPR2"* because they are not a direct responsibility of Transport Scotland. Indeed, the Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Regional Reports highlight that: *"It is recognised that the vision set out in NTS2 will only come to fruition through working in partnership with others, including Local Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships. This is particularly in areas of transport for which local authorities are responsible and which are not within the scope of this national strategic transport review."*

1.3 These eight themes are shown below, along with an overview in our view as to what extent each predominantly focusses on either urban, rural, remote rural or island issues. As can be seen from this high-level assessment, there is a dominant focus amongst Phase 1 themes around urban issues and opportunities.

Theme	Description	Interventions	Focus
Supporting smart and sustainable travel across Scotland	National measures that will support active and sustainable travel choices and placemaking principles	1. Development and delivery of Active Freeways 2. Expansion of 20mph zones 3. Influencing travel choices	**Urban** / Rural / ~~Remote Rural / Islands~~
Creating smart and sustainable towns and villages	Packages of sustainable transport improvements to enhance attractiveness and sustainability of our towns and villages	4. Transport's contribution to placemaking principles in neighbourhoods 5. Guidance and framework for delivering mobility hubs	**Urban / Rural /** ~~Remote Rural / Islands~~
Improving accessibility in rural and peripheral areas and for vulnerable groups	Improved public transport offering where fixed timetable services do not satisfactorily cover the needs of individuals, including consideration of demand responsive travel	6. Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service	~~Urban /~~ Rural / **Remote Rural / Islands**
Transforming Cities	Measures that will support active and sustainable travel alongside placemaking principles in Scotland's seven cities to help transform cities and neighbourhood centres	7. Reallocation of roadspace for active travel 8. Enhancing facilities at major rail stations (Rail Station Redevelopment) 9. Development of Glasgow Metro & Edinburgh Mass Transit strategies	**Urban** ~~/ Rural / Remote Rural / Islands~~
Enhancing public transport provision	A range of measures to improve the accessibility and reliability of public transport and stimulate a sustainable recovery post COVID-19	10. Reallocation of roadspace for buses 11. Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals 12. Infrastructure to provide access for all at rail stations	**Urban** ~~/ Rural / Remote Rural / Islands~~
Supporting transition to low-carbon transport	Measures that will increase the development and further transition of Scotland's transport fleet to low carbon	13. Investment in low carbon and alternative fuel transport systems 14. Delivery of Rail Decarbonisation Programme (Phase 1)	**Urban** / Rural / Remote Rural / Islands
Supporting a viable freight industry	Measures to improve conditions for the freight and haulage industry to deliver a modal shift	15. Strategy for improving rest and welfare facilities for hauliers 16. Infrastructure to encourage rail freight	Urban / Rural / Remote Rural ~~/ Islands~~
Enhancing safety and resilience on the strategic transport network	Package of measures on the strategic transport network focusing on improving safety and resilience	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	~~Urban /~~ **Rural** ~~/ Remote Rural / Islands~~

1.4 If remote rural and island issues and opportunities are not fully pursued through STPR2 phase 1, and, if issues associated with the dearth of revenue funding to support transport services in remote rural and island communities, are not addressed through STPR2, it needs to be made clear within STPR2 where these aspects will be tackled, both in terms of review and funding support.

2 How well do the Phase 1 interventions respond to the uncertainty in travel demand and behaviour that we face in the short term due to COVID-19? / How well do the Phase 1 interventions support Scotland's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in the short-term?

2.1 It would be helpful if the analysis and narrative around the COVID-19 Pandemic within the STPR 2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report considered and highlighted also the particular challenges surrounding issues in rural Scotland and for island communities. Notably, this includes:

- supported local bus and other services have seen a reduction in demand and restricted timetables, which further constrains the viability of these services going forward and has resulted in increased isolation in these communities.
- ferry and air service timetables having been restricted, with island communities therefore being constrained on an ongoing basis from the ability to undertake their normal activities, including travel to *essential* shopping and local health and other services.

2.2 Particular rural and island issues in terms of transport require special mention and consideration in terms of how STPR2 can support NTS2 aims in the post-pandemic period.

3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The recommended transport options for STPR2 are strategic covering a range of modes and geographies.

3.1 The recently published A Scotland for the Future: the opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population[1] sets out salient points of pertinence to the STPR2 and wider context for transport in Scotland, highlighting that 'Scotland's population change is, crucially, not a monolith. From Edinburgh to the Orkney Islands, from the Borders to Argyll and Bute, each and every local authority feels our demographic challenge differently.' The report highlights that we are seeing a precariously balanced picture across Scotland, with depopulation threatening some of our areas particularly across the Islands, Caithness, Sutherland and in the West.

3.2 In terms of Scottish Government Policies and Programmes which focus on infrastructure, the Scotland for the Future report sets out that:

> **The National Transport Strategy** sets the strategic framework within which investment decisions will be made with the on-going second **Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)** considering the strategic transport interventions needed – to support delivery of the strategy. The strategy highlights the need for the those living in rural, remote or island communities to be well connected including to making a positive contribution to maintaining and growing the populations in these areas.

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[1] A Scotland for The Future: The opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population (www.gov.scot)

3.3 This further reinforces our desire to understand how those rural, remote and island areas that will be untouched by the STPR2 phase 1 and phase 2 will be supported in terms of investment and development associated with transport to assist progress towards the NTS2 strategic framework and as highlighted here, ensuring that *'those living in rural, remote or island communities (will be) well connected including to (make) a positive contribution to maintaining and growing the populations in these areas'*.

4 How well do you feel the transport options recommended for further consideration address the problems, opportunities and objectives for strategic transport connections in Scotland?

<u>Setting the Policy Context</u>

4.1 The *Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Regional Reports* sets out the scope of STPR2 as follows:

> *To conduct a Scotland wide, evidence-based review of the performance of the strategic transport system, against multiple criteria including safety, environment, economy, integration, accessibility and social inclusion and, fundamentally, to support the Scottish Government's aims, including sustainable inclusive growth and the move to a low carbon transport system.*
>
> *In so doing, STPR2 will make recommendations for potential transport investments for Scottish Ministers to consider as national investment priorities, in an updated 20-year transport investment plan for Scotland.*

4.2 We reiterate here that the key factor remains the way in which the definition of the *strategic transport system* has been founded. It was not made clear in the early stages of the STPR2 development or through the various layers of consultation and engagement that the STPR2 was **only** interested in aspects for which Transport Scotland has responsibility, albeit also including active travel when it is not the responsibility of Transport Scotland. This, as has been highlighted in earlier responses, appears at odds with the National Transport Strategy vision and priorities. It would also appear that this, in keeping with comments above, favours issues and opportunities within the STPR2 that are more urban in nature.

4.3 Further, the *Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Regional Reports* states that STPR2 specifically focusses on Scotland's key strategic transport assets, and in this context, a strategic transport project is defined as:

- Any transport project that plays a significant part in supporting the NTS2 priorities and related outcomes;
- Projects or groups of projects related to transport networks owned, operated and funded directly by Transport Scotland;
- Passenger and freight access to ports and airports of national significance; and
- The inter-urban bus and active travel networks and principal corridors within urban areas.

4.4 Concluding the NTS2 sponsored review of roles and responsibilities in transport in Scotland is of critical importance to the shaping of the STPR2 process, and in turn, the definition of the Strategic Transport Network including airports, ports, harbours and other transport nodes which it appears has been focussed unilaterally on the status quo of responsibility.

4.5 As rural Scotland and the islands tend to suffer most as a consequence of this rigid approach to responsibilities, rather than considering a more collaborative stance or element of subsidiarity, it is difficult to recognise how the STPR2 process, as currently presented, will *reduce inequalities, take climate action, deliver inclusive economic growth* and / or *improve our health and wellbeing* for the Highlands and Islands region and therefore in turn the nation as a whole. What is the current status of this review of roles and responsibilities?

4.6 Specifically the failure to conclude this review at this time and the inability of the STPR2 process to consequently function as a whole of Scotland approach has resulted in:

- In terms of **strategic roads options for which the responsibility currently lies with Local Authorities,** the process appears to have overlooked the vital nature of these roads in securing lifeline access for much of the Highlands and Islands communities, which is in keeping with the NTS2 priorities around reducing inequalities, and inclusive economic growth. Furthermore, the local road network makes up 100% of the island network and 90% of the national network. Consequently sifting out all local authority roads is a major oversight and raises the appearance of Central Belt preference over rural and island areas. Furthermore this approach also ignores the active travel needs of islands and other rural and remote areas of Scotland; excluding local roads from STPR2 further limits the opportunities for increased active travel in remote, rural and island locations, which almost solely relies on the local authority road network.

- **Aviation** is a fundamental lifeline link for much of the region, both to mainland Scotland and inter-island, and hence should be fully considered through the STPR2 process. Air transport is a key economic, education, health care and social connector. Its removal displays a worrying lack of understanding of its vital nature to the fragile communities it supports within our region. We recognise the recent commitment to undertake an Aviation Strategy which we welcome. However, to exclude intra-Scottish aviation from the NTS and STPR2 undermines the vital function it performs and limits opportunities to understand its essential role in Scotland meeting its net zero targets.

- In terms of **ferry services,** no consideration has been given to any operator beyond those paid for directly or owned by the Scottish Government. CalMac as an operator features within the plan, but the wider connectivity that connects remote communities who depend on ferries operated by others are out of scope. A comprehensive plan must include all links and connectors, irrespective of ownership, especially where key lifeline services are involved.
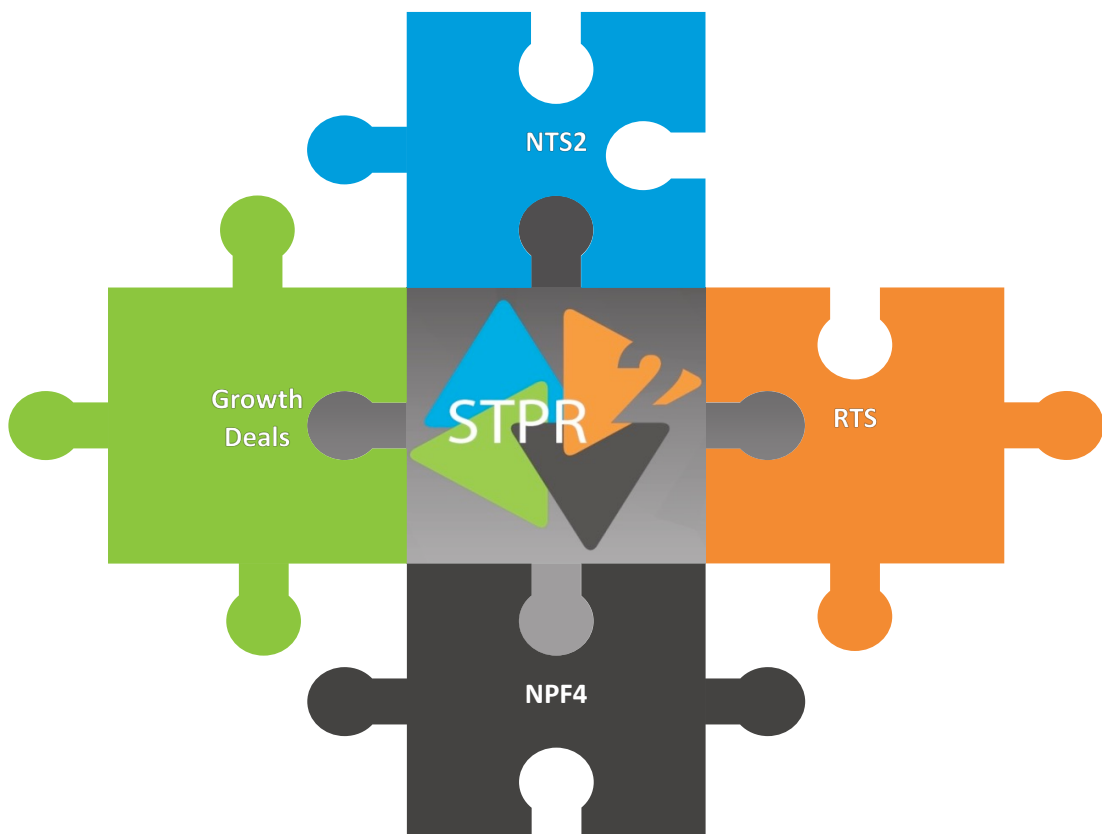
4.7 The question remains as to where strategic planning will otherwise be progressed with strategic matters that fall beyond the responsibility of Transport Scotland, but which necessitate consideration at a national level. For those projects that have been excluded as out of scope (*Appendix C – Out of Scope Options*), where will they now be considered? Highlighted here are projects such as the following that would benefit from national consideration:

- Reclassification of roads from local road to trunk road or vice versa – where will this be considered? Example opportunities for classification as trunk roads could include:
  - A846 Islay
  - A848 and A849 Mull
  - A890
  - A965 and A961 on Orkney
  - Western Isles Spinal Route
  - A98
- Any public transport project or option that is revenue based – in the context of declining budgets available for public transport, which is notably a rural issue where the majority of the local bus service network is supported by the local authority and where current national mechanisms of funding support (for example the BSOG and the National Concessionary Travel Scheme) in structure disproportionately benefit urban areas with commercial operations?
- Ferry routes which do not form part of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) or Northern Isles Ferry Service (NIFS) – how will these be considered where there is ongoing uncertainty around the ability to fund replacement vessels and infrastructure?
- Options related to air services, including operation / expansion of airports and new flights / changes to existing flights are out of scope. This includes Inter-Island and Island – Mainland air services – despite the fact that these services, by the communities that they serve, would consider them very strategic in nature, in the same way that train services would be considered strategic in more urban areas.
- Revenue funding for public transport is out of scope, including concessionary travel, free public transport, reduced public transport fares or changes to existing concessionary travel schemes and Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) – where then will such issues be considered? These aspects tend to disproportionately dis-benefit rural areas.
- Revenue funded routine and cyclic maintenance measures, for all modes and assets are out of scope – despite the fact that the maintenance backlog across much of the transport network across Scotland would be considered a strategic issue due to the scale of the problem.

4.8   Earlier elements of the STPR2 process has highlighted the linkages between differing levels of policy and strategy, from the national, through regional to local. The *STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations* report sets out that:

4.9   *"An Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) will be published, as the successor to the Ferries Plan 2013-22. It will develop objectives based on supporting delivery of NTS2 and the National Islands Plan , and develop proposals to meet those objectives which justify the continued high level of Government intervention. The ICP will be closely linked to the outcomes of the STPR2, in order to consider island connectivity more broadly having regard to aviation, ferries and fixed links, and to connection and onward travel".* Confirmation is required that this Islands Connectivity Plan will satisfy the following:

- Must demonstrably have an **equal footing and absolute parity** to STPR2; and
- will **comprehensively cover all islands and peninsulas** in terms of their wide-ranging connection needs; and
- will be **strategically long-term** in nature to consider future options – we suggest 60+ years to appropriately consider the breadth of options, such as location of crossings, means of connection, ferry or fixed link etc.

5   Do you feel the eight themes within the STPR2 Phase 1 capture what needs to be done in the short term, in relation to the transport investment priorities? / Do you feel the themes appropriately address challenges and opportunities described within the report? / Do you feel that the Phase 1 interventions associated with the eight themes support the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy? / Do you have any other comments on the transport options identified?

5.1   In terms of the wider process, the long list options presented across *Appendix C – Out of Scope Options, Appendix D: Options Sifted Out of STPR2* and *Appendix A: Groupings Taken Forward to Appraisal* would first have benefited from a more focused 'sense-check' and 'cleaning' step. There are several options that significantly overlap or are duplicates, and many others that are captured on varying scales of intervention, while others are closely linked, and some would be differing ways of delivering against the same problems or opportunities. This makes it very difficult to sensibly consider the list without this detailed cleaning and consolidation.

5.2   Prior to the initial appraisal there was a need to sense check, and for example, package some of the options that have been listed. This would be sensibly delivered through detailed consideration of the identified problems that are trying to be overcome or the opportunities that could be achieved, and we would have welcomed the opportunity through the Regional Working Groups and Reference Group to assist with this work.

5.3   The appraisal of 'packages' of measures, such as the "intervention 19 – Investment in Ferries and Ports" is too broad, and does not, particularly in the case of ferries, allow either comparison of different interventions against each other and critically does not cast a strategic, long-term eye, over the options for island connectivity in the very long term. It is far too simplistic to consider the breadth of ferry options across Scotland collectively, without testing and challenging the way services are currently provided, and if future change could better address the Transport Planning Objectives and wider Scottish Government and other objectives.

5.4   Specifically, it is not clear in terms of the ferry and some of the aviation options if there has been a step of cross-referencing with the most recent STAGs and OBCs etc., which would on a route / network basis have been subject to much greater detailed development and scrutiny – especially the linkage between 'problems' (and opportunities) surrounding particular connections and the proposed solutions and deliverability etc. If this cross-referencing was applied then these options could be presented in the list more pragmatically. For example, there are many options relating to internal connectivity within Orkney and the Western Isles which would better be captured through a network-wide strategy option, including highlighting the need to address any particular problems or constraints that have been identified through this or earlier (STAG / OBC etc.) processes.

5.5 Further, there is a wide range of active travel options, including enhancements to the functional travel network and links with leisure activity and tourism in mind. These, equally across the various locality and area types require development prior to appraisal. The risk with the current rudimentary approach is that some options in isolation would not score well, but when packaged and possibly programmed over a full programme could deliver successfully against strategic objectives, and vice versa.

5.6 It is difficult to comment on the division between options that have been sifted in or out without the accompanying summary of the consultant's appraisal evidence, notably the link to which problems / opportunities etc. an option is trying to address; and the assessment of how it is considered options will deliver against objectives. While we recognise at this stage the assessment is intentionally qualitative and to a degree subjective in nature, the opportunity to comment on these aspects would be welcome, and this would be a useful practice in using local expertise to supplement and inform the technical process.

5.7 In considering the specific phase 1 recommendations, the following is noted:

Supporting smart and sustainable travel across Scotland

5.8 HITRANS is supportive in general of the three interventions, which are in keeping with our Regional Transport Strategy. HITRANS would be keen to explore how these interventions can be tailored for remote, rural and island settings specifically.

5.9 Specifically, we would welcome a stronger emphasis in respect to intervention 3, which should go further and act more directly than simply marketing and campaigns. It is suggested that this also includes support for creating community hubs and the tools and policy and recruitment changes required to see more public, as well as private, sector employees based across our communities, which is also in keeping with the emphasis set out in the *A Scotland for the Future* report. Specifically, this would reduce the need to travel further, with travel to work becoming over shorter distances, more suitable to walking and cycling, and would support the retention and growth and sustainability of population in remote, rural and island areas.

5.10 This could be both local authority and government and government agency staff working within the communities, in the widest sense of that definition, that they service, so, for example, Transport Scotland staff based in communities that are served by ferry and air services.

Creating smart and sustainable towns and villages

5.11 In general HITRANS supports these interventions, but also seeks assurance that consideration will be given to application across the diversity of the cities, towns, settlements and more remote and island localities across the Highlands and Islands.

5.12 Specifically, while the rationale for the interventions references *"one of the major barriers to public transport uptake historically (being) connectivity and (a) lack of convenient end-to-end travel options"* **it is important to highlight that these are only barriers where public transport options exist**. Funding for local bus services has reduced significantly across Scotland, and continues to do so, and rural Scotland has been at the brunt of this decline with the heaviest reliance on subsidised local bus services. Between 2010 and 2019 there was loss of more than one in five subsidised bus services in Scotland, a loss of around 60 routes, which are far more likely to impact rural and remote areas. It would therefore be apt to consider and to make mention here how these two interventions could be tailored within this context.

Improving accessibility in rural, island and peripheral areas and for vulnerable groups

5.13 Dedicated capital support for bus and demand responsive services in rural, island and peripheral areas and for vulnerable groups is welcomed. The structure of such support will need to recognise the nature of the structures under which existing services are provided and the opportunities that exist, including across the third sector.

5.14 If not within STPR2, it is however also important to highlight where consideration could be given to address the *'scarce existing resources'* that are referred to from a revenue perspective. Without addressing this challenge also, it is difficult to see how a major capital investment would make any meaningful impact on present levels of accessibility and opportunity.

5.15 The Scottish Government has made a hugely positive commitment through their Bus Partnership Fund that will deliver transformational change in urban networks by tackling congestion and bus running time delays anchoring a partnership effort between local transport authorities and bus operators. Opportunities also exist, yet remain untapped, for Scottish Government to ensure that transformational change is delivered also for rural bus and community transport services; with interventions that would allow RTPs, Local Authorities and Community Transport groups to work together to deliver a pipeline approach that would make a real and lasting difference for sustainable travel in rural areas. If not within the umbrella of the STPR2, HITRANS would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government and Transport Scotland to design an approach to re-design and deliver this boost.

Transforming Cities

5.16 HITRANS welcomes the support through STPR2 Phase 1 for the Inverness Rail Station masterplan proposal, that will see needs of passengers and freight at its heart to create an enhanced station that would integrate with the city centre and facilitate innovative improvement opportunities, business opportunities, and benefits for surrounding areas, as well as integration of rail with bus and walking and cycling, a zero emission zone and efficient low carbon freight transfer. The Station Masterplan should be seen as an important element alongside completion of the earlier STPR commitments in respect of Highland Mainline frequency and journey times (average end to end journey time less than 3 hours and hourly frequency) and Inverness to Aberdeen (2 hour end to end journey time and hourly frequency) and these earlier service commitments must be re-stated with a clear timescale against delivery.

5.17 Inverness has a long standing ambition to be Scotland's cycling city. This has been supported through transformational investment and looks to build on the already long standing high rates of cycling within the city. In the short term there is an opportunity to make permanent some of the recent measures introduced through Spaces for People. In doing so it is essential that placemaking is at the heart of the process and that business and community interests buy in to the improvements made. In addition the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan is underpinned by an ambitious transport strategy that with the right support can realise a low carbon transport vision for the Highland capital and its catchment.

5.18 Elgin's Cultural Quarter is an important strand of the Moray Regional Growth Deal. There is real potential to deliver a showcase of good practice in sustainable urban realm and travel behaviour. A key enabler of this will be the removal of strategic trunk road traffic from the centre of Elgin through the A96 dualling programme with the Elgin bypass offering a real catalyst for delivering a better people focussed environment within Elgin. The potential of this scheme would benefit from accelerating the Elgin bypass element of the A96 dualling programme and could feature alongside a Moray park and ride strategy to further reduce traffic into Elgin.

5.19 Park and Ride remains an important opportunity to reduce car mileage and increase the use of sustainable travel modes. A strategic park and ride vision is needed for all major settlements and schemes identified in STPR 1 that have not been delivered remain an important opportunity to deliver modal shift.

5.20 Completion of the A9 and A96 dualling programmes are critical to the growth of Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth and will enable the City Region area to achieve its full economic potential. Within each of these schemes opportunities to accelerate delivery of sections of the programmes where the potential benefits to strategic traffic and end to end journey times can be maximised should be taken. Therefore delivering the bypasses of larger population centres (Nairn, Elgin and Keith) should be prioritised as should those sections of dual carriageway that can be delivered cost effectively and quickly.

Enhancing public transport provision

5.21 HITRANS particularly supports *Intervention 11 - Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals,* though is keen to understand what is meant by reference to "key ferry terminals", especially given the mixed picture of ownership and operation of ferry terminals across Scotland.

5.22 We have applied much effort over the years to improving interchange and interchange opportunity at ferry terminals across the Highlands and Islands, with rail and bus services, as well as in respect to walking and cycling connectivity. This is a difficult challenge within the constraints and structures of operations and timetabling, for example, the challenges of competing performance regimes which undermines integration, such as trains not waiting for ferry to arrive when delayed, despite both elements being Scottish Government contracts. HITRANS welcomes the opportunity to bring additional weight to these challenges through STPR2.

5.23 HITRANS also particularly welcomes *Intervention 12 - Infrastructure to provide access for all at rail stations and welcomes the proposals to upgrade facilities at Invergordon, Aviemore and Nairn,* and noting in particular the problems of accessibility at West Highland island platforms*.*

Supporting transition to low-carbon transport

5.24 HITRANS is equally committed to supporting the transition to Zero and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) as detailed in the Programme for Government, and is leading or participating in a multiple projects to deliver low carbon solutions including the EU funded projects like FASTER and MOVE and a number of innovative aviation projects that are advancing the transition to electric and hydrogen solutions that could transform both the economics and carbon emissions of domestic air travel in the near future. HITRANS is also very supportive of the Delivery of Rail Decarbonisation Programme. Electrification of the HML will have passenger and freight benefits, with rural routes playing their part with the development of alternatively-fuelled trains using renewable energy.

5.25 *Supporting a viable freight industry*Efficient movement of freight is vital to the success of our region and Scotland, for all sectors of the economy, it is vital that freight transport is given sufficient attention. This reflects the importance of external trade to the HITRANS region's economy given its small internal market. In addition, some products are significant contributors to the Scottish economy-e.g. whisky, fish/shellfish. The region also has several sectors which are freight transport intensive, e.g. forestry.

5.26 HITRANS in the *Regional Transport Strategy Update*[2] highlighted a number of specific freight interventions that were identified as essential to deliver on our RTS objectives, and supporting the Scottish Government's national economic, spatial, environmental and transport strategies. Specifically, we identified the need for a Rail Freight Strategy, including freight terminals – Fort William, Inverness, Georgemas, Keith / Elgin; and Gauge enhancements; and to conclude the freight fares work in respect to ferry services. We would ask that these aspects are advanced through this STPR2 phase 1 interventions, as well as progress with future fuels to decarbonise freight, both for road vehicles as well as ferries and rail.

5.27 *Enhancing safety and resilience on the strategic transport network*Improving safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing personal safety is one of the HITRANS five high level outcomes for the RTS, safeguarding improvements in road safety; reducing road casualties and tackling barriers caused by real and perceived safety issues. HITRANS welcomes the interventions to see investment in the strategic road network asset and to deliver a solution for access on the A83 to Argyll and Bute. We would also reiterate our commitment to proposals to upgrade the A9, A96 and the A82 between Tarbert – Inverarnan. These improvements are critical to improving the safety and resilience of the 3 principal corridors connecting the Highlands and Islands with the rest of Scotland. In the case of the A96, prioritisation of the sections to bypass Nairn and Elgin would significantly improve road safety within the towns but also provide for transformational placemaking projects to come forward.

5.28 There is also still a need to build on the investment delivered under the 2008 STPR priority of a 'Targeted Programme of Measures to Reduce Accident Severity in North and West Scotland'. Further targeted improvements are required to improve road safety on some sections of all trunk and regionally significant roads including addressing sections with poor alignment, reduced carriageway width and narrow bridges such as on the A887 at Torgoyle and A87 on Skye. Such improvements should be considered here under intervention 17.

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[2] HITRANS - Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership

5.29 While the proposal to double investment over the next 5 years to address backlogs by undertaking maintenance and asset enhancement is welcomed, this again draws attention however to the maintenance backlog on the wider local authority network, which has intensified due to increasing financial constraints in recent years for many local authorities.

5.30 The roads most likely to be affected by this maintenance backlog are those in remote areas. Here poorer roads slow journeys and increase wear and tear on vehicles and have adverse economic impacts. A national approach is required to redress the road maintenance backlog on the local authority road network, and, if not through STPR2, then where this will be considered needs to be set out. Securing funding and a coordinated approach to progress with the backlog and changing environmental conditions, such as at Stromeferry bypass or the Churchill Barriers in Orkney, is required.

5.31 HITRANS supports intervention 19 investment in ferries and ports. As highlighted in the RTS *'lifeline ferry services provide access to/from the communities of islands and peninsulas. Sailing frequency is generally increased in the summer to meet tourist demand. The communities benefit from this, but this then leaves deficiencies in frequency of service during the winter. Some ports around the region require upgrading to improve service reliability and to be able to accommodate future vessels. There can also be challenges in terms of larger freight vehicles accessing ports and harbours. An ageing ferry fleet is leading to reduced service reliability, perhaps coupled with changing weather patterns. It also contributes to vehicle capacity constraints on some routes, and ageing vessels and shore infrastructure are particularly issues for the internal Orkney ferry network.'*

5.32 As questioned in our comments on earlier interventions, clarity is requested on if not through STPR2 through which route challenges such as the future of the internal Orkney ferry network will be concluded? Will this be encapsulated with the Island Connectivity Plan specifically?

5.33 Furthermore, while HITRANS welcomes the *'commitment to a long-term plan to give confidence to island communities on (the) Scottish Government's ongoing commitment'* we recommend that this is a **very** long-term plan, that considers both the short-term next generation of vessel (and infrastructure) as well as the next at least two generations henceforth in order that a full examination and appraisal of options can be considered across a wide geographical area (rather than on a simple route-by-route basis) in partnership with the communities that are connected by the services, that can consider the status quo of provision as well as more radical options for connectivity.

5.34 HITRANS is supportive of *intervention 20 speed management plan* and welcomes the inclusion of speed limits through rural settlements on the trunk road network and reducing speed limits in residential areas. It would be helpful if consideration at the same time through the plan was also given to similar rural settlements that are not on the trunk road network but which experience similar problems and opportunities, as it would be most efficient to consider such aspects in parallel, including to ensure consistency across Scotland in terms of proposals and solutions. To achieve this adequate additional resource must be provided to local authorities to ensure they can take this forward. This is similarly the case for the efforts to eliminate pavement parking.

6 What worked well and what could have been improved in the Case for Change stakeholder and public engagement?

6.1 The stakeholder and public engagement did not make clear the detail of the remit of STPR2, which in turn has led to the amassing of many options which then do not fall within the now understood auspices of STPR2. It would have been more appropriate, and would have better managed expectations, to set out the scope of STPR2, as well as setting out where other aspects could and would be considered, from the outset. This would include setting out the scope also of the Island Connectivity Plan for example, and setting out the progress on the NTS-sponsored review of roles and responsibilities in transport in Scotland. Working these aspects in isolation has unwittingly raised expectations around the STPR2 process being a process for the whole of Scotland, and has resulted in a loss of confidence in the efficacy of the approach.

6.2 The recommendation is that this is set out more clearly from the outset in any similar process in the future.

7 Options that will be taken forward for further appraisal in STPR2 Phase 2

7.1 The following comments are provided in respect to the options that have been put forward for further appraisal in STPR2 phase 2.

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
Active Travel	Access to Bikes	Options to improve access to bikes (conventional and e-bikes) and equipment such as charging facilities, lights, locks and helmets through bike libraries and other initiatives	We welcome this initiative, and would welcome involvement in its development based on HITRANS' recent experience in this area across the Highlands and Islands; affordability is often an issue in preventing the uptake of bikes, and particularly e-bikes
	Active Travel Hubs	Options to provide active travel hubs in Scotland's cities and major towns that provide advice, bike storage and maintenance facilities	This would also be applicable for remote and island communities, perhaps where distance to such services and facilities would be a barrier; consideration should be given to means of deliverability across the whole of Scotland, including upskilling in our most remote communities or consideration of mobile facilities for example
	Connect More Settlements to the National Cycle Network	Options to expand the NCN to reach more settlements	This would be a welcome development, including consideration of parts of the network that are no longer on the NCN as they do not comprise off-road sections
	Cycle / Public Transport Integration	Options (outside of franchise commitments) which allow the safe and efficient transport of bikes on public transport (bus, rail and ferry) and at transport hubs.	This would be welcome and is relevant across Scotland; HITRANS has recent expertise to share in these areas
	Current National Cycle Network	Options to upgrade the existing NCN, including addressing issues where there are safety concerns at on-road sections since their addition to the network.	The declassification of long distance routes within the Highlands and Islands highlights the need for investment in this network but this investment should

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
			reflect local priorities and be shaped at a local level.
	Information & Signage for Active Travel	Options to provide good quality information, journey planning and signage of active travel networks and facilities	Welcome, including procedures to ensure this is kept up to date
	Major Trip Attractor Accessibility by Active Travel	Options to provide safe, high quality active travel routes that enable easy access to major trip attractors (e.g. hospitals, major employment sites) in Scotland's cities and towns	Also a focus on accessibility would be welcome, particularly in towns where the (historical) built environment can constrain the options in terms of what can be provided to improve accessibility, and notably focussing on people with reduced mobility, and those travelling with young children, perhaps in prams and buggies
	Liveable Neighbourhoods	Options to make urban and suburban neighbourhoods in Scotland's cities and towns more conducive for active travel by improving conditions for walking, wheeling and cycling and reducing traffic dominance	
	Strategic Road Severance	Options to improve facilities and crossings for pedestrians and cyclists in locations where strategic roads have a significant severance effect in communities	Also of relevance beyond the trunk road network; important to maintain consistency of approach across Scotland
	Public Bike Hire Schemes	Options to facilitate the roll out of public bike hire schemes to enable their use by more people in more locations across Scotland	Welcome option of benefit to both residents and visitors. Opportunities across all types of areas; need to recognise associated revenue costs also however, and consider means to ensure roll out is self-sustaining
	Quiet Roads	Options to implement quiet roads, potentially including measures such as traffic calming measures and speed limit reductions that form parts of strategic active travel networks, where appropriate	Welcome for consideration across all area types across Scotland
	School Active Travel	Options to provide opportunities for safe and high quality active travel routes that enables school pupils resident in Scotland's cities and towns to walk, wheel or cycle to school	Also of relevance in more rural, remote rural and island communities; while home to school transport (bus) will be the dominant mode in these areas, some children live closer to school and walking, wheeling and cycling is an option with the right facilities and support; consider rural 'bike train' for example
	Strategic Expansions of the National Cycle Network	Options to expand the NCN to reach more settlements and complete strategic gaps in the network.	How does this differ from option above: Connect More Settlements to the National Cycle Network?
	Footway Enhancements on Strategic Routes	Options to upgrade existing footways on trunk roads and principal routes in our towns and cities, such as width, surfacing, drainage and drop kerbs at crossings. In addition, safe crossing facilities on major desire lines and adequate security (such as sightlines, lighting) where feasible.	Also consider similar approach beyond the trunk road network in our towns and villages; and consider approach to address similar issues, including options within a space-constrained built environment for example
	Strategic Active Travel Corridors within and between Urban	Options to provide high quality, segregated active travel routes on major distributor routes in	Also need to consider as a priority the circumstances whereby an on-road active travel route is more appropriate / is the only feasible

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
	Areas (Active Freeways)	Scotland's towns and cities, with connections to major trip attractors	option, generally where space is very constrained, and consider the circumstances where this is a pragmatic solution and the best design features to optimise such a route for active travel
	Thriving Centres	Options to make town and neighbourhood centres more conducive for active travel by improving the urban realm and reducing the dominance of vehicular traffic and car parking	Consider approach to better balancing the sometimes competing demands around vehicular traffic and demand for car parking
	Transport Node Connectivity	Options to provide high quality active travel routes between public transport nodes (rail stations, bus stations, interchange facilities) and their catchments (such as residential and key trip attractors), along with high quality cycle parking at the nodes	Welcome intervention; HITRANS has been working on provision of high quality cycle parking at key nodes across the region, notably air, ferry and bus nodes, and would welcome further developments in this area across urban, rural, remote rural and island communities
	Village – Town Active Travel Connections	Options to provide active travel routes from villages to a nearby town or regional centre.	Welcome intervention, which will have applicability across much of the Highlands and Islands, including more remote and island communities; also recognise where this may also involve a ferry, air or bus element to a longer journey
	Former Rail Route Re-use for active travel	Options to create more active travel routes on former rail lines	Welcome intervention, for example the Black Isle
	Urban Placemaking	Options to facilitate placemaking schemes to improve the quality and ambiance of street spaces in Scotland's cities, towns and villages	Welcome intervention
Behaviour Change	School Streets	Options to facilitate traffic exclusion zones on streets where it is appropriate to do so near schools at school start/end times	Welcome intervention
	National Behaviour Change Programme	Options to implement a national, long-term campaign to promote the benefits of active and sustainable travel and give information on appropriate opportunities to do so	Consider an updated approach to influencing positive behaviour, consider influencers, making it social, and using the power of social networks for example
	Regional Behaviour Change Programmes	Options to support regional, long-term campaigns to promote the benefits of active and sustainable travel and give information on appropriate local opportunities to do so	
	Expansion of Car Clubs	Options to expand car club availability and use across Scotl-and	Welcome intervention, and particularly consider affordability for those that do not have / cannot afford access to a private car / van and for whom lack of transport, particularly bus services is a barrier to employment, learning etc. While car ownership is notably higher in rural and remote rural areas, still a significant number of households do not have access to a private car / van
	Improved Information on	Options to improve information (such as printed, real time and on-	Consider integration with existing app based information also, such

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
	Sustainable Travel Modes	vehicle announcements) about active and sustainable travel routes and services	as Strava, which is widely used for walk / cycle routes and route planning
	Sustainable Travel towns/Cities	City/Town-wide initiatives to give a holistic programme of promotion on active and sustainable travel choices	
	Road Safety Campaigns	Options that consider a national, long-term campaign (and/or support local/regional campaigns) to promote better driver behaviour and reduce road safety fears including people travelling actively	
	Travel Demand Management	Measures to effectively manage travel demand and encourage more sustainable travel options.	
	Low Emission Zones (LEZ)	Options related to Low Emission Zones (LEZ), i.e. where only certain vehicles are allowed to enter, based on their emissions standards.	
Bus	Bus Priority Infrastructure	Options to increase the roll out of bus priority measures, and where already available, improve existing measures	Welcome intervention in towns and cities
	Decarbonisation of the Bus Network	Options related to decarbonisation of the bus network (incl. fleet).	Welcome intervention; consideration required for approach to delivery for smaller operators, particularly in remote, rural and island communities who may not have the capacity, knowledge or capital to support decarbonisation; different levels of intervention required for different types of service / service operation
	Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) / Community Transport	Measures to support Demand Responsive (DRT) and Community Transport, excluding revenue funding	Welcome intervention; however careful consideration required as to how this will be delivered, and if not revenue support through STPR2, where revenue support could meaningfully come from in order to deliver any improvement in accessibility and therefore community outcomes
Rail	Central & North East Scotland Rail Improvements	Options to improve capacity, frequency and reliability of train services, such as, train lengthening and linespeed improvements	
	Glasgow, West Coast and South West Scotland Rail Improvements	Options to improve capacity, frequency and reliability of train services, such as, train lengthening and linespeed improvements	
	Edinburgh, East Coast and Borders Rail Improvements	Options to improve capacity, frequency and reliability of train services, such as, train lengthening and linespeed improvements	
	Highland and Far North Rail Improvements	Options to improve capacity, frequency and reliability of train services, such as, train lengthening and linespeed improvements	Welcome intervention electrification to Inverness, journey time, also rail freight capability (HML as per STPR1 – as yet undelivered)
	Decarbonisation of the Rail Network	Options related to decarbonisation of the rail network (incl. rolling stock)	Welcome intervention – classic electrification and using renewables for classic

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
			electrification on trunk routes and alt fuels on rural routes
	High Speed Rail	Development of High Speed Rail north of HS2 to Scotland and / or within Scotland	Welcome intervention – interchange in the Central Belt is key for the Highlands and Islands
	New Rail Lines, Including Re-Opening of Disused Lines for rail services	Options related to re-opening of disused rail corridors for rail and opening new rail lines including associated new stations	
	New Rail Stations	Options related to opening new rail stations on the existing rail network	Welcome intervention
	New Sleeper Routes	Option related to the introduction of new or extensions to existing rail sleeper routes	Welcome intervention – HITRANS has been developing this concept
	Rolling Stock Quality	Improvements to the quality of heavy rail rolling stock not already committed to within the relevant ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchise. This does not include decarbonisation options which are covered under RL5.	Welcome intervention
Public Transport	Public Transport Network Coverage, Frequency and Service Integration	Options to improve the network coverage, frequency and service integration of bus and rail, excluding revenue funding. Particularly access to key services such as healthcare, education, leisure and retail.	Careful consideration required as to how this will be delivered, and if not revenue support through STPR2, where revenue support could meaningfully come from in order to deliver any improvement in accessibility and therefore community outcomes
	Mobility Hubs and Multimodal Interchanges	Implement new / upgrade existing strategically important mobility hubs, Park & Ride sites and other multi-modal interchanges.	Welcome intervention
	Regional Passenger Facilities/Station Enhancements	Bus and rail passenger facilities and station enhancement improvements, including improved accessibility to facilities for passengers with reduced mobility.	Welcome intervention
	Integrated Public Transport Ticketing	Integration of ticketing across public transport (bus, rail, light rail and ferries).	Welcome intervention in some contexts between services; not essential in all situations, such as longer distance routes and connections whereby stronger integration between services, more multi-leg journey options and greater integrated resilience would be higher priorities
Ferries / Island Connectivity	Ferry Service Improvements on the CHFS and NIFS network	Options related to CHFS or NIFS network that suggest a change to ferry services, such as capacity, frequency or related port infrastructure.	Welcome intervention; as highlighted in comments in this document this needs to include very long-term planning approach to island connectivity, and could include fixed links options as described below
	New Ferry Routes (Internal to Scotland)	Options related to new internal ferry routes (within Scotland) which may reduce operating costs or subsidy on the CHFS or NIFS network.	
	New International Ferry Routes	Options relating to new international ferry services that could bring positive economic benefit to Scotland but which are not sufficiently attractive to the market.	Difficult to consider in the context of many ferry routes within Scotland not being presently fit of purpose

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
	Decarbonisation of Ferry Network	Options related to decarbonisation of the ferry network (incl. vessels).	Welcome intervention; work is progressing around the region to this end there is a real opportunity to decarbonise shorter ferry crossings quickly including on inter island routes. The expertise developed by Orkney Ferries on the use of hydrogen should be used to guide practice along with international best practice on the deployment of battery electric ferries. Decarbonisation of internal air services including on routes within Orkney and Argyll should be included in the options taken forward under Island Connectivity.
	Fixed Links	Options related to fixed links which meet at least one of the following criteria: Connect the Scottish mainland to an island; Reduce the operating costs of the CHFS or NIFS network; Address a strategic problem as identified through evidence-based appraisal that cannot be addressed by reasonable alternatives.	As above
Roads	North West Scotland Trunk Road Network Improvements	Package of measures to improve the capacity, reliability and resilience of routes, such as overtaking opportunities, partial dualling, junction improvements and route realignment.	Welcome interventions to improve reliability and resilience of the network. However, the classification based on Trunk Road operating areas highlights lack of consideration of strategic road network for which the local authorities are respnsible
	North East Scotland Trunk Road Network Improvements	Package of measures to improve the capacity, reliability and resilience of routes, such as overtaking opportunities, partial dualling, junction improvements and route realignment.	
	South West Scotland Trunk Road Network Improvements	Package of measures to improve the capacity, reliability and resilience of routes, such as overtaking opportunities, partial dualling, junction improvements and route realignment.	
	South East Scotland Trunk Road Network Improvements	Package of measures to improve the capacity, reliability and resilience of routes, such as overtaking opportunities, partial dualling, junction improvements and route realignment.	
	Low Emission/Ultra Low Emission/Electric Vehicle National Action Plan	A National Action Plan to support the shift to Low Emission/Ultra Low Emission/Electric Vehicles and help deliver Scottish Governments net zero targets.	Welcome interventions, particularly requires consideration of options to address affordability issues around the take-up of Low Emission / Ultra Low Emission / Electric Vehicles – supporting those that could most benefit (in terms of accessibility) from the benefits of such vehicles
	Road Safety (Vision Zero) Measures	A national package of road safety measures, such as road safety campaigns and technology to target casualty reduction.	Welcome intervention

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
	Trunk Road Space Reallocation	Package of measures to reallocate road space on the trunk road network, such as reduction of on-street parking, high occupancy vehicle lanes and no parking zones.	Welcome intervention
	Package of measures to reallocate road space on the trunk road network, such as reduction of on-street parking, high occupancy vehicle lanes and no parking zones.	Review of speed limits across the road network, including the potential to implement 20mph zones	Welcome intervention, across trunk road and local authority road network should be given consideration to ensure consistency of approach across Scotland
Freight	Decarbonisation of Freight Deliveries	Measures to encourage low carbon fuels (including electric, hydrogen, CNG/LNG) that will decarbonise the freight transport sector in line with the Scottish Government targets and commitments.	Welcome intervention
	Freight Consolidation Measures	Measures related to Freight Consolidation and Multimodal Hubs to help facilitate sustainable freight deliveries.	Welcome intervention
	Freight Rest Stops	Measures to help facilitate the introduction of freight rest stops for HGV drivers to take breaks and rest periods as required by regulation.	Welcome intervention
	Freight Reliability and Efficiency Improvements	Measures aimed at improving the reliability and efficiency of freight journeys.	Welcome intervention
	Last-Mile Logistics	Moving freight deliveries to low/zero carbon forms of transport, by encouraging the use of active travel measures and electric vehicles to service last-mile logistics	Welcome intervention; HITRANS is supporting such measures through support for projects utilising e-cargo bikes across in the Highlands and Islands
	Sustainable Modal Shift of Freight	Transferring the delivery of freight from road vehicles to more sustainable modes, such as rail and water freight.	Welcome intervention
	Rail Freight Enhancements	Measures to facilitate the growth of rail freight in Scotland, such as Gauge, Route Availability, Trailing Length, Terminals and Pathing	Welcome intervention – especially creation of new freight capability on HML (length) as proposed in STPR1
Technology	Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV)	Measures related to Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV), i.e. the operation of vehicles without direct driver input to control. This grouping relates to all modes of transport.	Welcome intervention
	Co-operative Intelligent Transport Systems (CITS)	Measures related to C-ITS, which are a group of technologies and applications that allow effective data exchange through wireless technologies between vehicles and infrastructure which can also be applied to vulnerable road users	Welcome intervention

Category	Grouping name	Grouping Description	Comments
		such as pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.	
	Transport Scotland Operational Communications	Options related to both wireless and fibre communications to support the management and operation of Transport Scotland services	
	Nationwide Open Data, Passenger Information and Communications	Options related to transport data and the provision of public transport information and passenger communications for journey planning.	Welcome intervention – and including better integration and allowing new entrants and giving power to the consumer
	Adaptive Traffic Control on the Trunk Road	Options that allow optimisation of the performance of the Trunk Road Network through adaptive control.	Welcome intervention
	Incident Management System Upgrade	Measures to improve the system software or architecture of Incident Management Systems.	Welcome intervention
	Control Centre of the Future	Development of operation functions and procedures within the Traffic Scotland National Control Centre to adapt to changing requirements	
	Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Roadside Infrastructure on Motorways and Trunk Road Network	Options to improve transport outcomes such as transport safety, transport productivity, travel reliability, informed travel choices, social equity, environmental performance and network operation resilience	Welcome intervention
Multimodal	Improve Routes to Major Ports and Airports	Options related to improving surface access to Major Ports and Airports, by all modes.	Welcome intervention; of relevance to ports and airport across the Highlands and Islands; access to all ports and airports is vital in terms of lifeline services
	Improved Resilience of the trunk road and rail networks	Options to improve the resilience of the trunk road and rail network including the impacts from climate change.	Welcome intervention
	Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Digital Platform	Options which assist in the development and adoption of a MaaS digital platform for Scotland across a wide range of existing public, shared and demand responsive transport services.	Welcome intervention; highlighted by HITRANS ambitious round 1 MaaS Investment Fund project and application for round 2
Mass Transit	Glasgow Metro	Development of the public transport network within the Glasgow city region, with consideration of bus rapid transit, rail conversion, light rail and underground elements	Options for enhanced shared mobility in other parts of Scotland should be featured alongside these projects in the three largest urban centres. These should include meaningful investment in bus and coach services and demand responsive transport.
	Edinburgh Mass Transit Options	Development of the public transport network within the Edinburgh City Region with consideration of bus rapid transit, rail conversion, and tram network extension	See comment above.
	Aberdeen Mass Transit Options	Development of the public transport network within the Aberdeen City Region, with consideration of bus rapid transit, and light rail	See comment above.

8   Case for Change Regional Reports

8.1   Regional TPOs have now been included within the updated Case for Change regional reports. These generally are comprehensive in matching with the regional issues, challenges and opportunities, however we highlight the following for consideration:

- In terms of *'Increase public transport mode share by connecting sustainable modes of transport to facilitate integrated journeys, with a particular focus at key transport interchanges, including ferry terminals'* the focus is not on the transport interchanges themselves, but on creating as seamless as possible journeys through these interchanges, and what is key is the provision of more travel opportunities at either side of the interchange.
- In terms of *'Reduce transport poverty, by increasing travel choice for the island and rural communities'* it is often about providing transport and mobility and inclusion where this doesn't currently exist, and so reducing transport poverty may be better aligned with the prior TPO of: *'Improve mobility and inclusion for rural residents'*.

8.2   HITRANS agrees that generally these TPOs align well with the objectives / outcomes developed for the Highlands and Islands and Argyll and Bute regions and indeed broadly with our own RTS objectives.

8.3   These regional TPOs will be a useful tool in later stages of appraisal.

9   Comments on the wider STPR2 Approach

9.1   While we recognise the merits of a number of the projects to our region that have been listed as 'progressed' through initial sifting to phase 1 or phase 2, it is clear that the loss of a number of other projects that have been sifted out will undermine the opportunity to optimise NTS2 priorities in the Highlands and Islands context.

9.2   Equally we would note that a number of the projects included for further consideration have previously been sifted out in local and regional plans, including the Regional Transport Strategy, recognising that over the life of the programme roles, responsibilities and boundaries may change.

9.3   Several of the options refer to process and procedural aspects – these have all been sifted out on the basis of "out of scope" or "progressed elsewhere". The conclusion of many of these process options would have a marked bearing on many of the other project options and their success or otherwise through the STPR2 process. So, for example, *transferring decision making powers, redesign of ferry network in terms of e.g. governance, ownership and operations, increase funding and improve allocation,* and *road hierarchy changes* would all impact on the assessment of many other options throughout the lists. These process options would be resolved through concluding (from NTS2) the review of roles and responsibilities in transport in Scotland. It is unclear as to how the STPR2 process can be sure of what is in / out of scope without this vital piece of work being concluded.

9.4 Furthermore, the process should include all of Scotland's transport, rather than limited to Transport Scotland's responsibilities. This does not meet with the intentions of the NTS2 being a national strategy for transport. If these matters have not been concluded at this date, then these process and procedural options should be retained in the STPR2 process at this stage, or more logically, the review should be progressed and concluded to inform the STPR2 process.

9.5 When options are stated as "progressed elsewhere" there is no reference to how, or to what other option this is referring. Again, without further detail it is impossible to meaningfully comment on the validity of these options progressing or otherwise, and so it is difficult to provide effective comment. Further, for the *out of scope* projects that have been *sifted out* it is necessary to understand how the most essential of these will be pursued in the coming years.

9.6 It is unclear how the Islands Impact Assessment for STPR2 has been used to inform the initial appraisal process. The understanding is that the Island Impact Assessment process should help shape and inform the STPR2 appraisal rather than being on the outside of the process as an addendum. Again, it is vital that evidence is supplied to demonstrate transparently how the Island Impact Assessment element has been employed.

9.7 The 'not revenue' support message is made clear across multiple options, including where the under provision of revenue support is one of, or the major, limiting factor – plus this approach disproportionately disbenefits the Highlands and Islands. Remote, rural and islands in Scotland do not have a commercial network across many transport modes. Any continuation in capital support will be welcome, but at present this is often beyond the reach of smaller and community-based operators, which are far more prevalent in the Highlands and Islands; and further, without enhanced or any options for revenue support, nothing will improve. The smaller operators, including community-based ones, will not be able to improve or introduce services. Consequently, benefits will much more likely be focussed on urban Scotland. It is expected that such challenges should be highlighted through the Island Impact Assessment, but it is important to note that these are equally challenges for remote and rural mainland Scotland as well as for our islands. Consequently, it is expected that the Island Impact Assessment process should identify appropriate mitigations in order that the island communities (as well as remote and rural) are not disadvantaged, which should then be fed into the STPR2 options development and appraisal process.

9.8 Furthermore, there are several policy-based options, most of which have been sifted out, but some which have been progressed. Many of these are critical to the success of achieving the NTS2 priorities and our RTS objectives. There is a need to identify specifically how these will be considered and pursued. They have been raised by participants in the STPR2 process, and in the interests of transparency and therefore legitimacy of the STPR2, this detail needs to be fed back to participants.

9.9 We put forward that the revenue and policy options that have the highest priority based on our own assessment include at this stage, but are not limited to:

- Reform concessionary fare scheme or use alternative top-up mechanisms to provide more equal benefit to rural areas than the scheme presently affords; a disproportionate disbenefit through the scheme that will be further amplified through the introduction of the concessionary travel scheme for young people.
- Ensure that all significant developments are accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan.
- Enhance Orkney - Scottish Mainland ferry routes: introduce RET or similar level of fares on ferry services between Stromness and Scrabster (and Aberdeen) (and by extension all domestic ferry services).
- Implement aligned funding and coordinated investment within the region and nationally.
- Provision of school buses for pre-school children to attend ELC Units.
- Reduce bus fares to increase patronage (possible extension to existing concessions).
- Prioritisation and integration of walking and cycling links within all infrastructure improvements / developments.
- Provision of cluster employment hot desks in local centres to reduce need for longer commutes and home working support.

9.10 Finally, some options do not score well in a complete sense against the NTS2 priorities or our own RTS transport objectives, but should be considered essential, for example in delivering net zero targets. Such projects perhaps do not materially change journey times or travelling experience etc., so do not offer an immediate benefit for travellers across the region, and so do not score well across full NTS2 priorities and our RTS transport objectives, but as stated, would be necessary to deliver net zero targets. Such and similar options should be highlighted and either considered within STPR2 or it is outlined clearly how they will be considered separately.

10 High-level initial appraisal against NTS2 and RTS objectives undertaken by HITRANS

10.1 As there had been no sight of the detail that has informed the sifting in or out of individual options that has been supplied, a strategic appraisal of all options was undertaken to test the appropriateness and successes of the long list of options versus the NTS2 priorities, TPOs and the Regional Transport Strategy transport objectives.

10.2 The tables below set out the highest *performing* options from this appraisal. From a HITRANS perspective, these options present the greatest opportunity for our region in terms of delivering on the real problems and challenges that exist alongside the various inherent opportunities to deliver against the NTS2 priorities.

10.3 Through Table 1 and Table 2 below these are the key options that will satisfy the needs across the region, and hence the options that require to be progressed between partners, including endorsement through STPR2, or if not through STPR2, as highlighted above, there requires to be urgent clarity as to the channels whereby these options can be robustly considered.

10.4 It is understood that some of these options will inevitably drop out of the process through the subsequent stages of appraisal, including now consideration of the Regional TPOs as presented in the updated Regional Case for Change reports, and including when considering deliverability and affordability etc., but many will require further development work to inform this assessment: this is the function of the STPR2 (or agreed alternative) process. And, as highlighted above, many require development, packaging and refinement through this appraisal process.

10.5 Further, and as highlighted above, these options at this stage comprise a mix of capital, revenue and policy-based options, and subsequently much more attention is required to progress and evidence how or otherwise these options will be developed, refined and pursued.

Table 1 Highlands and Islands Option Appraisal

ID	Option Title
3	Enhance Orkney - Scottish Mainland ferry routes: introduce RET or similar level of fares on ferry services between Stromness and Scrabster
9	Introduce a third aircraft to inter-isle air service provision
10	Invest in ferry vessel replacement programme for ferry services operated by local authorities
12	Provide funding to maintain the Churchill barriers
14	Prioritise investment in ferry services as ferry routes are the equivalent of Trunk Roads for island communities and should be considered strategic
15	Programme of investment in significant local road improvements on the Western Isles
16	The development of the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Link Road
18	Upgrade the spinal route on the Western Isles to a trunk road standard and reclassify as a trunk road
44	Create a Lothian style municipal bus operator for the Highlands that is more customer focused, reliable and run comfortable buses more suited to the distance and patronage of the specific services they run
49	Implement / extend the track dualling and electrification across the region
55	Enhance Orkney inter-isle ferry routes: new harbour, linkspan and ferry terminal infrastructure for inter-isle ferry services
59	Increase Government spending on ferry services to reflect the importance of island communities and connectivity
60	Ensure that all significant developments are accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan
62	Enhance Orkney inter-isle ferry routes: invest in new ferry vessels
63	Improved frequency and access to Public Transport in rural areas (bus and rail) to centralised facilities, areas of work & central belt e.g. Day returns from island & Caithness & Argyll
68	Improve the maintenance of the trunk road network
69	Programme of investment in significant local road improvements on the Orkney Isles
72	A96 Dualling
74	A890 Strathcarron to Balnacra - Widening & realigning of single-track A890 between Strathcarron and Balnacra to provide two traffic lanes This work will connect with the A890 Balnacra to Lair improvement
75	A890 Balnacra to Lair - off-line widening of single track road through Balnacra and Achnashellach two lane carriageway
76	A832 Slattadale to Kerrysdale - widening of the final remaining single track section of the A832
83	Provision for improvements to Longman Roundabout, which will provide a new grade separated junction to replace the existing roundabout at the junction between the A9 and A82
85	Fixed link across Corran Narrows
88	Implement commitments on A9/A96/A82
91	A96 Nairn bypass
96	Online Trunk Road Improvements on the A82 South of Fort William, A83, A85 west of Tyndrum and A828
100	Increase capacity on CHFS and NIFS ferry services in the Highlands & Islands
101	Increase capacity on air services in the Highlands & Islands

ID	Option Title
105	Implement electric car charging routes on strategic routes/trunk roads: A82, M8, A9
109	Development of park & ride sites and bus priority measures
110	Re-evaluate public transport timetables – full coverage throughout week, especially Sunday
116	Reform concessionary fare scheme to provide more benefit to rural areas than it does at present
123	Invest in internal connectivity projects for Orkney
124	Stromeferry bypass/improvement project
125	Implement aligned funding and coordinated investment within the region and nationally
131	Introduce new air service between Skye and Central Belt
133	Increase capacity of Highlands & Islands airports to accommodate larger aircrafts, increased capacity and frequencies
136	Introduce PSO on Wick air routes
137	Increase capacity on air routes to and from Scottish islands, including PSO routes
138	Enhance Wick air routes: introduce air services between Wick and Edinburgh twice per day five days per week
139	Enhance Wick air routes: introduce air services between Wick and Aberdeen twice per day five days per week
140	Enhance Orkney - Scottish mainland air routes: encourage additional air operators to increase competition, frequencies and lower fares
141	Enhance Benbecula - Glasgow air route: increase frequency
142	Enhance Benbecula - Inverness air route: increase frequency
143	Creation of a new separated Junction at the Longman roundabout at Inverness, (A9) allowing for better access to the port
146	Enhance Orkney inter-isle air routes: improve runways on North Ronaldsay, with navigational aids, improved lighting and asphalting of landing strips
147	Enhance Orkney inter-isle air routes: improve runways on Papa Westray, with navigational aids, improved lighting and asphalting of landing strips
151	Enhance North Ronaldsay – Kirkwall ferry route: convert from slipway to linkspan and introduce RoRo ferry service
152	Enhance Papa Westray – Kirkwall ferry route: convert from slipway to linkspan and introduce RoRo ferry service
153	Enhance Outer North Isles ferry routes: increase frequency through timetabling based on a 16 to 18-hour operational day and four vessel operation (Sanday, Stronsay, Eday, Westray, Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay)
154	Enhance Outer North Isles ferry routes: create a refit timetable that will as a minimum be equivalent to the current summer timetable
155	Enhance Orkney inter-isle ferry routes: consider options for new greener fuels when investing in new vessels
156	Tunnels for North Isles to replace internal ferry services
202	Enhance Western Isles internal ferry routes: improve vessel reliability (particularly Uist/Barra)
203	Enhance Armadale/Lochboisdale - Mallaig ferry route: relocate Mallaig ferry berth and linkspan to Loch Nevis for improved shelter
204	Enhance Armadale/Lochboisdale - Mallaig ferry route: consider options for infrastructure development at all ferry terminals
206	Road investments to tackle pinchpoints/ resilience issue on the A82 through Fort William and on the A95
208	Measures to support traffic flow / resilience - introduction of passing places on the A9, A99 and A96
213	Improve all sections of the A82 below modern twin track/dual trunk road standards
226	Active travel infrastructure to extend from the mainland to the islands using ports and harbours
239	A bypass of the A82 through Fort William for Non-Motorised Users by 2030
249	Improvements to bus services / bus stations (e.g. new & electric fleets, e-bike hire & e-bike facilities)
261	Increase the frequency of services on the Highland Mainline
262	Reduce the journey times on the highland mainline through the introduction of more passing loops or dual tracked sections
264	Improved/Increased capacity on the Aberdeen/Inverness rail line
265	The establishment of a railway station at Dalcross

ID	Option Title
276	Modernise the Far North and Kyle lines with more passing places e.g. Lentran, Kildary, Kinbrace, and Stromeferry. Provide all loops with motorised points to allow faster running. Speed up journey times with new hourly service frequency between Inverness and Invergordon
280	Enhance Orkney - Scottish Mainland ferry routes: increase frequencies
281	Invest in harbour infrastructure to support sustainable ferry operations and transition to zero carbon emissions (Highlands & Islands)
282	Enhance Western Isles internal ferry routes: increase frequency to create 24-hour operation
283	Enhance Western Isles - Scottish Mainland ferry routes: increase frequency and capacity to create 24-hour operation
288	Enhance Mull - Ardnamurchan ferry route: invest in more frequency/vessels
290	Enhance Stornoway - Ullapool ferry route: increase frequency
291	Enhance Barra - Oban ferry route: increase frequency
296	Investment in transport Interchange and station improvement packages; improving quality and facilities in the region
297	Improvements to the Fort William interchange: cycle routes to/from, improved ticketing & information facilities
298	Ferry link/Fixed link from South Ronaldsay to Gills Bay (main land) and onward new road connection to Inverness
299	Improve the alignment, width and overtaking opportunities of the A95
300	Improve the alignment, width and overtaking opportunities of the A82
302	Improve the alignment, width and overtaking opportunities of the A9 North of Inverness
303	Sound of Harris Fixed Link
304	Sound of Barra Fixed Link
305	Fixed link from Western Isles to Mainland
306	Improvements on the A9 North of Inverness to improve safety and journey times E.g. Dualling, 2 +1 etc
307	Electric vehicle charging points strategically placed along the road network e.g. along the A9
308	Electric vehicle charging points at Ferry interchanges /terminals
309	A9 /Scrabster: dualling / 2+1 road safety measures
312	Congestion and Safety Interventions (Dualling, 2+1 lanes) on strategic road corridors A82/ A830
313	Improve current transport links and services on major routes e.g. A835 road to the isles to increase, A82 Tarbet to Fort William
314	Fort William strategic trunk road realignment / Investment: A82 Fort William - Caol - Fort William bypass
316	New bridge at Cromdale to replace single lane and traffic signals on the A95
317	Road improvements from Inverness to Ullapool/Kyle
318	Implement improved roadside / driver information on the A82
319	Realignment of Cambusavie bends on the A9 between Dornoch and Golspie
320	Provide 2+1 lanes on the A9 after Alness
321	Raise Highland roads to modern standard (e.g. A889 and A86)
322	Development of electric car charging (rapid) points / Hubs along strategic corridors A82, A90, A9 & M8
323	Upgrade the A889, dualling, 2+1 lanes
326	Fixed link between Mull and Scottish mainland
327	Tunnel (dual carriageway width) between Benbecula (Rarnish) and Skye (Neist Point)
334	Improve Bus/Rail interchange facilities at Elgin, Dingwall and Thurso
341	Promote & provide multi-modal information at key sites, including the new Kirkwall & Stromness Travel Centres & at Kirkwall Airport
347	Implement park & ride and bus priority measures in Inverness
348	Bus priority measures in larger settlements such as Inverness, Fort William, Elgin
349	Improvement of transport interchange facilities in Inverness and co-operability between modes
357	Implement demand responsive transport throughout the region and in Orkney
367	Enhance Stornoway - Ullapool ferry route: operate Saturday evening return sailing from Stornoway to Ullapool

ID	Option Title
368	Enhance Stornoway - Ullapool ferry route: run overnight freight sailing in standard RoPax mode
373	Enhance Lochboisdale - Mallaig/Armadale route: consider options for vessel replacement and required harbour upgrades
374	Enhance Castlebay - Oban ferry route: procure open-deck vessel and cascade MV Isle of Lewis to another route
388	Improvements at Munlochy Junction
389	Improvements at Tomich junction

Table 2 Argyll & Bute Option Appraisal

ID	Option Title
403	Provide wave protection at smaller scale harbours and ferry terminals in Argll & Bute including but not limited to Gourock Jetty, Kilcreggan Pier, Cloanaig, Dunstaffnage Bay, Fishnish, Colonsay, Gigha and Tayinloan
410	Improve road closure procedures (resulting from accidents and overnight maintenance) to minimise disruption
413	Prioritisation and integration of walking and cycling links within all infrastructure improvements / developments
415	Reduce bus fares to increase patronage (possible extension to existing concessions)
416	Provision of school buses for pre-school children to attend ELC Units
417	Improve comfort and safety of bus shelters
421	Improve reliability of trains on the West Highland Main Line (WHML) resolving issues affecting lines, such as flooding, drainage and landslips etc
422	Improve rolling stock provision on West Highland Main Line (WHML)
423	Extend rail network to the islands via fixed links
425	Upgrade and futureproof medium scale harbour infrastructure and ferry terminals throughout Argyll & Bute including but not limited to Campbeltown, Islay, Mull and Iona
429	Increase frequency of air services to/from airports in Argyll & Bute (Islay, Tiree, Colonsay, Coll, Oban)
431	Introduce air services between Edinburgh/Glasgow and Oban (with link to Barra)
432	Enhance Campbeltown - Glasgow air service: improve aircraft to improve reliability
433	Introduce air service between Coll and Glasgow
434	Introduce air service between Colonsay and Glasgow
435	Introduce air service between Islay and Edinburgh (and sufficient time for onward travel to Jura)
437	Consider the suitability and application of electric planes serving routes linking A&B and other domestic airports, in-line with Scottish Government commitments to establish the Highlands & Islands as the world's first net-zero aviation region by 2040
438	Replace ferries with fixed links including, but not limited to; Portavadie to Tarbert, Colintraive to Rhubodach (Cowal to Bute)
439	Upgrade trunk roads to DMRB standard (A82, A83, A85 & A828) better accommodating heavy vehicles
440	Dual A82 between Balloch and Tarbet to reduce frustration and accidents numbers / severity
450	New road on Kerrera to connect the north and south ends of the island (removing requirement for 2 separate ferry services to the island)
453	Road improvements on Mull and Islay (removal of single track sections)
458	Increase the number and frequency of bus services to provide a more resilient network, connecting all towns within Argyll & Bute and providing connections to the Central Belt
460	Develop electric cycle charging network and storage facilities at key transport interchanges (i.e. bus and rail stations and ferry ports) to facilitate their use for shorter, everyday journeys to key attractors
471	Use of innovative modes and technologies for the delivery of goods (such as drones)
475	Utilise locally generated renewable energy to power transport systems

ID	Option Title
476	B836/A8003/B8000 Road Upgrade Dunoon – Colintraive – Portavadie: Improve key cross Cowal routes to 'A' class standard, including widening and improved road alignment
477	Targeted road improvements - Mull: Improvements to key routes on Mull, including: - widening of the A848 between Salen and Tobermory. - new bridge on the A849 at Pennyghael, Mull (to ensure continued connectivity to / from Iona).
478	Targeted road improvements - Islay: Improvements to key routes on Islay, including: - removal of single track sections on routes accessing ports / harbours.
479	Targeted road improvements - Bute: Improvements to key routes on Bute, including: - upgrades to routes accessing ports / harbours.
480	Fixed link between Scottish mainland and Jura
481	Fixed link between Jura and Islay
482	Improvements to the road system and replacement bridge improving flow of traffic to/from Oban port
484	Consider new freight only ferry routes, including potential for overnight freight services in Argyll and Bute
501	Widen access to, and provision of, demand responsive travel (DRT), particularly for access deprived areas
502	Consider new freight only ferry routes, including potential for overnight freight services
503	Expand active travel network in towns / islands, including CHORD towns (Campbeltown, Helensburgh, Oban, Rothesay and Dunoon) / Cowal and Islay
526	New rail station to service HMNB Clyde
534	Introduce new passenger/vehicle ferry service between Lismore and Port Appin
536	Enhance Mull - Oban ferry route: increase number of ferry services
537	Enhance Ardnamurchan - Mull ferry route: increase number of ferry services
538	Enhance Mull - Oban ferry route: increase capacity, improve vessels, reliability and resilience
539	Enhance Dunoon - Gourock ferry route: increase capacity, improve vessels, reliability and resilience
540	Enhance Islay - Kennacraig ferry route: increase capacity, improve vessels, reliability and resilience
545	Targeted fixed links to improve connectivity and reduce reliance on CHFS
546	Construction of a distributor / relief road around Oban to reduce congestion within the town, to support development and to improve access to Oban ferry terminal
548	Lay-by provision on trunk roads to reduce frustration and accident numbers / severity. - improving "stopping" places / parking in tourist hotspots. - long laybys on A83 (as on A75) to permit HGV / tractor drivers to pull in for overtaking. - more passing places on rural roads with long laybys for HGV to pull in
549	Targeted improvements to protect trunk roads (A82, A83, A85 & A828) from landslides, coastal erosion and / or flooding
550	Targeted safety schemes on trunk roads (A82, A83, A85 & A828)
554	Parking provision - Lorry parking. - Overnight locations (lorries, campervans). - Gourock ferry. - Western Ferry. - Oban Ferry Port.
555	P&R Provision (e.g. Loch Lomond, Oban)
556	Provision of real time information services to help manage demand (e.g. improved signage and info during road closures)
557	Reduce national speed limits to reduce accidents / severity
562	Improve provision for impaired mobility passengers (including enforcement) on PT, Ferries and at Ferry Terminals
570	Improve parts of the transport network (including road and rail) prone to flooding
574	Enhance Islay - Kennacraig ferry route: increase capacity for freight/improve day capacity through introduction of an overnight freight service
575	Enhance Mull - Oban ferry route: increase capacity for freight/improve day capacity through introduction of an overnight freight service
582	Improve rail connectivity between Oban and London through the introduction of a sleeper service, either as a standalone service or linking with the existing Fort William to London service
584	New road link between the A82 and Cowal, including fixed link or ferry crossings
585	New fixed link between Cowal and Inverclyde, linking to the A78
586	New road link between Cowal and Bute & Bute and North Ayrshire, linking to the A78, including fixed link or ferry crossings

ID	Option Title
587	New road link between Cowal and Kintyre, including fixed link or ferry crossing
588	New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the WHL, including fixed link or ferry crossings
589	New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the rail network in Inverclyde, including fixed link or ferry crossings
590	New rail connection to/from Cowal linking to the rail network in North Ayrshire, including fixed link or ferry crossings
591	New rail connection to/from Kintyre linking to Cowal, including fixed link or ferry crossing
592	New road connection between the A83 (west of R&BT) and A82 (north of Ardlui) through Glen Kinglass
593	New road connection between the A83 (within the vicinity of Clachan) and A82 (north of Inverarnan) through Glen Fyne
595	A82 Tarbet to Inverarnan Upgrade: Single carriageway, largely on-line upgrade, between Tarbet and Inverarnan, to reduce journey times and reduce accident numbers / severity
596	A83 Rest and Be Thankful Mitigation: Landslide mitigation measures on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful
597	New off-line alternative route improving resilience for strategic A83 traffic: Provision of new road infrastructure to enhance connectivity and reduce disruption to strategic A83 traffic
598	A85 Oban to Tyndrum Upgrade:Single carriageway, largely on-line upgrade, between Oban and Tyndrum, to reduce journey times and enhance resilience by tackling pinch points and accident blackspots.
599	A816 Lochgilphead to Oban: Improvements focussing on removal of pinch points, improving road alignment and excessive bends.
600	Enhance Ardrossan - Campbeltown ferry route improve vessels, reliability and resilience

11 Concluding Remarks

11.1 Generally it is highlighted that in our view there is a **lack of recognition of rural, remote and island locations and context from the approach that has been adopted for the STPR2** generally, and specifically through the appraisal process. This is judged based on those options in the long list that have been sifted out versus those that remain as well as the makeup of the options that have been pursued for phase 1, which suggests a limited value placed upon the rural context of Scotland.

11.2 If rural and island aspects, and hence the opportunity for support and funding, are not driven through the STPR2 process, then it is **important that the STPR2 process makes clear where, and through what means these rural and island issues and opportunities will be captured, evaluated, developed and delivered**. It is clear that under current arrangements and funding opportunities, which tend to unilaterally favour urban Scotland, that limited progress will be made for rural Scotland, which in turn means that rural Scotland will be left behind, with the accessibility and connectivity gap worsening, and with greater gaps opening in terms of health, wellbeing, poverty and involvement in society and the economy. This will be felt even more so when experienced through this Covid recovery period.

11.3 Through the earlier STPR2 workshops and working group meetings it was indicated that there would be active participation in the process across the whole of Scotland, and that appraisal and the methodology would give due respect to the needs of the whole of Scotland, to the Fairer Scotland Action Plan and to the National Plan for Scotland's Islands, as well as fitting within the framework of NTS2. Hence, **all of transport, accessibility and connectivity for all of Scotland**. However, it is now apparent that the sifting process has narrowed in focus to an assessment of what, at the present time, is or is not a Scottish Government asset/or service, rather than the respective merits of individual projects to deliver the NTS2 priorities for Scotland, and notwithstanding the need to conclude the review of roles and responsibilities work from the NTS2.

11.4 Many of our key comments around the approach taken to the rural and island context within STPR2 were provided in earlier responses and it is difficult to understand how this has been taken on board or otherwise through the process.

11.5 In Section 5 and Section 7 of this feedback we have supplied detailed comments in respect to phase 1 and phase 2 themes and projects, critically identifying aspects which we believe **require further examination, development and deployment**, to ensure that benefits are maximised, and opportunities are available right across Scotland, in keeping with the vision of the NTS2.

11.6 More detail of the assessment tools that have been used is needed to help us understand the appraisal process and to further inform our comments and feedback. **HITRANS would welcome an open dialogue, and a more involved and dynamic approach through the Regional Working Groups**. This would enable our collective expertise of transport across the Highlands and Islands to inform and validate the steps in the process to ensure that the emerging programme is able to offer the widest benefits to the region in the context of all of Scotland.

11.7 The National Case for Change Report notes that: *"sifted out from the process: if appropriate, these will be passed to other areas of Transport Scotland / Scottish Government, or the appropriate local/regional transport authorities and partnerships (through the RTWGs) for consideration out with STPR2."* This role for the Regional Transport Working Group (RTWG) is something new and was not identified in the letter issued by Transport Scotland back in January 2019. Transport Scotland are reminded that HITRANS is the Regional Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands, working in partnership with its five unitary authorities not the RTWG.

11.8 HITRANS is keen to understand **what the role of the Regional Working Groups and Reference Group will be going forward into phase 2 appraisal and is keen to play an active role in the process in light of our comments here**.