

Report to Partnership Meeting 2 February 2024

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

National Transport Strategy – 3rd Delivery Plan

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an overview of the third Delivery Plan for the National Transport Strategy in particular those measures that relate directly to the HITRANS area and makes recommendations on proposed workstreams for members to consider progressing within HITRANS 2024/25 Business Plan.

National Transport Strategy – 3rd Scottish Government Delivery Plan

A copy of the Third annual Delivery Plan for the National Transport Strategy can be found at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/h5omsrtk/national-transport-strategy-third-annual-delivery-plan-2023-24.pdf>. The Delivery Plan which was published on 8th December 2023 sets out the key actions taken by the Scottish Government to deliver the Strategy's vision and priorities for 2023-24.

The Delivery Plan sets out an extensive range of actions that the Scottish Government, is taking to help deliver the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy. Below is a summary of some of those actions with particular relevance to HITRANS, the HITRANS area and partners. The actions are summarised under the four priority themes of the National Transport Strategy.

Progress since 2022

- Following the transfer of ScotRail into public ownership in 2022, Caledonian Sleeper services were transferred into public control and ownership on 25 June 2023. And, as part of our wider £42 million investment in Scotland's Railway, Inverness Airport railway station in February 2023
- As of end September 2023, over 98 million journeys have been made through the Young Persons Free Bus Travel scheme since its launch in January 2022 and Transport Scotland are currently undertaking an evaluation of the scheme
- In March 2023, Transport Scotland published the fourth edition of the Carbon Management Plan (2022-27), setting out how we will meet net zero across our corporate activities, and how we will challenge the way in which emissions are managed throughout our supply chain.

3rd Delivery Plan Actions

- Transport Scotland will **publish the transport infrastructure delivery plan for the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)**, laying out our priorities for investment and providing further insight on the programming of the 45 STPR2 recommendations. Work is already underway to deliver 38 of these recommendations, with consideration ongoing on how best to mobilise the remaining seven.

- A draft targeted Transport Just Transition Plan will be published in 2024, outlining key policies and principles needed to deliver a fair transition to Net Zero in the transport sector. This follows our discussion paper on the Just Transition Plan for the transport sector and which was published in June 2023.
- As a successor to the Ferries Plan (2013 to 2022), **the draft Islands Connectivity Plan Strategic Paper and the draft Long-Term Plan for Vessels for Ports will be published for public consultation in the coming year.** The Islands Connectivity Plan will consider island transport connectivity with regard to aviation, ferries and fixed links, and to connecting and onward travel.
- In March 2023, we published our draft Local Transport Strategy guidance for consultation with stakeholders including local authorities, COSLA, SCOTS, public agencies and advocacy groups. The Local Transport Strategy offers an opportunity to set priorities, agenda, direction and process for change at the local level. This review of the draft guidance is intended to support local authorities as they develop and implement their strategies at a local level. A working group is being established following the analysis of the consultation and finalised guidance will be published during the period of this plan.

Reduces Inequalities

Fair Access to Services

- A new multi-annual approach to the Accessible Travel Framework Delivery Plan
- For 2023-24, £421.8 million has been allocated in funding for bus services and concessionary fares, as well as investment in bus priority infrastructure through the Bus Partnership Fund. In September 2023, a Community Bus Fund was introduced to support local transport authorities to explore the National Transport Strategy Transport Scotland 11 options in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, and to improve public transport in rural deprived areas. Through the concessionary travel scheme up to half of the Scottish population is now eligible for free bus travel. To date, the Bus Partnership Fund has already delivered bus lane cameras and traffic light equipment to help buses to travel more efficiently in Glasgow, Ayrshire and Inverness; bus prioritisation in Aberdeen City Centre; and, making a number of permanent temporary measures in Fife and Edinburgh

Easy to use for all

- High-quality journey information services are essential to enable people to confidently use the public transport network and encourage modal shift. Transport Scotland awarded our contract in March 2023 and we are working with our supplier to implement our digital travel data services project in 2024-25. This work will upgrade the travel data available to people in Scotland to plan their journeys on public transport, providing information not just on routes, fares and timetables but accessibility, active and alternative travel modes, and carbon footprints.
- Providing **step-free access at Pitlochry, Aviemore, Kingussie & Nairn railway stations**, with the installation of new footbridges and lifts. Listed Building Consents, recently granted with conditions, for both Kingussie and Nairn stations are currently being reviewed in an effort to identify a route to progression.

Affordable for all

- Transport Scotland are working on our Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares, making our public transport system more accessible, available, and affordable, with the costs of transport more fairly shared across government, business and society. The Review, which will report by the end of 2023, will recommend a package of measures which can be considered for implementation from 2024-25 and beyond. In addition, actions required to address the medium and longer-term issues for the cost and availability of public transport will also be taken forward in 2024.

- The Scotrail Peak Fares Removal Pilot will operate between 2 October 2023 and 29 March 2024, making ticketing simpler with all off-peak fares and products that are set and controlled by ScotRail valid for travel all day, helping to encourage modal shift and make rail travel more affordable and accessible. The impact of the pilot and the long-term sustainability of such a proposition will be reviewed before any commitment is made to any reinstatement of the pilot after 29 March 2024.
- Ticket prices on the Northern Isles and Clyde & Hebrides ferry networks are being held at current levels, from October 2023 until the end of March 2024, to help people and businesses from Scotland's remote rural and island communities.
- Ferry fares policy is being reviewed as part of our wider Fair Fares Review. Transport Scotland are considering a range of initiatives that will help contribute to the Review's principle of ensuring a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares in the future.
- The ferry scheme for young people, which offers four free single (two return) ferry journeys a year to the mainland, will be extended to all island residents under the age of 22. At present the scheme covers 16 to 18 year olds and eligible full time volunteers up to the age of 26. More people will be able to access ferry vouchers as a result of this change.
- Work is underway to evaluate and monitor the Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme, which was launched in January 2022.

Takes Climate Action

Helping to deliver Net Zero target

- Scottish Government will publish the draft Climate Change Plan in the coming year. This will set out their commitments and policies to support the journey to Net Zero and help achieve emissions reductions targets throughout the period of 2025 to 2040.
- Since publishing the draft route map to achieving a 20% reduction in car kilometres driven in Scotland by 2030, co-produced with CoSLA, Transport Scotland have undertaken engagement and consultation to inform the final route map, which will be published in the coming months. Alongside the final route map we will publish a number of supporting documents: the public consultation analysis, impact assessments, a monitoring and evaluation framework, supporting data and an accompanying Car Use Reduction Resource Guide, to support local authority and other stakeholder partners to implement interventions in the route map.
- Transport Scotland will **develop a Car Demand Management Framework by 2025**, which will take into account the needs of people in rural areas and island communities as well as those on low incomes and people with Equality Act protected characteristics.

Adapting to the effects of Climate Change

- In August 2023, Transport Scotland's Approach to Climate Change Adaptation & Resilience (ACCAR) was published, outlining the key climate risks affecting Scotland's transport system and sets out our strategic outcomes for road, rail, aviation and maritime transport networks. Alongside this, the second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP2) sets out the strategic approach to climate adaptation and resilience across all sectors of the economy. A draft of the third iteration of the programme, which will be rebranded as **the Scottish National Adaptation Plan (2024-29) – or SNAP3 – will be published for consultation in early 2024 and then finalised for publication in autumn 2024.**
- To ensure Scotland's trunk roads are well adapted and resilient to the current, projected and unexpected impacts of climate change, Transport Scotland will develop and publish a Trunk Roads Adaptation Plan and carry out an assessment of climate impacts on trunk roads using the latest UK climate projections.

- The Scottish Government are **committed to an infrastructure solution to address landslip risks at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful**. Delivery of a permanent and resilient solution is a priority and the Scottish Government state that they will continue to seek ways to achieve that as quickly as possible. The announcement on 2 June 2023 of the preferred route option through the Glen Croe valley is a very important milestone in finding a solution to this long-standing problem. The proposed new debris flow shelter will help protect the road and road users from future landslides. The next step for the project is to progress the detailed design of the scheme and will conclude with the publication of draft Orders and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report for comment. This should be concluded by the end of 2024. At the same time, improvements to the existing Old Military Road through the Glen Croe corridor are being made to make it a more resilient diversion route until the long-term solution to the problems at the Rest and Be Thankful is in place. It is expected that these works will be carried out on a phased basis starting in late 2023.
- In the current five-year railway funding period (2019 to 2024), £4.85 billion has been allocated to maintain, operate, enhance and decarbonise National Transport Strategy Transport Scotland 15 Scotland's railway, in part to support Network Rail Scotland's Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation (WRCCA) strategies.
- The investment in rail includes support for ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper services and rail enhancement projects, as well as investment in Network Rail's operations and maintenance for Scotland's Railway. Spend in the Financial Year 2023-24 alone is projected to be £1.4 billion, which is an increase of some £400 million compared to pre-pandemic funding levels.
- The Rail Services Decarbonisation Plan will be refreshed over the coming year. It includes a commitment to decarbonise passenger rail services.

Promote greener, cleaner choices

- The Scottish Governments Zero Emission Truck Taskforce, comprising of leaders from haulage, manufacturing, union, energy, finance and government will finalise and publish its co-designed pathway to zero emission HGVs in early 2024.
- Through the second round of the Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund (ScotZEB2), the Scottish Government are providing up to £58 million to support change in the bus market in favour of zero-emission technologies,
- Transport Scotland aim to provide **smart ferry concessionary travel in Orkney and Shetland** by late 2023 and improve concession data with the inclusion of on boarding and alighting data to be included in the concession ticket transactions. The Smart Delivery Strategy will be updated in the coming year.
- The **National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board** will commence operation in late 2023, following appointment of members in autumn 2023. Membership comprises of different modes, transport authorities, users and experts to advise Scottish Ministers on the future of smart ticketing. The Board will also advise on a national technological standard for smart ticketing, to be used in ticketing schemes to improve the interoperability of smart ticketing, setting the foundations for simpler, smart integration.

Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth

Get people and goods where they need to get to

- **The Scottish Government remain firmly committed to completing the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness**. In September 2023, following extensive market consultation, Transport Scotland commenced a new procurement competition for the £150 million A9 Dualling: Tomatin to Moy project. It is expected expect that the contract will be awarded in early Summer 2024 and the project is expected to take around three years to build. This project allows Transport Scotland to set new aspirations for carbon reduction in construction whilst creating employment and training opportunities. Work to determine the

most suitable procurement options for the remaining sections of the A9 dualling is now well advanced and it is expected that Parliament will be updated on a new programme to completion in Autumn 2023.

- The Scottish Government **remain committed to the north and north-east of Scotland, including an enhancements programme on the A96 corridor** that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. The current plan is to fully dual the route and as part of this process Transport Scotland are undertaking a review of the programme. Following publication of the initial appraisal report and the accompanying consultation report at the end of last year, Transport Scotland are now undertaking further work to inform the remaining stages of the review including an appraisal of the retained options alongside a Climate Compatibility Assessment and statutory assessments, with outcomes from this expected to be ready in the coming months for final public consultation, before a final decision can be reached.
- The **preparation stages for dualling the A96 from Inverness to Nairn as well as a bypass of Nairn continue to be taken forward** with a view to completing the statutory authorisation process. This includes work required to prepare for publication of Made Orders, including the Compulsory Purchase Order.
- The Scottish Government remain committed to working with Scotland's airports to help grow our international connectivity, while not returning to previous levels of emissions. Aviation is such an important enabler for so many other parts of the economy and for that reason it remains their aspiration to help Scotland become as well connected as peer nations and regions.
- **Work is ongoing across the Scottish Government to develop the aviation strategy.** An online public consultation on developing the strategy concluded last year and an independent analysis of the responses has been published. The consultation covered growing international connectivity and airfreight; the transition to low and zero-emission aviation; domestic connectivity; and governance arrangements in the Highlands and Islands. The transition to low and zero-emission aviation is also relevant to preparation of our Climate Change Plan and Just Transition Plans. In particular, The Scottish Government are carefully examining incentives for producing and using sustainable aviation fuel in Scotland.
- The Glasgow to Campbeltown, Tiree and Barra air services have been secured for a further four years. This included the introduction of a residents fare for Tiree and Barra which will help to address the capacity constraint on the services that the communities told us, as part of our consultation on the specification for the services, was the biggest issue they faced.
- The Scottish Government will **continue to produce, maintain and implement a long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports** to improve resilience, reliability, capacity, and accessibility, increase standardisation, and reduce emissions to meet the needs of island communities supported by investment of around £700 million during the current parliamentary period.
- Delivery of the MV Glen Sannox is progressing and currently expected in March 2024, with MV Glen Rosa expected in May 2025.
- The Scottish Government are accelerating replacement of major vessels in the ferry fleet and have provided funding for Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) to procure four new major vessels for Islay and the Little Minch routes. These vessels are now under construction. Port improvement works at Lochmaddy are nearing completion, and works continue at Uig with completion expected by late 2024. We are progressing port enabling works on the Islay routes. Progress on the first Islay vessel (MV Isle of Islay) is well underway and will be delivered to CMAL in October 2024. The second vessel (MV Loch Indaal) will be delivered to CMAL in February 2025. The new vessels set to serve on the Little Minch routes are also on track, with delivery to CMAL planned for 2025.

- The Scottish Government have set a further regulatory rail freight growth target for the period 2024 to 2029. This builds on the current growth target of 7.5% and challenges the rail industry to achieve 8.7% net growth over the five-year period to 2029, with an expectation that a higher figure of 10% may be achievable. Network Rail will also be consulting and working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a longer-term rail freight growth strategy by 2027. Freight Facilities Grants remain available in Scotland to help offset the capital costs of these projects.
- The Scottish Government will continue to look at benefits for freight in our rail decarbonisation projects recognising that this is an important enabler for growth as electrification will improve connectivity and create additional capacity for both passenger and freight services on the rail network.
- Around seven million tonnes of wood are harvested from Scotland's forests each year and transported to sawmills, board manufacturers and other processors, mostly on 44 tonne diesel lorries. In support of the forest industries decarbonisation goals, Scottish Forestry has awarded £452,000 grant support for a three-year trial, finishing in April 2024, to pilot use of state-of-the-art electric powered lorries to transport timber. The project aims to test the viability of electric trucks by evaluating achievable mileage vs battery consumption, durability, and total cost of ownership.
- **Forest cover in Argyll (30%) is almost double the Scottish average (18%) and the area produces around 15% of Scotland's timber.** However, limited local processing capacity and complex geography means that much of this timber is transported to central Scotland and Ayrshire via a circuitous route of around 190 miles on roads that are not ideal for HGV traffic. In contrast, transport across the Firth of Clyde requires a sea journey of just 50 miles. Scottish Forestry continues to support the TimberLINK short sea shipping service which transports 100,000 tonnes of timber a year to avoid around 8,000 lorry journeys – or nearly 1 million lorry miles. Since inception, the service has avoided 42,800 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Innovation

- The Scottish Government has invested over £2 million through our MaaS Investment Fund which aimed to **test the viability of the MaaS concept in Scotland**. Five projects were awarded funding, covering a mix of rural and urban areas - the Highlands and Islands, Tayside and the South East of Scotland, and all will complete in the coming year. Over the next six months, work is underway to ensure that the results from these projects are analysed and evaluated, forming the evidence base necessary to determine any future policy and funding requirements such as whether successful elements can be rolled out to other areas of the country.
- The Scottish Governments **Vision for Scotland's public electric vehicle (EV) charging network**, sets out what an ideal public charging offer for cars and vans would look like across Scotland. The EV Infrastructure Fund aims to enable £60million of public and private investment to double the size of the public charging network to 6,000 charge points by 2026 and create the conditions for much greater commercial investment in public electric vehicle charging across Scotland. As part of the approach we are supporting Scotland's local authorities to develop public electric vehicle charging strategies and infrastructure expansion plans. These plans are identifying local and regional charge point needs, the investment requirements, as well as the best approaches to delivering collaborative investments with commercial charge point operators. Scotland's public EV charging network will gradually evolve over the coming years to be less focused on ChargePlace Scotland, while retaining the ability for drivers to seamlessly travel across a more diverse charging network with greater charging opportunities and even better levels of driver experience.

Improves our Health and Wellbeing

Safe and secure for all

- Transport Scotland will implement a National Speed Indicator and increase the use of visual deterrents and enforcement across the road network with the aim of improving speed limit compliance and further enhancing safety across the road network.
- The Scottish Government are working to **ensure all appropriate roads in built-up areas have a safer speed limit of 20 mph**. A task group has been established to help determine the number of roads affected and communication plans are currently being developed, alongside research to shape a national campaign that will focus on promoting the benefits of lower speeds and encourage behaviour change pre and post implementation. The number of appropriate roads have been identified and the task group have agreed on the optimum route for delivery to meet the 2025 deadline. Highland Council have begun implementing 20 mph speed limits on their roads with other local authorities expected to reduce limits on their respective networks in 2024/25.
- The Scottish Government will introduce regulations to provide Local Authorities with the tools to be able to issue Penalty Charge Notices for cars parking on pavements, at dropped kerbs and double parking to bring national enforcement of pavement parking bans in 2023, with exemptions as designated by local authorities. The Scottish Government will also work with local authorities to provide support and ensure that local transport strategies fairly consider the needs of climate change, as well as the impact on road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and disabled car users in their approach to car parking.

Enable us to make healthy travel choices

- Transport Scotland are implementing the Active Travel Transformation Project to help realise the Government commitment to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling. Within the 2023-24 budget, almost £170 million has been allocated to fund infrastructure projects, behaviour change initiatives and improving access to bikes for people of all ages and abilities.
- The £20 million Active Travel Transformation Fund has brought forward the delivery of ambitious local authority-led infrastructure projects. This has introduced a new delivery and funding approach, prioritising direct capital funding from Transport Scotland to delivery partners, to help expedite delivery of Active Travel infrastructure, and will help ensure increased budget from 2024 to 2025 can be maximised.

Help make our communities great places to live

- The Scottish Government **continues to support local authorities in 2023-24 through the Community Bus Fund to look at different ways of delivering bus services in their areas** and make use of the bus provisions in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The remaining regulations and guidance to fully implement the bus franchising and partnership powers will be introduced throughout 2024.
- In September 2023, regulations were laid that enable local transport authorities to explore the bus franchising and partnership powers in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. From 4 December 2023, **local transport authorities can work with operators to improve the quality and efficiency of local services through a Bus Services Improvement Partnership** or develop a franchising framework to help them revitalise bus networks according to their own needs.

- Through the active travel budget, we are currently supporting the design of an active freeway network for Scotland where people can walk, wheel and cycle safely and confidently on high-demand corridors in Scotland's large urban areas. Over the period of this plan design work will be developed in collaboration with delivery partners.
- The Scottish Government works with local authorities, regional transport partnerships, and other stakeholders across Scotland to support the development and appraisal of local transport plans and proposals which are appropriate to their local area.
- Over the coming year The Scottish Government will be **working with the stakeholders in Fort William to develop an Integrated Transport Plan for the town, as recommended in the second Strategic Transport Projects Review**. Only by putting the "place principle" at the centre of this work, will we achieve the right solution to the transport challenges faced by residents, visitors and businesses.

HITRANS Business Plan 2024/25

There is an opportunity for HITRANS to consider work that it may undertake within its Business Plan for 2024/25 that will support and align with the actions set out in Third annual Delivery Plan for the National Transport Strategy.

Among the key priorities raised in the engagement sessions with Local Authorities to help develop the draft Regional Transport Strategy were the financial, technical, and environmental challenges faced in maintaining network resilience and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The Delivery Plan indicates that the Government will be publishing a Scottish National Adaptation Plan (2024-29) that will set out their strategic approach to climate adaptation and resilience across all sectors of the economy. Members are invited to consider work which HITRANS and Local Authority partners may undertake that could be fed into this consultation.

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The policies outlined in these key policy document will underpin the prioritisation of the projects within the RTS Delivery Plan

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – These policy documents provide a detailed and coordinated framework of policies at a national level

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – Several of the policies and priorities support the delivery of priorities identified in the Regional Transport Strategy. The recommendations to this report invite members to approve funding within HITRANS Business Plan for 2024/25.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Reducing Inequalities is one of the key priorities of the updated National Transport Strategy.

Members are invited to:

1. Note the Report
2. Consider the scope of work to better understand the challenges faced by transport authorities within our area in adapting to climate change and network resilience.
3. Approve the inclusion of a funding allocation within the draft HITRANS 2024/25 Business Plan to undertake work outlined in Recommendation No.2

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Date: 25th January 2023