

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 20 September 2024**

### **PARTNERSHIP**

### **PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Members with a summary of the key transport related aspects of the Programme for Government (PfG)<sup>1</sup> published on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

#### **Summary**

The report provides a summary of the key elements of the Programme for Government relevant to the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy and work of HITRANS in the forthcoming year.

#### **Programme for Government (PfG)**

The 2024-25 PfG is titled 'Serving Scotland'. This will deliver on the four main priorities of:

- eradicating child poverty
- growing our economy
- tackling the climate emergency
- improving public services

The PfG notes that this year comes against the backdrop of an extremely challenging financial situation which Scotland, like other nations, is facing. Despite that challenge, the Scottish Government is optimistic about improving people's lives, with eradicating child poverty as the single greatest priority for the Scottish Government.

#### **Commitments within PfG**

The Cabinet Secretary wrote to RTP Chairs to set out what PfG will deliver on Transport.

This letter noted that in transport Government are taking forward focussed action, as part of the long-term vision for transport, outlined in the National Transport Strategy. The priorities in the National Transport Strategy directly support the four overarching priorities of Government. The year will see the following areas focused on:

- The PfG acknowledges that Transport Scotland's activities and budgets are focused on maintaining and operating Scotland's transport system.
- Keeping Scotland's transport system effective, efficient and resilient in the face of the realities of climate change, is crucial to supporting Scotland's people and businesses every day, whether it be to travel to work or education, visit family and friends, access services or run our businesses.

- In 2024-25 Government are providing nearly £2.5 billion to support public transport and investing £1 billion in ensuring our motorway and trunk road network is safe, resilient and efficient.
- Over the coming year Government will work to ensure our transport system reduces poverty, and in particular, child poverty. This will be through transformative policies such as free bus travel for under 22s – which has now seen over 150 million bus trips made by young people across Scotland, and we will be working with Local Authorities to continue to promote the scheme.
- Government will continue to take climate action and work towards the commitment of reducing car use by 20% by 2030, recognising there cannot be one solution which suits all of Scotland – encouraging a shift towards sustainable travel and affordable, available and accessible public transport options. This will be done in a way that is inclusive and reflects the varied needs of people and communities.
- Government will continue to invest in active travel and deliver a clear route map for the ongoing development of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure. These actions build on what has been achieved over the last 12 months – including the wider enforcement of Scotland’s Low Emission Zones across our four largest cities, the first awards from our Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund and significant investment in zero emission buses.
- Government’s investment will support economic growth and boost connectivity. Examples of this include continuing to progress the A9 Dualling Programme, building on the recent milestones and will continue work on the A83 and commence the final stage of the process for the acquisition of land for A96 Dualling between Inverness and Nairn.
- 2024/25 will see delivery of three of the six new major ferries currently under construction, providing services for Arran and Islay, and progress the procurement of seven new electric ferries through Phase 1 of the Small Vessels Replacement Programme.

## **RISK REGISTER**

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – A number of key commitments will help shape the new RTS.

Policy

Impact - Positive

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – A number of commitments offer opportunity to build better and more sustainable transport services in the Highlands and Islands.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – With fairness and just transition at the heart of PfG this will have a positive Equalities Impact.

## **Recommendation**

1. Members and Advisors are asked to note the report.

**Report by:** Ranald Robertson  
**Designation:** Partnership Director

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024

---