

# HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

## Draft RTS Delivery Plan



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# Summary

The table below summarises the RTS policies, actions and their proposed implementation timescale

**TO BE COMPLETED IN FINAL FORMATTED VERSION**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

- 1.1.1 The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for much of the Highlands and Islands covering the council areas of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council, The Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council (Helensburgh and Loch Lomond excepted, which are covered by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, SPT). A map of our region is provided below:



Figure 1.1: Our RTP area

- 1.1.2 As an RTP, our core function under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 is to produce a Regional Transport Strategy RTS for our region. The RTS sets out the transport needs of our region, identifies the practical means of addressing these needs and sets out how transport will be provided, developed, maintained, improved and operated.
- 1.1.3 Our new Regional Transport Strategy 2025-2042 was adopted on **DATE**. It **sets the strategic framework for the development of transport in our region over the next circa**

**20 years.** Its aim is to deliver a transport system that contributes to the priorities of the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) through reducing inequalities, tackling climate action, delivering inclusive economic growth and improving health and wellbeing.

## 1.2 RTS Delivery Plan

- 1.2.1 Across the 11 RTS Strategy Themes, we have developed over 100 policies, which state our 'direction of travel' across all components of the transport system in our region. However, whilst our policies define the **desired outcomes**, they do not state **how** these will be delivered. This is entirely appropriate as selecting a preferred option is a matter for a business case, which can reflect specific geographic considerations and available funding at a given point in time.
- 1.2.2 To guide the implementation of the RTS, this Delivery Plan has been prepared to accompany the Strategy. The Delivery Plan states the actions that we will take to progress the RTS and the timeframes within which each action will be progressed. The Action Plan contains a combination of proposed appraisals / business cases, research studies, projects and programmes as well as 'business-as-usual' activities intended to promote the interests of our region. It focuses on **actions that are regionally significant in nature** - i.e., those which are large scale or cross-boundary, either between authorities within our region or between our region and other RTP areas. Local issues are a matter for the Local Transport Strategies of our constituent members.
- 1.2.3 Unlike the RTS itself, which provides a circa 20-year strategic framework, the **Action Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated** to reflect the changing status of projects, their differing stages in the project lifecycle and the need for new or amended actions to support a policy (e.g., in response to the emergence or development of new technology).
- 1.2.4 This **first Action Plan will run until Summer 2027** which is the just after the date of the next Scottish Local Government Elections. Thereafter, it is proposed that **each subsequent Action Plan will cover the five-year period between Scottish Local Government Elections**, as follows:
- **Action Plan (AP) 1:** February 2025 – Summer 2027
  - **AP2:** 2027 – 2032
  - **AP3:** 2032 - 2037
  - **AP4:** 2037 – 2042
- 1.2.5 For each Action Plan period, we will set out our proposed programme of work by year and we will revisit this annually as part of our budget setting process. Some actions will however be **ongoing** across the entire RTS period and this will be noted where appropriate.
- 1.2.6 All actions within the Delivery Plan have been developed within the context of the RTS Vision, Strategy Objectives and RTS Themes as set out in the following chapters.

### RTS Delivery Plan principles

- 1.2.7 In developing this first RTS Delivery Plan, the following principles have been adopted:
- **Where we are best placed to lead the delivery of a programme or project, we will do so, but we will involve our constituent members appropriately.** Such programmes and projects are likely to be where there is an obvious regional focus, for example where a project or programme encompasses more than one local authority (either within or external to our region) or there is merit in sharing resources.
  - We will endeavour to develop policy, planning and implementation frameworks that will **create consistency across our region, whilst respecting the rights of our constituent members to develop tailored local solutions** where appropriate

- We will act as a **regional voice for national level programmes, projects or policies**, for example with respect to the aviation, rail and trunk road networks
- We will advocate for **increased local representation** in the development of transport policy and the management and delivery of nationally provided transport services in our region

## 2 RTS Vision, Strategy Objectives and Themes

### 2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 This section briefly recaps the RTS Vision, Strategy Objectives and Themes, providing the context and framework within which the Delivery Plan is developed.

### 2.2 RTS Vision

- 2.2.1 Our RTS Vision is an expression of the type of region that we want the HITRANS region to be and how transport can contribute to achieving that for everyone. It has been developed to reflect national policy and legislation, most notably the commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, but at the same time reflects the very distinctive character of our region. The Vision provides an overarching context within which our RTS Strategy Objectives can sit and provides a long-term focus for HITRANS and our constituent members.

**Our transport networks and services will act to realise the economic potential of our region through reducing the actual and perceived impacts of distance, poor resilience and low population density. By doing this, they will facilitate economically and socially valuable activities for all, provide equality of opportunity, enable people to live active and healthy lives and allow our region to contribute fully to the national net zero emissions target.**

### 2.3 RTS Strategy Objectives

The RTS Strategy Objectives: (i) provide the bridge between the transport problems in our region and the outcomes that we are seeking through our RTS; and (ii) express how our RTS Vision will be realised. These are:

**Strategy Objective 1: To make a just transition to a post-carbon and more environmentally sustainable transport network.**

*Why?* – Scotland has a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045 and transport is a key sector in terms of such emissions, accounting for 20% of territorial emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e) across the region<sup>1</sup>. The transport networks and services in our region must adapt to fulfil this target in a fair and equitable way whilst also being developed in as environmentally sustainable a way as possible. The process must also recognise the needs of all groups through a ‘Just Transition’.

**Strategy Objective 2: To transform and provide safe and accessible connections between and within our city, towns and villages, to enable walking, wheeling and cycling for all.**

*Why?* – to allow everyone to walk, wheel and cycle more, leading to more local living patterns, greater inclusion, affordable transport, healthier lifestyles, and reduced car use – the latter leading to reduced emissions and noise pollution.

**Strategy Objective 3: To widen access to public and shared transport and improve connectivity within and from / to the region.**

*Why?* – to give people in the HITRANS region new travel choices, allowing them to: (i) use accessible and affordable public or shared transport options to make journeys they previously could not make; or (ii) to use public or shared transport instead of the car - this will lead to lower levels of car use supporting reduced emissions and noise pollution, reduced congestion

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<sup>1</sup> Derived from <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-local-authority-and-regional>



at network pinch points and reduced wear and tear and the regional road network. This objective is also important in encouraging inclusive economic growth by widening labour markets and providing improved accessibility to employment opportunities by public transport.

**Strategy Objective 4: To improve the quality and integration of public and shared transport within and from / to the region.**

*Why?* – to make public and shared transport in the HITRANS region more attractive and competitive with car-based travel and to ensure the accessibility needs of all groups are accommodated. This will improve the travel experience for existing public transport users and encourage people to use public or shared transport instead of the car, leading to lower levels of car use (leading to reduced emissions and noise pollution) and will support the social benefits associated with shared transport.

**Strategy Objective 5: To ensure reliable, resilient, affordable and sustainable connectivity for all from / to our island, peninsular and remote communities.**

*Why?* – some of our island and peninsular communities have suffered from pronounced connectivity difficulties in recent years. This has had wide-ranging impacts on these communities and this objective recognises the need to tackle this issue, in tandem with Strategy Objective 4. Delivering this objective will provide the foundation for the long-term sustainability and success of these vulnerable communities, including through helping meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and by tackling socio-economic disadvantage.

**Strategy Objective 6: To improve the efficiency, safety and resilience of our transport networks for people and freight and adapt to the impacts of climate change.**

*Why?* – our transport systems must be efficient, safe and able to adapt to changing demands (e.g., tourism patterns, trade etc) and be resilient in the face of climate change. This objective is important in allowing the society and economy of our region to prosper and to reduce inequalities of outcome associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

## **2.4 RTS Themes**

Our RTS is based around **11 Strategy Themes**, which have been used to shape the content of the RTS, with each theme containing a set of individual policies therein. The RTS Strategy Themes are shown in the graphic below:

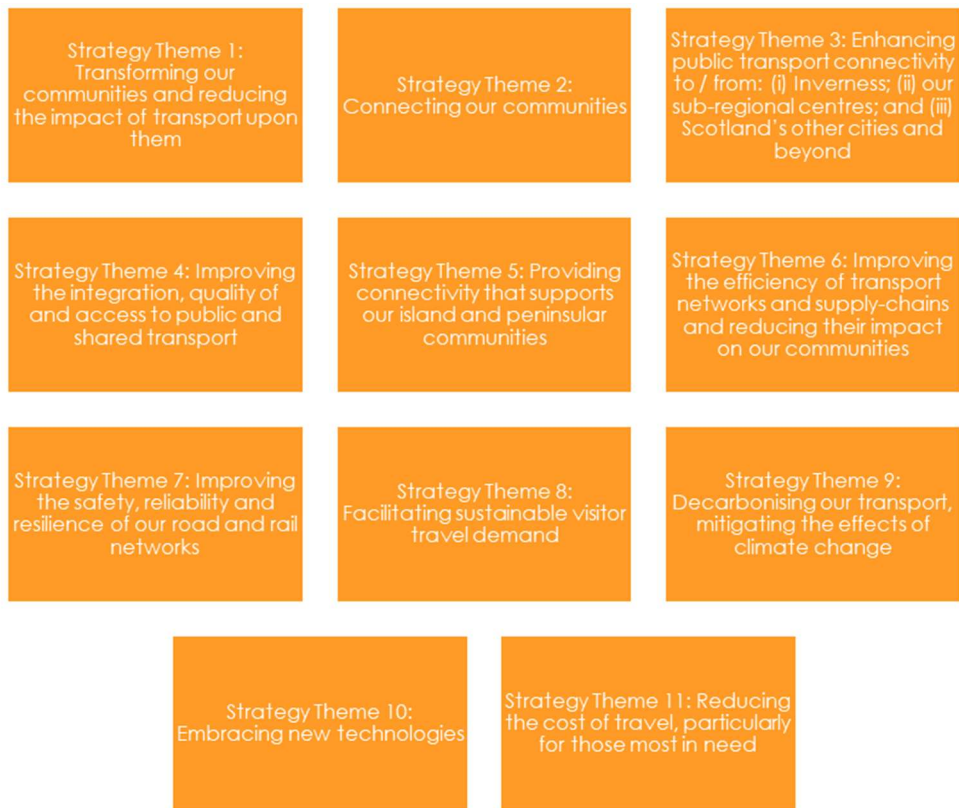


Figure 2.1: RTS Strategy Themes

# 3 Delivery Plan

## 3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Delivery Plan table below takes each policy in turn and sets out one or more actions for HITRANS in addition to a timescale in which this action will be undertaken. For reference, the outcome sought from the action is also noted as is the broad placement of the action in terms of the National Transport Strategy's *Sustainable Travel Hierarchy* and *Sustainable Investment Hierarchy*, both shown below. The mitigation measures identified within the Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Islands Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) have been incorporated in or will be delivered alongside the Delivery Plan.

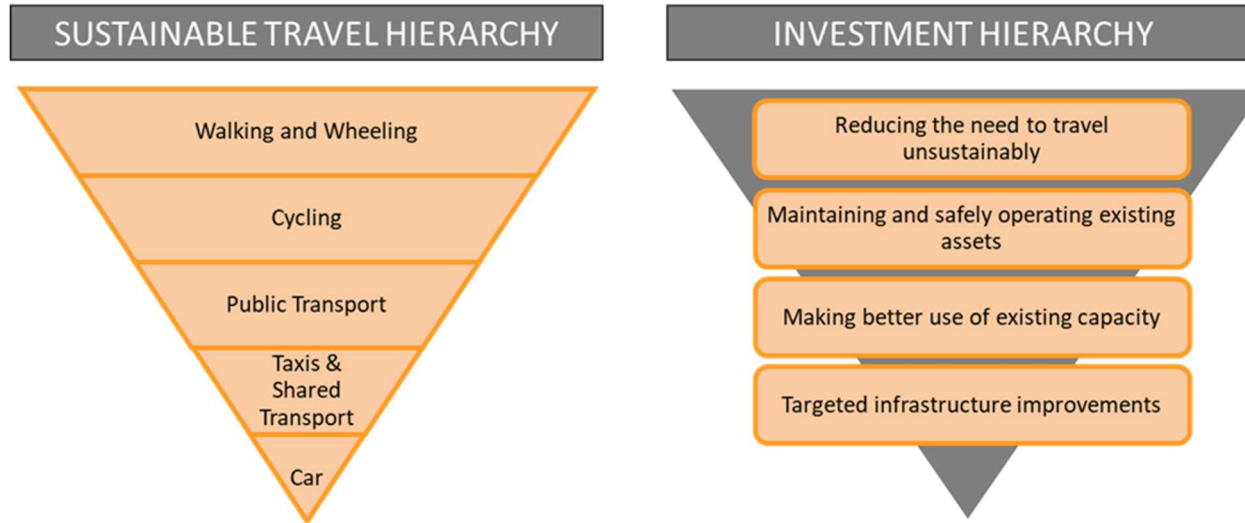


Figure 3.1: National Transport Strategy *Sustainable Travel Hierarchy* and *Sustainable Investment Hierarchy*

## 3.2 Delivery Plan

3.2.1 The tables below summarises the actions associated with each RTS Policy under each RTS Strategy Theme.

**Strategy Theme 1: Transforming our communities and reducing the impact of transport upon them**

*Improving the public realm and mobility within settlements by reducing the dominance of the private car and maximising opportunities for walking, wheeling and cycling*

	Policy	HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST1a</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>reallocating road space</b> , including parking, from general traffic. This should support placemaking to shape improved walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities in our communities as a means to promote safe active travel and encourage use of active travel modes. Reallocation of road space should avoid any negative impacts on bus services.	<b>Action 1:</b> We will update the HITRANS Active Travel Strategy to reflect the adopted RTS.				1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably
<b>Policy ST1b</b>	Where traffic in settlements is reduced by investment in road infrastructure, <b>road space reallocation</b> should be undertaken as an integral component of that investment.	<b>Action 2:</b> Publish our Regional Behaviour Change Strategy and continue to develop the Regional People and Place Behaviour Change Programme in partnership with local authorities and anchor community organisations.	<b>Action 1:</b> 2027	Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres		2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets
<b>Policy ST1c</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>traffic calming and speed limit reductions</b> and enforcement where they are appropriate, including on the Trunk Road network.	<b>Action 3:</b> We will seek Tier 2 Active Travel Funding to undertake road space reallocation opportunity reviews for de-trunked sections of the A96 and proposed bypassed settlements such as Elgin, Keith and Nairn.	<b>Action 2:</b> Ongoing	Improved public realm and urban environment through reallocation of road space, including 'locking-in' the benefits of major road-based investments for communities	1: Walking and wheeling	3: Making better use of existing capacity
<b>Policy ST1d</b>	The RTS supports measures to <b>reduce road-based severance</b> in our communities.	<b>Action 4:</b> We (in partnership with roads authorities) will identify opportunities in local active travel masterplans with respect to road space allocation within the region, so as to provide local authority transport and planning officers with a clear framework within which to work.	<b>Action 3:</b> Post 2027  <b>Action 4:</b> Ongoing		2: Cycling	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST1e</b>	The RTS recognises the challenges presented by the impacts of increasing <b>abnormal load movements</b> across the region. It calls for a coordinated approach to be taken to ensure that appropriate planning and mitigation is put in place	<b>Action 5:</b> We will work with roads authorities and Police Scotland to understand the impact of abnormal loads on the regional road network and explore opportunities for	<b>Action 5:</b> 2027 subject to developing scope with partner LA's	Reduced impact of abnormal loads on communities	Not applicable	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets

**Strategy Theme 1: Transforming our communities and reducing the impact of transport upon them**

	as part of the planning process for new developments that will generate such movements.	ensuring appropriate coordination or mitigation is provided.				
<b>Policy ST1f</b>	Parking management is the responsibility of partner local authorities. The RTS supports <b>the development of a consistent approach (in 'like-for-like' locations) of parking management across our region</b> , including payment mechanisms, parking information and enforcement.	<b>Action 6:</b> We will prepare a Regional Parking Strategy with a view to providing a framework within which local authorities can develop and evolve their existing approach to parking management and delivery.	<b>Action 6:</b> 2027 subject to developing scope with partner LA's	A safe, efficient and coordinated approach to parking management, including in and around schools	5: Car	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets  3: Making better use of existing capacity
<b>Policy ST1g</b>	The RTS supports the principle of improving the management and enforcement of <b>traffic and parking around schools</b> , including <i>School Streets</i> (a road outside a school with temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times).					
<b>Policy ST1h</b>	The RTS supports the prioritisation of <b>new development</b> in locations that are in proximity to key services and already well-served by active travel and public transport.	<b>Action 7:</b> We will work with local authorities to ensure that Local Development Plans complement the RTS Strategy Objectives and RTS Policies.  <b>Action 8:</b> We will continue to support the implementation of the regional guidance we have prepared for 20-minute neighbourhoods / Living Well Locally in the region.	<b>Action 7:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 8:</b> Ongoing	Embedding of sustainable of travel into new developments and minimising vehicle kilometres associated with existing developments	Not applicable	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably
<b>Policy ST1i</b>	The RTS supports the <b>local delivery of public services</b> , including health and education, and other day-to-day retail and personal services (e.g., banking) which minimise the need to travel.					
<b>Policy ST1j</b>	The RTS supports the integration of active travel, public transport and shared mobility into the <b>planning of all new developments</b> . Proposers of new developments should be required to outline how they will deliver connections into the local active travel and public transport networks.					
<b>Policy ST1k</b>	The RTS supports the concept of ' <b>infrastructure first</b> ' in relation to developments across our region.					
<b>Policy ST1l</b>	The RTS recognises the centrality of <b>environmental considerations</b> , particularly biodiversity enhancements and nature networks, within the planning and decision-making process.					

Strategy Theme 2: Connecting our communities

*Facilitating walking, wheeling and cycling within settlements and improving active travel connections between them.*

Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST2a</b>	The RTS supports transformational investment in the improvement of our existing <b>active travel networks</b> to make these accessible to all.	<b>Action 1:</b> We will update the HITRANS Active Travel Strategy to reflect the adopted RTS.				
<b>Policy ST2b</b>	The RTS supports the reinstatement and expansion of a network of <b>strategic and local traffic free / quiet walking, wheeling and cycling routes</b> to connect communities across and beyond our region.	<b>Action 2:</b> Publish our Regional Behaviour Change Strategy and continue to develop the Regional People and Place Behaviour Change Programme in partnership with local authorities and anchor community organisations.	<b>Action 1:</b> 2027			
<b>Policy ST2c:</b>	The RTS supports the expansion of the <b>National Cycle Network</b> to all parts of the region.		<b>Action 2:</b> Ongoing			
<b>Policy ST2d</b>	Our active travel infrastructure should be designed to a high standard in accordance with the most up-to-date <b>best practice and regionally appropriate design standards</b> (as this evolves) to meet the needs of all users.	<b>Action 9:</b> We will work with local authority partners, Sustrans and other stakeholders to develop a vision for the NCN in the region.	<b>Action 9:</b> Ongoing	Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres	1: Walking and wheeling 2: Cycling	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably 3: Making better use of existing capacity 4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST2e</b>	The RTS supports the <b>integration of active travel and public transport connections</b> within our communities.	<b>Action 10:</b> Subject to funding we commit to undertake pilots with local authority partners to introduce innovative sustainable transport solutions which reflect local characteristics.	<b>Action 10:</b> Ongoing			
<b>Policy ST2f</b>	The RTS promotes the adoption of measures outlined in the <b>Sustainable Travel to Stations Strategy</b> with respect to access to railway stations.		<b>Action 11:</b> Post 2027			
<b>Policy ST2g</b>	The RTS seeks the implementation of initiatives which widen <b>access to bicycles and e-bicycles</b> , including e.g., promoting ownership, expansion of bicycle share and hire and provision of new 'first mile, last mile' cycling opportunities.	<b>Action 11:</b> We will develop, in partnership, guidance akin to the <i>Sustainable Travel to Stations Strategy</i> for other public transport interchanges.	<b>Action 11:</b> Ongoing			
<b>Policy ST2h</b>	The RTS supports the upgrade and new provision of <b>bicycle parking and facilities</b> at all public buildings, transport interchanges and key on-street locations within the region as well as the provision of bicycle storage for residents.	<b>Action 12:</b> We will continue to support the expansion of cycle hire schemes within our region building on the current HI-Bike and Brompton dock provision.	<b>Action 12:</b> Ongoing			

**Strategy Theme 2: Connecting our communities**

<b>Policy ST2i</b>	Our <b>active travel network</b> should be developed, presented and promoted in a more coherent, recognisable and integrated way for regular, occasional and new users of the network, including visitors.	<b>Action 13:</b> We will support the installation of a regional step change in cycle parking in partnership with community planning partners, transport operators, and local businesses.				
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**Strategy Theme 3: Enhancing public transport connectivity to / from: (i) Inverness; (ii) our sub-regional centres; and (iii) Scotland's other cities and beyond**

*Distance, topography, geography and low population density currently limit public transport connectivity within much of the region. This Strategy Theme is focused on improving public transport connectivity for journeys within, to and from the region through expanding the transport network, providing additional connections and making journeys quicker.*

	Policy	HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST3a</b>	The RTS supports measures to reduce <b>social exclusion</b> for those without access to a car. It supports the principle of the entitlement to minimum levels of connectivity reflecting settlement types and geographies.	<b>Action 14:</b> We will develop a public transport level of service framework based on settlement type. This framework will establish how we will define an appropriate and more equitable level of connectivity across the region.  <b>Action 15:</b> We will establish a Health and Transport Action Plan for the Highlands and Islands, which will include NHS Shetland. This will build on the positive work already undertaken through the Short Life Working Group established in the Outer Hebrides.	<b>Action 14:</b> 2027  <b>Action 15:</b> 2027	Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one	3: Public transport  4: Taxis and shared transport	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST3b</b>	The RTS recognises that the <b>decline in bus passenger numbers in the region needs to be reversed</b> and supports measures to extend service coverage, improve frequencies, lengthen	<b>Action 16:</b> In partnership with local authorities, we will develop a Regional Bus Strategy. This will explore opportunities provided by the	<b>Action 16:</b> 2027	Increased use of bus, DRT and EDRT services from the perspective of both	3: Public transport	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably

**Strategy Theme 3: Enhancing public transport connectivity to / from: (i) Inverness; (ii) our sub-regional centres; and (iii) Scotland's other cities and beyond**

	the operating day and make the network more integrated.	Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and should include consideration of the role of Community Transport and DRT / EDRT in providing connectivity and reducing journey times. It will also consider opportunities to improve the integration and provision of information and ticketing through the development of mobility-as-a-service.	<b>Action 17:</b> Ongoing	passenger numbers and passenger kilometres	4: Taxis and shared transport	3: Making better use of existing capacity
<b>Policy ST3c:</b>	The RTS supports measures to <b>reduce bus journey times</b> both between and within settlements in the region, including through the provision of bus priority measures.		<b>Action 18:</b> Ongoing	Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one		
<b>Policy ST3d</b>	The RTS supports innovative <b>alternatives to fixed route bus services</b> where these can be affordably provided.		<b>Action 19:</b> Ongoing			
<b>Policy ST3e</b>	The RTS recognises the role which <b>community transport and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)</b> plays in our most rural communities and supports its expansion and integration with timetabled services.	<b>Action 17:</b> We will continue to support the expansion of our Moove Flexi app for new DRT services across our region (subject to funding) by working with community transport providers and local authority partners.	<b>Action 20:</b> Ongoing & linked to <b>Action 17</b>			
<b>Policy ST3f</b>	The RTS supports measures to widen the <b>awareness and use of community transport, DRT and Enhanced Demand Responsive Transport (EDRT)</b> amongst all members of society.	<b>Action 18:</b> We will continue to work with partners in the Highland Bus Service Improvement Partnership to identify measures to reduce bus journey times and improve journey time reliability in Fort William and Inverness.  <b>Action 19:</b> We will work with other partner Local Authorities and bus operators to establish Bus Service Improvement Partnerships elsewhere in the HITRANS area.  <b>Action 20:</b> We will continue to make the case for addressing the imbalance in funding support available for rural bus services.				
<b>Policy ST3g</b>	The RTS recognises the <b>role of taxis</b> as a key element of transport provision in the region where community transport, DRT and EDRT services are not provided.	<b>Action 21:</b> In partnership with local authorities, we will consider opportunities to improve taxi	<b>Action 21:</b> Ongoing	To ensure that the connectivity opportunities offered by taxis are	4: Taxis and shared transport	3: Making better use of existing capacity



**Strategy Theme 3: Enhancing public transport connectivity to / from: (i) Inverness; (ii) our sub-regional centres; and (iii) Scotland's other cities and beyond**

		coverage, accessibility and quality across the region.		maximised, particularly where bus service frequency is low		
<b>Policy ST3h</b>	The RTS recognises that <b>rail journey times</b> to, from and within the region are typically longer than elsewhere in Scotland, and therefore supports measures to reduce these journey times.	<b>Action 22:</b> We will develop a HITRANS Rail Strategy to identify partnership priorities for feasibility and business case work.	<b>Action 22:</b> 2027  <b>Action 23:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 24:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 25:</b> Ongoing	Increased use of rail services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres  Decarbonisation of rail services in line with national policy  Improved rail services for existing journeys, particularly inter-urban movements  Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one	3: Public transport	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably  3: Making better use of existing capacity  4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST3i</b>	The RTS supports the commitment to <b>electrify the Highland Main Line and Aberdeen to Inverness Line</b> as an opportunity to reduce rail journey times and improve reliability as part of the overall decarbonisation of the network.	<b>Action 23:</b> We will make the case to <i>Scotland's Railway</i> for infrastructure investment and operational improvements to reduce rail journey times to, from and within the region.				
<b>Policy ST3j</b>	The RTS recognises that very low rail service frequency often makes rail uncompetitive with the car and therefore supports measures which would facilitate <b>increased rail service frequency</b> , particularly between Inverness and Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow.	<b>Action 24:</b> We will support the implementation of planned improvements to the Highland Mainline and Aberdeen to Inverness Line and explore opportunities to improve sectional running times elsewhere on the network.				
<b>Policy ST3k</b>	The RTS promotes and supports the development of <b>additional local rail services</b> focused on our regional centres.	<b>Action 25:</b> We will support commitments in the Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan to electrify inter-city routes and investigate the deployment of alternative traction for other lines within the region.				
<b>Policy ST3l</b>	The RTS supports <b>infrastructure measures</b> which would enable increased service frequency, such as the electrification of the Highland Main Line and Aberdeen to Inverness, and improvements to the signalling system.					
<b>Policy ST3m</b>	The RTS supports the planning and delivery of <b>new railway stations</b> , including innovative solutions proportionate to the location, subject to the development of an appropriate business case.	<b>Action 26:</b> We will develop / further develop business cases for new stations in the region including HMNB Faslane, Evanton, UHI / Inverness East etc.				
			<b>Action 26:</b> Ongoing	Increased use of rail services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres  Reduction in social exclusion for those	3: Public transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements

**Strategy Theme 3: Enhancing public transport connectivity to / from: (i) Inverness; (ii) our sub-regional centres; and (iii) Scotland's other cities and beyond**

				without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one		
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**Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport**

***Addressing the barriers to travel by public transport, including interchange within and between modes, physical barriers for those less able and poor-quality facilities and travel information***

Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST4a</b>	The RTS supports measures that will improve <b>integration within and between modes of transport</b> at key locations and transport interchanges in order to provide new travel options and alternatives to the private car, recognising the constraints within which this is possible (e.g., delivering school bus services).	<p><b>Action 16:</b> In partnership with local authorities, we will develop a Regional Bus Strategy. This will explore opportunities provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and should include consideration of the role of Community Transport and DRT / EDRT in providing connectivity and reducing journey times. It will also consider opportunities to improve the integration and provision of information and ticketing through the development of mobility-as-a-service.</p> <p><b>Action 27:</b> work with local and national partners to improve the integration of facilities between modes at points of key interchange including Inverness, Oban and Fort William</p>	<p><b>Action 16:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 27:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 28:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 29:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 30:</b> Ongoing</p>	<p>To reduce the barriers to travel / inconvenience when having change within or between modes on a journey</p> <p>Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres</p> <p>Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one</p>	<p>3: Public transport</p> <p>4: Taxis and shared transport</p>	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p>
<b>Policy ST4b</b>	The RTS supports <b>integrated ticketing measures</b> to simplify travel and improve the passenger experience.					
<b>Policy ST4c:</b>	The RTS supports the adoption of contract conditions for tendered and supported services that <b>encourage operators to work in partnership</b> to improve integration, timetable planning and coordination.					

**Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport**

		<p><b>Action 28:</b> We will seek to define an appropriate level of service for bus / train to ferry / air service integration.</p> <p><b>Action 29:</b> We will, in partnership with Transport Scotland, seek to develop new guidelines for accommodating best practice integration at interchanges between modes, especially at ferry ports</p> <p><b>Action 30:</b> We will continue to support and expand (subject to funding) the provision of multi-modal real-time information displays at key interchanges across the region.</p>				
<p><b>Policy ST4d</b></p>	<p>The RTS supports the provision and enhancement of <b>mobility hubs</b> across the region, in line with a hierarchy reflecting local requirements.</p>	<p><b>Action 31:</b> We will develop a regional mobility hubs hierarchy.</p> <p><b>Action 32:</b> We will undertake a number of mobility hub pilots across the region and evaluate their outcomes and impacts.</p>	<p><b>Action 31:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 32:</b> Ongoing</p>	<p>To reduce the barriers to travel / inconvenience when having change within or between modes on a journey</p> <p>Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres</p> <p>Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres</p>	<p>1: Walking and wheeling</p> <p>2: Cycling</p> <p>3: Public transport</p> <p>4: Taxis and shared transport</p> <p>5: Car</p>	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p> <p>4: Targeted infrastructure improvements</p>

**Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport**

				Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one		
<b>Policy ST4e</b>	The RTS supports measures which will enable people to <b>leave their bicycles in a secure environment</b> at a bus stop / station, railway station, ferry terminal or airfield.	<p><b>Action 1:</b> We will update the HITRANS Active Travel Strategy to reflect the adopted RTS.</p> <p><b>Action 33</b> We will develop an annual prioritised action plan of interventions to support improved delivery of options to travel with a bicycle on public transport, including the identification of a network of mobility hubs within the region and booking of journeys by bike on all modes via mobility-as-a-service.</p>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 33:</b> Ongoing</p>	To reduce the barriers to travel / inconvenience when having change within or between modes on a journey	<p>1: Walking and wheeling</p> <p>2: Cycling</p> <p>3: Public transport</p>	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p> <p>3: Making better use of existing capacity</p>
<b>Policy ST4f</b>	The RTS supports, where practical, the provision of increased <b>bicycle capacity on public transport</b> services within the region.					
<b>Policy ST4g</b>	The RTS supports the simplification of the process of <b>taking a bicycle</b> both to and onto a bus or train.					
<b>Policy ST4h</b>	The RTS supports more widespread journeys which <b>combine bicycle and public transport</b> .					
<b>Policy ST4i</b>	The RTS supports the provision of consistent standards of <b>facilities at bus stations and bus stops</b> reflecting location and usage.	<p><b>Action 16:</b> In partnership with local authorities, we will develop a Regional Bus Strategy. This will explore opportunities provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and should include consideration of the role of Community Transport and DRT / EDRT in providing connectivity and reducing journey times. It will also consider opportunities to</p>	<p><b>Action 16:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 28:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 29:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 30:</b> Ongoing</p>	<p>Increased use of bus, DRT and EDRT services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres</p> <p>Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres</p>	<p>3: Public transport</p> <p>4: Taxis and shared transport</p>	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p> <p>2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets</p>
<b>Policy ST4j</b>	Our bus network should be <b>safe, secure and fully accessible</b> to all.					
<b>Policy ST4k</b>	Our bus network should provide a high-quality and consistent <b>onboard experience</b> .					
<b>Policy ST4l</b>	Travel on buses to, from and within the region should, where possible, <b>enable meaningful working time</b> .					

**Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport**

		<p>improve the integration and provision of information and ticketing through the development of mobility-as-a-service.</p> <p><b>Action 27:</b> We will seek to define an appropriate level of service for bus / train to ferry / air service integration.</p> <p><b>Action 28:</b> We will, in partnership with Transport Scotland, seek to develop new guidelines for accommodating best practice integration at interchanges between modes, especially at ferry ports</p> <p><b>Action 29:</b> We will continue to support and expand (subject to funding) the provision of multi-modal real-time information displays at key interchanges across the region.</p>				
<b>Policy ST4m</b>	The RTS supports the provision of <b>more consistent standards</b> of facilities at railway stations, reflecting station usage.	<p><b>Action 22:</b> We will develop a HITRANS Rail Strategy to identify partnership priorities for feasibility and business case work.</p>	<b>Action 22:</b> 2027	Increased use of rail services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres	3: Public transport	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p> <p>2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets</p>
<b>Policy ST4n</b>	Our railway network should be <b>safe, secure and fully accessible</b> to all.					
<b>Policy ST4o</b>	The RTS supports the continuation and expansion of the <b>Scotland's Railway Adoption Programme</b> and other measures to enhance the station environment.					
<b>Policy ST4p</b>	Our ferry network should be <b>safe, secure and fully accessible</b> to all. This includes both shore-to-vessel access and movement around the vessel itself.	<p><b>Action 34:</b> We will feed the requirement for our ferry network to be safe, secure and fully accessible to all into the <i>Islands</i></p>	<p><b>Action 34:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 35:</b> Ongoing</p>	Reduced social exclusion through ensuring that physical access to	3: Public transport	<p>2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets</p>

**Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport**

		<p><i>Connectivity Plan</i> work being led by Transport Scotland.</p> <p><b>Action 35:</b> We will explore and pursue external funding opportunities for accessibility improvements on ferries and at ferry terminals.</p>		ferry services is not a barrier to travel		
<b>Policy ST4q</b>	<p>In partnership with key public stakeholders and operators we will continue to explore solutions which improve the accessibility of inter-Island air services in Argyll and Bute, Orkney and the Western Isles. We will also keep abreast of developments in technology and <b>new aircraft types</b>. More widely, the RTS supports improved accessibility for all to commercially operated aircraft.</p>	<p><b>Action 36:</b> In partnership with key public sector stakeholders and operators we will continue to explore solutions which improve the accessibility and quality of inter-Island air services in Argyll and Bute, Orkney and the Western Isles.</p> <p><b>Action 37:</b> We will support the Scottish Government in delivering the commitment made in its <i>Transport to Health Delivery Plan</i> to consider if accessibility improvements can be made to Islander aircraft and associated airside facilities.</p>	<p><b>Action 36:</b> 2027</p> <p><b>Action 37:</b> 2027</p>	<p>Reduced social exclusion through ensuring that physical access to air services is not a barrier to travel</p>	3: Public transport	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets
<b>Policy ST4r</b>	<p>The RTS supports sufficient provision and better enforcement of <b>Blue Badge parking</b> across the region.</p>	<p><b>Action 6:</b> We will prepare a Regional Parking Strategy with a view to providing a framework within which local authorities can develop and evolve their existing approach to parking management and delivery.</p>	<p><b>Action 6:</b> 2027 subject to developing scope with partner LA's</p>	<p>Reduced social exclusion through ensuring that parking availability for those with a Blue Badge is not a barrier to travel</p>	5: Car	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets
<b>Policy ST4s</b>	<p>The RTS recognises the important role of <b>taxis</b> as part of the overall transport mix in the region. It supports partnership working with licencing authorities and taxi providers to raise standards of provision where required and to facilitate the expansion of the network.</p>	<p><b>Action 21:</b> In partnership with local authorities, we will consider opportunities to improve taxi coverage, accessibility and quality across the region.</p>	<p><b>Action 21:</b> Ongoing</p>	<p>To ensure that the connectivity opportunities offered by taxis are maximised and that</p>	4: Taxis and shared transport	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets

**Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport**

<b>Policy ST4t</b>	The RTS supports the provision of <b>taxi services</b> which are fully accessible in terms of booking and vehicle access.			taxis are safe and accessible		
<b>Policy ST4u</b>	A key component of making travel accessible to all, the RTS supports measures to <b>remove barriers to travel</b> , including increased staff training, passenger chaperones and the provision of physical and online travel information in accessible formats.	<b>Action 38:</b> We will continue to work with partners, stakeholders and operators to make travel accessible to all.	<b>Action 38:</b> Ongoing	Reduced social exclusion for groups with a protected characteristic using public and shared transport	3: Public transport 4: Taxis and shared transport	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST4v</b>	The RTS supports the maintenance and expansion of at-stop / at-station multi-modal <b>real-time information</b> .	<b>Action 29:</b> We will continue to support and expand (subject to funding) the provision of multi-modal real-time information displays at key interchanges across the region.  <b>Action 39:</b> We will continue to develop and progress our current approaches to travel planning within the region, including within Bus Service Improvement Plans.  <b>Action 40:</b> We will continue to support our HI-Travel shared service that supports the management and delivery of digital and physical public transport information in partnership with local authorities and transport operators	<b>Action 29:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 39:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 40:</b> Ongoing	To reduce the barriers to travel / inconvenience when having change within or between modes on a journey  Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres  Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres  Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one	3: Public transport	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably  2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets
<b>Policy ST4w</b>	The RTS promotes the <b>simplification and consolidation of travel planning</b> and in-journey information to make travel easier for less frequent users.					
<b>Policy ST4x</b>	The RTS supports the provision of up-to-date <b>physical travel information</b> at bus stops, and the removal of out-of-date information.					
<b>Policy ST4y</b>	The RTS calls for improved <b>cross-provider digital connectivity</b> across the region to facilitate access to travel information for all (including in-car information), enable meaningful working time when	<b>Action 41:</b> We will work with partners including HIE to understand the scale and geographic distribution of the	<b>Action 41:</b> Ongoing	Improved efficiency of journey planning and journey making	3: Public transport 5: Car	Not applicable

### Strategy Theme 4: Improving the integration, quality of and access to public and shared transport

	travelling by public transport and to help reduce the need to travel where possible.	digital connectivity problems and make the case to the Scottish Government and UK Government for investment.				
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### Strategy Theme 5: Providing connectivity that supports our island and peninsular communities

#### *Improving the connectivity and reducing the peripherality of island and peninsular communities through improved ferry and air services, and potentially fixed links*

	Policy	HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST5a</b>	The RTS supports the provision of longer <b>daily time on-mainland and on-island</b> where this is required for the long-term sustainability of a community.	<b>Action 27:</b> work with local and national partners to improve the integration of facilities between modes at points of key interchange including Inverness, <b>Oban</b> and Fort William  <b>Action 28:</b> We will, in partnership with Transport Scotland, seek to develop new guidelines for accommodating best practice integration at interchanges between modes, especially at ferry ports  <b>Action 42:</b> We will scope and develop any necessary evidence to support the case for the incorporation of relevant RTS Policies within the <i>Islands Connectivity Plan</i> and subsequent studies including consideration of developing a Regional ferry strategy.	<b>Action 27:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 28</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 42:</b> 2027  <b>Action 43:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 44:</b> 2027  <b>Action 45:</b> Post-2027	Delivery of a ferry service that maximises connectivity for island residents and businesses as well as those visiting and delivering goods and services to islands	3: Public transport  5: Car	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably  2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets  3: Making better use of existing capacity  4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST5b</b>	The RTS supports the provision of services which minimise the requirement for one or more <b>overnight stays</b> .					
<b>Policy ST5c:</b>	Where practicable, the RTS supports the operation of <b>additional sailings</b> on the supported ferry networks within the region where these address identified needs and provide value for money.					
<b>Policy ST5d</b>	The RTS supports year-round <b>seven-day connections</b> for island and peninsular communities where this is required for the long-term sustainability of a community and enjoys public support.					
<b>Policy ST5e</b>	The <b>booking and ticketing</b> arrangements for ferry services in the region should support the convenience and efficiency of travel for all.					
<b>Policy ST5f</b>	The RTS calls for the earlier opening of <b>ferry booking systems</b> and increased transparency around the release and management of vehicle deck space.					



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<b>Policy ST5g</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>Road Equivalent Tariff (RET)</b> . However, where service frequency permits, controlled use of peak pricing could be used to help manage demand, recognising that this would need to be at no net detriment to the connectivity of island and peninsular communities.	<p><b>Action 43:</b> We will continue to provide analytical and, where appropriate, financial support to local authorities in their ferry replacement programmes and projects.</p> <p><b>Action 44:</b> We will seek to work in partnership with Transport Scotland to evaluate the Mull, Coll and Tiree island resident priority pilot and identify any lessons learned.</p> <p><b>Action 45:</b> We will seek to work in partnership with Orkney Islands Council to evaluate the introduction of the passenger only vessels trial in Orkney and identify any lessons learned.</p>				
<b>Policy ST5h</b>	The RTS supports operational measures which maximise the efficient management of <b>vehicle deck space</b> on sailings.					
<b>Policy ST5i</b>	The RTS supports measures to improve <b>door-to-door journeys</b> through enhancing active travel, public transport and shared mobility connections to and from ferry terminals, combined with other measures to reduce the need to take a car onboard.					
<b>Policy ST5j</b>	The RTS recognises the long-term underfunding of vessels and infrastructure in the region and strongly calls for fleet and <b>infrastructure modernisation</b> to address issues of reliability and resilience.					
<b>Policy ST5k</b>	The RTS calls for the development of a regularly maintained <b>Vessels and Infrastructure Planning Pipeline</b> across all publicly supported ferry networks in Scotland.					
<b>Policy ST5l</b>	The RTS supports an increase in the overall <b>fleet size</b> and the <b>inter-operability</b> of that fleet and supporting infrastructure to strengthen resilience.					
<b>Policy ST5m</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>increasing capacity</b> through frequency rather than larger vessels.					
<b>Policy ST5n</b>	The RTS calls for an objective consideration of the <b>design characteristics of future vessels</b> for all routes, including hull form and the provision of crew accommodation.					
<b>Policy ST5o</b>	The RTS supports the introduction of new <b>low or zero emissions vessels</b> to replace life-expired					

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	tonnage. This should be done in line with the NTS2 <i>Sustainable Investment Hierarchy</i> .					
<b>Policy ST5p</b>	With the vessel and infrastructure replacement cycle, the RTS supports measures to <b>reduce journey times</b> for our island communities. This includes providing direct sailings rather than via another island (where this is the preference of the local community) and consideration of new ferry terminal locations that reduce crossing distances.					
<b>Policy ST5q</b>	The RTS supports <b>harbour infrastructure</b> improvements ahead of life expiry where this could contribute to a material improvement in reliability.					
<b>Policy ST5r</b>	The RTS supports the <b>conversion of the remaining Lo-Lo routes</b> in the region to Ro-Ro where there is community support.	<b>Action 46:</b> We will continue to work with Orkney Islands Council to support the case for the conversion of Lo-Lo ports to Ro-Ro where appropriate.	<b>Action 46:</b> Ongoing	Removal of the operational, logistical and cost issues associated with Lo-Lo as a mode of operation	3: Public transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST5s</b>	The RTS supports the further development of the Highlands and Islands' <b>air network</b> in terms of both services and supporting infrastructure.	<b>Action 47:</b> We will continue to explore ways of achieving a Highlands and Islands air network that meets the socio-economic needs of the region, including where legislative change may be required or the development of a regional aviation strategy to support this.  <b>Action 48:</b> We will continue to test and deploy emerging sustainable aviation technologies in rural and island areas through SATE	<b>Action 47:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 48:</b> Ongoing	Delivery of an air service that maximises connectivity for residents, businesses and visitors to the region  Integrate sustainable aviation into the overall transport mix to improve connectivity	3: Public transport	N/A
<b>Policy ST5t</b>	The RTS supports the further development of <b>commercial external routes</b> , particularly to London Heathrow and other international hub airports, that support the economic competitiveness of the region.					
<b>Policy ST5u</b>	The RTS supports the retention of the <b>PSO air network</b> within the region and, where alternative travel choices are inadequate, its further expansion.	<b>Action 49:</b> We will continue to support the case for air services to Wick, Oban and Skye to the	<b>Action 49:</b> Ongoing	Delivery of a PSO air service that maximises	3: Public transport	2: Maintaining and safely

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	'Adequate' in this context refers to the ability to achieve an affordable daily return to / from a national centre.	Central Belt, the Orkney Islands and new connections in the Inner and Outer Hebrides.		connectivity for island residents and businesses as well as those visiting and delivering services to islands		operating existing assets  3: Making better use of existing capacity  4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST5v</b>	The RTS supports the operation of <b>additional connections and flights</b> on the PSO air networks within the region, whether delivered by existing, additional or new low emission aircraft.	<b>Action 50:</b> We will continue to explore ways of achieving a Highlands and Islands air network that meets the socio-economic needs of the region, including where legislative change may be required or the development of a regional aviation strategy to support this.	<b>Action 50:</b> Ongoing	Delivery of a PSO air service that maximises connectivity for island residents and businesses as well as those visiting and delivering services to islands	3: Public transport	2: Making better use of existing capacity
<b>Policy ST5w</b>	The RTS supports more <b>direct flights</b> rather than via another island.					
<b>Policy ST5x</b>	The RTS supports the adoption of <b>technological and infrastructure solutions</b> which would improve the reliability and frequency of inter-island air services.	<b>Action 51:</b> We will continue to support technological and infrastructure solutions which would improve the reliability and frequency of inter-island air services.	<b>Action 51:</b> Ongoing	Delivery of a PSO air service that maximises connectivity for island residents and businesses as well as those visiting and delivering services to islands	3: Public transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST5y</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>fixed links</b> where they represent value for money and are supported by the island or peninsular community. Any fixed link should be implemented in conjunction with improved public transport connectivity and incorporate provision for active travel.	<b>Action 52:</b> We will undertake a Regional Fixed Link Review and Prioritisation study, which will include consideration of tolling options.	<b>Action 52:</b> Post 2027	Reducing the peripherality of island peninsular communities, providing improved travel opportunities for residents and businesses and	3: Public transport  4: Taxis and shared transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST5z</b>	The RTS supports the consideration of <b>tolling</b> where this would assist in making the case for a					

### Strategy Theme 5: Providing connectivity that supports our island and peninsular communities

	<b>fixed link.</b> The use of vehicle number plate recognition technology could allow local residents to travel for free.			potentially lower service delivery costs		
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### Strategy Theme 6: Improving the efficiency of transport networks and supply-chains and reducing their impact on our communities

*Many supply-chains in the region are marginal and face challenges not found elsewhere in Scotland, working around ferry connections for example. This Strategy Theme is focused on enhancing the efficiency of supply-chains and identifying means for improving their environmental sustainability.*

Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST6a</b>	The RTS supports the principle of new dedicated or high-capacity <b>freight vessels</b> on freight intensive routes.	<b>Action 42:</b> We will scope and develop any necessary evidence to support the case for the incorporation of relevant RTS Policies within the <i>Islands Connectivity Plan</i> and subsequent studies including consideration of developing a Regional ferry strategy.	<b>Action 42:</b> 2027	Improved connectivity for freight businesses serving island and peninsular communities reducing the cost of serving these communities	5: Car (road freight)	3: Making better use of existing capacity  4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST6b</b>	The RTS supports the formalisation and extension of the carriage of <b>unaccompanied trailers</b> to a wider range of routes.					
<b>Policy ST6c:</b>	The RTS supports the operation of dedicated <b>freight sailings</b> , either by contracted or commercial operators where there is demand and it is operationally deliverable.					
<b>Policy ST6d</b>	The RTS supports moves towards greater simplification and consistency in the setting of <b>ferry freight fares</b> across the region, recognising that this would be achieved over the medium-term.	<b>Action 53:</b> We will advocate for Transport Scotland to update and implement the Ferry Freight Fares Review.  <b>Action 54:</b> We will provide analytical support to any of our constituent members undertaking internal freight fares reviews.	<b>Action 53:</b> 2027  <b>Action 54:</b> Ongoing	Reduction or removal of the inequalities between communities related to ferry freight fares	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST6e</b>	The RTS supports <b>infrastructure measures</b> which will enable the growth of rail freight to and from the region.	<b>Action 22:</b> We will develop a HITRANS Rail Strategy to identify partnership priorities for feasibility and business case work.	<b>Action 22:</b> 2027	Mode shift of freight from road to rail	3: Public transport (rail freight)	3: Making better use of existing capacity

Strategy Theme 6: Improving the efficiency of transport networks and supply-chains and reducing their impact on our communities						
						4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST6f</b>	The RTS supports infrastructure investment and funding initiatives which will enable the growth of <b>waterborne and air</b> freight to, from and within the region.	<p><b>Action 55:</b> We will support the transfer of freight to water where practical, particularly for large scale infrastructure schemes, such as for major renewables projects.</p> <p><b>Action 56:</b> We will support the expansion of air freight where there are opportunities to do so, particularly where this is enabled by new technology (e.g., drones), through programmes such as SATE</p>	<p><b>Action 55:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 56:</b> Ongoing</p>	Mode shift of freight from road to water and air	3: Public transport (waterborne freight)	<p>3: Making better use of existing capacity</p> <p>4: Targeted infrastructure improvements</p>

Strategy Theme 7: Improving the safety, reliability and resilience of our road and rail networks						
<i>Weather, geological instability and very limited diversion opportunities make resilience a key issue in the region, whilst safety is a primary concern on many of the main road routes. This Strategy Theme is therefore focused on improving the safety, reliability and resilience of transport networks within the region.</i>						
Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST7a</b>	The RTS restates our support for the full <b>dualling of the A9 and A96</b> , with early prioritisation of the Elgin and Keith bypasses to dual carriageway standards, following the already committed Inverness to Wester Hardmuir scheme.	<b>Action 57:</b> We will continue to support the case for the full dualling on the A9 and A96.	<p><b>Action 57:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 58:</b> Ongoing</p>	Reduction in road based journey times for inter-urban movements, benefitting both residents and businesses	5: Car	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST7b</b>	The RTS calls for incremental improvements to our <b>road network</b> where there are safety, efficiency and environmental benefits, including in relation to single track roads.	<b>Action 58:</b> We will work with roads authorities to identify opportunities to address known				

**Strategy Theme 7: Improving the safety, reliability and resilience of our road and rail networks**

<b>Policy ST7c:</b>	The RTS supports the expansion of <b>50mph HGV speed limits</b> across the Trunk Road network in the region where it is safe to do so.	safety issues whilst seeking to protect end-to-end journey times.		Reduction in road casualties in our region		
<b>Policy ST7d</b>	The RTS supports the provision of <b>overtaking opportunities</b> on our roads, especially where there are known problems with vehicle platooning which can cause driver frustration.					
<b>Policy ST7e</b>	The RTS calls for investment in our regional road network where there are regular and sustained <b>periods of disruption</b> due to weather and / or geological instability.	<b>Action 59:</b> We will work with partners to progress schemes which address known resilience issues, including at the A83 Rest & Be Thankful, the A82 at Loch Lomond and A890 at Stromeferry.	<b>Action 59:</b> Ongoing	Improved resilience of the regional road network, now and in the future	3: Public transport	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets
<b>Policy ST7f</b>	The RTS recognises the increasing vulnerability of our region's <b>road network</b> to severe weather events linked to <b>climate change</b> and supports capital and revenue measures to mitigate this.	<b>Action 50:</b> We will chair the Client Delivery Group with partners Transport Scotland and The Highland Council overseeing the development of Integrated Transport Plan for Fort William	<b>Action 560:</b> 2027		4: Taxis and shared transport 5: Car	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST7g</b>	The RTS recognises the increasing vulnerability of the <b>railway network</b> to severe weather events linked to <b>climate change</b> and supports capital and revenue measures to mitigate this.	<b>Action 61:</b> We will work with partners to progress schemes which address known resilience issues on the railway, such as at Stromeferry, Cruachan and coastal Sutherland.	<b>Action 61:</b> Ongoing	Improved resilience of the regional railway network, now and in the future	3: Public transport	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets 4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST7h</b>	The RTS supports the continued provision and expansion of <b>real-time travel information</b> for motorists and public transport users through existing and emerging platforms.	<b>Action 29:</b> We will continue to support and expand (subject to funding) the provision of multi-modal real-time information displays at key interchanges across the region.  <b>Action 62:</b> We will continue to support the provision of real-time information displays at strategic	<b>Action 29:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 62:</b> Ongoing	Improved efficiency of journey planning and journey making	3: Public transport 5: Car	Not applicable

**Strategy Theme 7: Improving the safety, reliability and resilience of our road and rail networks**

		locations on the trunk and local road networks.				
<b>Policy ST7i</b>	The RTS recognises that many parts of our region's road network are in poor condition. It calls for <b>enhanced preventative and remedial road maintenance</b> to ensure the safe, reliable and efficient movement of people across our region.	<b>Action 63:</b> We will continue to make the case for increased funding to maintain our strategic and lifeline road network to a high standard	<b>Action 63:</b> Ongoing	Reducing the impact of poor quality roads / road defects on communities, businesses and visitors to the region	3: Public transport 4: Taxis and shared transport 5: Car	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets
<b>Policy ST7j</b>	Investment in our road network should continue to have an overarching focus on <b>safety</b> with a view to reducing road traffic casualties in accordance with <i>Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030</i> .	<b>Action 58:</b> We will identify opportunities to address known safety issues whilst seeking to protect end-to-end journey times.				
<b>Policy ST7k</b>	To address <b>risks which are particular to roads in our region</b> , the RTS supports: enhanced advisory signage; ongoing public information campaigns around the use of single-track roads; provision of additional safe motorist services and HGV rest areas; and information campaigns for visitors driving left-hand drive vehicles.	<b>Action 64:</b> We will look to identify opportunities for capital works projects to improve the road network including vegetation clearance that improves forward visibility and enhanced stopping or parking provision for all road users and HGVs and visitors in particular.	<b>Action 58:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 64:</b> Ongoing	Reduction in road casualties in our region	3: Public transport 4: Taxis and shared transport 5: Car	2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets  4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST7l</b>	The RTS specifically supports the improvement or removal of <b>priority junctions on higher speed trunk roads</b> , especially for right-turning traffic.					
<b>Policy ST7m</b>	The RTS calls for increased provision of <b>level boarding at stations</b> across the region, which will reduce station dwell times.					
<b>Policy ST7n</b>	The RTS supports the provision of additional <b>sections of double track</b> (or static or dynamic passing loops where double track does not represent value for money) to improve punctuality.	<b>Action 22:</b> We will develop a HITRANS Rail Strategy to identify partnership priorities for feasibility and business case work.	<b>Action 22:</b> 2027	Improved rail service reliability in our region	3: Public transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST7o</b>	The RTS supports infrastructure and timetable improvements external to the region which will improve the <b>reliability of services</b> to / from Inverness, Fort William, Oban and Mallaig.					

## Strategy Theme 8: Facilitating sustainable visitor travel demand

*Responding to the challenges arising from the significant seasonal influx of tourists to the region, often in the areas least well-placed to accommodate it*

Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST8a</b>	The RTS supports the further development of <b>long-distance walking, wheeling and cycling</b> routes (including the National Cycle Network), recognising the visitor, economic and local benefits offered.	<p><b>Action 65:</b> We will lead the development of a Regional Tourism Transport Strategy in partnership with e.g., local authorities, HIE, NPA, Cruise Scotland, Transport Scotland, Visit Scotland and other partners.</p> <p>Areas this may consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catering for the tourism demand profile of the region which varies significantly by season and geography</li> <li>Active travel provision for visitors, both overall and with respect to specific visitor attractions</li> <li>Bus and rail travel to areas of high visitor demand, including specific visitor attractions</li> <li>Facilities and interchange</li> <li>Parking and traffic management (including time slot booking)</li> <li>Management of motorhomes / wild camping</li> <li>Management of cruise ship demand</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 65:</b> 2027 subject to agreeing final scope/funding with partners</p>	<p>Reducing the negative impacts imposed by visitors on our communities without reducing tourism volumes or impacting on the visitor experience</p>	<p>1: Walking and wheeling</p> <p>2: Cycling</p> <p>3: Public transport</p> <p>4: Taxis and shared transport</p> <p>5: Car</p>	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p> <p>2: Maintaining and safely operating existing assets</p> <p>3: Making better use of existing capacity</p> <p>4: Targeted infrastructure improvements</p>
<b>Policy ST8b</b>	The RTS supports the development of <b>active travel connections</b> to our ports, airports and regionally important railway stations.					
<b>Policy ST8c:</b>	The RTS supports the development of <b>active travel connections</b> to our key tourism destinations where this would be a realistic option for some visitors.					
<b>Policy ST8d</b>	Where there are concentrations of international tourists, including cruise passengers, the RTS supports the provision of enhanced local travel information and coordination to <b>improve visitor experience</b> and reduce impacts on local networks.					
<b>Policy ST8e</b>	The RTS supports the operation and promotion of <b>additional local rail services</b> to key tourism destinations.					
<b>Policy ST8f</b>	The RTS supports in the longer-term the provision of <b>additional rail carriages</b> on existing services in peak season, where feasible.					
<b>Policy ST8g</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>flexible timetabling</b> where this can co-exist with regular services for local residents.					
<b>Policy ST8h</b>	The RTS supports the principle of expanded <b>open access rail services</b> where these can be accommodated at no disadvantage to scheduled services.					



**Strategy Theme 8: Facilitating sustainable visitor travel demand**

<b>Policy ST8i</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>sustainably accommodating visitor demand</b> whilst maintaining or increasing visitor numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of where sustainable aviation technologies could improve visitor travel and demands on infrastructure</li> </ul>				
<b>Policy ST8j</b>	The RTS supports the introduction of increased <b>parking management measures</b> at tourist honeypots as a tool to encourage improved access to these locations by public transport or active modes and to address indiscriminate and dangerous parking.					
<b>Policy ST8k</b>	Where new or increased <b>parking charges</b> are introduced, the RTS encourages that this should be done in combination with improved facilities for those accessing via sustainable modes.					
<b>Policy ST8l</b>	The RTS supports measures to ensure that <b>motorhome and campervan-based tourism demand</b> is sustainably accommodated so that any negative impacts on communities are mitigated.					
<b>Policy ST8m</b>	Whilst recognising the benefits of <b>cruise tourism</b> in our region, the RTS recognises that catering for this demand can negatively impact on our communities. The RTS therefore supports measures to ensure that this demand is more sustainably accommodated.					
<b>Policy ST8n</b>	The RTS supports measures which would allow the benefits of <b>cruise tourism</b> to be more evenly distributed around the region.					
<b>Policy ST8o</b>	The RTS supports the principle of <b>bespoke bus services</b> aimed at tourists to address excessive car-based demand at honeypot locations.					
<b>Policy ST8p</b>	The RTS recognises that high volumes of tourist traffic are impacting the <b>condition of some roads</b> in our region and that increased central government funding is required that reflects this increased pressure on local transport infrastructure, to support an enhanced repair and maintenance programme.					

### Strategy Theme 8: Facilitating sustainable visitor travel demand

<b>Policy ST8q</b>	The RTS recognises that <b>high volumes of tourist traffic</b> can lead to slow and inefficient journeys and therefore supports measures to address this.					
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### Strategy Theme 9: Decarbonising our transport, mitigating the effects of climate change

#### Supporting the decarbonisation of transport through the adoption of zero emission vehicles, vessels, and aircraft

Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST9a</b>	The RTS supports the implementation of measures which facilitate the <b>decarbonisation of the public transport vehicle fleet</b> within the region, including commercial vehicles, buses and community transport, rail rolling stock, aircraft and ferries.	This is a general statement of support for this principle, supported by a number other actions including <b>Actions 16, 22, 41 and 46</b>	Ongoing	Decarbonisation of the public transport vehicle fleet in line with the national net zero target	3: Public transport 4: Taxis and shared transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST9b</b>	The RTS recognises the opportunities brought about by the <b>availability of renewable energy</b> in our region, including locally produced green hydrogen. The transport fleet mix and associated infrastructure should reflect this.	<p><b>Action 66:</b> We will continue to develop locally-based innovative solutions for the decarbonisation of the railway network in the region.</p> <p><b>Action 67:</b> We will continue to work with the Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) to explore emerging decarbonisation opportunities in the aviation sector.</p> <p><b>Action 68:</b> We will support the use of locally produced renewable energy on our inter-island ferry services.</p>	<p><b>Action 66:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 67:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Action 68:</b> Ongoing</p>	Maximisation of the opportunities presented by the abundance of renewable energy in our region	3: Public transport 4: Taxis and shared transport 5: Car	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST9c:</b>	The RTS supports the development of <b>vehicle pooling and vehicle sharing services</b> across the	<b>Action 69:</b> We will work with partners, including employers, to identify and pursue opportunities	<b>Action 69:</b> Ongoing	Reduction in car kilometres,	4: Taxis and shared transport	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements

Strategy Theme 9: Decarbonising our transport, mitigating the effects of climate change						
	region to reduce the need for personal car ownership.	for the expansion of vehicle pooling and sharing.		particularly for single occupant journeys	5: Car	
<b>Policy ST9d</b>	The RTS calls for the <b>expansion, standardisation and maintenance of EV charging infrastructure</b> to support the decarbonisation of all vehicle based travel in our region.	<b>Action 70:</b> We will work with partners to identify and pursue opportunities for the expansion of zero emission vehicle uptake.				
<b>Policy ST9e</b>	The RTS recognises the challenges of distance, topography, climate and short winter daylight hours to the rollout of battery electric powered commercial vehicles and seeks <b>low or zero emission solutions appropriate to our region</b> , and which capitalise on the surplus energy production within our region.	<b>Action 71:</b> We will work with local authorities and Transport Scotland to support the implementation of the EV Infrastructure Fund in a way that reflects the specific opportunities and challenges of developing a charging network that meets the transport demands of our region.	<b>Action 70:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 71:</b> 2027	Decarbonisation of the vehicle fleet in line with the national net zero target	<i>Note public transport is addressed in Policy ST9a</i>  4: Taxis and shared transport  5: Car	4: Targeted infrastructure improvements
<b>Policy ST9f</b>	The RTS supports the roll-out of other <b>alternative fuels</b> to promote the decarbonisation of our transport networks, ports, ferry terminals, airports and airfields.					

Strategy Theme 10: Embracing new technologies						
<i>Capitalising on innovations in new technology</i>						
Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST10a</b>	The RTS embraces the opportunities provided by <b>new technologies</b> to improve the provision of transport infrastructure and services across the region.	<b>Action 72:</b> New and emerging technologies will be monitored for their applicability in our region. We will pursue opportunities to pilot these technologies as they arise.	<b>Action 72:</b> Ongoing	Expansion of transport connectivity and accessibility through adoption of new technology	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST10b</b>	The RTS supports consideration of the provision of future <b>innovative personal transport</b> within the design of our active travel network and mobility hubs.	<b>Action 1:</b> We will update the HITRANS Active Travel Strategy to reflect the adopted RTS.	<b>Action 1:</b> 2027	Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres	1: Walking and wheeling  2: Cycling	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably

Strategy Theme 10: Embracing new technologies

<p><b>Policy ST10c:</b></p>	<p>The RTS supports the principle and further development of <b>Mobility-as-a-Service</b> as the technology evolves,</p>	<p><b>Action 73:</b> We will continue to support and reflect the evolution and expansion of mobility-as-a-service.</p>	<p><b>Action 73:</b> Ongoing</p>	<p>To reduce the barriers to travel / inconvenience when having change within or between modes on a journey</p> <p>Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres</p> <p>Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres</p> <p>Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one</p>	<p>1: Walking and wheeling 2: Cycling 3: Public transport 4: Taxis and shared transport 5: Car</p>	<p>1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably</p>
<p><b>Policy ST10d</b></p>	<p>The RTS supports opportunities for the more widespread adoption of <b>Connected and Autonomous Vehicles</b> and autonomous buses, whilst recognising the challenges posed in our region.</p>	<p><b>Action 74:</b> We will continue to identify actions required to facilitate the safe introduction of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and autonomous buses in the region.</p>	<p><b>Action 74:</b> Ongoing</p>	<p>Reduction in social exclusion for those who cannot drive or who would prefer not to drive</p>	<p>5: Car</p>	<p>Not applicable, market-led</p>

**Strategy Theme 11: Reducing the cost of travel, particularly for those most in need**

*Reducing the cost of travel for residents of the region, which is a primary contributor to 'transport poverty'*

Policy		HITRANS Action(s)	Action Timescale	Outcome(s) Sought	Sustainable Travel Hierarchy	Sustainable Investment Hierarchy
<b>Policy ST11a</b>	<b>Transport poverty</b> is a complex, dispersed and often hidden problem in our region. The RTS commits to define and evidence this problem and identify appropriate actions to be delivered by HITRANS and our partners.	<b>Action 75:</b> We will undertake research that defines transport poverty in our region and explores the disproportionate impact of this on communities and businesses across the region (the evidence from this should be used to develop more specific actions / investment cases to take to Scottish and UK Governments).	<b>Action 75:</b> 2027	Reduction in transport poverty and associated social exclusion	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST11b</b>	Recognising that, for many in our region (and especially those living in our island communities), transport costs account for a high proportion of household income, the RTS supports a <b>reduction in public transport fares</b> and the introduction of payment plans for multi-journey tickets.	<b>Action 76:</b> We will work with Transport Scotland to ensure that actions emerging from the <i>Fair Fares Review</i> are appropriate and equitable for our region.  <b>Actions 17 and 22</b> to develop regional bus and rail strategies will also address the issues relating to the impact of the cost of travel within our region.	<b>Action 76:</b> Ongoing	Reduction in transport poverty and associated social exclusion	Not applicable	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST11c:</b>	The comparative costs of public transport mean that residents and visitors to the region often <b>choose to travel by car</b> . The RTS therefore supports a reduction in the cost differential between travelling by public transport and car.			Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres  Mode shift from car to active modes, contributing to reduced vehicle kilometres  Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a	3: Public transport  4: Taxis and shared transport	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably

**Strategy Theme 11: Reducing the cost of travel, particularly for those most in need**

				car or who would prefer not to use one		
<b>Policy ST11d</b>	The RTS supports in principle the roll-out of <b>Road Equivalent Tariff</b> to any ferry routes on which it does not currently apply, including local authority services.	<b>Action 77:</b> We will continue to make the case in support of this principle	<b>Action 77:</b> Ongoing	Reduction in transport poverty and associated social exclusion  Reduction in inequalities between island and peninsular communities	3: Public transport  5: Car	Not applicable
<b>Policy ST11e</b>	The RTS calls for greater cross-industry partnership working and regulatory reform to reduce the <b>cost penalty for interchange</b> within or between modes of transport.	<b>Action 16:</b> In partnership with local authorities, we will develop a Regional Bus Strategy. This will explore opportunities provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and should include consideration of the role of Community Transport and DRT / EDRT in providing connectivity and reducing journey times. It will also consider opportunities to improve the integration and provision of information and ticketing through the development of mobility-as-a-service.  <b>Action 78:</b> We will seek to continue the development of mobility-as-a-service for delivering cross-operator ticketing.  <b>Action 79:</b> We will work with industry partners to increase the scope of multi-operator ticketing (within and between modes of	<b>Action 16:</b> 2027  <b>Action 78:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 79:</b> Ongoing	To reduce the barriers to travel / inconvenience when having change within or between modes on a journey  Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres  Reduction in social exclusion for those without access to a car or who would prefer not to use one	3: Public transport  4: Taxis and shared transport	1: Reducing the need to travel unsustainably

**Strategy Theme 11: Reducing the cost of travel, particularly for those most in need**

		transport), including through Bus Service Improvement Plans.				
<b>Policy ST11f</b>	The RTS calls for the extension of the <b>National Concessionary Travel Scheme</b> and Under-22s Concessionary Travel Scheme to rail, ferry and air services where these are the main or only mode of public transport in an area.	<b>Action 80:</b> We will continue to make the case to Transport Scotland for the extension of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme to some rail, ferries and air services.	<b>Action 80:</b> Ongoing	Increased use of public transport services from the perspective of both passenger numbers and passenger kilometres  Reduction in social exclusion for those in island communities or mainland communities where the train is the main form of public transport  Reduction in inequalities between residents of our region and the Central Belt	3: Public transport	
<b>Policy ST11g</b>	The RTS calls for the retention and expansion of the <b>Air Discount Scheme</b> , including to businesses in the region.	<b>Action 47:</b> We will continue to explore ways of achieving a Highlands and Islands air network that meets the socio-economic needs of the region, including where legislative change may be required or the development of a regional aviation strategy to support this.  <b>Action 81:</b> Following publication of the Aviation Policy Statement, we will look to work with	<b>Action 45:</b> Ongoing  <b>Action 81:</b> 2027	Reduced business transport costs  Reduced peripherality	3: Public transport	Not applicable

**Strategy Theme 11: Reducing the cost of travel, particularly for those most in need**

		Transport Scotland, HIAL and partners to support the retention and expansion of the Air Discount Scheme.				
<b>Policy ST11h</b>	<b>National road pricing proposals</b> may emerge in response to the reduction in fuel duty and Value Added Tax as a result of the mass adoption of electric vehicles. If this eventuality materialises, the RTS calls for a road pricing system that recognises the unique characteristics of our region.	<b>Action 82:</b> We will advocate a coordinated national approach to road pricing to Transport Scotland that considers travel demand at a regional level.	<b>Action 82:</b> Ongoing	N/A	5: Car	1: Reducing the new to travel unsustainably  3: Making better use of existing capacity



