



Transport Scotland

Written consultation response

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendations

The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) is an independent and inclusive economic development network representing all sectors and all geographies of the Scottish economy. Our mission is to convene our members and partners across the private, public and third sectors to collaborate to deliver inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

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Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Introduction

Do you feel the eight themes within the STPR2 Phase 1 capture what needs to be done in the short term, in relation to the transport investment priorities?

Agree.

Do you feel the themes appropriately address challenges and opportunities described within the report?

Yes.

Please use the space below to provide any further comments on the challenges and opportunities described within the report:

SCDI agrees with the challenges and opportunities described within the report.

While 'increased automation' is identified as one of the potential trends which will provide the context for STPR2, automation, data and the sharing economy are not considered in detail.

Do you feel that the Phase 1 interventions associated with the eight themes support the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy?

Agree.

Please use the space below to provide any further comments that you wish to make on the eight themes.

While the eight themes are all supported, NTS2 is a national strategy for all of Scotland's transport system. STPR2 makes a 'National Case for Change', but it has been restricted to Transport Scotland's responsibilities. Integrated interventions under the themes are needed across all of Scotland's infrastructures and networks to address the challenges and opportunities described, in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and in the longer-term.

How well do the Phase 1 interventions respond to the uncertainty in travel demand and behaviour that we face in the short term due to COVID-19?

Well.

How well do the Phase 1 interventions support Scotland's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in the short-term?

Well.

Please use the space below to highlight the Phase 1 themes and interventions, that you particularly support:

SCDI agrees with all of the Phase 1 themes and interventions. SCDI does not disagree within any of them. We have some comments on the proposed Phase 1 themes or interventions.

SCDI does not disagree within any of the Phase 1 themes or interventions. SCDI agrees with all of them. We have some comments about interventions which are not currently in Phase 1.

SCDI understands that the Scottish Government remains committed to those STPR1 and Infrastructure Investment Plan projects which have not yet been progressed or completed.

Intervention 1 – Development and delivery of Active Freeways

SCDI welcomes this intervention. However, we are concerned at the discrepancy between Sustrans' suggested funding of £70m per annum over 30 years and the £50m total funding identified in the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan for design and development. The long-term funding available from Scottish and local governments must be appropriate for a programme of high-quality segregated networks of routes across Scotland.

Micromobility is rapidly expanding with an increasing range of devices for sale or shared use. While it is currently illegal to use many of them on a public road, pavement or cycle lane, e-scooters are currently being trialled in England. Alongside fully active travel, micromobility devices can play an important role in reducing congestion and improving air quality. Some or all of them should be legalised, with space provided in the active freeways and mobility hubs.

Intervention 2 – Expansion of 20mph zones

The intervention is focussed on urban areas, but the introduction of 20mph zones may also be beneficial for more rural communities and link to the theme of creating smart and sustainable towns and villages, and its intervention 4 of place-making in neighbourhoods.

Intervention 3 - Influencing travel choices

Public transport patronage has declined dramatically in the Covid-19 pandemic as people have been asked to travel only when necessary, work from home if possible and avoid using public transport due to the perceived risks of spreading the infection between passengers. Long-term modal shift to from cars to public transport will be essential for the Net Zero targets. As well as protecting and reintroducing services which have been withdrawn during the Covid-19 pandemic, and targeted communications campaigns encouraging sustainable and active travel, it will be critical to restore many peoples' familiarity with and confidence in using public transport from a public health perspective. The latest evidence has suggested that the risks are low especially when preventative and protective measures are taken. People making travel choices should be reassured about the safety of public transport in the short-term through targeted communications campaigns and the provision of public health-related information, such as real-time capacity and crowding, Covid-19 precautions and times of last cleaning.

While it is understood that such a strategy would not directly flow from STPR2, the Scottish Government should go further than influencing travel choices through communications campaigns. The Irish Government will be implementing a National Remote Work Strategy, which aims to make remote work a lasting feature of Ireland's workforce, offer new and expanding companies the opportunity to locate in rural areas, either as primary locations or advance second sites, and reduce the need for travel. It has estimated that up to 400 remote working hubs will form part of an integrated national network in both rural and urban areas.

Intervention 4 – Transport's contribution towards placemaking principles in neighbourhoods

This intervention would support place-based investment, including town centre revitalisation and ambitions to develop 20-minute neighbourhoods, which would be welcome. SCDI believes that the Scottish Government should commit in a first phase to investment in 20-minute mixed economy neighbourhoods in cities, towns and rural communities, including more

deprived communities. The 20-minute neighbourhood policy will only work if the public services that people need to access are available locally and are accessible. It will be more challenging to adopt 20-minute neighbourhoods in rural areas so its neighbourhoods should have higher funding per person to allow for the housing, co-working or social spaces needed.

Intervention 7 – Reallocation of roadspace for active travel

Intervention 10 - Reallocation of roadspace for buses

There are an increasing number of successful cities around the world that were moving before the Covid-19 pandemic towards the creation of more attractive and liveable city centres including pedestrianisation, improvements to active travel and public transport, and prohibition or severe restrictions of cars within zones. Following the establishment of the Low Emission Zones in Scotland's major cities next year, they and Transport Scotland should very closely work with local businesses and third sector organisations on plans for car-free city centres.

Reversing cuts to funding for local bus services is needed alongside bus priority measures.

Intervention 8 - Enhancing facilities at major rail stations (Rail Station Redevelopment)

The proposed expansion plans for Edinburgh Waverley, Glasgow Central, Perth and Inverness stations are all welcome. These are to be progressed in the current Control Period between 2019 and 2024. These plans are all associated with earlier track infrastructure and service commitments. In the case of Perth and Inverness stations, the STPR1 projects of rail enhancements on the Highland Main line between Perth and Inverness, and between Aberdeen and Inverness, have only been partially delivered. In the case of Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Central stations, high speed rail links between Glasgow and Edinburgh and the north of HS2, have not been progressed yet to a Strategic Business Case. These associated track infrastructure and service commitments with a clear timetable for delivery should be included in STPR2. We comment further on the omission of high speed rail in the space to highlight where we disagree with any of the Phase 1 themes or interventions.

Intervention 9 - Development of Glasgow 'Metro' and Edinburgh Mass Transit strategies

Both these interventions are strongly supported. As a member of the Glasgow Connectivity Commission which proposed the Glasgow 'Metro', we would highlight that it recommended that a rail link to Glasgow Airport along the South Clyde Growth Corridor should be "the first stage of a wider strategy to transform the fixed public transport network for the city and region as a whole" and should be delivered through City Deal funding by 2025. STPR2 Phase 2 should therefore develop a rail link to Glasgow Airport as the first phase of the Glasgow Metro.

Intervention 13 - Investment in low carbon and alternative fuel systems

Intervention 14 - Delivery of Rail Decarbonisation Programme (Phase 1)

Scotland has the opportunity to integrate its investments in low carbon and alternative fuel systems in electric and hydrogen hubs to decarbonise transport modes, both offshore vessels and onshore vehicles, and places. This can also increase the local economic benefits and the opportunities for Scotland to research, develop, manufacture and export the technologies.

Transport's contribution to Net Zero will only be delivered if decarbonisation and digitalisation technologies are brought together to support a shift to more people using public and shared transport as well as the decarbonisation of private vehicles. Scotland can be a living lab for technology and data-led transport solutions, such as Mobility As A Service, Demand Responsive Transport and Smart Logistics, for which there are growing international markets.

Intervention 16 - Infrastructure to encourage rail freight

This intervention is said to assist in delivering the requirement by Scottish Ministers in the Scottish High Level Output Specification of a 7.5% growth in rail freight traffic carried on the Scottish rail network by 31 March 2004. However, it is not said whether it will be sufficient and, if it is not, what further interventions are proposed to achieve this growth. While there is a commitment to identify future works on the West Coast Main Line, routes within Central Scotland and to the freight termini at Aberdeen, Inverness and Fife, there is no commitment to act upon it. The Scottish Joint Freight Board Industry Growth Plan which is referenced says that “the first option for growing the rail freight business has to be to explore how the existing ways of doing things could be improved and how novel ideas can be rapidly developed”. However, this intervention does not explore innovation or different ways of doing things.

Intervention 17 - Investment in the strategic road network asset

The Scottish Government's proposal to double investment in maintenance over the next five years to address backlogs by undertaking maintenance and asset enhancement is welcome. However, the benefits of this would be reduced if the condition of the local road network is allowed to deteriorate further due to budgetary pressures on local authorities. Transport Scotland and local authorities must fund a programme to address the backlog of maintenance of the local road network, which, especially in rural and remote areas, is a strategic asset too.

Intervention 18 - Access to Argyll and Bute (A83)

The case for early investment in a longer-term solution for the A83 is strongly supported.

Intervention 19 - Investment in ferries and ports

The production and implementation of an effective long term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports is essential. The Islands Connectivity Plan should be on a par with STPR2, multi-modal and long-term to allow for consideration of strategic options as the location of ports, routes of crossings and opportunities to replace ferries with fixed links.

The intervention address only the Clyde and Hebrides ferry service and Northern Isles ferry service networks. It does not cover operators of other services to the islands and peninsular communities, intra-island service networks, and ferries and ports serving UK and international routes. These should be addressed in the Islands Connectivity Plan and Phase 2 of STPR2.

Intervention 20 - Speed Management Plan

The review of whether to increase the national speed limit of HGVs over 7.5 tonnes on the trunk road network from 40mph to 50mph on single carriageway roads and 50mph to 60mph on dual carriageway roads is supported. An increase should be balanced by interventions to increase the competitiveness of rail freight, improvements to the efficiency of road freight logistics to reduce CO₂ emissions, and a transition to alternative low carbon fuels for HGVs.

Please use the space below to highlight where you disagree with any the Phase 1 themes or interventions.

SCDI is concerned that the omission of high speed rail from the Phase 1 interventions represents a further delay. SCDI has been a member of High Speed Rail Scotland, the partnership formed by the then Minister for Housing and Transport Keith Brown MSP, for over 10 years. This published [Fast Track Scotland – Making the Case for High Speed Rail Connections with Scotland](#) in 2011, the strategic case for these links. UK and Scottish Ministers the jointly issued a statement following the publication in March 2016 of the [Broad](#)

[options for upgraded and high speed railways to the North of England and Scotland report](#) that by 2019 they would work to identify any and all options with strong business cases, for consideration for implementation in Control Periods 6 and 7 between 2019 and 2029. In the First Minister's speech on [November 6th 2017](#) in Newcastle she confirmed that Transport Scotland would be "commissioning two studies to investigate the requirements, costs and benefits for the potential improvements". She explained that "we're not simply waiting for high speed rail to come from the south...often we should try and make these benefits go from north to south, rather than wait on them coming from south to north". The feasibility studies were completed by early 2019 which were to inform a business case. This was to be commissioned by Transport Scotland and it would inform STPR2 rather than follow it. However, 2 years later procurement on the business case has not yet started. Meanwhile, construction on Phase 1 has started and Phase 2a was recently given the go-ahead by the UK Government.

SCDI agrees with the comments of the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson MSP in his recent letter to the Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps MP on the Union Connectivity Review – Interim Report. Mr Matheson wrote:

"Accordingly, I want the UK Government to accelerate and expand HS2 to Scotland, via the West Coast and East Coast, potentially by means of dynamic bypassing of the existing lines as a credible and affordable strategy in addressing modal shift and emissions reduction, as well as improving capacity and connectivity. Also, to reiterate the agreement UK and Scottish Ministers have already made to identify options that could reduce the Anglo-Scottish rail journey time to a 3 hour target, rather than the 3 hour 38 minute journey time achieved by the baseline HS2 Anglo-Scottish service specification. It is imperative that all nations and regions of Britain benefit from the sustainable growth and prosperity that HS2 will deliver both in its construction and its implementation. I look forward to a commitment from your Government to commence design and development activity to deliver infrastructure that provides greater rail capacity throughout the routes of the West Coast and East Coast corridors."

However, it is Transport Scotland which has delayed the procurement of the business case for HS2 lines in Scotland and as it is not currently a Phase 1 intervention this suggests that it will not be procured until the end of 2022 at the earliest, 5 years after the First Minister's speech. It would then seem increasingly unlikely that there would be any options which could be implemented in Control Period 7 to 2029 and certainly not within Control Period 6. SCDI recommends that development of the business case should be in Phase 1 of STPR2.

The Covid-19 pandemic has, once again, reinforced public concern about regional inequality. Low productivity in parts of the UK is the key reason for regional inequality. Poor transport and digital connectivity are, in turn, among its causes. Many rural, remote and island regions and areas are among those with the lowest productivity levels in Scotland. The Phase 1 themes and interventions do not properly address the need to increase productivity in rural areas of Scotland for long-term economic recovery and resilience. The Phase 1 interventions should be made applicable to rural economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges as well, where not already and where possible. Phase 2 interventions should then include more of the interventions needed to increase productivity in rural, remote and island areas.

Programmes of interventions on the A77 and A75 are particularly needed to increase productivity in the South of Scotland. Decisions on the investment in the Scottish strategic roads are the responsibility of the Scottish Government. However, SCDI members in the South of Scotland would welcome extra funding from the UK Government if it is made available following the Union Connectivity Review to accelerate projects and increase their benefits.

SCDI recognises Transport Scotland's commitment to the development of a Scottish Aviation Strategy. International air connectivity with global markets for passengers and freight are vital

for the Scottish economy. Domestic flights in the UK are also very important, especially for those routes without competitive journey times by rail services. Intra-Scottish and inter-island aviation are economic and social lifelines links for regions and communities in Scotland. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on Scotland's air connectivity. The aviation industry also has major challenges with and commitments to a sustainable future. The Scottish Government has a target that Scotland should work to decarbonise all scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040 and become the world's first zero emission aviation region. Scotland also has industrial opportunities in the production of sustainable aviation fuels. STPR2 does not currently include aviation. If it is not brought back into scope, it will be essential the Scottish Aviation Strategy and STPR2 are joined-up, and that they both support the Scottish aviation sector with its short-term and longer-term challenges and opportunities.