

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Depute Chief Executive and Director
of Housing, Operations and Development
to Cabinet
of 15 February 2023**

**Subject: Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)
Publication**

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Transport Scotland's second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) publication.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet;

2.1.1 notes the publication of the Strategic Transport Projects Review;

2.1.2 remits the Head of Roads to provide regular updates on the delivery programme by Transport Scotland; and

2.1.3 otherwise notes the contents of the report.

3. Background

3.1 The original STPR was published in 2009. It included 29 recommendations for strategic road and rail improvements such as the Queensferry Crossing, A9 improvements, rail infrastructure improvements and various park and rides. Further information is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

4. Proposals

4.1 The final report was published in December 2022 however the plan is not fully funded and will be subject to funding applications approved by Parliament.

4.2 STPR2 makes 45 recommendations that focus investment on sustainable transport options. Of those recommendations, 28 provide benefits for individuals, families, communities and businesses across most parts of Scotland (not applicable to islands in some cases): and are grouped under six themes.

- Improving Active Travel Infrastructure;
- Influencing Travel Choices and Behaviours;
- Enhancing Access to Affordable Public Transport;

- Decarbonising Transport;
- Increasing Safety and Resilience on the Strategic Transport Network; and
- Strengthening Strategic Connections.

4.3 The following recommendations are applicable to multiple regions, but will have a particular benefit to the Ayrshire and Arran Region:

- Supporting Integrated Journeys at Ferry Terminals;
- Ferry Vessel Renewal and Replacement and Progressive Decarbonisation;
- Investment in Port Infrastructure to Support Vessel Renewal and Replacement and Progressive Decarbonisation; and
- Rail Freight Terminals and Facilities.

4.4 The following recommendation is Specific to the Ayrshire and Arran Region:

- Access to Stranraer and the Ports at Cairnryan

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at the current time. Funding associated with delivery of the STPR2 aims would be subject to funding applications reviewed and approved by Transport Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 There are no human resource implications arising from the report at the present time. However, should additional funding be made available for active travel measures this will have a staff resource implication for ARA.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with the rejection of the recommendations

9. Equalities

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken by Transport Scotland in parallel with STPR2.

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10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 4 of the Council Plan: South Ayrshire Works/ Make the most of the local economy.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Bob Pollock, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

- 14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Operations and Development will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Updates to be provided on the delivery programme.	March 2024	Head of Ayrshire Roads Alliance

Background Papers All STPR2 documents can be found on the Transport Scotland website at: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/strategy/strategic-transport-projects-review-2/#overview>

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Further Background Information

- 1.1 STPR2 is being led by Transport Scotland and will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years. It is intended to help deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes of the second National Transport Strategy (NTS2), and will complement others such as the Infrastructure Investment Plan, National Planning Framework 4, and Climate Change Plan update.
- 1.2 STPR2 has a wider scope than the original STPR and is predicated on the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in NTS2 which promotes walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to individual use of a private car.
- 1.3 Due to Covid-19, Transport Scotland has restructured the STPR2 into two phases. Phase 1 will focus on the short-term (up to 5 years) with a view to identifying interventions which can be accelerated to support a green economic recovery from Covid-19, and also those which embed, support and extend any increase in travel by sustainable travel modes, including positive behaviour change seen during the pandemic. Phase 2 was completed and report published in December 2022, giving Scottish Ministers a programme of potential transport investment opportunities for the period 2022-2042.

Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Ayrshire and Arran

- 1.4 STPR2 was progressed at both a national and regional level in order to appraise transport problems and opportunities and the development of options in the context of place. A total of 11 regions were established for STPR2 including Ayrshire & Arran and a regional working group was established which includes representatives from:
 - Transport Scotland;
 - Jacobs/Aecom transport consultants;
 - Ayrshire Roads Alliance;
 - 3 Councils' Planning Policy teams;
 - Ayrshire Growth Deal; and
 - Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 1.5 In addition to the Working Group meetings, local problems and opportunities were identified through a number of stakeholder engagement events:
 - Problems and Opportunities workshops held in Ardrossan and Kilmarnock with regional stakeholders in June 2019.
 - Option Generation workshops held in the same locations in November 2019 to identify potential options to address the identified problems and opportunities.

- Structured Interviews undertaken with stakeholders, including senior officers across the 3 Ayrshire Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnership officers and other organisations in the region.
- An Elected Members Briefing held in Irvine in January 2020 and attended by around 30 Elected Members and Senior Officers.
- An Online Survey carried out between 2nd December 2019 and 10th January 2020 for the public and organisations to provide their views on transport issues and challenges in their day to day journeys.

Problems and Opportunities Summary

1.6 The transport problems and opportunities in the Ayrshire & Arran region were informed through data analysis, stakeholder engagement and policy review. The key themes identified are:

- **Active Travel Facilities and Safety:** Mode of travel to work by bicycle and foot is lower in the region compared to the Scottish average. This may in part be due to a lack of active travel facilities, including segregated cycle infrastructure for commuting purposes and on-board bike carrying facilities on trains and buses. Safety was also highlighted as a concern.
- **Accessibility:** There are large areas of Ayrshire where there is limited access to public transport, particularly in rural areas, although bus revenue support is out of scope for STPR2. Poor accessibility restricts people's access to key services, including employment, education and healthcare.
- **Connectivity and Journey Times:** This has primarily been highlighted as a problem between Ayrshire and the M74 (via the non-trunk A70 and A71) and south of Ayr to access the ports at Cairnryan via the A77. Long journey times were noted to impact the economic competitiveness of the region.
- **Resilience:** In the event of A77 route closure the diversionary route has been noted to be long and sub-standard for the volume and type of vehicles using it (e.g. HGVs).
- **Capacity constraints and congestion at the Bellfield Interchange,**
- **Frequency and Fragility of Public Transport:** Limited public transport coverage prevents access to services and can lead to forced car ownership. There is limited integration between public transport, particularly in rural areas, and limited interconnectivity between bus, rail and ferries with low frequency and limited operating hours. Bus patronage has fallen in recent years and bus mileage, bus connectivity and bus quality have been cited as contributory factors to this decline.
- **Transport Poverty and Affordability:** Transport expenditure and poverty is generally higher in rural parts of the region. The cost of bus travel in the region was noted to be high compared to car (and taxi) and there is a perceived lack of funding to encourage modal shift.
- There are opportunities associated with: Economic development, particularly in relation to the Ayrshire Growth Deal; tourism, including, though not limited to, active travel tourism; journey time reduction, journey

quality and improved connectivity; travel planning, behaviour change and low carbon, such as improving digital connectivity and electric vehicle infrastructure; and improving route resilience.

Option Generation, Sifting and Development

- 1.7 Transport Scotland generated a long list of initial transport options across all modes. All of these ideas/suggestions/options were collated and generated 880 options. Options that required further definition were developed, and similar options were consolidated. Following the option cleaning exercise, 243 options were retained in the long list of interventions to be sifted specific to the Ayrshire and Arran Region.
- 1.8 Each of the options included in the long list were then assessed using an option sifting methodology developed to drive consistency in the sifting of options across STPR2. Based on the methodology, options were either:
- Sifted in for further consideration; or
 - Sifted out from the process. If appropriate, these options will be passed to other areas of Transport Scotland / Scottish Government, or the appropriate local/regional transport authorities and partnerships (through the RTWGs) for consideration outwith STPR2.

Draft Options Pack

- 1.9 The Ayrshire & Arran Working Group was consulted on an 'Options Pack' on 10 November 2020. The Head of Roads at ARA responded on behalf of the Working Group on 26 November 2020 with a number of queries and concerns relating to the process and the options that were sifted out. These concerns included:
- Clarity sought on criteria for defining projects as either in scope and out of scope;
 - Clarity sought on the sifting process;
 - Concern that A70 and A71 routes were denoted as out of scope without clarity on why they were considered out of scope; and
 - Clarity sought on what criteria was to be used to assess the selection of options from the long list to the short list.
- 1.10 The 'Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Ayrshire & Arran Region' was published on 3 February 2021 together with the other regional case for change reports and the National Case for Change report.

Options Sifted Out

- 1.11 A full list of options that were sifted out across all regions and at a national level is provided as an Appendix to the National Case for Change. The 105 options sifted out in the Ayrshire and Arran and Transport Scotland's rationale for sifting them out are shown [here](#) (pages 71 – 87).

Examples of Options Sifted out

1.12 The following is a sample of options sifted out and Transport Scotland's rationale for doing so:

- Cheaper/subsidised bus fares and cheaper rail fares for all users (out of scope as it relates to concessionary fares);
- Ayrshire inter-connected core bus route network with half-hourly frequency (out of scope as it requires revenue funding);
- Upgrades to A70, A71 & A736 (improve carriageway standard, realignment, straightening) (option out of scope as it relates to a local roads); and
- Upgrade A77 to motorway standard as far as Prestwick (option sifted out as does not address regional problems/opportunities).

Options Sifted In

1.13 Following the sifting exercise 138 options specific to the Ayrshire and Arran Region were retained for further appraisal and can be found [here](#) (pages 48 – 65).

Examples of Options Sifted In

1.14 The following is a sample of options sifted in for further appraisal:

- Provision of a cycle/footpath network which follows main roads to connect settlements
- Introduce bus priority lanes on the A77/M77 into Glasgow
- improve east-west rail connections within Ayrshire (e.g. direct services between Kilmarnock, Ardrossan and Largs) and northsouth rail connections within Ayrshire (e.g. direct services between Largs-Ayr)
- extend rail electrification from Ayr to Girvan
- electrify railway between Troon and Kilmarnock
- Increased park and ride spaces for bus and rail
- electrification of the railway between Ayr and Stranraer.

STPR2: Recommendations

1.15 As detailed at paragraph 1.3, due to Covid-19 Transport Scotland restructured the STPR2 into two phases. Phase 1 focussed on the short-term (up to 5 years) with a view to identifying interventions which could be accelerated to support a green economic recovery from Covid-19. The outcome of STPR2 Phase 1 is that twenty interventions were recommended for early progression. Transport Scotland emphasised that the support of partners would be essential in taking these forward and for delivery. Grouped under eight themes, the twenty interventions are noted in Table 1 below:

Table 1: STPR2 Phase 1 themes and Interventions

Theme	Proposed Interventions
Supporting smart and sustainable travel across Scotland	1. Development and delivery of Active Freeways 2. Expansion of 20mph zones 3. Influencing travel choices
Creating Smart and sustainable towns and villages	4. Transport's contribution towards place-making principals in neighbourhoods. 5. Guidance and framework for delivering mobility hubs
Improving accessibility in rural, island and peripheral areas and vulnerable groups	6. Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility As a Service
Transforming Cities	7. Reallocation of road space for active travel 8. Enhancing facilities at major rail stations 9. Development of Glasgow Metro and Edinburgh Mass Transit strategies
Enhancing public transport provision	10. Reallocation of road space for buses 11. Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals 12. Infrastructure to provide access for all at rail stations
Supporting transition to low-carbon transport	13. Investment in low carbon and alternative fuel systems 14. Delivery of Rail Decarbonisation Programme (Phase 1)
Supporting a viable freight industry	15. Strategy for improving rest and welfare facilities for hauliers 16. Infrastructure to encourage rail freight
Enhancing safety and resilience on the strategic transport network	17. Investment in the trunk road network asset 18. Access to Argyll and Bute (A83) 19. Investment in ferries and ports 20. Speed Management Plan

1.16 Transport Scotland proposed that detailed delivery plans are developed for each of the 20 interventions, including a programme, with a focus on the next 5 years, along with an operational plan outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of those organisations responsible for taking the intervention forward. The Phase 1 recommendations were also included within the overall appraisal of the final STPR2 package of interventions.

Stage 2 – Appraisal (Spring – Summer 2021)

1.17 The next stage of the process sifted options to be combined into packages and appraised against the Transport Planning Objectives and against wider Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria and deliverability. This included feasibility, affordability and public acceptability.

1.18 Further detailed assessment was undertaken to produce a final short list of proposed interventions which was reported in STPR2 Phase 2 and completed the Review.

Approvals and Reporting (Autumn 2021)

- 1.19 Drafts of the STPR2 Reports associated with Phase 2 and a proposed delivery plan were programmed to be finalised for approval by Scottish Ministers during Autumn 2021. However, due to delays the final draft report was published in January 2022, providing stakeholders, including the general public, with the opportunity to comment by 15 April 2022.