

Agenda Item	15
Report No	PLA 30/17

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Places Committee

**Date:** 16 August 2017

**Report Title:** HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy – Response to Consultation

**Report By:** Director of Development & Infrastructure

### **1 Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the key elements of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and recommends a response.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree the response to the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy as set out in Section 4 of this report.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The Highlands and Islands RTS 2008-2022 was approved by Scottish Ministers in 2008. The document sets out the key policies and proposals required to deliver a shared vision for transport in the region. It is an important document for continued partnership working between the five partner Councils (Highland, Moray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Argyll & Bute), Community Planning agencies, the private and voluntary sector, and Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.
- 3.2 Since 2008 there have been many changes to the context within which the policy, economic, societal and environmental contexts within which HITRANS operates, so this refresh is very timely. The refresh to the RTS captures the projects that are now committed to improve the transport of the region and also highlights the further action that is required.
- 3.3 The full document can be viewed on the HITRANS web-site at [www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional Transport Strategy](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional_Transport_Strategy).

### 4 Response to Consultation

- 4.1 Although the consultation on the RTS is now officially closed, an extension was sought to allow for Committee approval of the proposed response, which is set out in the paragraphs below.
- 4.2 Overall the refreshed RTS is welcomed and it reflects the discussions which have taken place through partnership meetings over the last year. The RTS summarises the key initiatives and projects that are underway and are planned across the region. It also accurately captures the key infrastructure improvements being promoted by HITRANS at the regional scale (see **Appendix 1**). The RTS will also play an important role in shaping transport strategy and steering improvements to the transport system in advance of the review of the Highland Local Transport Strategy which is anticipated to be prepared alongside and be incorporated under the review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.
- 4.3 One of the improvements seen in this version of the refresh was the inclusion of local authority specific maps that allow a much more localised input to the RTS. The Highland map is shown as **Appendix 2** to this report. It would be useful if further work was carried out on this section of the RTS, to ensure that targeted improvements on the A9 north (for example at Tomich Junction or Munloch junction) are also reflected. Given the recent work being undertaken on the back of the major investment at the smelter in Fort William, there would also be merit in ensuring that an inset is included to identify all of the various transport interventions that may be required (across all modes of transport).
- 4.4 An important issue is to ensure that the RTS remains a usable document which can be supplemented by each partner Council preparing a more informal local transport strategy document to be read alongside it. The addition of the separate maps in the RTS allows this process to be started and ensuring the links are clear to local development plans or other local transport strategy documents should be an important part of finalising the RTS. Work undertaken with HITRANS on Community Links funding bids demonstrate the additional benefits that can be gained from joint working at the strategic and operational level.
- 4.5 Chapter 2 of the document sets out the key trends in transport between 2008 and

2016, and clearly demonstrates the issues that have led to the refresh of the RTS. It may be appropriate now to move this part of the document to an appendix so that the main focus is on the strategy and the transport priorities contained within it.

- 4.6 The role of HITRANS as a community planning partner is highlighted within the strategy, and the Council would welcome continued and further input into partnership activity around Active Travel and Development Planning. The role of active travel in promoting healthy lifestyles should be a key element of this.

## **5 Implications**

- 5.1 Resource – the preparation of the RTS is funded through HITRANS.
- 5.2 Legal – none.
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – none.
- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – many of the interventions contained within the RTS aim to reduce carbon associated with transport and travel.
- 5.5 Risk – none.
- 5.6 Gaelic – none

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

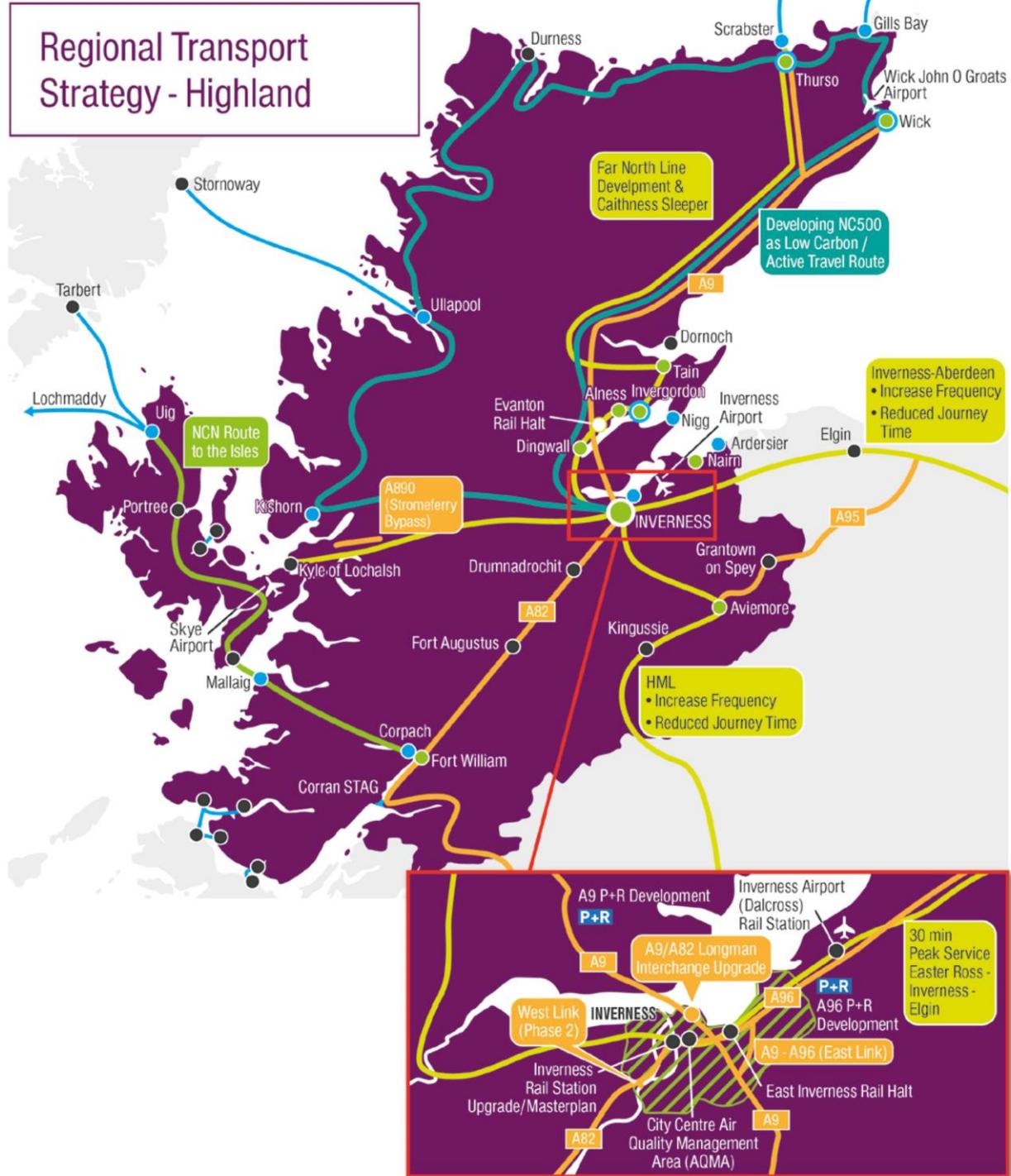
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HITRANS 2016 Strategy: Economy



- Scottish Ferries Plan
- Extend Air Discount Scheme
- ✈ London Heathrow Access
- Targeted Road Improvements
- Rail Developments



- Active Travel Masterplan
- & ● Port/Harbour Development
- Targeted Road Improvements
- Inverness Active Travel Improvements & Bus Statutory Quality Partnership

