NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

23 March 2021

Cabinet

Title:	**Strategic Transport Update**
Purpose:	To provide an update on strategic transport and seek approval of a response to a consultation on Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2).
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: • Notes the update on the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2; • Approves the proposed consultation response to the STPR2 consultation attached at Appendix 1; • Notes the current position on the Ayrshire Regional Transport Appraisal; • Notes the progress of the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Regional Transport Strategy; and • Notes the update of the North Ayrshire Local Transport Strategy in 2021/22.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The majority of Scotland's strategic transport policy has recently undergone or is currently undergoing a refresh. This paper provides an update on the progress with these plans and seeks approval for the proposed response to the consultation on the second Strategic Transport Project Review (STPR2). The report highlights the concerns that some local transport priorities are at risk of not securing Scottish Government support and also provides an update on actions being taken.

2. Background

2.1 Transport investment in North Ayrshire is informed by the strategic transport policy hierarchy. This informs the Government and Transport Scotland's funding priorities for transport and active travel. This funding is then disbursed through a range of programmes. These programmes are open to applications from Local Authorities on an annual basis to enable them to implement transport and active travel priorities at a local level. This paper provides an update on the ongoing development of these strategic plans at a national, regional and local level.

National Transport Strategy

2.1.1 The National Transport Strategy (NTS) sets out the vision for the transport system over the next 20 years. Its vision of a sustainable inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors is underpinned by four priorities: Reduces inequalities; Tackles climate action; Helps deliver inclusive economic growth; and Improves our health and wellbeing.

2.1.2 In December 2020 the NTS Delivery Plan for 2020-2022 was published with annual delivery plans to follow thereafter. The current Delivery Plan focusses on strategic policies, rather than investment and interventions, which will be set out within the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2).

2.2 **Strategic Transport Projects Review 2**

2.2.1 STPR2 will inform transport investment for the next 20 years across Scotland. It will help to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes for transport set out in the NTS. It is informed by an evidence-based review of the performance of Scotland's strategic transport network across all transport modes to identify interventions required to support the delivery of Scotland's Economic Strategy.

2.2.2 A two phased approach is planned in light of the pandemic restrictions. Phase One reported in winter 2020/21 on options that align with the NTS, can be delivered or substantially progressed in the next 2 to 3 years and will support recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Phase 2 will report in Autumn 2021 and will outline recommendations for investment over the longer term 20-year STPR2 horizon.

2.2.3 A public consultation exercise is currently underway on Phase 1 with a deadline of 31 March 2021. A copy of the proposed consultation response is attached for consideration to this report (Appendix 1). STPR2's development has been informed by a review of existing plans and strategies, stakeholder engagement and an option sifting exercise. Officers have actively contributed to this process through the Ayrshire Regional Transport Working Group (RTWG). Further details on STPR2 including those transport priorities that are currently in scope for further assessment are set out at Appendix 2 for information.

2.2.4 Several of the Council's strategic transport priorities are currently sifted out of the STPR2 process. Officers continue to liaise with Transport Scotland for these to be reconsidered for inclusion. The RTWG have raised the matter directly with Transport Scotland requesting further clarity on the process and outputs. A meeting has been organised with the Transport Minister to raise these concerns in detail. The priorities currently sifted out include the upgrade of the:

- B714 as part of the A737 Northern Corridor Improvements to provide more direct access to A78, Ardrossan Ferry Terminal and Hunterston;
- A841 to link the two ferry services and improve road conditions for bus travel on Arran; and
- A70 and/or A71 to provide improved access to the M74, M6 and major motorway networks.

2.3 **Regional Transport Appraisal**

2.3.1 A commitment was made through the Ayrshire Growth Deal (AGD) Heads of Terms to undertake a Regional Transport Appraisal, its purpose being to identify the infrastructure required to underpin AGD projects. There is a lack of clarity and growing concern on the approach to Regional Transport Appraisal with Transport Scotland appearing to have changed their stance on its development. The appraisal process helps support the development of the business case and the necessary evidence required to compete for investment funds. The AGD partners have jointly requested further clarity from both Transport Scotland and the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity on whether they intend to honour their earlier commitment to the appraisal. This will be discussed in the planned meeting with the Transport Minister.

2.4 **Regional Transport Strategy**

2.4.1 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) directs Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and their Capital Investment Programme for the next 15-20 years. The existing RTS was published in 2008 and a three-year delivery plan was developed for 2018/19 – 2020/21. The preparation of the new RTS has been delayed by COVID-19.

2.4.2 SPT are finalising their Case for Change report which will include: the identification of problems and opportunities; set out their strategic framework of vision, outcomes, targets, themes and objectives; and option generation. Officers continue to support SPT with the development of the RTS and advocate for the inclusion of North Ayrshire transport priorities. Public consultation is expected in April/May 2021 with the detailed strategy to follow later in 2021.

2.5 **Local Transport Strategy**

2.5.1 The Local Transport Strategy (LTS) sets out the local vision, objectives and proposals for transportation in North Ayrshire. The current North Ayrshire LTS was published in 2015 and was due for review in 2020. This work was delayed due to COVID-19 and the subsequent delay in national and regional transport policy development, which the LTS should reflect. The approach to developing the new LTS is being finalised and will incorporate the active travel strategy. It is anticipated that the new LTS will be delivered within 2021/22 following the publication of the RTS and will align with the forthcoming Islands Plan.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- Notes the update on the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2;
- Approves the proposed consultation response to the STPR2 consultation attached at Appendix 1;
- Notes the current position on the Ayrshire Regional Transport Appraisal;
- Notes the progress of the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Regional Transport Strategy; and
- Notes the update of the North Ayrshire Local Transport Strategy in 2021/22.

4.   Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1   These strategies will inform strategic transport funding priorities and programmes for the next 20 years. If the projects identified as North Ayrshire transport priorities are not included within STPR2 then further consideration will be dependent on available funding to secure any investment. If Transport Scotland do not commit to developing a Regional Transport Appraisal this will create a need to consider and identify any alternative funding available to the three Ayrshire Authorities to ensure that the maximum benefits from the Ayrshire Growth Deal projects are achieved.

Human Resources

4.2   None.

Legal

4.3   None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4   The transport priorities being promoted aim to provide a fit for purpose and inclusive transport network for North Ayrshire to reduce socio-economic disadvantage and transport poverty.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5   The transport priorities being promoted aim to support sustainable and active travel and reduce the impact of transport on our communities. These aim to reduce the volume of traffic travelling through our towns and to facilitate public transport to support a shift towards more sustainable travel behaviour.

Key Priorities

4.6   The implementation of our transport priorities will contribute to achieving the Council Plan outcomes. They will contribute to the ambitions for: an inclusive, growing and enterprising economy; North Ayrshire to be well-connected with effective infrastructure; and for a sustainable, vibrant, welcoming and attractive environment.

Community Wealth Building

4.7   The Inclusive Growth Diagnostic identified transport as a barrier to inclusive growth at a local level. The provision of a connected transport network including high-quality opportunities for active travel and public transport for everyday journeys is vital to local communities and delivering inclusive growth and Community Wealth Building.

5. Consultation

5.1 The development of STPR2 by Transport Scotland has been informed by stakeholder engagement involving Officers, Elected Members and communities. Officers continue to liaise closely with Transport Scotland through the Regional Transport Working Group to ensure that North Ayrshire priorities are adequately represented.

5.2 Consultation on the forthcoming Regional Transport Strategy is anticipated in April/ May 2021. The new Local Transport Strategy will be informed by extensive stakeholder engagement with Elected Members and public consultation exercises will be an integral part of the process.

Russell McCutcheon
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Claire Fitzsimmons, Active Travel and Transport Manager,** on **MS Teams**.

Background Papers

STPR2 Comments Forms

Privacy Statement:

Privacy and Your Personal Information

This activity is being carried out by the STPR2 Consultant Team (Jacobs and AECOM) on behalf of Transport Scotland. The activity is being carried out under the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines and your data will be aggregated so you will not be identified in the reporting of the feedback findings. We will combine the information you provide with that of other respondents to understand views on the transport related problems and opportunities across different regions and the country as a whole as well as the transport planning objectives. The information gathered will be used to inform the work of STPR2 and data may also be shared with Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities to assist with regional and local work in their area.

To find out why Transport Scotland collect personal information and how it is used, please see Transport Scotland's privacy policy and AECOM's privacy policy data processors. Aggregated data will be shared with Jacobs. Any personal information you provide will be securely stored by AECOM to build an understanding of key issues for consideration in STPR2. Once the project is complete this data will then be deleted.

STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report:

This comments form seeks to understand your views on the **eight Phase 1 themes and associated Phase 1 interventions** within the **STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report**. We recommend that you review the material within the report prior to you providing comments. The form should take about 10 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous.

The closing date for comments is midnight on 31 March 2021.

		Demographic Questions
1		**Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?** ▪ Organisation
2		**If responding as an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?** ▪ North Ayrshire Council
3		**Please indicate which category best describes your organisation?** ▪ Local Authority
4	Only for those responding as an individual	**Which of these age groups are you in?** ▪ Not applicable

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		Comments Form STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report
5		**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
6		**Do you feel the themes appropriately address challenges and opportunities described within the report?** ▪ Yes
6b		**Please use the space below to provide any further comments on the challenges and opportunities described within the report:** The challenges in providing a suitable transport system that meets the needs of the population are well documented. These were explored through the development of National Transport Strategy 2 and are summarised as: reducing inequalities, tackling climate action, delivering inclusive growth and improving health and well-being. The themes proposed for Phase 1 of STPR2 are clearly aligned with these challenges and, as initial actions, they cover the main areas of concern for North Ayrshire, most notably in regard to improving accessibility in rural/peripheral areas and for vulnerable groups; enhancing public transport provision; and enhancing the safety and resilience of the strategic transport network. The Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Diagnostic identified transport as a barrier to inclusive growth and in particular as a limiting factor to and preventing people from accessing employment and training opportunities. Several contributing factors were identified including the: frequency of transport; connections between transport modes; cost; and shift patterns exacerbating transport constraints.

		In North Ayrshire, we are keen to see more done nationally in terms of the role of transport in helping to support local economies and encouraging inclusive economic growth. We appreciate that this will mainly happen via Phase 2 options but given the substantial delivery timescales for Phase 2, more focus on economic development would be welcomed in Phase 1.
7		**Do you feel that the Phase 1 interventions associated with the eight themes support the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy?** ▪ Agree
8		**Please use the space below to provide any further comments that you wish to make on the eight themes.** Intervention 1 – Development and delivery of Active Freeways: This may have a negative implication for those authorities seeking to increase the number of active travel journeys as it implies the demand must be there first. The desire to improve active travel infrastructure was a high priority of the respondents to the public survey undertaken for STPR2. It is however important to remember that in some areas the infrastructure is needed first to generate the demand. Intervention 2 – Expansion of 20mph zones: the development of a national strategy to guide the implementation of 20mph zones and limits, and the proposal for implementation best practice is welcomed. No allowance however has been made for the increase in demand from the public to enforce these restrictions – both on Police and local authority resources.
9		**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
10		**How well do the Phase 1 interventions support Scotland's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the short-term?**

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		▪ Well
11		**Please use the space below to highlight the Phase 1 themes and interventions, that you particularly support:** Intervention 11 – Supporting integrated journeys at ferry terminals: This is welcomed for both Arran and Cumbrae ferries. Our island economies have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions. These economies are heavily reliant on tourism and therefore measures that improve their economic resilience and accessibility are welcomed. Our islands have also been substantially impacted by the implementation of the Road Equivalent Tariff. Whilst we welcome increased visitors, the impact of their travel, particularly increased road traffic, needs to be considered so supporting integrated and more sustainable journeys to the ferry terminals is welcomed.
12		**Please use the space below to highlight where you disagree with any the Phase 1 themes or interventions.** On the whole North Ayrshire is content with the Phase 1 themes and interventions, although as noted above, we would welcome greater emphasis on facilitating economic growth within the themes given the timescales that will be involved with the delivery of Phase 2.
13		**Please use the space below to provide any other comments you wish to make on the STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report.** Our remaining comments relate to the Ayrshire and Arran Case for Change and the Phase 2 options being taken forward for further appraisal. These concerns are noted in the following section of the consultation response. Specifically, in relation to Appendix A: Groupings being taken Forward to Appraisal – Grouping Name "Footway Enhancements on Strategic Routes" we would propose this is reworded to: "*Options to upgrade existing footways on trunk roads and principle routes in our towns and cities, such as width, surfacing, drainage and drop kerbs at crossings. In addition,* **safety measures,** *such as safe crossing facilities on major desire lines**; improved lighting provision; and adequate security, such as sightline improvement, where feasible**.*"

STPR2 Transport Options Questions:

This comments form is aimed at capturing your views on the **STPR2 Transport Options outlined within the Case for Change document.** It also seeks views on the challenges and opportunities related to COVID-19 as well as the STPR2 engagement process to date. We recommend that you review the material within the report prior to you providing comments. The form should take around 10 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous.

The closing date for comments is midnight 31 March 2021.

		Demographic Questions
1		**Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?** ▪ Organisation
2	(for those responding as an organisation)	**If responding as an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?** ▪ North Ayrshire Council
3	(for those responding as an organisation)	**Please indicate which category best describes your organisation?** ▪ Local Authority
4	Only for those responding as an individual	**Which of these age groups are you in?** ▪ Not applicable

Comments Form STPR2 Case for Change and Transport Options		
		Which of the Case for Change reports have you read prior to providing comments? Tick as many that apply: ▪ Ayrshire & Arran Case for Change
5		**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:** **The recommended transport options for STPR2 are strategic covering a range of modes and geographies.** ▪ Disagree
6		**How well do you feel the transport options recommended for further consideration address the problems, opportunities and objectives for strategic transport connections in Scotland?** ▪ Poorly
7		**Do you have any other comments on the transport options identified?** Despite substantial engagement during the option development process, several North Ayrshire transport priorities have been sifted out of the STPR2 process. These are not included in the Phase 2 options being taken forward for further appraisal. The Ayrshire and Arran RTWG have jointly requested further clarity on the: assessment criteria; origin of the suggested options; scope of STRP2; sifting process; which stage options were sifted out including the rationale for doing so; and clarity on where options are proposed to be progressed elsewhere or by another option. Whilst it is recognised that a number of these points have in part been addressed through the Case for Change Report, a formal response would be welcomed. The following projects are all transport priorities for North Ayrshire and we strongly believe these should still be included within the process:

- Upgrade of B714 from Dalry to A78 at Sharphill Roundabout to trunk road status;
- A841 upgrade between Brodick to Lochranza;
- A70 link to M74; and
- A71 link to M74.

The B714, A70 and A71 road upgrades are of particular importance to North Ayrshire as they each would significantly enhance and strengthen Ayrshire's economic connectivity to Glasgow, the Central Belt and to the north of England. More specific details on the rationale for the two North Ayrshire route upgrades are provided below:

B714:
- Local roads have been sifted out unless they provide access to major ports, however, as the B714 provides a direct link to the significant ports at Ardrossan and Hunterston and which are likely to be considered as major ports in NPF4, it should be included and not ruled out at this point.
- Upgrading the B714 to trunk road status would significantly improve connectivity between the Three Towns / North Coast areas of North Ayrshire and Glasgow, the Central Belt and wider motorway network. This would substantially increase the potential for tourism and economic growth in North Ayrshire and provide enhanced links to the Arran and Cumbrae Ferry services.
- It would also support access to Hunterston which has been identified within the National Planning Framework (NPF) as a key deepwater resource with significant potential to support both transport and energy sectors. The NPF acknowledges the need to support a National Development at Hunterston with infrastructure improvements, in particular the A78/A737.
- It would help to meet both national and local development aspirations by providing an upgraded link between the A78 and A737 strategic routes. Substantial resources are being invested in both Hunterston and Ardrossan through the Ayrshire Growth Deal, with £18m secured for the Centre for Research into Low Carbon Energy and the Circular Economy at Hunterston, and £10.5m for the International Marine Science and Environment Centre at Ardrossan.
- It would reduce journey times, reduce accident rates and provide a more direct route between North Ayrshire and the M8. It would also remove the need for the A737 to pass four schools including Kilwinning Academy and the current bottleneck experienced within the town particularly at the Dalry Road/Byres Road junction. An improved B714 would therefore attract traffic away from the existing

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trunk road route through Kilwinning, reducing air pollution, congestion and accident rates there with the reduced volumes of HGV and strategic transport from the town.

- It would also contribute to the repopulation of our islands and rural areas by providing improved access between the ferry terminals, mainland settlements, Glasgow, the central belt and wider motorway network. This would ensure that those living in our rural, remote and island communities are well connected and have equitable access to services as those living in the rest of Scotland. This could result in a positive contribution to maintaining and growing the population, supporting the wider economy and contributing to the long-term sustainability of our island communities. This would accord with the Scottish Government's Population Strategy and the concept of Repopulation Zones proposed by the Convention of Highlands and Islands (COHI), which approach the challenge of population in a collaborative manner. These aim to meet the complex and urgent population challenges across the Highlands and Islands communities and include the theme of infrastructure with a view to focussing transport planning and investment on responding to the specific needs of area.

- It could provide an alternative option for bypassing Kilwinning within the A737 Route Improvement Package.

- The A760 (Garnock Valley to Largs) upgrade has been sifted in due to Enhanced Diversionary Routes / Resilience Package: Package of measures to improve diversionary routes in the event of trunk road closure (including local roads) – the B714 meets the same criterion and as such should also be included.

- Although the inclusion of the A760 is welcome, North Ayrshire would prioritise the B714 upgrade first given the economic benefit to the wider Ayrshire economy, and the enhanced access it would provide to our major ports.

- Similar roads elsewhere have been retained in STPR2 for further consideration. For example, the A714 upgrade (through South Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway) is sifted within Improve Routes to Ports / Harbours / International Gateways: In scope options related to improving surface access to Ports / Harbours / International Gateways, including airports, by all modes (including Freight). The B714 would also fall under this criterion and consistency is required in the sifting in process.

A841:

- The A841 was not proposed simply as a road improvement project. A significant part of the rationale for this route upgrade is to help facilitate public transport on Arran. The low floor buses used on the island face challenges with the current condition of the route. Due to the surfacing the buses have to travel at

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		slower speeds to negotiate the route. This causes issues with timetabling and can impact the bus services ability to meet ferry sailings. • It connects two lifeline ferry services and is essential for resilience of ferry services to/from Arran e.g. if one ferry route is not available the A841 offers a link to an alternative ferry service. • It provides a gateway to Kintyre for Ayrshire when the Ardrossan to Campbeltown service is not operational. • It would better facilitate public transport and directly aligns with the Phase 1 theme to enhance public transport provision; and also Phase 1 intervention 11 to support integrated journeys at ferry terminals. • Transport Scotland's RET evaluation report identifies Arran as having had the greatest impact from RET. An upgrade of the A841 would help support the increase in traffic and make public transport and other modes of sustainable travel on the island a more attractive option. This is a key tourist route and main link between the two ferry ports. There has not been a proportionate increase in bus or rail journeys on the mainland to access the ferry terminals or on the islands themselves – these are in fact in decline. This suggests that the additional passengers are travelling in cars.
8		**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:** **It is clear what the next steps are when considering the transport options.** ▪ Agree
9		**Do you believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will bring about challenges and/or opportunities relevant to planning future transport investment through STPR2?** ▪ Yes, challenges and opportunities
10		**What do you believe could be the key medium to longer-term challenges relevant to STPR2 arising from the COVID-19 pandemic on travel demand and patterns in your region / nationally?** The primary challenge arising from COVID-19 will be the lack of confidence in public transport and ensuring people do not make a permanent modal shift towards car travel because of this. Within North Ayrshire public transport usage has historically been good in relation to commuting to Glasgow with our excellent rail links. Work will be required to restore this confidence to ensure the ongoing viability of these key services

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and to minimise any increase in car traffic. With the strategic road network currently passing directly through Kilwinning town centre this may increase the impact of the road network on the community substantially.

The ongoing decline of bus patronage will also be a key challenge in North Ayrshire. Bus travel in the South West, Strathclyde and South East areas of Scotland accounts for over three quarters of all bus journeys in Scotland. Passenger numbers have however been in decline across Scotland since the 1960s. This has been dominated by the decline in the South West of Scotland. Strathclyde and Glasgow have seen the largest proportion of decline and the network has also reduced by over 24 million kilometres. In comparison, the South East of Scotland has seen passenger growth and no decline in the overall network size.

A lack of confidence in bus travel will only compound this decline further. Decreasing patronage impacts on the commercial viability of services and can result in the need for the Regional Transport Partnership, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), to financially support socially necessary services. A total of 24 bus services including all services on the Isle of Arran were supported by SPT in 2020 and 15% of all bus miles were supported services in 2019. Due to the pandemic, some commercial bus services have been revised or cancelled and the relative importance of subsidised services has further increased.

North Ayrshire is the fifth most deprived Local Authority in Scotland under the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The Ayrshire Inclusive Growth Diagnostic identified transport as a barrier to inclusive growth and in particular as a limiting factor to and preventing people from accessing employment and training opportunities. Several contributing factors were identified including the: frequency of transport; connections between transport modes; cost; and shift patterns exacerbating transport constraints.

A resilient network and confidence in public transport is therefore key to ensure good access to education and employment opportunities. Halting the decline in patronage and improving service provision is therefore vital to local communities, inclusive growth and supporting modal shift to sustainable travel. Several of our more rural areas already have limited access to public transport and it will therefore be essential to ensure that these populations are not adversely affected any further.

		Access to the islands has also been a significant challenge during the COVID-19 restrictions. This has impacted on our island communities' ability to access services and goods. As the economy reopens it will be critical that island access is supported and that sufficient passenger capacity is provided to ensure our island economies are not further disadvantaged. A recently published Fraser of Allander report on the impact of Covid-19 on Arran's economy notes that on average, each day of ferry operation contributes just under £170,000 to the island's economy. Due to its prevalent tourism industry, Arran has been disproportionately impacted by the lockdown restrictions. The subsequent capacity constraints in its hospitality sector have meant that even as lockdown restrictions have eased, businesses in these tourism facing industries are still highly dependent on government support.
11		**What do you believe could be the key medium to longer-term opportunities relevant to STPR2 arising from the COVID-19 pandemic on travel demand and patterns in your region / nationally?** A key opportunity resulting from the pandemic is the reduced demand for travel. With much of the population working from home for the past year, this has presented an opportunity for workplaces to rethink their working practices. Whilst we advocate for workplaces to reopen, not least to help support the town centre economies that rely on the spending power of workers, the rise of these digital working practices will hopefully allow us to reduce levels of travel demand with companies encouraged to opt for a blended approach to the office with some days at home still possible. This presents a significant opportunity in relation to road safety, journey times, and climate targets. Associated with this shift and separately as well, there are clear opportunities to further develop active travel infrastructure.
12		**How well do you feel the Case for Change element of STPR2 has engaged with stakeholders and the public?** ▪ Well, however the scope of STPR2 was unclear through the engagement therefore suggestions were made through the consultation processes by participants that were out of scope.
13		**Have you or your organisation participated in events or previous online surveys in relation to STPR2? Tick all that apply:**

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		We have participated in: ▪ Workshops ▪ Online Survey ▪ Feedback through Regional Transport Working Group
14		**What worked well and what could have been improved in the Case for Change stakeholder and public engagement?** The Regional Transport Working Groups have worked well however these would have benefited from more active dialogue to address the concerns raised in relation to the Case for Change process. Clarity on the scope of STPR2 for stakeholders and the public would have been beneficial at an early stage of the engagement.
15		**Overall, has the Case for Change element of STPR2 met your or your organisation's expectations?** ▪ No, it has not met our organisation's expectations as the Case for Change has sifted out several North Ayrshire priorities.
16	Answer only for if you responded to Q15 – It has met some / No, it has not my or my organisations expectations	**Please explain why the Case for Change element of STPR2 has not met all your organisation's expectations?** The Case for Change has sifted out several North Ayrshire priorities. Our rationale for the inclusion of more North Ayrshire transport projects is detailed in the response to Q7 above.
17		**Please provide any other comments on the Case for Change element of STPR2?** Analysis by the Fraser of Allander Institute at the University of Strathclyde has highlighted the stark levels of regional inequality in Scotland. The new NUTS2 Southern Scotland region introduced in 2018 (comprised of the Ayrshires, South Lanarkshire, Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders) has the lowest GVA per head across the whole of the UK.

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The evidence suggests that to tackle these issues we needed a new approach locally which is reflected in our new local economic strategy and economic model, Community Wealth Building. It also requires structural change in national policy that would result in more local fair work and greater levels of national investment in local infrastructure. North Ayrshire Council's Recovery and Renewal Approach is focused on building back better, fairer and greener.

The Council is also working with other Local Authorities that are experiencing declining and aging populations and have contributed to the new draft Scotland strategy that sets out priorities for tackling population challenges. Access to labour markets and transport infrastructure are key factors in people's decision about where to live and the Council will continue to make the case for change to ensure that North Ayrshire is a more sustainable place in the future.

Appendix 2: Strategic Transport Project Review 2 (STPR2) Option Sifting Briefing Note

Background

A wide range of transport options were generated through workshops, an online survey, regional plans and strategies, engagement and interviews to inform the development of STPR2. Transport Scotland's consultants, AECOM, provided a technical note on the options sifting process in mid-November for review by the Ayrshire and Arran Regional Transport Working Group (RTWG). This details the options generation and sifting process and identifies where options identified to date are either in scope, require further appraisal or are out of scope.

This note was circulated to the RTWG to establish if any options had been sifted out prematurely or if potential options had been missed. The RTWG issued a joint response requesting further clarity on the: assessment criteria; origin of the suggested options; scope of STRP2; sifting process; which stage options were sifted out including the rationale for doing so; and clarity on where options are proposed to be progressed elsewhere or by another option.

The North Ayrshire priorities currently sifted-in for further appraisal include:

- A737 Route Improvement Package:
  - Package of measures to improve the route, including: Overtaking lanes, WS2+1's, partial dualling, junction improvements and route realignment / straightening.
- A78 Route Improvement Package (would include Pennyburn Roundabout):
  - Package of measures to improve the route, including: Overtaking lanes, WS2+1's, partial dualling, junction improvements and route realignment / straightening.
- Upgrade A760 from A737 to A78 (Garnock Valley to Largs):
  - Included within a wider grouping titled: *Enhanced Diversionary Routes / Resilience Package: Package of measures to improve diversionary routes in the event of trunk road closure (including local roads).*
- Improvement of Hunterston rail provision (note: status of Hunterston as a major port however is still to be confirmed by Scottish Government):
  - Included within grouping titled: Improve Routes to Ports / Harbours / International Gateways All options related to improving surface access to Ports / Harbours / International Gateways, including airports, by all modes (including Freight).

In addition to the above there are a range of active travel and public transport measures being taken forward for further consideration which would be applicable to North Ayrshire however they have been sifted into high level packages with no specific geographic locations at this stage. Some examples of these non-geographic grouped options include: to bring existing NCN up to appropriate standards; to develop strategic urban active travel corridors; measures to reallocate road space; to consider measures to support Demand Responsive and Community Transport; decarbonisation of the bus fleet; bus and rail passenger facilities and station enhancement improvements, etc.

The North Ayrshire Council Sifted Out priorities are:

- B714 upgrade from Dalry to A78 at Sharphill Roundabout;
- A841 Brodick to Lochranza;
- A70 link to M74; and

- A71 link to M74.

The B714, A70 and A71 road upgrades are of particular importance to North Ayrshire as they each would significantly enhance and strengthen Ayrshire's economic connectivity to Glasgow, the Central Belt and to the north of England. The rationale for their inclusion is detailed within the consultation response.