

A Consultation on Scotland's National Transport Strategy

Report by Kevin Anderson, Acting Director Resources

1 Purpose of Report

Transport Scotland (the Scottish Government's transport agency) are consulting on a new National Transport Strategy for Scotland.

The purpose of this report is for elected members to consider and approve a response to the consultation. The consultation period ran from 31 July to 23 October 2019. Due to the available timescale, the attached response has been submitted to Transport Scotland with a caveat that it is 'subject to Council approval'.

The consultation response indicates the predicted benefits and issues that may result in Midlothian and outlines funding, legislation and other means required to implement the policy outcomes. The consultation response is Appendix A.

2 Background

- 2.1** The response welcomes the vision as aspirational and forward looking but highlights a lack of specific action regarding death and injury on Scotland's roads. There is also a concern that Scotland's Climate Change targets will be difficult to achieve without large scale investment in strategic and local transport networks.
- 2.2** The imbalance of funding between the trunk road and local road network are mentioned in the section about priorities and outcomes.
- 2.3** Problems associated with growing electric vehicle use are considered in the 'Drive to net-zero emissions' section proposing that government set up an electric charging utility company to manage private charging where residents don't have in-curtilage parking and require to cross over and have equipment in the public highway.
- 2.4** Additional active travel funding is welcomed but concerns over competitive funding requirements, match funding and ensuring all sustainable modes are taken into account are highlighted.
- 2.5** Borders Railway is welcomed and overdue. To ensure that high quality infrastructure and future proofing is included when considering further investment to the rail network is essential.
- 2.6** We also make comparisons with Europe and a need for a more efficient transport system across Scotland. Benchmarking against other countries is suggested.
- 2.7** Low emission zones are discussed with suggestions that ways of reducing emissions from older/polluting vehicles should be expanded.
- 2.8** Community engagement is required and ways to engage fully with the general public rather than specific groups is highlighted.

- 2.9** The processes involved in justifying projects and the length of time between identifying the issue and implementing a solution is discussed in comparing this process with other countries as the benchmark.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no resources required.

3.2 Risk

It is imperative that the views of local authorities are considered in national strategies.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The transport network is a key economic enabler. Safety and climate change are also key to Midlothian.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

National Strategy should inform local performance and outcomes.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

National Strategy should inform local performance and outcomes.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This is a consultation response to Transport Scotland (Scottish Government)

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

The Strategy will be assessed as a national policy document.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The Strategy will aim to lower carbon emissions.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues associated with this report.

4 Recommendations

Council is recommended to approve the proposed consultation response

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Background Papers:

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/45149/national-transport-strategy-draft-for-consultation-july-2019.pdf>