PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Comhairle with an update on the publication of the National Transport Strategy and the development of Regional and Local Transport Strategies.

COMPETENCE

1.1 There are no legal, financial, equalities or other constraints to the recommendation being implemented.

SUMMARY

2.1 The refreshed National Transport Strategy was published by the Scottish Government in January 2016 and whilst the high level objectives and key strategic outcomes of the previous Strategy, published in December 2006, remain valid and are carried over, it is accepted that there is a need for a fuller review of the National Strategy in the next Parliament which will “delve into the more fundamental questions around how we can best work together and prioritise our activity to the benefit of Scotland’s economy and Scotland’s people”.

2.2 The published Strategy recognises that addressing existing and emerging issues will require the involvement of a number of key stakeholders and specific mention has been made of the role that Regional Transport Partnerships and Community Planning Partnerships have and will continue to have in the development and implementation of future strategies.

2.3 At a regional level, the Transport Scotland Act 2005 requires Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) to prepare Transport Strategies for their regions which will enhance economic wellbeing; promote safety, social inclusion and equal opportunity; plan for a sustainable transport system; and integrate across boundaries with other Partnerships. HITRANS, the RTP for the Highlands and Islands, has now commenced an update of its 2008 Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan and, at the time of writing, the intention is to have developed a Main Issues Report, which is to form the basis of wider consultation, prior to the Partnership Advisors meeting to be held on 17 March 2016. Following this there will be an eight week public consultation on the draft RTS. Further information associated with the draft Regional Transport Strategy, its Main Issues Report and details of the proposed consultation process will, if possible, be the subject of a Supplementary Report to be circulated following the meeting of the Partnership Advisors.

2.4 At a local level, the Comhairle’s most recent Local Transport Strategy was published in October 2000 and, although much has been achieved since its development, publication and implementation and whilst many of its strategic aims and objectives remain as valid for the Outer Hebrides as they were in 2000, it is significantly out-of-date and requires a major review.

2.5 It is proposed that a new Local Transport Strategy for the Outer Hebrides be developed in collaboration with the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS) and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP). The exact methodology of this is to be developed in liaison with lead officers from the CPP partners and it, along with progress, will be the subject of further reporting and consultation with the Committee at future meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle
(a) note the publication of the National Transport Strategy and progress associated with the development of the Regional Transport Strategy; and
(b) agree that a new Local Transport Strategy be developed in collaboration with the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS) and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership.

Contact Officer: Iain Mackinnon, Director of Technical Services; 01851 822656
Appendices: 1 National Transport Strategy; January 2016 – Executive Summary
2 Regional Transport Strategy HITRANS April 2008 – Executive Summary
3 Local transport Strategy; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; Summary of Key Tasks October 2000
Background Papers: National Transport Strategy
NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

4.1 The previous National Transport Strategy (NTS) was published in 2006 with the high-level objectives of:

- **Promote economic growth** by building, enhancing managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency;
- **Promote social inclusion** by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network;
- **Protect our environment and improve health** by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumption of resources and energy;
- **Improve safety of journeys** by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff; and
- **Improve integration** by making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connection between different forms of transport.

4.2 The three Key Strategic Outcomes were:

- **Improve journey times and connections** between our cities and towns and our global markets to tackle congestion and provide access to key markets
- **Reduce emissions** to tackle climate change
- **Improve quality, accessibility and affordability** of transport, to give people the choice of public transport and real alternatives to the car

4.3 In April 2015, the Minister for Transport and Islands announced his intention to refresh the Strategy and, whilst emphasising this would not constitute a root-and-branch review, he had previously asked COSLA for its views on potential opportunities afforded by the refresh. Whilst there was a continuing desire for a full review of the NTS, it was accepted, because of time constraints particularly with regard to the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), only a refresh of the Strategy was achievable within the terms of the current Parliament.

4.4 The refresh process was very much a collaborative and consultative process with several meetings of the NTS Stakeholder Group comprising Transport Scotland, COSLA, Regional Transport Partnerships, STUC, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland, CBI Scotland, SCOTS, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Scottish Cities Alliance, Transform Scotland, Citizens Advice Scotland and Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, having taken place in a relatively short period of time.

4.5 The Draft Strategy was considered by COSLA Leaders in November 2015 and the finalised Strategy was launched by Derek Mackay MSP, Minister for Transport and Islands, on 21 January 2016.

4.6 The finalised National Transport Strategy is available from the Transport Scotland website using the following link:

http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy/national-transport-strategy

Copies of the National Strategy is available from the Director of Technical Services and in the Members’ Lounge; the Executive Summary is included at Appendix 1 to the Report

4.7 The refresh process has affirmed the need for a fuller review of the National Transport Strategy in the next Parliament which will “delve into the more fundamental questions around how we can best work together and prioritise our activity to the benefit of Scotland’s economy and Scotland’s people”.
4.8 The published Strategy recognises that addressing existing and emerging issues will require the involvement of a number of key stakeholders and specific mention has been made of the role that Regional Transport Partnerships and Community Planning Partnerships have and will continue to have in the development and implementation of future strategies.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

5.1 The Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS) was formally established as one of the seven Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships in December 2005. The Transport Scotland Act 2005 requires these Partnerships to prepare Transport Strategies for their regions which will enhance economic wellbeing; promote safety, social inclusion and equal opportunity; plan for a sustainable transport system; and integrate across boundaries with other Partnerships. These Strategies must take account of future needs and set priorities for transport development and improvement and should provide a framework for the transport activities of constituent Councils, Health Boards and other key agencies within the region.

5.2 The current HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy, published in April 2008, is available to view using the following link:

http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Corporate_Documents/Strategy

Copies of both the current Regional Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan are available from the Director of Technical Services and in the Members’ Lounge; the Executive Summary is included as Appendix 2 to the Report.

5.3 HITRANS have now commenced an update of the 2008 Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan. It is intended that this update be objective-led and apply the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance.

5.4 A workshop was held on 21 January 2016 with HITRANS Partnership Advisors and a further workshop with Partnership Members was held in advance of the HITRANS Partnership Meeting held 4 February 2016. The workshops sought to review the objectives of the existing Strategy and discuss priorities for the Refresh.

5.5 At the time of writing, the intention is to have developed a Main Issues Report which is to form the basis of wider consultation prior to the Partnership Advisors meeting to be held on 17 March 2016. Following this there will be an eight week public consultation on the draft RTS and associated documents after which final versions of the full documents incorporating any subsequent revisions will be developed for submission to the Minister for Transport and Islands for approval.

5.6 Two key elements of the updated Regional Transport Strategy will be the incorporation of area wide Low Carbon and Active Travel action plans. These plans should align with the Scottish Government’s proposed Strategic Interventions for the 2014-2020 round of ERDF funding.

5.7 The Active Travel and Low Carbon Strategy/Action Plans are being developed as discrete commissions with AECOM currently preparing a draft Regional Active Travel Strategy. HITRANS officers are also in dialogue with consultants Urban Foresight to undertake work on the Low Carbon Action Plan. Urban Foresight having recently delivered the Switched in Scotland Roadmap for Transport Scotland and are retained by Transport Scotland to develop this Roadmap further and support its implementation.

5.8 Further information associated with the draft Regional Transport Strategy, its Main Issues Report and details of the proposed consultation process will, if possible be the subject of a Supplementary Report to be circulated following the meeting of the Partnership Advisors to be held on 17 March 2016.
LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

6.1 The Comhairle’s most recent Local Transport Strategy was published in October 2000 and, although much has been achieved since its development, publication and implementation and whilst many of its strategic aims and objectives remain as valid for the Outer Hebrides as they were in 2000, it is significantly out-of-date and requires a major review. Copies of the Local Strategy are available from the Director of Technical Services and in the Members’ Lounge.

6.2 The Local Strategy published in 2000 proposed the following transportation objectives:

- On the basis that successful economic development depends on efficient transport networks, take account of sustainable development encompassing economic, social and environmental considerations when considering future development needs;
- To campaign for improvements to the price, reliability and availability of external links to the Western Isles by both air and sea;
- To maximise accessibility for all residents of the Western Isles to services and job opportunities;
- To improve safety in transportation matters;
- To ensure the maximisation and efficient use of available resources; and
- To maximise the integration of all strategies, promoted by the Comhairle, to optimise the development of internal and external transport needs.

6.3 Following on from these strategic objectives, the Transportation Committee at that time developed a number of key tasks which are set out in detail in Appendix 3 to the Report. Of these, the most significant developments achieved since 2000 are:

- The construction of the Eriskay Causeway and the Sound of Barra ferry infrastructure;
- The securing of significant additional EU and Scottish Government funding to continue the development of the Western Isles Spinal Route;
- Explore alternative ferry fare mechanisms in the interests of the Western Isles (which resulted in the establishment of RET on ferry services across the Clyde and Hebrides network) and to address the inadequacy of air services to/from and within the Western Isles with particular emphasis on the introduction of new aircraft on to routes and the affordability of the services (resulting in the introduction of the Air Discount Scheme on commercial flights within the Highlands and Islands);
- Seek the provision of a new terminal building and car parking at Stornoway Airport;
- Develop in conjunction with colleagues in other authorities the potential for a Strategic Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands (which resulted in the formal establishment of HITRANS); and
- Continue to play and active part in the debate regarding marine traffic/hazardous cargoes through the Minches and seek all year round cover from the Stornoway tug.

6.4 It is necessary to consider the development of a new Local Transport Strategy in the context of the National Transport Strategy policy framework and the high level objectives and key strategic outcomes set out in Paras 4.1 and 4.2 above; how they are then translated into priorities, aims, objectives and outcomes at a regional level through the work currently being undertaken by HITRANS; and then at a local level through integration with the Single Outcome Agreement produced by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership and its Local Outcomes and Priorities summarised in Tables 1 and 2 below.
**OHCPP Local Outcomes**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The populations of the Outer Hebrides are stable, with a better balance of age, gender and socio-economic groups</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The economy of the Outer Hebrides and the economies within the Outer Hebrides are thriving</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The people of the Outer Hebrides are well educated, well trained and well skilled.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The physical and mental health and wellbeing of the people of the Outer Hebrides is improved</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The communities of the Outer Hebrides are stronger and more able to identify, articulate and take action and responsibility regarding their needs and aspirations</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The people of the Outer Hebrides derive maximum benefit from the natural and cultural resources of the area whilst at the same time safeguarding those resources to benefit future generations</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The services of the Outer Hebrides are of high quality, continuously improving and reflective of local needs</td>
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**Table 1: Local Outcomes**

**OHCPP Local Priorities**

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<tr>
<td>Our assets have provided opportunities for sustainable economic growth</td>
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<td>Older people positively contribute to our economy and communities, and access appropriate and quality services to enable them to retain their independence</td>
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<td>Children and young people have the best start in life and are protected</td>
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<td>Communities are safer and healthier by preventing and reducing the harmful effects of alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our communities are physically and mentally healthier through an increase in physical; and social activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>The people of the Outer Hebrides have an improved standard of living through addressing poverty and inequalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Outer Hebrides will be better connected with high quality infrastructure supporting renewables and broadband</td>
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**Table 2: Local Priorities**

6.5 The recently published National Transport Strategy marks the start of a process of joint working with Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), local authorities and others to clarify roles and expectations across transport modes, locations and organisational hierarchy.

6.6 The Strategy suggests that future transport sub-policies, strategies and guidance will include a specific focus on roles and responsibilities and, in parallel, Transport Scotland will review existing guidance on regional and local transport strategies, to ensure that it reflects an updated understanding of how transport is organised in Scotland and the challenges which it now faces.
6.7 It is proposed that Transport Scotland will also review how these will complement guidance for spatial planning and forthcoming statutory guidance on community planning under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This includes guidance on how community planning partners, including local authorities and RTPs, can and should support local outcomes which CPPs identify as priorities in their new local outcome improvement plans and towards the achievement of which transport can contribute.

6.8 It is therefore proposed that a Local Transport Strategy for the Outer Hebrides be developed in collaboration with the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS) and the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP). The exact methodology of this is to be developed in liaison with lead officers from the CPP partners and it, along with progress, will be the subject of further reporting and consultation with the Committee at future meetings.